Intraindividual Variability in Personality Research:
Considering Time, Measurement, and the Interpersonal Context

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Abstract

Personality research has established robust associations between traits and a variety of life outcomes. Nevertheless, much of the literature relies on the Big Five traits, which broadly encapsulate important patterns of psychological individual differences. As a result, this broad conceptualization often leads to weaker associations with outcomes within specific domains. The current dissertation offers a comprehensive examination of different ways to expand upon traditional trait research. This includes combining multiple levels of personality constructs both within and outside of the Big Five framework, multiple perspectives through self and informant reports, and multiple timescales from one-time trait measures to dynamic state fluctuations and longitudinal trait changes. The primary focus is on intraindividual variability, or how people change in their psychological processes across time, and its relevance within the highly influential life domain of romantic relationships. Study 1 presents a preregistered meta-analytic review across $k = 88$ independent samples ($N = 20{,}813$) of the association between personality traits at both the domain (Big Five) and metatrait (Stability and Plasticity) levels with affective variability. We found a positive association between affective variability and Plasticity as well as its underlying traits. However, the pattern of findings was mixed and valence-specific for the Stability traits, and this metatrait itself was negatively associated with variability in Positive Affect but positively so for variability in Negative Affect. Study 2 further investigated intraindividual variability in psychological processes by examining assortative mating patterns in 138 established romantic couples using experience sampling methods of personality and affective states across 35 time points during a 7-day period. We found evidence for assortative mating based on both baseline traits and dynamic states. However, there was more evidence for perceived similarities than actual similarities at baseline, and there was much more evidence for dynamic similarities on states than baseline similarities on traits. There was also evidence for a complementarity effect or negative between-partner correlation on Volatility. Study 3 expanded the timescale from dynamic short-term state fluctuations to longitudinal trajectories of trait change across multiple months and years, examining assortative mating patterns in two complementary samples of early dating couples (*N* = 184) and married or cohabiting couples (*N* = 168). We found evidence for assortative mating across various relationship-specific characteristics both at baseline and longitudinally, which were often stronger in magnitude than assortment on Big Five traits. Consistent with Study 2, couples often perceived each other to be more similar than their actual similarity indicated. Nonetheless, in line with the literature, there was little evidence to support the benefits of between-partner similarity for relationship quality, especially after controlling for actor and partner effects of both partners' individual characteristics. Altogether, this research program provides a broad and thorough examination of intraindividual variability in general as well as in the interpersonal context, and in doing so contributes to both the substantive body of literature and the methodological considerations needed when investigating these personality processes.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Personality research has been aptly called *the last refuge of the generalist in psychology* (Revelle, 2007, p. 37). Personality psychologists not only employ a broad array of research designs and analytical methods, but we also study a wide range of psychological constructs, many of which have demonstrated strong and robust predictive power for outcomes in important life domains (Soto, 2019). Under the generalist tradition, this dissertation synthesizes several areas of research within personality science. Specifically, I focus on the intraindividual component of personality, which examines how an individual may change and fluctuate across time. The timescale of interest ranges from momentary fluctuations in daily life to longitudinal change trajectories across the years. The constructs of interest include not only general affect and Big Five personality traits but also multiple levels within trait research (aspects, domains, metatraits) as well as multiple levels of personality (traits and characteristic adaptations).

To synthesize these lines of research, the current dissertation emphasizes three particular considerations in personality research. First, I present empirical investigations of multiple levels within the Big Five trait framework as well as multiple levels of the broader conceptualization of personality. Second, I showcase the importance of including multiple timescales in personality investigations, ranging from one-time trait measures to dynamic momentary fluctuations and longitudinal change trajectories. Finally, I discuss the implications of personality for life outcomes in different domains. Specifically, the goal of this dissertation is to demonstrate empirical evidence for the importance of intraindividual variability in personality processes, with illustrative examples drawn from personality research in the interpersonal domain.

Personality Measurement across the Three-Level Model

Gordon Allport (1961) presented one of the earliest formal definitions of personality as “the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his unique adjustments to his environment, characteristic behavior, and thought” (p. 28). Personality psychology then purports to investigate patterns of psychological individual differences, motivation and dynamics, and the unique person (McAdams, 1997). These three focal points of research are formally conceptualized as the three-level model of personality, which includes (1) personality traits, (2) characteristic adaptations, and (3) narrative identity (McAdams & Pals, 2006). Because they emphasize different research questions, research programs concerning each of these areas have developed rather independently from one another, following different research methods and using different constructs (McAdams & Pals, 2007).

Personality Traits

In the decades that followed Allport’s original definition, personality psychologists have devoted much attention to the first component of individual differences, traits, and have devised several taxonomies to organize the numerous potential traits into a concise and comprehensive system. The most dominant and influential trait taxonomy is the “Big Five,” which consists of Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Neuroticism, and Openness to Experience (Costa & McCrae, 2008; Goldberg, 1993). These factors were developed based on the *lexical* *hypothesis*, which posits that important psychological individual differences would be reflected in our daily language use and thus in studying the dictionary we will be able to uncover these traits (Allport & Odbert, 1936). This process first resulted in approximately 4,500 descriptive terms (Allport & Odbert, 1936) which were then revised and reduced to 60 clusters with high intercorrelations, constituting the *trait sphere* (Cattell, 1943). Using factor analytic techniques, Cattell eventually reduced his trait sphere to 35 bipolar variables, each including a positive and negative pole with several descriptive adjectives (Cattell, 1945). Similarly, L. L. Thurstone presented 60 adjectives to 1,300 raters and found that “five factors are sufficient” to account for conversational descriptions of a person (Thurstone, 1934). The empirical works that followed were able to reliably replicate a five-factor structure (Digman & Inouye, 1986; Goldberg, 1990, 1992; McCrae & Costa, 1985; Norman, 1963), which was originally numbered as: Factor I (surgency or extraversion), Factor II (agreeableness), Factor III (conscientiousness), Factor IV (emotional stability versus neuroticism), and Factor V (culture, intellect, or openness to experience).

In addition to the Big Five, there exists other established taxonomies of personality traits. A prominent example is the HEXACO model (Ashton & Lee, 2007) which was derived from extensive cross-cultural research (Ashton et al., 2004) that indicated a sixth factor of Honesty-Humility as “the tendency to be fair and genuine in dealing with others, in the sense of cooperating with others even when one might exploit them without suffering retaliation.” (Ashton & Lee, 2007, p. 156). The remaining factors also differed slightly from those of the Big Five model. First, Openness has a new element of unconventionality in addition to intellect and imagination; Neuroticism is replaced by emotionality and now includes an element of sentimentality that is usually within Agreeableness; then, Agreeableness now lacks sentimentality and has an anger component (gentle versus ill-tempered) that is most associated with Neuroticism. Although there are additional taxonomies outside of the Big Five such as the Big Six HEXACO or even Big Seven (Almagor et al., 1995), no research is claiming that only fix, six, or seven personality traits exist. Rather, these structures simply organize innumerable personality traits with different levels of specificity into higher-order factors or personality *domains*. Even within this first level of personality traits, research has explored a hierarchy that expands both below and above the domain level, to provide researchers with both finer-grained constructs that may be more suited for their outcomes of interests and a higher-order unifying framework for personality conceptualization.

Hierarchy Within the Trait Level

Many research programs have expanded below the domain levels. For instance, the Big Five Aspect Scale (BFAS: DeYoung et al., 2007) measures ten personality *aspects,* two for each domain; the Big Five Inventory (BFI-2: Soto & John, 2017) includes three facets per domain; and the NEO Personality Inventory (NEO-PI-R: Costa & McCrae, 1995, 2008) includes thirty facets, six for each of the Big Five domain (e.g., Extraversion includes warmth, gregariousness, assertiveness, activity, excitement seeking, and positive emotions). These finer-grain traits are much more specific than the domain level, and they have shown additional predictive power beyond the information given from just the Big Five (e.g., for personality disorders: Reynolds & Clark, 2001;

health behaviors: Hagger-Johnson & Whiteman, 2007; academic performance: MacCann et al., 2009). This finding pattern is largely concordant with the *bandwidth-fidelity trade-off*, in which the broad domains have larger bandwidth and may be predictive of a wider range of outcome variables; however, narrower traits like aspects and facets may be more predictive of a given specific outcome (Cronbach & Gleser, 1957). Further, there is some evidence of discriminant validity such that lower-level traits within the same broad domain may differentially predict different outcomes (e.g., Denissen et al., 2020). More recent research has even examined personality *nuances* which are each represented by a single item from a personality questionnaire (Mõttus et al., 2017; Mõttus & Rozgonjuk, 2021).

In addition to expanding to finer-grained constructs within the domains, factor analyses have also resulted in two metatraits – Stability and Plasticity – which are higher-order overarching factors that further organizes the Big Five (DeYoung et al., 2002). Some models have named these metatraits differently, including Alpha and Beta (Digman, 1997), Self-Control and Engagement (Olson, 2005), or Social Self-Regulation and Dynamism (Saucier et al., 2014). Stability includes three domains of Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and (reversed) Neuroticism, whereas Plasticity includes Extraversion and Openness. This unifying framework of the Big Two along with the various lower-order aspects within the domains altogether provide personality researchers with many constructs in their toolkits depending on the level of specificity needed for their investigations. However, although this hierarchy exists within personality traits, it is important to understand that traits alone are not sufficient to describe the whole person.

Despite their utility in organizing broad cognitive and behavioral patterns and their predictive power in important life domains, personality traits remain “a psychology of the stranger” (McAdams, 1995, p. 365). In other words, these broad descriptors are useful to differentiate people across many general settings, but they are by design insufficient to offer specific insights to truly know another person on an intimate level and in specific situations. In the following section, I further explore the second and third levels of personality, that of characteristic adaptations and life narratives.

Characteristic Adaptations and Narratives

Characteristic adaptations (CA) are constructs at the second level of personality, and they broadly include “motives, goals, plans, strivings, strategies, values, virtues, schemas, self-images, […] and many other aspects of human individuality that speak to motivational, social-cognitive, and developmental concerns” (McAdams & Pals, 2006). Another related way to define characteristic adaptations is through the conceptualization of personality as an adaptive and goal-oriented system (DeYoung, 2015). In this way, characteristic adaptations include motivational units such as goals, interpretations, and strategies. Unlike personality traits, this definition allows characteristic adaptations to be highly specific to the situation in which they are conceptualized, and, unlike traits, we should not expect universality at this level across cultural or historical contexts.

There exists no extensive taxonomy of characteristic adaptations. Indeed, researchers may disagree on whether a specific construct should be defined as a CA or a trait (Syed et al., 2019), and even constructs that are conceptually considered a CA might be measured in a trait-like manner and thus simply resemble lower-level traits (for a review, see: Nguyen et al., 2021). Further, McAdams and Pals (2006) proposed narratives to be at the third and final level of personality, whereas others may consider them to be another CA instead of a unique level (DeYoung, 2015). Instead of advocating for a clear delineation among the levels, this section is rather dedicated to highlighting that personality is not simply a sum of our traits and bringing attention to the studies of motivations, goal-attainment, values and beliefs, internal self- and relational model, and ultimately studies of the whole person (McAdams & Pals, 2007).

At the third level of personality, the most contextual, specific, and idiographic level, is *narrative identity*; “the stories we tell about ourselves reveal ourselves, construct ourselves, and sustain ourselves through time” (McLean et al., 2020, p. 922). Further, life narratives refer to specific stories about important episodes or moments in someone’s life, which may include: high and low points in life, self-defining memories, and turning points (McAdams, 1993, 2001) and are most commonly obtained from the semi-structured Life Story Interview (McAdams, 2008). The central element to narratives is the interconnectedness and meaning-making aspect, that is: narrative identity does not simply include a series of recalled events from one’s life, but people must actively link these events and derive meaning from them in order to construct a larger cohesive life story. In doing so, this is a highly subjective process that would be distinct even among individuals who share the same objective list of life events.

Because of its subjective nature and the rich qualitative data that it entails, narrative research is an arduous process from data collection to narrative coding and analyses. The biggest hurdle for researchers is the numerous narrative features that may be analyzed, including (but not limited to) agency, communion, valence, redemption, contamination, coherence, complexity, positive and negative meaning-making, affective processing, and accommodative processing (Adler et al., 2016). Factor analytic work has presented the Big Three (McLean et al., 2020, but also see: Adler et al., 2016; Graci et al., 2018) as an empirical structure to help organize these variables: (1) motivational and affective themes (e.g., redemption, affective tone, agency); (2) autobiographical reasoning (e.g., thematic coherence, meaning-making, exploratory processing); and (3) structure (e.g., context coherence, chronological coherence). There are several established associations between narrative features and personality traits, largely in intuitive directions. For instance, Neuroticism was associated with emotionally negative narrative tone, Agreeableness with communion themes, and Openness with structural complexity (McAdams et al., 2004). Further, self-descriptive labels such as “artistic self,” “adventurous self,” “fearful self,” and “nurturing self” were all associated with personality traits in the hypothesized directions, i.e., Openness, Extraversion, Neuroticism, and Agreeableness, respectively (Raggatt, 2006).

In sum, this section has explored the wealth of constructs available to personality researchers and the associated added value of expanding our research in these directions. The current dissertation aims to illustrate this point through empirical investigations of multiple levels within Big Five trait frameworks as well as multiple levels of the grander personality conceptualization. In doing so, we confirm that although broad traits are indeed useful tools for understanding broad psychological individual differences and outcome correlates, the finer-grained and more contextualized constructs are particularly valuable when investigating a specific research domain.

Diverse Perspectives through Multiple-Informant Reports

In addition to expanding the examined personality constructs, researchers may also investigate each construct more deeply and thoroughly by including multiple informant perspectives. Admittedly, self-reports are not only one of the most convenient research designs to obtain personality assessments, but they are also uniquely useful to capture how an individual is subjectively feeling and thinking. Nonetheless, the Self-Other Knowledge Asymmetry model posits that different psychological constructs may be differentially observable, and this effect is further moderated by the type of informants and their acquaintance level (Vazire, 2010). Indeed, extensive research has pointed to the incremental benefits of mult-informant reports. This effect may be particularly evident for evaluative outcomes like work and academic performances (Connelly & Ones, 2010; Connelly & Hülsheger, 2012; Oh et al., 2011) and prosocial and moral behaviors (Thielmann et al., 2017), which likely results from informants being a less biased judge than the self in highly evaluative contexts. Thus, it is sensible to employ multi-informant designs especially when contextually relevant. For instance, dyadic research, as will be presented in the later Chapters 3 and 4, would benefit greatly from including reports from both partners' perspectives, because many of the constructs of interest, such as partner responsiveness or attachment orientations, either resulted from different dyadic processes or at the very least were conceptualized in the dyadic relationship context.

Trait research has also examined the differential patterns of self- and informant-reports over time. Although much of longitudinal personality trait research has relied on self-reports, cross-sectional age-graded results from a large sample of $N > 10{,}000$ showed some discrepancies in age trajectories between informants specifically in the timing and magnitude of these effects (Rohrer et al., 2018). Longitudinal research in this area also included varying acquaintance levels, time durations, and assessment intervals, which prevents a straightforward synthesis. Notably, a study across the tumultuous time of the first two years of college and across multiple informant types showed very little evidence for correlated change, suggesting that one's personality trait change was not similarly perceived by other close informants (Nguyen et al., 2023). Nonetheless, the short duration of this study might have prevented us from identifying time-lagged effects as suggested by cross-sectional age-graded trajectories. The next section will further explore the implications of varying timescales for personality assessments, highlighting the importance of designing longitudinal research programs of appropriate duration, frequency, and time period to capture our phenomena of interest.

Personality Traits and States across Different Timescales

Longitudinal Trait Trajectories

In addition to expanding to other levels of personality, we may also expand the timescale of trait research by including repeated measurements. Personality traits are by definition relatively stable across time and situation (e.g., Costa & McCrae, 1994). Nonetheless, much research has shown that personality traits can and do change, either with mean-level change, rank-order change, individual difference in change, or ipsative profile change (Roberts et al., 2008). The first two are sample-level approaches whereas the last two examine within-individual processes, and these types of change do not necessarily co-occur but instead presented different views of the developmental trajectories (e.g., Donnellan & Robins, 2009; Nguyen et al., 2023). In addition, several mechanisms for change and stability have been proposed and empirically supported (Donnellan et al., 2007; Roberts et al., 2008). For example, the *maturity principle* posits that people become more socially adaptable, that is: higher Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Extraversion as well as lower Neuroticism with age. The *cumulative continuity principle* states that there will be an increase in rank-order stability in a given sample across time. The *identity principle* then states that the process of identity development and maintenance leads to increased personality consistency with age. Extensive meta-analytic and longitudinal work has supported these principles (Bleidorn et al., 2022). Personality traits have also been shown to change due to major life events/transitions in both work and life domains (Bleidorn & Denissen, 2021), with the psychotherapeutic process and concurrently with symptomatic change (Nguyen et al., 2020; Roberts et al., 2017), as well as due to direct interventions aimed at personality trait change (Jackson et al., 2021).

Dynamic State Fluctuations

Recently, some personality researchers have shifted their focus to finer-grained variations than those obtained from traditional longitudinal designs. An exciting research area has emerged to examine momentary fluctuations in what have been termed personality states. *Whole Trait Theory* was developed as an effort to combine the situationist or social-cognitive approach and the individualist or trait approach in personality research in order to explain cross-situational variability and consistency in broad patterns of human behaviors (Fleeson & Jayawickreme, 2015). In order to study different variables at the state level, researchers often use a variety of intensive longitudinal designs such as the experience sampling method (ESM; Bolger & Laurenceau, 2013), also known as ambulatory assessments, ecological momentary assessments, or daily diary methods. ESM designs require three main elements: (1) real-time and (2) repeated assessments (3) in a natural and thus ecologically valid setting (Conner et al., 2009). This means that participants may be answering questionnaires multiple times per day thus providing researchers with intensive high-dimensional data.

In support of the dynamic approach of personality, research has shown significant within-person variability in personality states (Heller et al., 2007) and this intraindividual variability pattern is itself an individual difference: that is, different people demonstrate unique and relatively stable patterns of their state distributional parameters (Baird et al., 2006; Fleeson, 2001). Further, meta-analytic results of behavioral manifestations showed that these parameters were associated with personality trait-level scores (Fleeson & Gallagher, 2009). In addition, we can examine the dynamic organization of an individual's personality such as the relationship between their Extraversion and Agreeableness states across time. These structures have also been shown to be person-specific or a unique individual difference (Borkenau & Ostendorf, 1998; Beck & Jackson, 2020).

Not only are dynamic intensive repeated-measures of personality constructs reliable individual differences, but research also indicates that they are uniquely predictive for a variety of outcomes, even above and beyond trait predictions. For instance, after controlling for personality traits, daily personality states were still predictive of daily well-being and happiness (Howell et al., 2017). In the clinical setting, within-person fluctuations in depression severity were linked to changes in personality states but not to trait assessments (Clark et al., 2003). In the applied setting, an investigation in industrial/organizational psychology showed that states Conscientiousness and Neuroticism were associated with momentary task performance for employees in a large financial institution and recommended that employers should be mindful of not only trait assessments but also state variability in their recruiting considerations (Debusscher et al., 2016). This exciting emerging research area suggests that there is much utility in including personality constructs at the momentary state levels. Although there is evidence for this benefit across various research domains, the next section will focus on a central domain for psychological well-being, that of the interpersonal context.

The Interpersonal Context

There is plentiful evidence of the predictive power of personality traits across important life domains, resulting from meta-analytic, longitudinal, and cross-cultural studies (Beck & Jackson, 2022; Ozer & Benet-Martinez, 2006). Notably, the link between personality traits and life outcomes has demonstrated a very high replication rate of 87% significance in the same direction as the original findings (Soto, 2019). This pattern is particularly impressive in comparison with psychological research as a whole, in which only 36% of studies selected from high-impact journals were able to successfully replicate (Open Science Collaboration, 2015). A recent mega-analysis (Beck & Jackson, 2022) attempted to synthesize the past decades in personality research across a variety of important life outcomes, including but not limited to health domains (mortality, health events), relationship domains (marriage/divorce, cohabitation, childbirth), prosocial behaviors (volunteering and criminality), and academic and occupational performance (unemployment, higher education). Even through comprehensive analytic techniques to ensure robustness such as propensity score matching and specification curve analysis, across various cross-sectional and longitudinal designs, personality traits remained a significant predictor of life outcomes.

This dissertation aims to further explore the implications of personality on life outcomes. While acknowledging this breadth of research across different life domains, I choose to focus specifically on the interpersonal context, which is indeed a highly influential force for psychological and physical well-being (Robles et al., 2014). Mega-analytic results in relationship domains showed that both childbirth and cohabitation with a romantic partner were associated with higher Extraversion and Conscientiousness; marriage was associated with higher Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness, whereas divorce was also associated with higher Agreeableness and Conscientiousness (Beck & Jackson, 2022, p. 535).

Long before Beck and Jackson’s work, personality psychologists have collectively and comprehensively examined these personality-outcome links for romantic relationships (for a review across domains, see: Ozer & Benet-Martinez, 2005). Meta-analytic results across 19 studies showed that relationship satisfaction was associated with high Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Extraversion as well as low Neuroticism (Malouff et al., 2010). These associations were robust across genders and marital statuses, although there was some cross-cultural heterogeneity for Extraversion. There is also a large body of research linking traits with outcomes in other relationship domains beyond romantic relationships. Personality traits have been shown to be predictive of friendship in children (Jensen-Campbell et al., 2002) and young adults (Wilson et al., 2015) as well as parent-child relationships in young adults (Belsky et al., 2003). Additionally, meta-analytic results across 113 independent samples showed that Big Five traits were associated with loneliness, and all traits remained significant predictors after controlling for the other four, except for Openness (Buecker et al., 2020). Further, all Big Five traits have shown meta-analytic associations with perceived availability of social support, although there were significant differences among general social support and person-specific support, such as that provided to a friend or family member (Barańczuk, 2019). In a related domain of social investment, which examines an individual's commitment to their various social roles including that of a parent or community member (Roberts et al., 2005), personality traits of Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and (reversed) Neuroticism were all meta-analytically associated with family social investment (Lodi-Smith & Roberts, 2007).

Assortative Mating

Across relationship domains, romantic partner selection remains one of the most influential tasks for psychological and even physical well-being (Robles et al., 2014). *Assortative mating* may be formally defined as "the tendency for two partners to be matched systematically on one or more characteristics" (Luo, 2017, p. 1). Notably, this definition does not restrict the matching pattern to be that of similarity, but that it is simply non-random and thus other strategies, such as complementarity, may be included. Whereas similarity simply refers to partner selection based on similar characteristics, complementarity is a bit more complex in that it requires the knowledge of both (1) which trait levels are complementary to one another and (2) which evidence is needed to demonstrate complementarity empirically. *Complementarity theory*, in fact, was originally based on Henry Murray's Need Schema (Murray, 1938, 1943) and resulted from the empirical findings that couples were found to be less correlated on their psychogenic needs than non-couple pairs (Winch et al., 1954). Unfortunately, this specific finding has consistently failed to replicate (e.g., Murstein, 1967; cross-cultural findings: Till & Freedman, 1978) and the theory has been largely discredited due to several psychometric, design, and conceptual problems (Murstein, 1976; White & Hatcher, 1984). In response, a theory of *successive filtering* was proposed to include three hierarchal layers of partner selection (Kerckhoff & Davis, 1962). Firstly, all potential mates undergo a basic filter for social and demographic background; secondly, remaining candidates undergo a consensus filter to ensure similarity on important values; lastly, only the few serious contenders undergo the complementarity filter. Indeed, the vast majority of current research findings present evidence for similarity rather than complementarity (for a review, see: Epstein & Guttman, 1984; Luo, 2017), although more evidence of complementarity or negative assortment exists in the animal kingdom (Thiessen & Gregg, 1980). As a result, this dissertation uses the term *assortative mating* only to refer to the systematic matching in which romantic partners share similarities with one another instead of complementary patterns.

So, why should we expect mating to be a non-random process? Why should partners be more similar than non-partners? It is important to explore the potential mechanisms of this process in order to make sense of the existing patterns of findings, which are not uniform across variables and situations. First, it is proposed that there are adaptive evolutionary benefits to select for gene similarity (in non-relatives, which differentiates assortative mating from related mating or consanguinity which comes with great costs to reproductive fitness): (1) increasing the possibility that each parent's genetic materials, especially those that they share, will be passed onto their offspring and, relatedly, (2) increasing the evolutionary benefit/cost ratio of altruistic acts (Thiessen & Gregg, 1980). At a micro-level, partner similarity leads to offspring and siblings that are more homogenous or similar to one another. However, at a macro-level, partner similarity ensures heterogeneity such that there are more individuals with extreme levels of a trait (e.g., obesity: Speakman et al., 2007). Second, mate selection is influenced by the concept of a *marriage market*: people have their own preferences yet face constraints due to competition with other candidates in the market, and this competitive pressure lead to pairs of similar trait levels (Mortensen, 1988). Third, there are strong explicit societal pressures to push for positive assortment, especially regarding demographic and status variables such as race/ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, and education (Bratter & Eschbach, 2006; Rosenfeld, 2008) as well as geographical constraints that push for propinquity or physical proximity to one's partner (Spuhler & Clark, 1961). Fourth, the *convergence hypothesis* states that long-term partners become more similar to one another over time, rather than just being similar at the time of selection; however, longitudinal findings for this hypothesis have been mixed (Caspi & Herbener, 2013; Gonzaga et al., 2007, 2010; Lewis & Yoneda, 2021).

Based on the existing findings and potential mechanisms for assortative mating, researchers have proposed a hierarchical model to organize different traits that may be relevant for mate selection. The most influential variables concern those under geographic and societal pressures: demographic variables (age, propinquity/proximity, socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, religion, education). The second group concerns values, intelligence, interests, and mental well-being. The last group then includes physical characteristics and personality traits (Luo, 2017). Notably, however, this grouping may vary across researchers and time, especially due to the changing or mixed findings for variables in the second and last group, such as those for personality traits (Thiessen & Gregg, 1980). Interestingly, the expansion of the dating and marriage market to online platforms has been linked to lower couple similarity in race/ethnicity and education compared to other meeting settings such as through friends, family, leisure activity, or school (Potarca, 2017).

A comprehensive review (Luo, 2017; for older reviews see: Epstein & Guttman, 1984; Vandenberg, 1972) summarized findings on these groups of variables and reported average between-partner correlations as follows: age correlations range from around .70s to .90s (Feng & Baker, 1994; George et al., 2015; Watson et al., 2004); education around .40s to .60s (George et al., 2015; Hur, 2016; Watson et al., 2004); attitudes range from .40s to .80s (risk attitude: Bacon et al., 2014; political conservatism, religiosity, gender equality: Feng & Baker, 1994; Watson et al., 2004) but basic values, which refer to universal trait-like guiding principles in one's life such as hedonism, power, or security (Schwartz, 1992), are much lower at .10s to .40s (Gaunt, 2006; Watson et al., 2004); physical characteristics range from .10s to .20s (Di Castelnuovo et al., 2009; Silventoinen et al., 2003) but perceived attractiveness ranges from .30s to .40s (George et al., 2015); subjective well-being and mental disorders range from .20s to .50s (Buss, 1984; George et al., 2015; Randler & Kretz, 2011); abilities and intelligence range from .20s to .40s (Mascie-Taylor, 1989; Reynolds et al., 2000; van Leeuwen et al., 2008) but tend to be stronger for verbal than for spatial abilities (Watson et al., 2004).

Importantly, results on personality traits are relatively mixed. Although findings are generally in the positive direction, estimated correlations are low and rarely above .30 (e.g., Botwin et al., 1997; Luo, 2009; Watson et al., 2004). In addition, some findings were in the negative direction and indicative of the complementarity rule (Markey & Markey, 2007). Further, a recent meta-analysis of 22 complex traits showed that social attitudes, substance use behaviors, and cognitive traits such as intelligence had the highest between-partner correlations, whereas Big Five personality traits and physical characteristics showed the weakest yet still positive and significant correlations (Horwitz et al., 2023).

With a relatively mixed body of literature, it is important to not only conceptualize assortative mating as a general matching pattern, but also to be mindful of the importance of each specific construct that we examine. For instance, why is it that verbal ability may be influential over spatial and why do some Big Five traits (e.g., Openness) show similarity patterns whereas others do not? In this dissertation and the empirical works that follows, I argue that the lack of synthesis in the personality literature on this domain is due partly to the predominance of trait research. Instead, assortative mating research would benefit from exploring personality beyond the one-time Big Five trait measures and include both short- and long-term longitudinal processes as well as finer-grained and more relevant constructs to the relationship process.

Research Outline

This dissertation combines the three aforementioned aspects of personality research, namely the timescales, measurement approaches, and interpersonal contexts, to investigate the intraindividual variability components and correlates of personality constructs.

Chapter 2 presents a preregistered meta-analytic review of the association between personality traits at the domain and metatrait levels with variability in affective states. Whereas the metatraits of Plasticity and Stability both have implications for intraindividual variability, each Big Five trait may also be linked to variability as motivated by the cybernetic theory of personality. We further included two operationalizations of variability: the within-person standard deviation and the relative variability index. This allowed us to account for the confounding association between personality traits and mean levels of affective states. Based on the results of this study, I discuss the implications of different levels of personality traits for everyday psychological processes and provide methodological recommendations for future research on intraindividual variability.

Chapter 3 further investigates intraindividual variability in psychological processes, specifically in the romantic relationship domain. This pilot study examined assortative mating patterns in 138 established couples, using both baseline measures of affective and personality traits as well as dynamic experience-sampling measures of affective and personality states across a seven-day period. Here, I demonstrate the utility of intraindividual variability components in the dyadic context and highlight the importance of finer-grained constructs by including both personality domains and the lower-order personality aspects.

Chapter 4 expands the timescale from dynamic short-term state fluctuations to longitudinal trajectories of trait change across multiple months and years. Using two complementary samples of 184 early dating couples and 168 married or cohabiting couples across the first two years of parenthood, we examined baseline and longitudinal evidence and benefits of assortative mating patterns. Similarly to Chapter 3, this investigation demonstrates the added utility of expanding personality assessments beyond one-time, self-reported measures of Big Five traits. In addition, we examined personality characteristics beyond the Big Five framework to include relationship-specific characteristics which may provide the additional granularity needed for the romantic relationship context.

Finally, Chapter 5 consists of a general discussion in which I synthesize results patterns across the preceding empirical studies. I discuss the contributions of the current research program to our theoretical understanding of personality constructs across multiple granularity levels, informant perspectives, and short-term and long-term timescales, with a particular focus on outcomes in the romantic relationship domain. In doing so, I provide methodological recommendations for future research on the intraindividual components of personality.

CHAPTER 2:

Meta-Analysis of the Associations Between Big Five Personality Traits and Affective Variability

Personality traits are well-known for their broad predictive powers for outcomes across many different life domains (Beck & Jackson, 2022; Ozer & Benet-Martínez, 2006; Soto, 2019). The vast majority of these studies have focused on how mean-level traits are related to mean-level outcomes; however, emerging research points to the importance of intraindividual variability in personality characteristics. In addition to traditional longitudinal designs that follow participants across months or years, research has explored intensive dynamic processes as obtained from daily diaries or experience sampling methods. Not only is there evidence for individual differences in momentary variability, but this variability also has predictive power for important outcomes (Kuppens et al., 2007; Lievens et al., 2018; Mõttus et al., 2017). A focus on intraindividual variability is further motivated by the cybernetic theory of personality, which conceptualizes personality traits as adaptive goal attainment systems (DeYoung, 2015). Indeed, individual flexibility in goal identification and exploration as well as stability in facing potential disruptions are both crucial to a successful goal attainment process. As a result, the current meta-analysis aimed to clarify the relationship between personality traits and intraindividual variability on psychological processes. Specifically, we explored this association for variability on affective states and examined personality traits both as Big Five domains and the higher-order metatraits of Stability and Plasticity.

Intraindividual Variability in Affective States

Emotion research has extensively examined the structure of self-reported emotional experiences, which are theorized to function as a feedback system for self-regulation (Carver & Scheier, 1990; Schachter & Singer, 1962). Early investigations have focused on two bipolar dimensions of mood: valence (unpleasantness to pleasantness) and activation (calmness to excitement) (e.g., Purcell, 1982; Watson & Tellegen, 1985). However, specific emotions and their corresponding facial expressions have also been studied extensively and cross-culturally, including the so-called *basic* or *universal emotions* (happiness, sadness, anger, fear, disgust, and surprise: Ekman, 1980; Ekman & Friesen, 1975). Further, factor analytic works suggested two higher-order factors of Positive Affect and Negative Affect, each with ten specific emotion words (Watson et al., 1988b). Instead of a single bipolar valence dimension, some literature suggests that these two factors are relatively independent of one another with low real-time intercorrelations (Bradburn, 1969; Diener & Emmons, 1984) as well as discriminant validity in clinical (Watson et al., 1988a; Watson & Pennebaker, 1989) and social/interpersonal contexts (Berry & Hansen, 1996; Tellegen, 1985).

It is well established that traits Positive and Negative Affect are both predictive of various well-being outcomes (in the positive and negative directions, respectively) with both longitudinal (Watson & Walker, 1996) and meta-analytic support (Busseri, 2018). Notably, assessments of global affective traits have been shown to be associated with respondents' momentary affective states at the time of assessment (Brose et al., 2013), and much research has thus focused on the relationship between well-being and affective *states* instead of affective traits. By definition, individuals who are high in emotional lability show high variability in emotional reactions across time and situations. Variability in itself might be considered both adaptive and maladaptive: flexibility across situations might suggest that an individual is appropriately interpreting and reacting to differing situations; however, variability may also indicate instability or an inability to maintain one's emotional states in response to external stimuli. Variability in emotional expression has been strongly implicated in mental health (Houben et al., 2015), and Borderline Personality Disorder in particular even includes a diagnostic criteria of emotional instability (American Psychiatric Association, 2013; Dixon-Gordon & Laws, 2021). Specifically, depression has been shown to be associated with variability, instability, and inertia of state Negative Affect (Koval et al., 2013; Thompson et al., 2011), although much of this effect was accounted for by mean levels of negative affective states (Bos et al., 2018).

The focal outcome in the current meta-analysis is intraindividual variability in affective states. Although Positive and Negative Affect should be theoretically independent, and evidence suggests that this is the case, others claim that their measurements are not (Crawford & Henry, 2004; Green & Salovey, 1999; Russel & Carroll, 1999). Accordingly, we conducted meta-analytic models that combined all extracted affect measures, with moderation analyses for affect types and individual models that separately focused on Positive Affect and Negative Affect. Our primary interest is in how personality traits are related to intraindividual variability in affective states.

Personality Traits and Intraindividual Variability in Affective States

The Big Five traits (Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Neuroticism, and Openness) represent general patterns of individual differences in four components of affect, behavior, cognition, and desire (Revelle, 2008). For instance, Agreeableness may be further deconstructed into sympathetic affect, considerate behaviors, trusting cognitions, and affiliative desires (Wilt & Revelle, 2015). Not only are traits often measured with items that correspond to each of these components, but they are also sometimes conceptualized to highlight a particular component, such as the predominance of emotional stability (i.e., affective component) in conceptualizing Neuroticism (Hills & Argyle, 2001) and creativity and imagination (i.e., cognitive component) in conceptualizing Openness (e.g., Sassenberg et al., 2023). Looking specifically at the affective component, there is a rich existing body of research on affective correlates of personality traits, specifically for Neuroticism and Extraversion. Whereas Neuroticism is characterized by the high tendency to experience negative emotions (Miller et al., 2009; Rusting & Larsen, 1997), Extraversion is often strongly associated with positive emotions, even beyond its association with sociability (Lucas et al., 2008; Rusting & Larsen, 1997). In fact, participants being instructed to *act extraverted* also show heightened levels of Positive Affect (Fleeson et al., 2002).

In addition to mean-level associations between personality and affective traits, Neuroticism is also often linked to *variability* in affective states (Miller & Pilkonis, 2006), so much so that Emotional Stability is often used as its direct antonym (Gosling et al., 2003). However, research on affective variability for the other Big Five traits is less conclusive, and there is emerging evidence to suggest that the association for Neuroticism might be a statistical artifact (Kalokerinos et al., 2020). Accordingly, by including all Big Five traits as well as two different methods to compute within-person variability, the current meta-analysis aimed to further elucidate both the affective component and adaptive aspect of personality traits with a thorough investigation into intraindividual variability in affective states in daily life.

To provide theoretical support for the hypothesized relationship between personality traits and intraindividual variability in affective experiences, we may draw from cybernetic theories as well as the hierarchical organization of the Big Five traits into the metatraits of Stability and Plasticity. The cybernetic theory of personality posits that traits emerged as *adaptive* systems that ultimately contribute to individual goal attainment (DeYoung, 2015). This adaptation process includes a feedback loop that continually selects actions (consciously or not) to move closer to a goal state and reevaluates action plans or update goals based on outcome interpretation. Individual characteristics, such as the Big Five traits, have evolved to contribute to different stages of this process. Not only are people differentially motivated by different goals and rewards, but they also employ different goal exploration and attainment strategies. The following sections further explore each individual Big Five trait and their implications for intraindividual variability. Although variability is conceptualized broadly to include within-person variations in different psychological processes, the current meta-analysis explored this association by focusing specifically on affective variability.

From a cybernetic conceptualization, Neuroticism represents an active defensive response to perceived threats and punishments. This defensive system is enacted particularly when we perceive our current situation and trajectory to be at odds with a desired state of goal attainment. The heightened sensitivity to such stimuli thus manifests as negative and labile emotional reactions. Understandably, there has been a lot of research programs that investigated the relationship between Neuroticism and affective variability, and it is the most common Big Five trait to be investigated in relation to affective states. Overall, results showed a strong positive association between Neuroticism and variability in reported affective states from rapidly sampled studies such as experience sampling or daily diary design (e.g., Hisler et al., 2020; Houben et al., 2015; Wenzel & Kubiak, 2020), and we hypothesized that this positive association would be found in the current meta-analysis.

Under the cybernetic framework, Extraversion is most related to goal activation through its relationship with reward sensitivity. Individuals who are high on Extraversion tend to be more motivated by the potential for and attainment of a reward. As a result, many traits related to Extraversion have shown effects in the different domains of social interactions such as leadership, friendship, and sexual relationships, including an increase in risky sexual behaviors (Do & Minbashian, 2014; Feiler & Kleinbaum, 2015; Miller et al., 2004; Schenk & Pfrang, 1986). Due to this increase in varied interpersonal interactions and situations, we might expect that individuals high in Extraversion would also experience more variability in their affective states. Research has found that Extraversion was indeed associated with more intense and frequent experiences of

Positive Affect (e.g., Smillie et al., 2015; Verduyn & Brans, 2012). Further, an internal meta-analysis of six studies showed some support for a reactivity model as highly extraverted individuals exhibited greater emotional reactivity after a mood induction procedure, particularly with activated positive items such *alert* or *excited* as opposed to pleasant positive items such as *happy* or *joyful* (Lucas & Baird, 2004). Nonetheless, compared with Neuroticism, fewer studies have examined the relationship between Extraversion and within-person *variability* in affective states. Using a small sample of 33 students in the London area, Hepburn & Eysenck (1989) found that Extraversion was associated with both higher mean levels and higher variability in overall mood, Positive Affect, and Negative Affect. Another study on a non-clinical French sample ($N = 191$; Dauvier et al., 2019) found that Extraversion (along with Neuroticism) was positively associated with affective variability from a three-dimensional space involving Positive Affect, Negative Affect, and activation (e.g., activated pleasure and activated displeasure). We thus hypothesized that trait Extraversion would be positively associated with affective variability in the current meta-analysis.

Agreeableness is the personality trait that is most directly related to a cooperative, as opposed to a hypercompetitive, social nature (Hilbig et al., 2013; Ross et al., 2003). Individuals who are high on Agreeableness thus demonstrate more altruistic and prosocial tendencies (Ashton et al., 1998; Carlo et al., 2005; Graziano et al., 2007; Habashi et al., 2016; Oda et al., 2014). Research has also shown a link between Agreeableness and theory of mind, which is the ability to perceive and consequentially sympathize with others' cognitive and emotional states (Haas et al., 2015; Nettle &

Liddle, 2008). Under the cybernetic theory of personality, Agreeableness reflects different strategies for goal attainment, with communal goals (getting along) mapping well to heightened cooperation and agentic goals (getting ahead) associated with the other opposite pole of Machiavellianism and manipulativeness. The relation between Agreeableness and affective states may thus result from our ability and tendency to navigate social relations. Interestingly, some research has found a negative association between Agreeableness and instability in Negative Affect both in a small dataset of undergraduate students (Miller et al., 2009) and psychotherapy patients with impairments in interpersonal functioning (Miller & Pilkonis, 2006). In both studies, affect instability was computed as the mean-squared successive differences, which accounts for both variability and successive change in a time series (von Neumann et al., 1941). As a result, we hypothesized that Agreeableness would be negatively associated with affective variability.

Conscientiousness is related to planfulness and a tendency towards order and stability. It is the personality trait that is most highly related to cognitive performance in various domains, particularly job and academic performance from various meta-analytic research programs (Poropat, 2009; Hurtz & Donovan, 2000). Conscientiousness has also been associated with higher engagement in preventive health behaviors and lower engagement in risky behaviors (Bogg & Roberts, 2004) as well as general longevity (Kern & Friedman, 2008). Under the cybernetic theory of personality, Conscientiousness reflects the tendency to prioritize and commit to long-term goals, through potential disruptions or distractions to goal pursuit. Its aspect orderliness is particularly reflective of following rules and orders to establish stability and avoid chaos. The industriousness aspect, on the other hand, is characterized by the long-term perseverance and discipline, which is most directly related to strong work ethics in various domains involving long-term goal pursuits (DeYoung, 2015). As a result, we hypothesized that high trait levels of Conscientiousness would be negatively associated with within-person variability in affective states because individuals high in Conscientiousness continually strive to prevent disruption to their short- and long-term plans.

Lastly, Openness refers to the tendency to explore and appreciate abstract and artistic ideas (Chamorro-Premuzic et al., 2009; Fayn et al., 2015; Feist & Brady, 2004). Due to this connection to divergent thinking, it is the personality trait that is most related to general creativity (Sassenberg et al., 2023) as well as specific creative pursuits in the arts and sciences for its aspects of openness and intellect, respectively (Kaufman et al., 2016). Under the cybernetic framework, Openness is expressed as heightened exploration of new goals or innovative strategies for goal attainment processes (DeYoung, 2015). As a result, variability in experiences and associated emotional reactions might be expected with individuals scoring higher on the Openness domain, and we hypothesized a positive association between trait Openness and affective variability in the current meta-analysis.

In addition to examining each trait conceptualization and its implication for within-person variability, factor analytic results have also organized the Big Five into two metatraits – Stability and Plasticity – which represent goal protection and exploration in the cybernetic system, respectively (DeYoung et al., 2002). Some models have named these metatraits differently, including Alpha and Beta (Digman, 1997), Self-Control and

Engagement (Olson, 2005), or Social Self-Regulation and Dynamism (Saucier et al., 2014). These higher-order factors both also have strong implications for within-person variability; because of the fast and constant feedback loop, the adaptive system must be both stable and flexible. Stability reflects the ability or tendency to suppress impulses that may disrupt existing goals and planned strategies. Plasticity refers to the tendency towards exploration, particularly in pursuing novel goals and goal attainment strategies. Such flexibility is in direct contrast with rigidity, which reflects the reluctance to explore alternatives or to adjust existing strategies in response to new information and conditions.

It is important to note that Plasticity and Stability are not direct opposites; in fact, they are generally uncorrelated especially with multiple informants (Chang et al., 2012; DeYoung, 2006). This counter-intuitive association is because their antonyms reflect different processes: instability is different from Plasticity and rigidity is different from Stability. Indeed, a sense of flexibility and adaptability as suggested by Plasticity is often necessary to avoid disruptions to planned goal attainment strategies as needed to maintain Stability. From these conceptualizations, we hypothesized that the metatrait Plasticity would show a positive association with within-individual variability due to the increased flexibility to explore and adopt new appropriate strategies. On the other hand, we hypothesized that the metatrait Stability would show a negative association with within-individual variability.

Methodological Pitfall when Investigating Intraindividual Variability: The Dependency Between the Mean and Standard Deviation

It is well documented that certain personality traits have been strongly linked to mean levels in affect. For instance, Extraversion is often linked to Positive Affect and Neuroticism is linked to Negative Affect (McNiel & Fleeson, 2006). This association to the mean is problematic when we want to examine measures of variability, such as the standard deviation, because they are mathematically dependent. In particular, the use of bounded scales along with potential floor and ceiling effects result in restricted variation in the low and high range of the scales (Mestdagh et al., 2018). As a result, researchers must account for mean levels in any investigation concerning the standard deviation. There are several approaches to address this issue: 1) Including both mean and standard deviation in a multiple regression model, in which the two terms are conditioned upon each other, thus partialing out their dependent effects and (2) computing a relative variability index (RVI or $\sqrt{V_i^*}$; Mestdagh et al., 2018) to model in place of the standard deviation. The RVI is independent from the mean and provides a generic solution to this mathematical dependency that can be applied to many situations involving repeated measures using bounded scales, as is certainly the case in intensive longitudinal studies in psychological research. The RVI can be conceptualized as a weighted standard deviation computed with the following form:

$$V_i^* = \frac{V_i}{\max{(V_i|M_i)}}$$

where V_i represents the intraindividual variance and $\max(V_i|M_i)$ represents the maximum amount of variance given the scale boundaries and each individual mean score across the time series. Specifically, the maximum possible variance is set at zero if the mean is at either boundary, which results in no applicable RVI. Otherwise, this value is computed as:

$$\max(V_i|M_i) = \frac{n_a(a - M_i)^2 + n_b(b - M_i)^2 + (m - M_i)^2}{N - 1}$$

where a is the scale minimum, b is the scale maximum, M_i is the mean score across all time points for individual i, N is the number of time points, and:

$$n_b = \lfloor (M_i N - aN)/(b - a\,) \rfloor$$

$$n_a = N - 1 - n_b$$

$$m = M_i N - a n_a - b n_b$$

The full explanation and proof of this optimization problem can be found in Mestdagh and colleagues (2018)'s supplementary materials. They also demonstrated the RVI utility both in a normative sample and an inpatient sample with Borderline Personality Disorder, illustrating that the associations between Negative Affect variability with external traits were mostly attributable to individual mean levels, instead of their variability, on Negative Affect. In a meta-analysis involving intensive longitudinal designs with non-clinical and clinical samples (Kalokerinos et al., 2020), it was shown that Neuroticism was indeed strongly related (*r* = .36) to the mean levels of Negative Affect which was then strongly related to the variability in Negative Affect (*r* = .52). Because most non-clinical samples showed a positively skewed distribution of Negative Affect (i.e., most people reported relatively low levels of Negative Affect in their daily lives), this introduced a potential confound in the investigation between Neuroticism and affective variability which could be addressed by using the RVI in place of the standard deviation. The two aforementioned approaches to account for mean dependency has shown differing results for Neuroticism: the first method of controlling for the mean in a multiple regression model still showed a significant positive association with variability (Eid & Diener, 1999) whereas the second method with RVI did not (Kalokerinos et al., 2020). As a result, we extended the use of the RVI to our investigation of other Big Five traits as a way to rigorously account for this mean-variability dependency.

Current Study

The current study provides a preregistered meta-analytic review of the published and unpublished literature on the link between personality traits and intraindividual variability in affective states. The literature has long investigated this relation for trait Neuroticism, which is warranted due to its relationship with Negative Affect and emotional lability, and some research has also been conducted with Extraversion for its association with Positive Affect. This paper extended the investigation to all Big Five personality traits due to their individual cybernetic conceptualizations and organizations under the two metatraits, as well as to the metatraits of Stability and Plasticity themselves. Specifically, we hypothesized that the metatrait Stability and its underlying Big Five traits (Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and reversed Neuroticism) would have a negative association with affective variability, whereas Plasticity and its traits (Extraversion and Openness) would have a positive association with affective variability. We further included two operationalizations of variability: the within-person (1) standard deviation and (2) relative variability index to account for the association between Big Five traits and the mean level of affective states.

Method

Procedure

This study was preregistered on the Open Science Framework server on March 24, 2022, with an amendment on March 28, 2022. The final timestamped version is accessible at this link: https://osf.io/5vhsm. All reported methods and analyses were preregistered unless explicitly indicated otherwise.

It is important to note that variability may be obtained through two major approaches, either through traditional or intensive longitudinal design, the latter of which is also known as ambulatory assessments, experience sampling methods, or daily diary designs. Although the preregistration included both approaches, the current study only includes intensive longitudinal designs, in which participants provide one or more measurement occasions of affect per day. These designs often focus on momentary constructs and use question stems to clearly identify their affect measures as momentary (e.g., "How you are feeling right now" or "How have you been feeling in the past three hours"). There are many more possible question stems in traditional longitudinal designs, including those specifying a global affective trait (e.g., "How you feel on the average"). As a result, these constructs may no longer be state-like, and it is ambiguous whether we can combine results from traditional and intensive longitudinal studies. Because we focused on momentary fluctuations in affective states, rather than longitudinal change trajectory of affective traits, traditional longitudinal designs are outside of the scope of the current meta-analysis and thus excluded from all analyses moving forward.

To refine our meta-analytic scope and workflow, a pilot process was conducted using a systematic search on PsycINFO of published records between January 2018 and February 2020, which resulted in 320 search results[1]. This led to 30 articles that we screened in full for study characteristics and effect sizes of interest, the latter of which was not reported in any full-text reviews. We thus expected that the effect we wanted to extract in the final meta-analytic workflow would not often be the focal statistic (or even a reported statistic) of published studies which would necessitate a high number of data requests from the original authors.

Literature Search

A systematic search was conducted for published articles in PsycINFO, PubMed, and Ovid Medline and for gray literature in ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global and the PsyArXiv preprint server. The following search terms were used for screening the titles and abstracts:

Personality traits terms: (personality) OR (agreeableness) OR (conscientiousness) OR (extraversion) OR (neuroticism) OR (openness)

Affect terms: (emotion*) OR (affect*) OR (happiness)

Repeated-measures terms: (longitudinal) OR (ecological momentary assessment*) OR (experience sampling) OR (daily) OR (ambulatory assessment*) OR (variability)

Repeated measures of affect: Affect terms AND Repeated-measures terms

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[1] In addition to the restriction on publication status, data source, and time frame, the pilot process also differed from the final meta-analytic workflow in other ways, with the inclusion of traditional longitudinal designs and variability in well-being in addition to just affective variability obtained through intensive longitudinal designs.

Final: Repeated measures of affect AND Personality traits terms

These searches were conducted in March 2022 and resulted in 2,397 PsycINFO records, 1,865 MedLine records, 1,465 PubMed records, 1,236 ProQuest records, and 158 PsyArXiv records. After deduplications, we had a total of 2,975 published records and 1,350 gray records. An updated search was conducted in September 2023 and returned 716 results, of which 76 duplicated records were removed, resulting in a total of 640 abstracts for further screening (312 published records and 328 gray records). Notably, four of the final records came from author contacts during which some authors disclosed unpublished datasets that might fit the inclusion criteria. Furthermore, 14 records were obtained from the Everyday Measures of Temporal Emotions database (EMOTE; Kalokerinos et al., in preparation), which included published and unpublished datasets from intensive longitudinal studies of emotions. The published datasets were not uncovered during the systematic search because the associated publications did not include or highlight the Big Five traits, although they were indeed measured in the original data collection (data request numbers 597LSVSDQB and 4738W5BTSB).

All deduplicated records were imported into the Rayyan server for the abstract screening process. Each abstract was screened by two independent researchers, and the first author resolved any resulting conflicts. Rater agreement was achieved 80.45% of the time[2]. At the abstract screening stage, papers were categorized as either ineligible or to-be-determined. Ineligible papers did not move forward; others were exported and moved into full-text screening. The method section for each paper at the full-text screening stage was read in full by two independent researchers and more closely screened for eligibility. Ineligible papers did not move forward; others were exported and moved into article coding. At this final stage, each paper was coded for important information, including sample characteristics, study designs, and focal statistics. Here, 70 full-text articles were excluded due to missing eligibility criteria, 189 were excluded due to lack of author response regarding the effect size of interest or raw data for effect size calculations, and 1 record from the EMOTE database was excluded due to non-unique samples. The full search flow diagram is presented in Figure 2.1.

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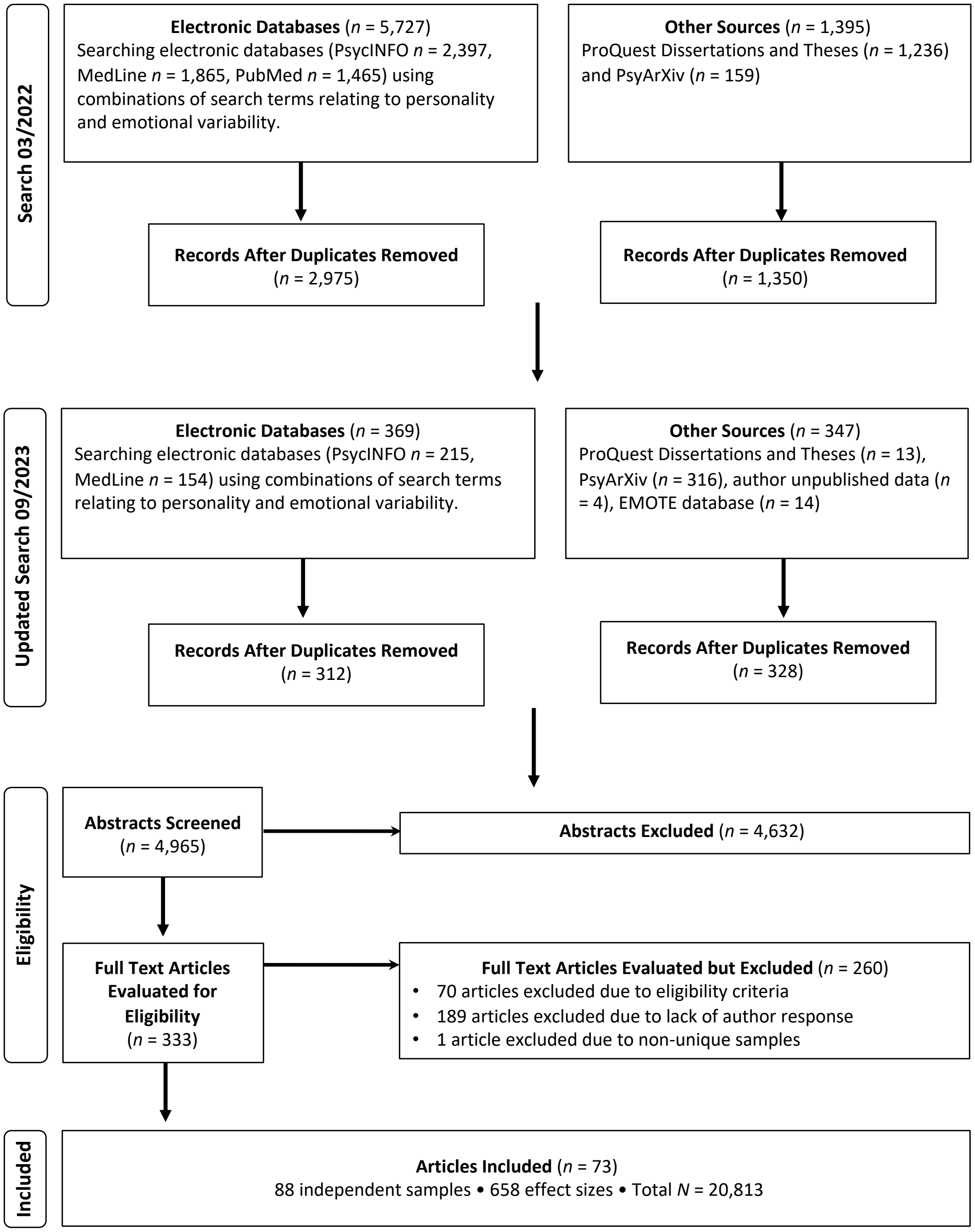
[2] Our distribution of exclusion/inclusion deviated greatly from the equal marginals that are assumed under Cohen's *kappa* statistic and test. As a result, we only reported the raw percentage of agreement here instead of using test statistics for interrater reliability.

Figure 2.1

Search Flow Diagram


Search 03/2022
Electronic Databases (*n* = 5,727)
Searching electronic databases (PsycINFO *n* = 2,397, MedLine *n* = 1,865, PubMed *n* = 1,465) using combinations of search terms relating to personality and emotional variability.
Other Sources (*n* = 1,395)
ProQuest Dissertations and Theses (*n* = 1,236) and PsyArXiv (*n* = 159)
Records After Duplicates Removed (*n* = 2,975)
Records After Duplicates Removed (*n* = 1,350)
Updated Search 09/2023
Electronic Databases (*n* = 369)
Searching electronic databases (PsycINFO *n* = 215, MedLine *n* = 154) using combinations of search terms relating to personality and emotional variability.
Other Sources (*n* = 347)
ProQuest Dissertations and Theses (*n* = 13), PsyArXiv (*n* = 316), author unpublished data (*n* = 4), EMOTE database (*n* = 14)
Records After Duplicates Removed (*n* = 312)
Records After Duplicates Removed (*n* = 328)
Eligibility
Abstracts Screened (*n* = 4,965)
Abstracts Excluded (*n* = 4,632)
Full Text Articles Evaluated for Eligibility (*n* = 333)
Full Text Articles Evaluated but Excluded (*n* = 260)
• 70 articles excluded due to eligibility criteria
• 189 articles excluded due to lack of author response
• 1 article excluded due to non-unique samples
Included
Articles Included (*n* = 73)
88 independent samples • 658 effect sizes • Total *N* = 20,813

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Participants were limited to human subjects from non-clinical populations. For the current study, a *clinical* sample was defined as a sample comprised of exclusively in-patient/out-patient psychotherapy clients, participants diagnosed with a psychological disorder, or participants who had undergone any clinical or experimental intervention directed at behavioral change in the duration of the study. We excluded clinical populations because of the established relationship between affective variability and psychopathology or psychological dysregulation, particularly with the diagnosis of Borderline Personality Disorder. Further, psychological well-being and the associated affective states are often the direct target of many psychological interventions, and thus these constructs might reflect different processes in these populations that are outside of the scope of the current research.

Outcome measures must include at least one measurement occasion of personality domains of the Big Five: Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Neuroticism, Openness. Importantly, this does not include the HEXACO model; although the Big Five traits are included in these measures, their conceptualizations are different from those obtained from measures based on the Big Five (Ashton & Lee, 2007). In addition, there must be at least two measurement occasions of affect. Affect was defined as any measure of positive, negative, or neutral affect. Some expected measures included Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (Watson et al., 1988b), State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory (Spielberger, 1988), and Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen et al., 1983).

Study designs were limited to intensive longitudinal research design with repeated measures of affect. There was no further restriction on the duration or frequency of assessments. The language of publication was limited to English.

Effect size of interest was the correlation between one-time personality trait measures and the variability of affect measured by the within-individual standard deviation or relative variability index across time points. When more information was required beyond what was reported in the publicly available paper and supplementary materials, we contacted the corresponding author to request the statistics and/or necessary data. To be included, the paper must either include this statistic or the authors must respond to the request for further information. After one month without a response, the study would not be included for analysis.

Study Information Coding

Sample size: The total sample size of the study as reported in the paper. This might differ from the final effective sample size that was used to compute the effect size of interest.

Age: The mean and standard deviation age in years as reported in the paper.

Gender*:* The percentage of female participants in the sample as reported in the paper.

Race: The percentage of white participants in the sample.

Location: The geographical location of the study.

Measures*:* The name of the personality and affect measures used in the study.

Duration and frequency: The overall duration of the study and frequency of affect assessments of how far apart the assessments were from one another.

Number of assessments: The total number of affect assessments per participant. This refers to the maximum total number of assessments as specified by the study design, and not the empirical number of assessments that were actually collected.

Personality variable: Each of the measured Big Five personality traits in the paper.

Affect variable: Each of the measured affect variables in the paper.

Effective sample size*:* The effective sample size for each pair of variables.

Correlation with standard deviation: The correlation between personality traits and within-person standard deviation of affect.

Correlation with relative variability index: The correlation between personality traits and within-person relative variability index of affect.

Study quality: A researcher-coded variable on a three-point scale of poor, fair, or good based on the NIH's Quality Assessment Tool for Observational Cohort and Cross-Sectional Studies (https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-topics/study-quality-assessment-tools). This guide was adapted for the current study and included five questions: (1) Was the study population clearly specified and defined? (2) Were all the subjects selected or recruited from the same or similar populations? Were inclusion and exclusion criteria for being in the study prespecified and applied uniformly to all participants? (3) Was a sample size justification, power description, or variance and effect estimates provided? (4) Were the personality and (5) affect variables clearly defined, valid, reliable, and implemented consistently across all study participants? The lead author coded all samples, and one of six research assistants provided the second reliability coding for each sample. Rater's agreement was achieved 68.57% of the time. Study quality was considered *good* if at least four criteria were met, *fair* if at least two were met, and *poor* otherwise.[3]

Data Analytic Plan

We fit random effects models with restricted maximum likelihood (R package *metafor*, Viechtbauer, 2010) to estimate the overall effect size of the correlation between personality traits and within-person variability in affect. Random effects models assume that observed effect sizes differ from one another not only due to sampling error but also randomly distributed errors from other unknown sources. They are suitable in the presence of significant heterogeneity among effect sizes. Analyses were run separately for each personality trait. In addition, we applied robust variance estimation to the random effects models (R package *clubSandwich*; Pustejovsky & Tipton, 2022) to account for within-study dependence[4]. For studies with available raw data, the within-person relative variability index was calculated using the *relativeVariability* R package

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[3] The decision to adapt an adjusted version of the NIH total guide and the specific categorical thresholds were made after the pre-registration during the full-text review stage. Similar to abstract screening reliability, the distribution deviates greatly from equal marginals, so Cohen's *kappa* was not reported.

[4] This is a deviation from the preregistration, which stated that we would apply the *robumeta* R package for this analysis using the default within-study effect of *rho* = .80 (Fisher & Tipton, 2015). Upon further research, we decided on the *metafor and clubSandwich* combination which allows for more flexible working models (Pustejovsky & Tipton, 2022). Analyses using *robumeta* did not differ meaningfully and are provided in the supplementary Table A.2.

(Mestdagh et al., 2018) and was used as a measure of affective variability instead of the within-person standard deviation in a separate set of models.

In addition to the preregistered decision to test for heterogeneity using the Q-statistic, we also reported I^2, τ^2, and prediction intervals. Because we expected significant heterogeneity across studies due to the varying longitudinal designs, we conducted moderation analyses to test for potential impacts of study characteristics. We initially decided on four moderators: The first moderator was the categorization of affect type as either positive or negative. The second moderator was the coded study quality. The third moderator was the publication status. The fourth moderator was whether the needed correlation statistic was reported in the original paper. Nonetheless, moderation tests were only conducted if there were at least 10 effect sizes in each category of the moderators (as preregistered), and as a result only the first two moderation tests with affect types (positive versus negative) and study quality (fair versus good) were conducted. Publication bias was examined visually with funnel plots and statistically with tests of funnel plot asymmetry.

In addition to preregistered analyses with each of the Big Five traits, we also ran exploratory meta-analytic structural equation models (Cheung, 2008) using the *metaSEM* R package (Cheung, 2015) to fit a second-order factor analysis that mapped the Big Five into their two overarching metatraits of Plasticity and Stability. These higher-order factors were then used as predictors of affective variability.

All analyses were conducted using R software (R Core Team, 2023). Alpha level was set at .05 for all tests. The preregistration document, meta-analytic dataset, and analytic code are stored on the project OSF repository: https://osf.io/72b3z/.

Results

Sample Characteristics

The final 73 records included $k = 88$ unique samples for a total of $N = 20{,}813$[5]. The average reported sample size ranged widely from 32 to 2,626 participants with a median of 109 participants ($M = 247.36$, $SD = 402.37$). Sample size was extracted from the original publication and often differed slightly from the effective sample size which was used to compute each effect size of interest. Age was reported in 77 samples (87.50%) with a mean of 27.29 ($SD = 10.88$). Gender was reported in 78 samples (88.64%) with a mean of 67.96% female ($SD = 15.16\%$). Only 36.36% or 32 samples reported racial/ethnic distribution with a mean of 64.30% white participants ($SD = 23.42\%$). There was an average of 48.53 maximum timepoints by design ($SD = 39.58$), ranging from 4 to 200 assessment times. The most common assessment frequency was daily designs ($k = 37$), then 10 times a day ($k = 12$), and 5 times a day ($k = 10$). The design with the most frequent assessments was 50 times a day, and the sparsest design was twice a month. We had good global representation from 14 different countries; the most common locations were the United States ($k = 31$), Belgium ($k = 12$), and Germany

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[5] Total sample size was computed as the sun of all the maximum effective sample size that was used for effect size calculation in each sample. This may differ from effect to effect (e.g., if one participant did not provide a score for Agreeableness but did for Conscientiousness) and it may also differ from the reported sample size from the associated publication.

(*k* = 11). Study characteristics are summarized in Table 2.1 and information for all samples are presented in supplementary Table A.1.

Table 2.1

Summary of Sample Characteristics

	M	***SD***	***k* valid**
Sample Size	247.36	402.37	86
Mean Age	27.29	10.88	77
Female Percentage	67.96	15.16	78
White Percentage	64.30	23.42	32
Number of Assessments	48.53	39.58	88
	k	**%**	
Big Five Traits			
Agreeableness	58	65.91	
Conscientiousness	63	71.59	
Extraversion	72	81.82	
Neuroticism	79	89.77	
Openness	56	63.64	
Affect Types			
Positive affect	76	86.36	
Negative affect	73	82.95	
Neutral affect	7	7.95	
Study Quality			
Good	54	77.14	
Fair	16	22.86	
Poor	0	0.00	

The effect size of interest was defined as the zero-order correlation between a one-time trait measure of the Big Five and the within-person variability of affect. This resulted in a total of 658 effect sizes. The most common Big Five trait was Neuroticism (*k* = 79), then Extraversion (*k* = 72), Conscientiousness (*k* = 63), Agreeableness (*k* = 58), and Openness (*k* = 56). Affect was categorized as either Positive Affect (*k* = 76), Negative Affect (*k* = 73), or neutral (*k* = 7). Out of the total 88 unique samples, 80 included raw data provided by the original authors which allowed us to calculate the effect sizes ourselves.

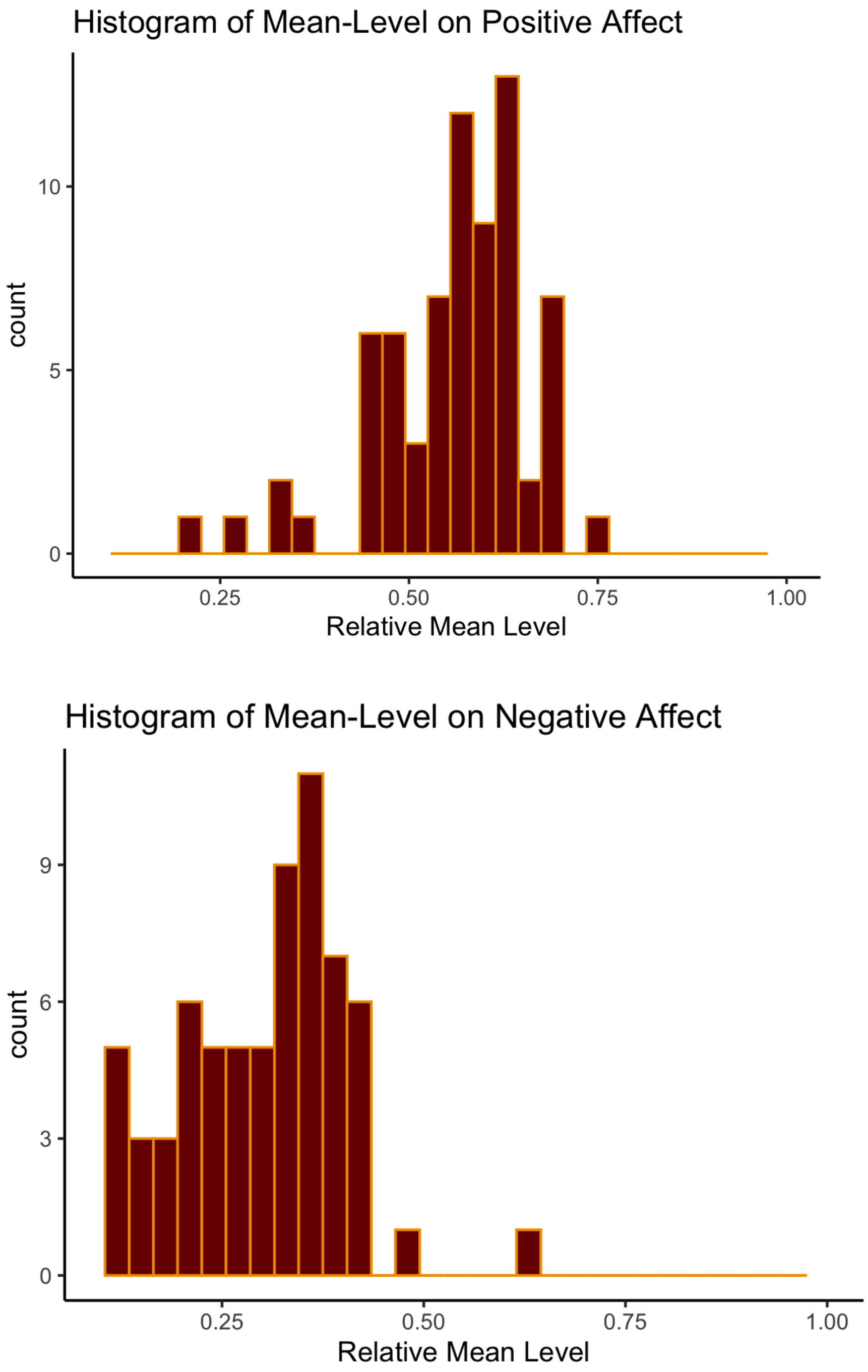
Affective Mean and Variability Relationships with SD and RVI

In addition to descriptive sample characteristics, we also conducted un-preregistered exploratory analyses to further clarify the relationship between our two variability indices: within-person standard deviation (SD) and relative variability index (RVI), especially in relation to affective means and the scale boundaries.

Because scale boundaries differed across measures across samples, we computed an index of relative distance from the boundaries: the raw distance from the minimum or maximum anchor (whichever is lower) divided by the scale range. This index may range from 0 to .50; a relative distance of .50 indicates that the individual is 50% of the scale away from either the minimum or maximum boundary, meaning they score exactly at the scale mid-point, and a distance of 0 means that they score either at the minimum or maximum scale boundary. This relative distance was on average 18% away from scale boundaries for Negative Affect (*k* = 69), 40% for Positive Affect (*k* = 71), and 32% for neutral affect (*k* = 7). In other words, individual mean levels of Positive Affect tended to be closer to the mid-point of the scale, whereas mean Negative Affect tended to be closer to scale boundaries. Specifically, we found that Negative Affect tended to be closer to the lower boundary (Figure 2.2).

Figure 2.2

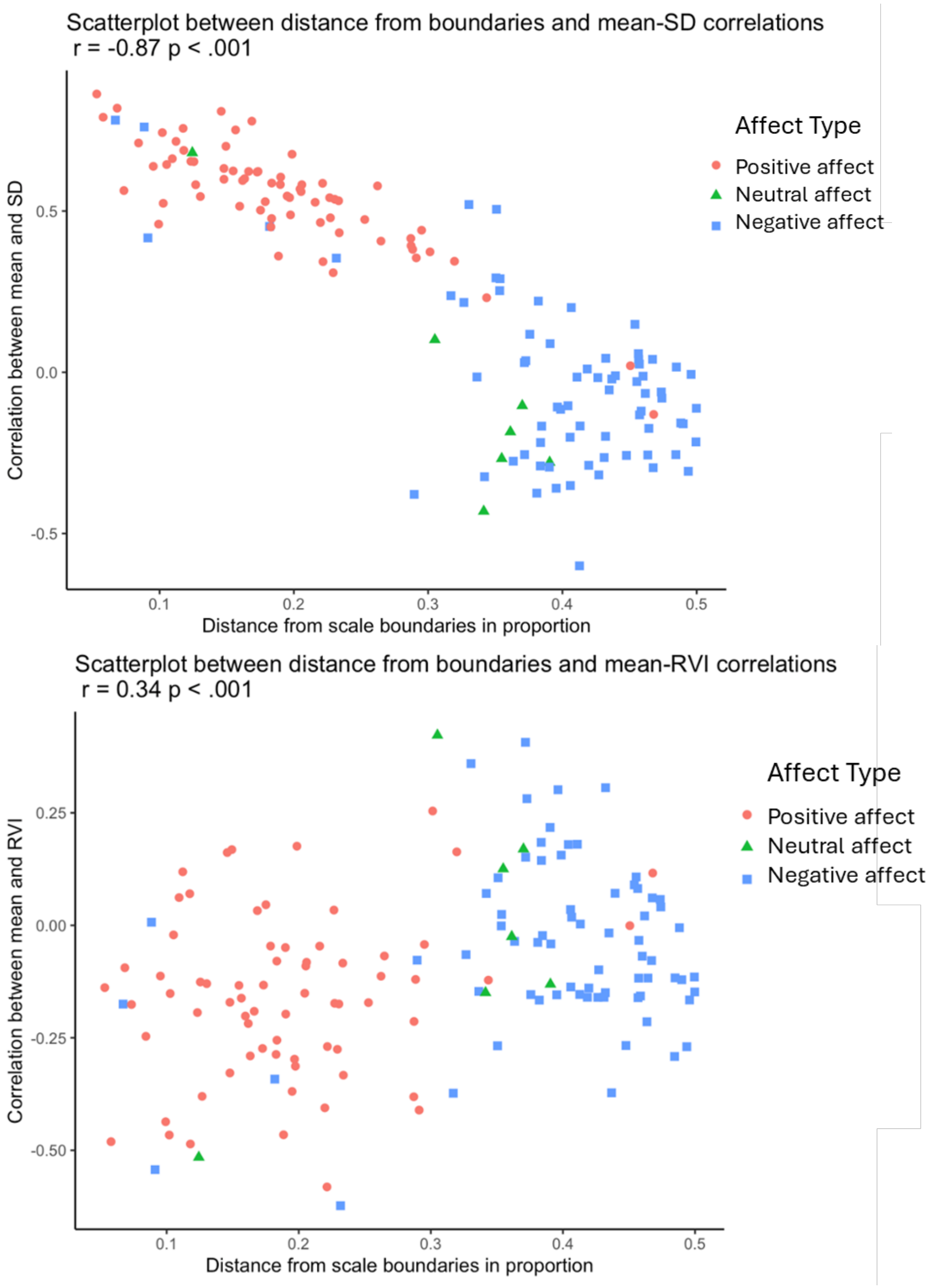
Distribution of Relative Mean Levels on Positive Affect (Top) and Negative Affect (Bottom)



We further found that the mean-SD correlation was significantly higher when the mean was closer to the scale boundary ($r = -.87$, $p < .001$). This relationship is depicted in Figure 2.3. Strikingly, for Negative Affect, the median correlation between the mean and variability was $r = .57$ for SD and a much-attenuated $r = -.15$ for RVI. On the other hand, for Positive Affect, this association was $r = -.06$ for SD and $r = -.07$ for RVI. Reasonably from the RVI formulation, the two indices became more dissimilar as the mean levels approached the scale boundary. However, when individual means were near the mid-point of the scale, there was little difference between the SD and RVI. Specifically, there was a strong positive correlation ($r = .82$, $p < .001$) between the distance from scale boundaries and SD-RVI correlations.

Figure 2.3

Relationship Between Distance from Scale Boundaries and Mean – Standard Deviation Correlations (Top) or Mean – Relative Variability Index Correlations (Bottom)



Neuroticism

Within-Person Standard Deviation

There were 156 effect sizes for the association between Neuroticism and within-person standard deviation in affect. The *Q*-statistic for heterogeneity was significant ($Q_{(155)} = 921.74$, $p < .001$; $I^2 = 81.63\%$, $\tau^2 = .02$), which suggested significant heterogeneity among studies beyond what would be expected from just sampling errors. The estimated mean effect size was .21 (95% CI = [.19, .23], 95% PI = [.07, .35], $p < .001$)[6], which suggested a positive association between Neuroticism and affective variability.

Affect types were a significant moderator of mean effect size: Neuroticism was more strongly associated with variability in Negative Affect ($r = .30$, 95% CI = [.28, .32], 95% PI = [.16, .44], $p < .001$) than it was with Positive Affect ($r = .08$, 95% CI = [.06, .10], 95% PI = [-.04, .20], $p < .001$), with a significant difference in mean effect of .22 ($p < .001$). A forest plot of these effects is presented in Figure 2.4.

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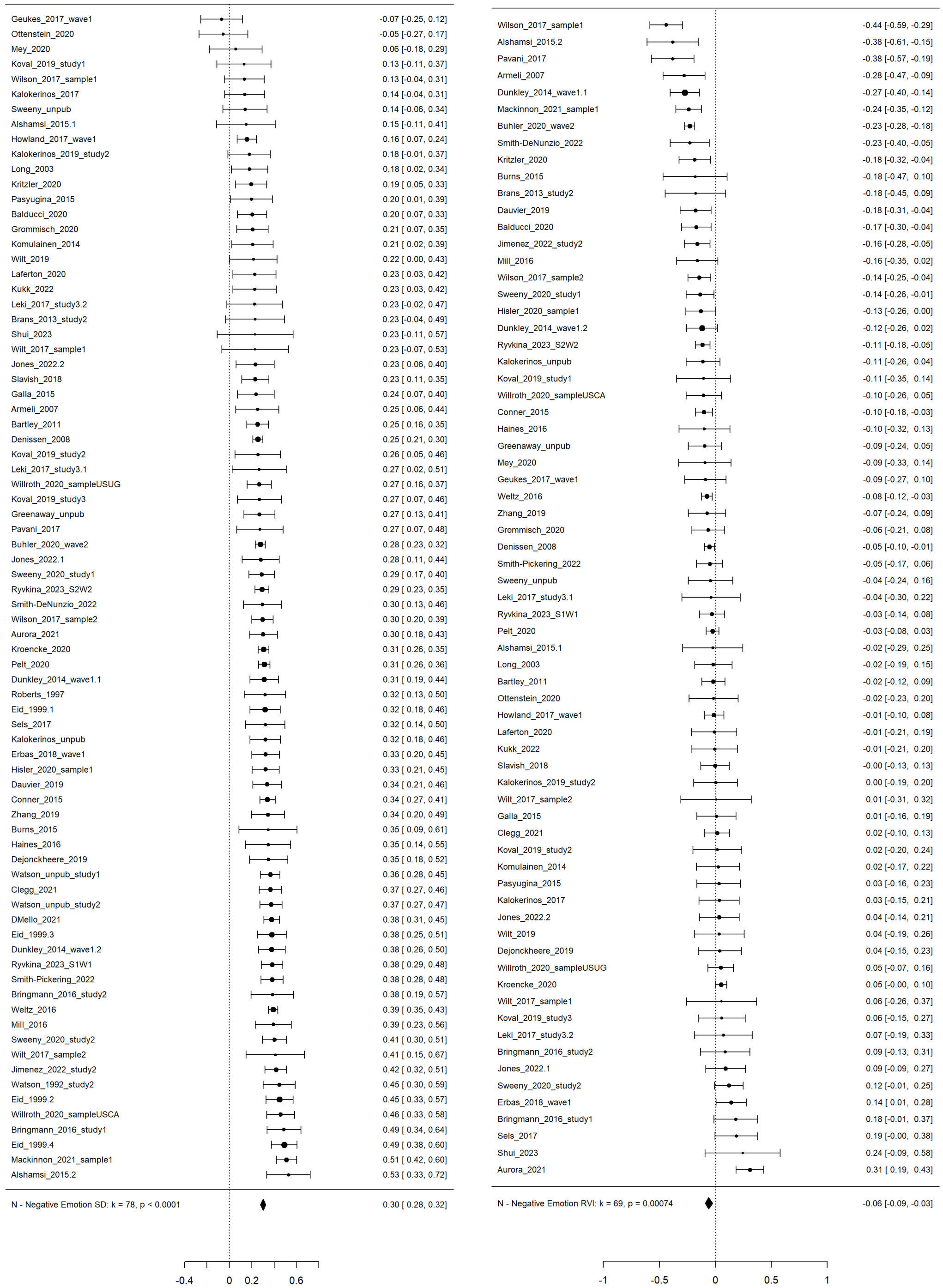
[6] 95% CI indicates the 95% confidence interval and 95% PI indicates the 95% prediction interval.

Figure 2.4

Forest Plots for the Associations Between Neuroticism and Negative Affective Variability Using Within-Person Standard Deviation (Left) and Relative Variability Index (Right).



Within-Person Relative Variability Index

There were 139 effect sizes for the association between Neuroticism and within-person relative variability index in affect. The *Q*-statistic for heterogeneity was significant ($Q_{(138)}$ = 545.07, $p < .001$; $I^2 = 75.03\%$, $\tau^2 = .01$), which suggested significant heterogeneity beyond sampling errors. The estimated mean effect size was .00 (95% CI = [-.02, -.03], 95% PI = [-.17, .17], $p = .95$), which indicated no association between Neuroticism and affective variability.

Affect types were a significant moderator of mean effect size: Neuroticism was positively associated with variability in Positive Affect ($r = .06$, 95% CI = [.03, .09], 95% PI = [-.08, .20], $p < .001$) and negatively associated with variability in Negative Affect ($r = -.06$, 95% CI = [-.09, -.03], 95% PI = [-.27, .16], $p < .001$).

Extraversion

Within-Person Standard Deviation

There were 137 effect sizes for the association between Extraversion and within-person standard deviation in affect. The *Q*-statistic was significant ($Q_{(136)}$ = 440.6, $p < .001$; $I^2 = 69.02\%$, $\tau^2 = .01$). Contrary to our hypothesis, there was no mean effect for Extraversion ($r = .01$, 95% CI = [-.01, .04], 95% PI = [-.15, .17], $p = .32$).

However, affect types significantly moderated the effects. Extraversion was significantly and positively associated with variability in Positive Affect ($r = .06$, 95% CI = [.04, .10], 95% PI = [-.10, .24], $p < .001$) and negatively so with variability in Negative Affect ($r = -.05$, 95% CI = [-.07, -.02], 95% PI = [-.18, .08], $p < .001$).

Within-Person Relative Variability Index

There were 120 effect sizes for the association between Extraversion and within-person relative variability index in affect. The Q-statistic was significant ($Q_{(119)} = 198.72$, $p < .001$; $I^2 = 43.6\%$, $\tau^2 = .00$). In accordance with our hypotheses, there was a significant positive association between Extraversion and affective variability, $r = .06$, 95% CI [.04, .09], 95% PI = [-.06, .19], $p < .001$.

This effect remained significantly positive for variability on both Positive Affect ($r = .05$, 95% CI = [.02, .08], 95% PI = [-.08, .18], $p = .001$) and Negative Affect ($r = .07$, 95% CI = [.05, .10], 95% PI = [-.04, .19], $p < .001$). However, the association was significantly stronger for Negative Affect compared to Positive Affect (difference $r = .02$, $SE = .01$, $p = .01$).

Agreeableness

Within-Person Standard Deviation

There were 118 effect sizes for the association between Agreeableness and within-person standard deviation in affect. The Q-statistic was significant ($Q_{(117)} = 360.97$, $p < .001$; $I^2 = 71.26\%$, $\tau^2 = .02$). In accordance with our hypotheses, there was a significant negative mean effect between Agreeableness and affective variability ($r = -.06$ (95% CI = [-.08, -.03], 95% PI = [-.24, .13], $p = .001$).

Affect types further significantly moderated the estimated effect sizes. Specifically, there was no longer any association between Agreeableness and variability in Positive Affect ($r = -.01$, 95% CI = [-.04, -.03], 95% PI = [-.19, .18], $p = .71$), and the significant mean effect was driven by Negative Affect ($r = -.10$, 95% CI = [-.13, -.07], 95% PI = [-.26, .07], $p < .001$).

Within-Person Relative Variability Index

There were 103 effect sizes for the association between Agreeableness and within-person relative variability index in affect. The Q-statistic was significant ($Q_{(102)} = 264.74$, $p < .001$; $I^2 = 69.81\%$, $\tau^2 = .01$). Contrary to our hypothesis, there was no significant mean effect between Agreeableness and affective variability using the RVI ($r = .02$, 95% CI = [-.01, .06], 95% PI = [-.16, .21], $p = .12$).

Affect types further significantly moderated the estimated effect sizes. Specifically, there was a significant positive association between Agreeableness and variability in Negative Affect ($r = .05$, 95% CI = [.02, .08], 95% PI = [-.11, .21], $p = .004$), which was in the opposite direction of our hypothesis. There remained no association for variability in Positive Affect ($r = .01$, 95% CI = [-.03, .05], 95% PI = [-.20, .22], $p = .61$).

Conscientiousness

Within-Person Standard Deviation

There were 134 effect sizes for the association between Conscientiousness and within-person standard deviation in affect. The Q-statistic was significant ($Q_{(133)} = 267.41$, $p < .001$; $I^2 = 51.19\%$, $\tau^2 = .02$). In accordance with our hypotheses, there was a significant negative mean effect ($r = -.07$, 95% CI = [-.09, -.05], 95% PI = [-.17, .03], $p < .001$).

Affect types further significantly moderated the estimated effect sizes. Specifically, there was no association between Conscientiousness and variability in Negative Affect (r = -.02, 95% CI = [-.04, .01], 95% PI = [-.11, .08], p = .13), and the significant effect only remained for Negative Affect (r = -.12, 95% CI = [-.14, -.10], 95% PI = [-.20, -.03], p < .001).

Within-Person Relative Variability Index

There were 111 effect sizes for the association between Conscientiousness and within-person relative variability index in affect. The Q-statistic was significant ($Q_{(110)}$ = 324.93, p < .001; I^2 = 73.43%, τ^2 = .01). There was no significant mean effect (r = .02, 95% CI = [-.01, .05], 95% PI = [-.16, .20], p = .22).

However, affect types significantly moderated the estimated effect sizes. Specifically, although there was still no association with variability in Positive Affect (r = .00), there was a positive association between Conscientiousness and variability in Negative Affect (r = .05, 95% CI = [.01, .09], 95% PI = [-.17, .27], p = .01), which was in the opposite direction as hypothesized, and the difference between the categories was itself statistically significant (difference r = -.05, SE = .02, p = .02).

Openness

Within-Person Standard Deviation

There were 113 effect sizes for the association between Openness and within-person standard deviation in affect. The Q-statistic was significant ($Q_{(112)}$ =316.95, p < .001; I^2 = 67.63%, τ^2 = .01). In accordance with our hypotheses, there was a significant positive mean effect between Openness and affective variability (*r* = .03, 95% CI = [.00, .06], 95% PI = [-.16, .22], *p* = .046).

However, affect types significantly moderated the effects: Openness was only positively associated with variability in Positive Affect (*r* = .06, 95% CI = [.02, .10], 95% PI = [-.14, .27], *p* = .002), and there was no effect with Negative Affect (*r* = .01, 95% CI = [-.02, .04], 95% PI = [-.15, .17], *p* = .55).

Within-Person Relative Variability Index

There were 98 effect sizes for the association between Openness and within-person relative variability index in affect. The *Q*-statistic was significant ($Q_{(97)} = 216.75$, $p < .001$; $I^2 = 60.61\%$, $\tau^2 = .01$). In accordance with our hypotheses, there was a significant positive association between Openness and affective variability (*r* = .05, 95% CI = [.02, .08], 95% PI = [-.10, .20], *p* < .001).

Affect types did not further moderate the effect. This mean effect remained significantly positive for variability on both Positive Affect (*r* = .06, 95% CI = [.02, .09], 95% PI = [-.12, .23], *p* = .002) and Negative Affect (*r* = .05, 95% CI = [.01, .08], 95% PI = [-.11, .20], *p* = .01) in separate models. Full meta-analytic results for overall affect, Positive Affect, and Negative Affect for all Big Five traits are presented in Table 2.2 (within-person standard deviations) and 2.3 (within-person relative variability index).

Table 2.2

Meta-Analytic Results Between Big Five Traits and Within-Person Standard Deviations on Affect

	k	*r*	*p*	95% CI	95% PI	*Q*	I^2
Agreeableness							
All affect***	118	-.06	< .001	[-.08, -.03]	[-.24, .13]	360.97	71.26
Positive affect	55	-.01	.71	[-.04, .03]	[-.19, .18]	126.82	64.20
Negative affect***	57	-.10	< .001	[-.13, -.07]	[-.26, .07]	142.86	64.77
Conscientiousness							
All affect***	134	-.07	< .001	[-.09, -.05]	[-.17, .03]	267.41	51.19
Positive affect	63	-.02	.13	[-.04, .01]	[-.11, .08]	96.22	29.37
Negative affect***	65	-.12	< .001	[-.14, -.10]	[-.20, -.03]	85.63	28.47
Extraversion							
All affect	137	.01	.32	[-.01, .04]	[-.15, .17]	440.60	69.02
Positive affect***	67	.07	< .001	[.04, .10]	[-.10, .24]	156.16	61.45
Negative affect***	63	-.05	< .001	[-.07, -.02]	[-.18, .08]	117.38	53.25
Neuroticism							
All affect***	156	.21	< .001	[.19, .23]	[.07, .35]	921.74	81.63
Positive affect***	72	.08	< .001	[.06, .10]	[-.04, .20]	126.79	47.40
Negative affect***	78	.30	< .001	[.28, .32]	[.16, .44]	183.76	62.00
Openness							
All affect*	113	.03	.046	[.00, .06]	[-.16, .22]	316.95	67.63
Positive affect**	53	.06	.002	[.02, .10]	[-.14, .27]	146.81	70.29
Negative affect	54	.01	.55	[-.02, .04]	[-.15, .17]	112.48	60.18

Note. * indicates $p < .05$, ** indicates $p < .01$, *** indicates $p < .001$

Table 2.3

Meta-Analytic Results Between Big Five Traits and Within-Person Relative Variability Index on Affect

	k	*r*	*p*	95% CI	95% PI	*Q*	I^2
Agreeableness							
All affect	103	.02	.12	[-.01, .06]	[-.16, .21]	264.74	69.81
Positive affect	48	.01	.61	[-.03, .05]	[-.20, .22]	126.12	71.74
Negative affect**	49	.05	.004	[.02, .08]	[-.11, .21]	106.51	64.52
Conscientiousness							
All affect	111	.02	.22	[-.01, .05]	[-.16, .20]	324.93	73.43
Positive affect	53	.00	.99	[-.04, .03]	[-.19, .19]	119.01	65.68
Negative affect*	52	.05	.01	[.01, .09]	[-.17, .27]	155.82	75.48
Extraversion							
All affect***	120	.06	< .001	[.04, .09]	[-.06, .19]	198.72	43.60
Positive affect***	59	.05	< .001	[.02, .08]	[-.08, .18]	102.82	45.12
Negative affect***	54	.07	< .001	[.05, .10]	[-.04, .19]	87.33	43.84
Neuroticism							
All affect	139	.00	.95	[-.02, .03]	[-.17, .17]	545.07	75.03
Positive affect***	64	.06	< .001	[.03, .09]	[-.08, .20]	118.38	51.22
Negative affect***	69	-.06	< .001	[-.09, -.03]	[-.27, .16]	256.13	75.66
Openness							
All affect***	98	.05	< .001	[.02, .08]	[-.10, .20]	216.75	60.61
Positive affect**	46	.06	.002	[.02, .09]	[-.12, .23]	106.16	62.39
Negative affect**	46	.05	.01	[.01, .08]	[-.11, .20]	96.22	60.28

Note. * indicates $p < .05$, ** indicates $p < .01$, *** indicates $p < .001$

Metatraits: Stability and Plasticity

Because we obtained a good number of raw datasets from the original authors (k = 80), we were able to compute not just the correlations between each Big Five trait and affective variability but also the correlation matrices among the Big Five themselves. As a result, we conducted meta-analytic structural equation modeling (SEM) which mapped the Big Five traits into their two higher-order factors of Stability and Plasticity. This allowed us to directly examine the association between these metatraits and affective variability. For instance, in addition to examining the association between Extraversion or Openness and affective variability separately, we were able to directly examine the association between their shared variances (Plasticity) and the two measures of affective variability. Due to the patterns of valence-specific effects found for the individual Big Five traits, we decided to conduct four sets of meta-analytic SEM models, using the higher-order factors to predict: (1) within-person SD in Positive Affect, (2) within-person SD in Negative Affect, (3) within-person RVI in Positive Affect, and (4) within-person RVI in Negative Affect. All models followed the same structure as depicted in Figure 2.5 and all results are presented in Table 2.4.

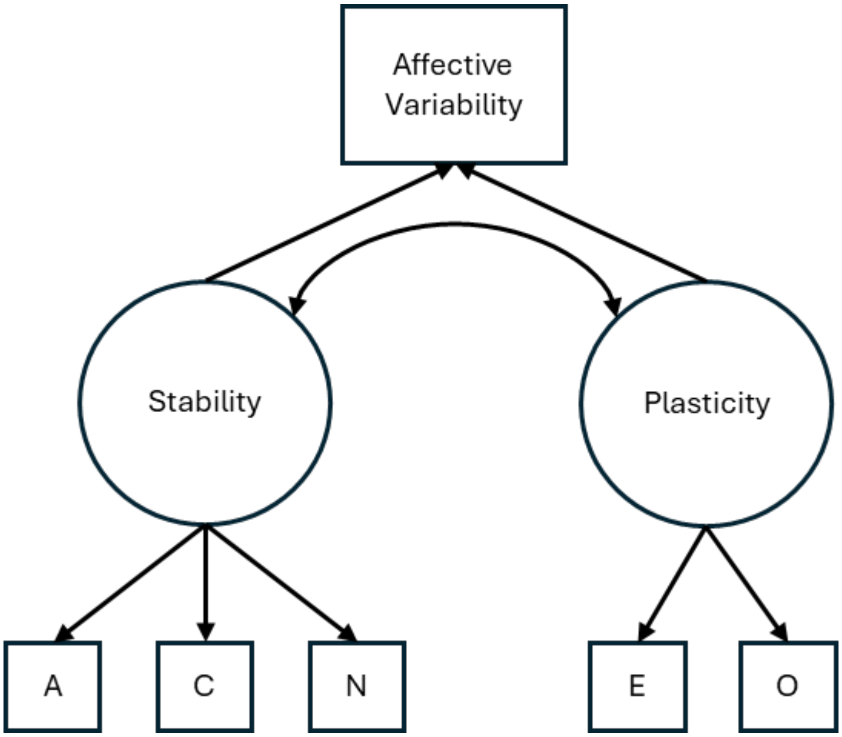
Table 2.4

Meta-Analytic Structural Equation Modeling Results

	Positive Affect				Negative Affect			
	N	*est.*	*p*	95% CI	*N*	*est.*	*p*	95% CI
Stability								
Variability as SD	11,353	-.22	< .001	[-.27, -.18]	12,846	-.50	< .001	[-.54, -.46]
Variability as RVI	11,353	-.19	< .001	[-.23, -.15]	12,846	.07	< .001	[.03, .11]
Plasticity								
Variability as SD	11,353	.26	< .001	[.22, .31]	12,846	.21	< .001	[.17, .26]
Variability as RVI	11,353	.19	< .001	[.15, .24]	12,846	.06	< .001	[.02, .10]

Figure 2.5

General Structure for the Meta-Analytic Structural Equation Models



Note. A: Agreeableness, C: Conscientiousness, N: Neuroticism, E: Extraversion, O: Openness. There were four sets of models, for which affective variability was operationalized as the (1) within-person SD in Positive Affect, (2) within-person SD in Negative Affect, (3) within-person RVI in Positive Affect, and (4) within-person RVI in Negative Affect. Error variances not shown.

Variability in Positive Affect

For meta-analytic SEM models using the within-person standard deviation, the chi-square test statistic was $\chi 2$ (7, N = 11,353) = 136.89, $p < .001$, CFI = .97, RMSEA = .04 and SRMR = .02. Stability was negatively associated with Positive Affect SD, with a standardized path estimate of -.22, 95% CI = [-.27, -.18], $p < .001$. On the other hand, Plasticity was positively associated with Positive Affect SD, with a standardized path estimate of .26, 95% CI = [.22, .31], $p < .001$.

For meta-analytic SEM models using the within-person relative variability index, the chi-square test statistic was $\chi 2$ (7, N = 11,353) = 136.13, $p < .001$, CFI = .97, RMSEA = .04 and SRMR = .02. Results were similar to those obtained with the within-person SD; within-person RVI was negatively associated Stability (β = -.19, 95% CI = [-.23, -.15], $p < .001$) and positively associated with Plasticity (β = .19, 95% CI = [.15, .24], $p < .001$).

Variability in Negative Affect

For meta-analytic SEM models using the within-person standard deviation, the chi-square test statistic was $\chi 2$ (7, N = 12,846) = 254.37, $p < .001$, CFI = .95, RMSEA = .05 and SRMR = .03. Similarly to Positive Affect, Negative Affect SD was negatively associated with Stability (β = -.50, 95% CI = [-.54, -.46], $p < .001$) and positively associated with Plasticity (β = .21, 95% CI = [.17, .26], $p < .001$).

For meta-analytic SEM models using the within-person relative variability index, the chi-square test statistic was $\chi 2$ (7, N = 12,846) = 101.02, $p < .001$, CFI = .98, RMSEA = .03 and SRMR = .02. There was once again a positive association with Plasticity (β = .06, 95% CI = [.02, .10], $p < .001$). However, in contrast with the other results, Negative Affect RVI was also positively associated with Stability (β = .07, 95% CI = [.03, .11], $p < .001$).

Associations Between Personality Traits and Mean-Levels in Affect

Although this was not the focal point of this meta-analysis, the obtained raw datasets allowed us to not only examine the relationship between personality traits with affective variability but also with the within-person mean level of affect across time points. Further, our decision to include two separate measures of variability was based on the assumption of mean-level associations. As a result, we further conducted supplementary and un-preregistered analyses of the meta-analytic[7] associations between (1) one-time trait measure of personality traits and (2) within-person mean level of affective states across the time series.

We found evidence for mean-level associations for all Big Five traits. Specifically, intraindividual mean-levels in Positive Affect were positively associated with Agreeableness ($r = .20$, $k = 48$, $p < .001$), Conscientiousness ($r = .20$, $k = 51$, $p < .001$), Extraversion ($r = .28$, $k = 59$, $p < .001$), Openness ($r = .15$, $k = 46$, $p < .001$), and they were negatively associated with Neuroticism ($r = -.30$, $k = 64$, $p < .001$). Conversely, mean-levels in Negative Affect were negatively associated with Agreeableness ($r = -.19$, $k = 49$, $p < .001$), Conscientiousness ($r = -.18$, $k = 52$, $p < .001$), Extraversion ($r = -.11$, $k = 54$, $p < .001$), Openness ($r = -.04$, $k = 46$, $p = .04$), and they were positively associated with Neuroticism ($r = .38$, $k = 68$, $p < .001$). All results are presented in Table 2.5.

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[7] Although meta-analytic models were used to synthesize the findings, these effect sizes did not truly come from a meta-analytic process because we did not search for nor extract them during the systematic review stage. We instead only used the raw data from the 80 samples that were provided by the original authors. As a result, they should not be treated as a stand-alone meta-analysis and should only be used to further understand the finding pattern in the current paper.

Table 2.5

Meta-Analytic Results Between Big Five Traits and Within-Person Mean on Affect

	k	*r*	*p*	95% CI	95% PI	*Q*	I^2
Agreeableness							
All affect	103	.01	.60	[-.02, .03]	[-.10, .11]	1586.27	93.55
Positive affect***	48	.20	< .001	[.15, .24]	[-.05, .44]	231.76	83.10
Negative affect***	49	-.19	< .001	[-.23, -.14]	[-.41, .04]	226.57	84.79
Conscientiousness							
All affect	109	.01	0.2395	[-.01, .04]	[-.11, .14]	2078.06	94.42
Positive affect***	51	.20	< .001	[.16, .25]	[-.06, .47]	298.95	89.09
Negative affect***	52	-.18	< .001	[-.22, -.14]	[-.44, .08]	338.82	89.01
Extraversion							
All affect***	120	.13	< .001	[.09, .17]	[-.17, .43]	2397.52	93.52
Positive affect***	59	.28	< .001	[.23, .33]	[-.02, .58]	446.25	87.46
Negative affect***	54	-.11	< .001	[-.15, -.08]	[-.31, .09]	154.86	73.82
Neuroticism							
All affect**	138	.06	.01	[.02, .10]	[-.28, .40]	6898.32	97.77
Positive affect***	64	-.30	< .001	[-.33, -.26]	[-.54, -.06]	299.68	85.34
Negative affect***	68	.38	< .001	[.35, .42]	[.15, .62]	724.31	92.16
Openness							
All affect**	98	.06	.004	[.02, .09]	[-.17, .28]	927.34	88.90
Positive affect***	46	.15	< .001	[.09, .20]	[-.18, .48]	399.55	89.18
Negative affect*	46	-.04	.04	[-.08, .00]	[-.25, .17]	151.91	78.89

Note. * indicates $p < .05$, ** indicates $p < .01$, *** indicates $p < .001$

Bias and Robustness Analysis

Study Quality

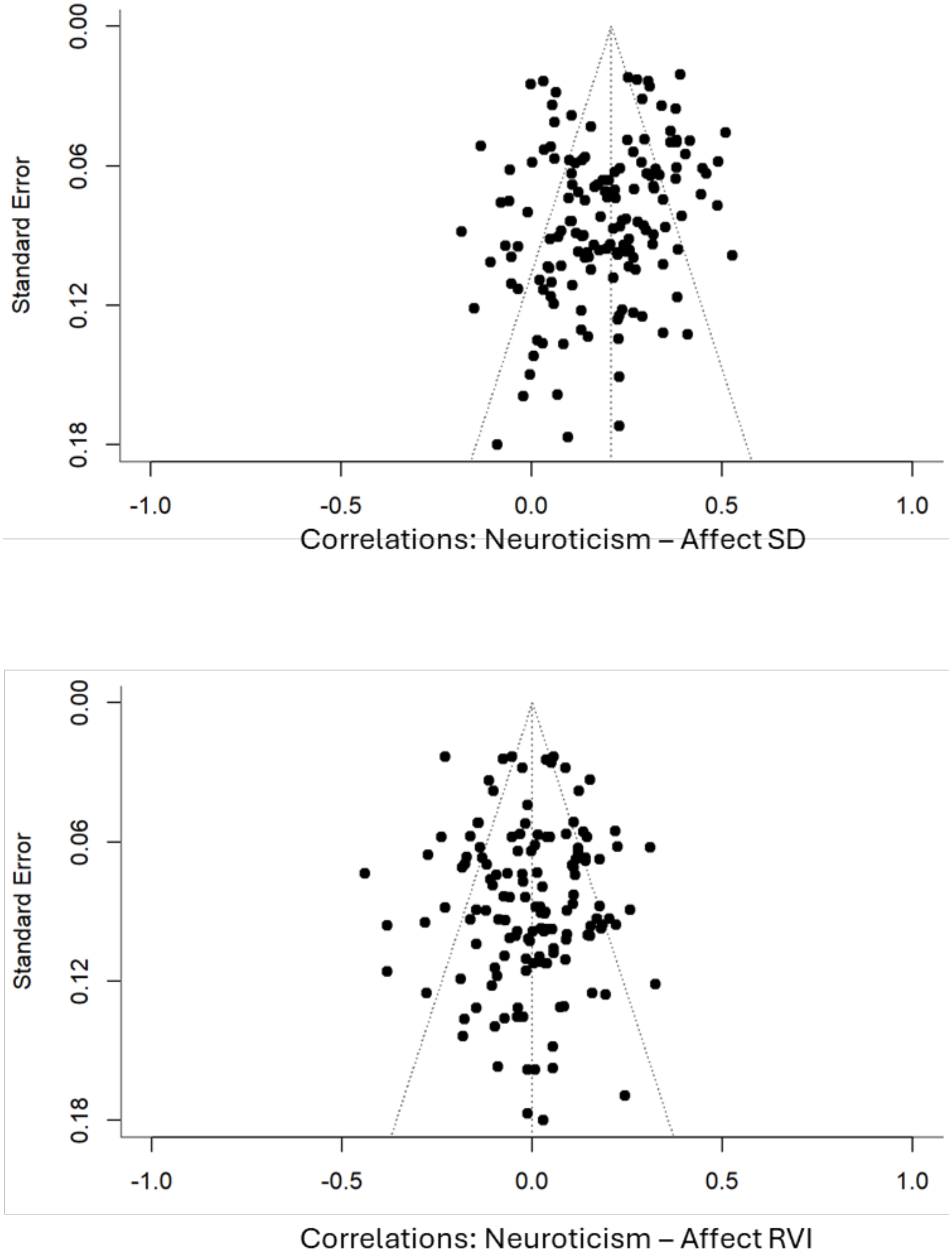
Most samples were considered to have *good* study quality ($k = 54$) and some were considered *fair* ($k = 16$). No sample was considered *poor* either by the main or reliability coders, and the remaining samples ($k = 20$) did not have sufficient information for study quality coding (unpublished datasets or published datasets from EMOTE for which the published manuscripts did not include the Big Five traits). In the meta-regression models, study quality (*good* versus *fair*) was never found to be a significant moderator of mean effects in any model, either with the within-person standard deviation or relative variability index.

Publication Bias

This meta-analysis required author contact for every sample, because the effect size of interest using the relative variability index was never included in the published manuscripts. Nonetheless, we used funnel plots and statistical test of asymmetry to examine the effects of publication bias. We did not find any significant asymmetry for any model except for the Neuroticism model with the within-person standard deviation in affect (Kendall's $\tau = -.16$, $p = .002$). However, there was no asymmetry for Neuroticism effects with the relative variability index (Kendall's $\tau = -.05$, $p = .39$). The funnel plots for both of these models are shown in Figure 2.6.

Figure 2.6

Funnel Plots for the Correlations Between Neuroticism and Within-Person Standard Deviation (Top) and Relative Variability Index (Bottom) in Affect



Robustness Analyses

Results were presented in parallel between the (1) within-person standard deviation and (2) within-person relative variability index in affect, which allowed for a direct comparison between the two patterns of findings. Nonetheless, there were eight samples for which raw data were not obtainable which prevented RVI calculations and resulted in the two sets of analyses being conducted on slightly different sets of effect sizes. Thus, we also repeated the analyses with within-person standard deviation using only samples for which an RVI was computed. Results only differed for trait Openness. Although the mean effect size was nearly identical, the association with the within-person standard deviation was significant with the full set of data (r = .03, k = 113, p = .046) but no longer significant with only the RVI-compatible datasets (r = .02, k = 98, p = .18).

Discussion

The current preregistered mete-analysis provides a thorough investigation of the relationship between affective variability and personality traits at the domain and metatrait levels. Specifically, we examined the relationship between personality traits and within-person variability on affective states obtained through intensive longitudinal designs. Variability was operationalized as both the within-person standard deviation and relative variability index, the latter of which alleviates the mathematical dependency between the mean and standard deviation in bounded affect measures. We indeed found differing patterns of findings between these two approaches as well as empirical support for using the relative variability index.

From our descriptive and exploratory findings on the mean level of affect, we confirmed our assumptions that there would be an association between (1) the mean affect and personality traits and between (2) the mean affect and standard deviation of affect especially when mean scores were closer to the scale boundaries. Further, mean levels of Negative Affect in particular tended to be low and close to the minimum boundary on the scale. Considered altogether, this indicated that the relationship between personality traits and variability in affect, particularly so for Negative Affect, would not be clear just from the standard deviation alone. This same point was proposed and tested for Neuroticism by Kalokerinos and colleagues (2020) and confirmed with our meta-analysis. Indeed, although Neuroticism has a strong established link with mean-level affect in the literature, we found strong mean-level associations for *all* Big Five traits, which further highlights the need for an appropriate correction.

Our hypotheses were organized around the two higher-order metatraits: We hypothesized that Stability and its underlying domains (Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, reversed Neuroticism) would show a negative association with affective variability whereas Plasticity and its domains (Extraversion and Openness) would show a positive association. We found some support for this pattern when using the within-person standard deviation; however, effects often differed significantly for variability in Positive versus Negative Affect: Agreeableness and Conscientiousness was only (negatively) associated with variability in Negative Affect, not Positive Affect, and Openness was only (positively) associated with variability in Positive Affect, not Negative Affect. Further, Extraversion was positively associated with variability in

Positive Affect and negatively so for variability in Negative Affect. Although Neuroticism was positively associated with variability in both Positive and Negative Affect, the effect was much stronger in magnitude and significantly so for Positive Affect ($r = .30$ versus $r = .08$). This further called into question the nature of the effect and suggests that it might be instead confounded by the mean-level associations.

After applying the correction with the within-person RVI, we found that Extraversion and Openness, the two traits under Plasticity, consistently showed the hypothesized significant positive associations with variability, regardless of affect types. Conceptually, an individual who is higher on Extraversion is expected to engage in a diverse set of activities in varied settings and with a higher number of social encounters. Extraverts may also interact with more extraverts, which further creates an accumulative effect on their social experiences (Feiler & Kleinbaum, 2015). Similarly, Openness and its association with curiosity, imagination, and divergent thinking should also provide the individual with a more expansive set of interests and activities (e.g., Fayn et al., 2015). It should then come as no surprise that these characteristics would be associated with an increase in the variety of affective states.

On the other hand, there was no consistent association for the Stability traits with RVI. Specifically, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness was only positively associated with variability in Negative Affect, and not significantly associated with either Positive Affect or in the full meta-analytic model. These associations were also in the opposite direction of our hypothesis. Lastly, Neuroticism showed opposite significant effects between affect types, resulting in a .00 overall meta-analytic effect. This indicated that not only was Neuroticism not associated with affective variability, but it was in fact *negatively* associated with variability in Negative Affect. This result is striking because it directly contradicts the common notion between Neuroticism and Negative Affect variability; however, it confirmed the notion suggested by Kalokerinos and colleagues (2020) that the positive association found in the literature was a statistical artifact due to the usage of the standard deviation.

A unique strength of the current meta-analysis is our ability to model not just the Big Five traits individually but also their shared variances as the metatraits Plasticity and Stability. As a result, we were able to directly examine whether or not there was an association with affective variability at the metatrait level. Our hypotheses were fully supported for Positive Affect, as variability was positively associated with Plasticity and negatively so with Stability regardless of variability indices used. However, we found unexpected patterns of results for variability in Negative Affect. As expected, due to the strong mean-standard deviation bias with Negative Affect, estimates were quite different between models using SD and RVI. When using our adjusted index, we found that variability in Negative Affect was positively associated with *both* Plasticity and Stability.

Theoretical Implications

This meta-analysis aimed to further elucidate the relationship between personality traits with intraindividual variability in psychological processes, as motivated by the cybernetic theory of personality and the hierarchical organization of the Big Five into the two metatraits of Plasticity and Stability. Specifically, we examined this relationship for personality traits at the domain and metatrait levels using intraindividual variability in affective states obtained from intensive longitudinal studies. We found consistent evidence for Plasticity and its domains of Extraversion and Openness in the hypothesized direction. These findings contribute to a clearer conceptualization of personality traits and help us gain insights into how the psychological flexibility afforded by Plasticity may shape our everyday emotional life.

On the other hand, there was a mixed patterns of results for Stability that suggests that effects may be valence specific, highlighting the importance of affect types when conceptualizing and examining variability. In particular, there were positive associations between variability in Negative Affect and Stability, which was in contrast with our hypotheses. These patterns of association suggested that variability in Negative Affect may be a particularly adaptive process in response to varying external stimuli. Notably, the current literature suggests otherwise. For example, research has shown an association between Negative Affect variability and worse psychological well-being (Jenkins et al., 2020; Houben et al., 2015) and a longitudinal analysis of the Midlife in the United States study also showed an association with worsening physical health (Jenkins et al., 2023). However, these findings were all based on the within-person standard deviation, and Bos and colleagues (2019) showed that the association for depression in particular was no longer significant after adjusting for mean levels of Negative Affect. None of these research programs directly consider the effects of scale boundaries on the maximal level of variability as we did with the relative variability index.

Methodological Implications

In addition to presenting empirical evidence for the substantive associations of interest, the current meta-analysis also shed further light on the methodological approaches in examining intraindividual variability. Specifically, using $k = 80$ raw datasets obtained from the original authors, we confirmed the confounding associations between mean levels of affect and the standard deviation of the time series. This was particularly problematic for Negative Affect, because our non-clinical samples reported relatively low levels of Negative Affect in their daily lives. As a result, their mean scores trended close to the minimum scale boundary which further restricted the range of possible variation as obtained by the standard deviation. On the other hand, daily Positive Affect showed mean levels closer to the mid-point of the scale, which is why effect estimates did not differ markedly between the two variability indices. In sum, our recommendation for researchers interested in intraindividual variability is to use the weighted calculations provided by the relative variability index instead of the standard deviation or variance. Notably, Mestdagh (2018) provided equations not only for the RVI-equivalence of the standard deviation but also for other common indices for time series such as the range and the root mean squared successive difference.

Limitations

One limitation of the current research is the lack of pre-specified hypothesis for the direction of effects for each affect type. We instead conceptualized variability broadly to include both Positive and Negative Affect (as well as neutral affect types), and the results clearly suggested that a more nuanced investigation is needed. In addition, although significant, many of the mean effect sizes were very small in magnitude. Specifically, none of the trait and RVI correlations exceeded a magnitude of .07. Small associations are not uncommon with Big Five traits due to the bandwidth-fidelity tradeoff resulting from their broad conceptualization and measurements (Cronbach & Gleser, 1957). Although this is not surprising, it still warrants caution when interpreting and generalizing these findings. Even if these meta-analytic effects were truly consistent and close to the population truth, they are not by any means strong effects.

The current meta-analysis generally did not find strong evidence of publication bias from our funnel plot visual and statistical analyses. This was not surprising due to the nature of the investigation; the effect size of interest was often not the focus of existing publication and thus should not have been impacted by much publication pressure. Nonetheless, this does not mean our meta-analysis is bias-free, as we fully relied on original author correspondence and open-source databases to gather the necessary data for effect calculation. In fact, 189 articles out of a total of 262 eligible records from the full-text review stage were not included due to lack of original author response, a striking 72.14%. As a result, although the effects might not have undergone publication bias, they might very well represent a unique subset of the entire literature.

Conclusion

In sum, the current meta-analysis examined the association between personality traits and intraindividual variability in affect. This research question is readily answerable in many existing studies, yet it is rarely the main question of interest, allowing us to use meta-analytic techniques on a wide range of datasets that may have experienced less publication pressure than typical. Beyond Neuroticism, there has been very limited examination of this association for the other Big Five traits. Further, emerging research suggests a statistical artifact for Neuroticism and Negative Affect especially when using the standard deviation. We confirmed the problematic association between the mean and standard deviation for Negative Affect across the meta-analytic datasets and highlighted the importance of applying a correction to alleviate this dependency. In doing so, we also provided meta-analytic results of the association between the Big Five traits and mean levels of affective states, which were all statistically significant of mostly moderate size and in expected directions.

We confirmed our central hypothesis for the Plasticity traits and found that Extraversion and Openness showed consistent association with affective variability when using an adjusted measure of variability. We further found the same patterns using the Plasticity metatrait modeled as the shared variances between Extraversion and Openness. However, finding patterns were mixed and valence-specific for the Stability traits of Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Neuroticism. In particular, Neuroticism showed completely opposite patterns for variability in Positive versus Negative Affect, suggesting further theoretical development is needed to clearly delineate the difference in variability between the two. The metatrait Stability also showed a positive association with variability in Negative Affect when using the adjusted variability index. Altogether, this suggested that variability is conceptually different for Positive versus Negative Affect, and the differing association patterns suggest that variability in Negative Affect may be an adaptive process.

Lastly, all Big Five-level meta-analytic effects were very small in magnitude. Even if there were truly consistent effects in the population, they were very weak and varied significantly from sample to sample. Results were stronger in magnitude for the metatraits Plasticity and Stability, which represented the shared variances among the Big Five. The current meta-analysis altogether suggested limited overall evidence for the association between individual Big Five traits and affective variability and rather demonstrated an association at the metatrait level.

CHAPTER 3:

Dynamic Assortative Mating on Personality and Affective States in Romantic Couples

Personality research has shown that general trait measures, such as the Big Five traits, are predictive of a wide variety of life outcomes and different domains, including health, occupational, and social outcomes (Ozer & Benet-Martínez, 2006; Soto, 2019). However, although generally robust across analytic approaches, these effects tend to be small in magnitude and further attenuated after controlling for relevant covariates (Beck & Jackson, 2022). One life domain for which personality traits have shown weak predictive results is in assortative mating in close relationships – a phenomenon in which romantic couples tend to be similar to one another. Although extensive research has shown strong positive assortment across many demographic and psychological constructs such as cognitive abilities and socio-political values, findings were weak and inconsistent for personality traits such as the Big Five traits (Horwitz et al., 2023; Luo, 2017). It may be the case that one-time self-reported trait measures lack the granularity needed to be highly predictive in such contextualized cases as assortative mating. Accordingly, in the present study, we focused on both actual and perceived similarities in personality and affective traits as well as dynamic processes of personality and affective states in romantic couples' daily lives. In doing so, we highlighted the importance of contextualized personality assessments in the romantic relationship domain.

Assortative Mating Based on Personality Traits

Assortative mating broadly refers to matching patterns between romantic couples such that they share similarities with one another on demographic, physical, and psychological characteristics (Luo, 2017). Recent meta-analytic results across 30 studies and upwards of 23,000 spousal pairs showed rather weak but positive between-partner correlations in the Big Five traits (Horwitz et al., 2023): Extraversion $r = .08$, Neuroticism $r = .10$, Agreeableness $r = .11$, Conscientiousness $r = .16$, and Openness $r = .21$. Note, however, that although Openness showed the strongest between-partner similarity of moderate size, it has also been linked with various measures of cognitive abilities (e.g., Ackerman & Heggestad, 1997; DeYoung et al., 2014; Harris, 2004) and educational attainment (e.g., O'Connell & Marks, 2022), which are themselves much stronger indicators of assortative mating, with meta-analytic between-partner correlations of .39 and .53, respectively (Horwitz et al., 2023).

Not only does research show relatively weak effects for assortative mating based on self-reported personality traits, but there is also very limited evidence for the benefits of between-partner similarity for measures of relationship quality. The overwhelming evidence supports the actor or partner effects rather than dyadic effects of personality traits, that is: psychological characteristics of each partner are generally more predictive of relationship quality than their interactions are (e.g., Becker, 2013; Dyrenforth et al., 2010; Watson et al., 2004). Because personality traits are so broadly and robustly predictive of many life outcomes (e.g., Soto, 2019), it is perhaps surprising that they provide such limited utility in the assortative mating context. Indeed, successful mate selection is a highly consequential task for an individual's psychological and even physical well-being (Robles et al., 2014). We argue that this gap resulted from a predominant focus on traits in personality research, specifically in the prevalence of one-time self-reported measures of the Big Five domains. However, there are multiple ways in which we may expand our constructs of interest for this line of research.

First and foremost, the promising evidence for perceived similarity (e.g., Dyrenforth et al., 2010) highlighted the need for multi-informant perspectives beyond self-reported measures. The Self-Other Knowledge Asymmetry model suggests that although self-reports are certainly a valid and useful source of information, they offer only one unique perspective: that of the self, and this needs not be the only perspective or even the most "accurate" one (Vazire, 2010). In such an intimate interpersonal domain as romantic relationships, it is reasonable to assume that partners may have their own unique knowledge of one another, and informant-reports from close acquaintances have indeed shown incremental validity for predicting prosocial behaviors (Thielmann et al., 2017). Indeed, in a meta-analysis across 460 effect sizes, perceived similarity obtained by correlating self- and partner-reports showed a much stronger association with interpersonal attraction than actual similarity, the latter of which did not show an association among people in existing relationships (Montoya et al., 2008). Further, a study using online dating profiles showed that people also preferred potential partners who they perceived to be more similar to themselves with regards to Agreeableness and Openness, even though they were only presented with their photos and very short biographical descriptions (Neyt et al., 2020). As a result, the current study included both self- and partner-reports of personality and general affective traits at baseline.

Second, although individual personality traits may be examined in separate univariate models, research suggests that there may be added benefits to a multivariate approach. Using two different indices for profile similarity (D-indices: Cronbach & Gleser, 1953; profile agreement IPA: McCrae, 2008), Decuyper and colleagues (2012) showed that the effects of perceptual similarity and accuracy differed across analytic methods and highlighted the limitations of basing our interpretations mostly on univariate techniques that do not account for the relationships among different traits in a personality profile.

Third, whereas constructs at the domain level (i.e., the Big Five) are incredibly prevalent in personality literature, there exists lower-level trait measures that represent finer-grained and more contextualized constructs. For instance, the well-known NEO Personality Inventory (Costa & McCrae, 1995, 2008) includes thirty facets, with six for each of the Big Five. In between the facet and domain levels, the Big Five Aspect Scales (DeYoung et al., 2007) measure 10 personality aspects, with two aspects for each of the five domains. Not only do these finer-grained constructs show incremental validity beyond the domains for a variety of psychological outcomes (e.g., Hagger-Johnson & Whiteman, 2007, Reynolds & Clark, 2001), but constructs within the same domain have also shown discriminant validity as well as differing longitudinal trajectories (Denissen et al., 2020; Nguyen et al., 2023). As a result, incorporating lower-level trait measures is a relatively simple solution to the bandwidth-fidelity trade-off often found at the domain level (Cronbach & Gleser, 1957).

Finally, another way to expand the predictive power of personality constructs is to include not just one-time measures of global personality traits but also longitudinal measures to assess trait change and intensive longitudinal measures to assess state fluctuations, the latter of which is the primary focus of the current study. The next section summarizes existing research for assortative mating based on both these longitudinal approaches.

Intraindividual Variability and Assortative Mating

Personality traits are by definition relatively stable across time and situation (e.g., Costa & McCrae, 1994). Nonetheless, much research has shown that personality traits can and do change (e.g., Roberts et al., 2008). Traditional longitudinal designs often involve repeated measures of traits at months-long or years-long intervals, and there is some exciting longitudinal research on personality and affective trait trajectories in the romantic relationship context. For instance, a study on almost 4,000 couples showed that couples showed correlated change in Openness over time, and they also showed evidence of correlated fluctuation or variability in Neuroticism, Extraversion, and Openness (Lewis & Yoneda, 2021). In investigating the benefits of longitudinal assortment, data on 237 couples suggested some longitudinal similarity effects on satisfaction such that similar baseline Neuroticism was associated with male partners' relationship satisfaction and similar baseline Openness was associated with female partners' relationship satisfaction two years after (Weidmann et al., 2017). In the related domain of affective traits, another longitudinal study on newly-weds found both that partners were more similar in their emotions than non-partner pseudo-couple and also that couples who became more alike reported maintaining their relationship satisfaction, whereas those who became more dissimilar showed a decrease in satisfaction after a one-year follow-up (Gonzaga et al., 2007). Further, a small longitudinal study of 66 dating couples showed that those with higher emotional similarity were less likely to break up at the six-month follow-up (Anderson et al., 2003). In addition, Chapter 4 of the current dissertation later presents a longitudinal study across two samples of 184 early dating couples and 168 married/cohabiting couples, which showed some evidence for the benefits of similar change trajectories on relationship-specific characteristics, such as partner responsiveness, trust, social provision, and some caregiving behaviors.

Beyond traditional longitudinal designs, emerging research has focused on much finer-grained variations and examined momentary fluctuations in what has been termed personality *states*. These intensive designs involve three main elements: (1) real-time and (2) repeated assessments (3) in a natural and thus ecologically valid setting (Conner et al., 2009). Their question stems tend to reflect either momentary states (how participants are current feeling) or a short retrospective window (how participants have been feeling for the past few hours). This means participants may be answering questionnaires multiple times per day thus providing researchers with intensive high-dimensional data. In support of this dynamic approach of personality, research has shown significant within-person variability in personality states (Heller et al., 2007) and this intraindividual variability pattern is itself an individual difference: that is, people demonstrate unique and relatively stable distributions in their momentary characteristics (Baird et al., 2006; Fleeson, 2001).

Although some traditional longitudinal research programs exist for personality and affective trait trajectories over time, there is a clear lack of dyadic research on personality dynamics or intraindividual variability in personality states. The recent rise in intensive longitudinal data collection presents researchers with an exciting opportunity to investigate not just average patterns of personality traits, but their distributional characteristics over time and how these might be influential in the dyadic context. Although there is little existing research on dyadic similarities on personality states, we may draw upon the related research area of dyadic *affective* states. Indeed, "emotion" is the most commonly studied topic in intensive longitudinal research (65.9% of 496 unique meta-analytic samples; Wrzus & Neubauer, 2022). However, there is a high overlap between fluctuations in personality and affective states (Wilson et al., 2017). Not surprisingly, this association was strongest between state Extraversion and state Positive Affect (*r*s = .60s) and between state Neuroticism and state Negative Affect (*r*s = .40s – .50s). As a result, it would be important to establish their discriminant validity, and both personality and affective constructs were investigated in the current study.

Most importantly, our decision to include affective constructs resulted from the rich body of theoretical and empirical work on emotional processes in close relationships. The literature in dyadic emotion research suggest that emotions may be transmitted between romantic partners and thus they may converge in their emotional experiences over time due to an automatic mimicking and synchronizing of emotional expressions

(Hatfield et al., 1993) particularly after extended exposures to similar emotional events (Fischer et al., 2004). Indeed, romantic partners have been shown to fluctuate in their emotions together across time (Butler & Randall, 2013), and changes in one partner's affective state may be predicted by the changes in the other partner's (Larson & Almeida, 1999).

In addition to evidence for between-partner similarities on affective states, research has also shown some evidence for the benefits of this dynamic assortment. Theoretically, Anderson and colleagues (2003) proposed that partners become more emotionally similar over time because this is an adaptive process that enhances coordination, understanding, and closeness. Furthermore, this emotional similarity has been demonstrated even when partners were not in each other's company (Anderson & Keltner, 2004). Additionally, *positivity resonance theory* posits that it is co-experienced *Positive* Affect in particular that may be consequential for relationship outcomes (Fredrickson, 2016). In a study of conversational interactions with 150 married couples, Brown and colleagues (2021) found that, although co-experienced Positive and Negative Affect were both predictive of relationship quality (better and worse quality, respectively), the effects were particularly stronger for Positive Affect. As a result, the current intensive longitudinal design included measures of Big Five personality states as well as separate measures for state Positive and Negative Affect.

Current Study

The current study investigated assortative mating patterns in established relationships using personality and affective traits and states. By incorporating multiple perspectives through self- and partner-reports and by incorporating multiple assessment types of personality processes with baseline assessments as well as experience sampling methods, we provided a thorough examination of assortative mating beyond one-time trait measures. The confirmatory hypotheses were organized into two general research questions as follows:

Research Question 1: Is There Evidence of Assortative Mating Between Romantic Partners?

Hypothesis 1. At baseline, romantic partners will be similar in their personality traits and general affects such that their scale scores will be significantly and positively correlated.

Hypothesis 2. At baseline, perceived similarity will be stronger than actual similarity.

Hypothesis 3. Dynamically, romantic partners will be similar in their momentary variability on personality and affective states.

Research Question 2: Is Assortative Mating Associated with Relationship Quality?

Hypothesis 4. At baseline, partner similarity in self-reported personality traits and general affect will be associated with enhanced relationship quality.

Hypothesis 5. At baseline, self-reported personality traits and general affects will be most strongly associated with self-reported relationship quality, more so than the effect of partner-reported and similarity on these variables.

Hypothesis 6. At baseline, perceived similarity will be more strongly associated with relationship quality than actual similarity.

Hypothesis 7. Dynamically, partner similarity in momentary variability on personality and affective states will be associated with enhanced relationship quality.

Method

Participants

Data were collected for 138 couples, with a mean age of 27.59 years old (*SD* = 9.28). To be eligible for the study, participants needed to be adults based in the United States who had been in a monogamous relationship for at least 12 months. Both partners needed to consent to participate. Participants were recruited using physical flyers in the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities (UMN) campus and nearby neighborhoods. In addition, online flyers were distributed to student listservs at UMN and nearby colleges. We also used snowball sampling as participants were encouraged to share the study flyer with their acquaintances. There was no gender restriction which resulted in both same-sex and different-sex couples. Most couples were different-sex (*N* = 122 couples, 88.41%), 14 couples were female-female and 2 couples were male-male. Most participants identified as heterosexual/straight (*N* = 189 participants, 68.48%), 10 identified as lesbian, 5 as gay, 57 as bisexual, and 15 as another sexuality. Couples reported an average relationship duration of 62.3 months or roughly 5 years (ranging widely from 12 months to 588 months or 49 years).

Participants were designated as either participant 1 or participant 2 for data management and analytic purposes. The first participants were those who scheduled the initial appointment and completed the baseline assessments prior to their interviews, whereas the second participants completed the baseline assessments immediately after a

30-minute interview on their relationship story. As a result, these dyads were treated as distinguishable. Indeed, there was a much higher female proportion for the first participants (74.6%) than for the second (34.1%). The first participants were also slightly younger (*M* = 27.20, *SD* = 8.53) than the second participants (*M* = 27.99, *SD* = 9.99). There were also some descriptive differences on Big Five personality traits such that first participants were slightly more agreeable, conscientious, extraverted, neurotic, and open than second participants. The first participants also reported slightly higher relationship satisfaction than their partners (139.1 versus 138 out of 162), and they had higher completion rates for the digital surveys (*M* = 29.73 surveys or 84.9% versus *M* = 29.22 surveys or 83.5%). Nonetheless, none of these differences were statistically significant except for trait Agreeableness.

Because of our recruitment plan, our sample was highly educated, with 81 or 58.7% of first participants and 58 or 42% of second participants either currently pursuing or having obtained a post-graduate degree. The majority also identified as either middle or upper-middle class (98 or 71% of first participants and 97 or 70.3% of second participants). Participants indicated being more liberal than conservative (2.35 average for first participants and 2.53 average for second participants on a 7-point scale) and not very religious (1.78 average for first participants and 1.80 average for second participants on a 4-point scale). The majority of participants were white (87 or 63.04% of first participants and 86 or 62.32% of second participants), then Asian (24 or 17.39% of first participants and 26 or 18.84% of second participants), and Hispanic (10 or 7.25% of first participants and 9 or 6.52% of second participants), black (6 or 4.35% of first participants and 4 or 2.90% of second participants), or mixed (11 or 7.97% of first participants and 10 or 7.25% of second participants).

Procedures

The recruitment flyers provided a link to an initial short eligibility screening survey. If eligible, people were directed to a Google Calendar booking link to schedule their initial appointment. This study involved one baseline assessment followed by a seven-day process of digital data collection using experience sampling methods. Only one baseline appointment was needed for each couple and both dyad members needed to be present. Participants had the option to schedule either an in-person appointment at the laboratory (*N* = 27 couples) or an online appointment via Zoom (*N* = 111 couples). Baseline assessments included demographic information, trait measures, and an optional interview that was not included in the current paper. Full baseline protocols are stored on the OSF repository: https://osf.io/q8pdy. At the end of the appointment, participants were instructed to download and join the ExpiWell application on their smartphone (https://www.expiwell.com) to prepare for the ESM data collection period to start the next day.

Meta-analytic reviews of previous ESM studies in psychology and related field reported an average of seven assessment days (Wrzus & Neubauer, 2022). Because this study intended on capturing typical affective and personality states in daily life and not any rare events, we also decided on a seven-day period to be sufficient for data collection in order to capture both weekday and weekend variability. During this period, participants received notifications to complete five momentary measures each day using the ExpiWell application on their smartphone. Notifications were scheduled at fixed intervals at 9am, 12pm, 3pm, 6pm, and 9pm. A reminder was sent after 30 minutes of no response and each survey remained open for 1 hour.

Incentive Structure

Missing data is a prevalent issue in most longitudinal research, and it is indeed expected in intensive longitudinal design. Although the daily schedule of up to five assessments was intended to provide a reasonable coverage such that participants may be able to answer as many assessments as possible, it is unavoidable that participants may miss a few questionnaires, either due to situational factors or simply fatigue. This study thus combined a fixed and incremental payment schedule to further incentivize compliance. Whereas all participants, provided that both dyad members have completed the baseline assessments in the laboratory, were guaranteed a payment for their participation, they received additional compensation depending on the amount of completed ESM questionnaires. There were three completion thresholds of 40%, 60%, and 80%, which corresponded to two, three, and four of the five assessments per day, respectively. Compensation was calculated for and distributed to dyads in the form of electronic gift cards based on their joint compliance rate instead of individual participants. The maximum compensation was \$50 per dyad if they completed 80% of the ESM questionnaires, then \$30, \$20, and \$10 if they completed 60%, 40%, or fewer of the ESM questionnaires, respectively. This total amount was increased by \$10 per couple if they also elected to complete the optional baseline interview. In addition to monetary compensation, participants were provided with a descriptive visual report of their personality traits at baseline and state fluctuations during the seven-day period. Reports were provided to dyad members separately; participants could see their own self-reported personality trait scores and how they perceived their partners, but not their partner's responses.

Materials

Baseline Trait Measures

Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations at baseline are presented in Table 3.1.

Big Five Aspect Scales (BFAS; DeYoung et al., 2007) measure the Big Five personality domains as well as their underlying ten aspects: Agreeableness (Compassion and Politeness; Cronbach's αs = .68 – .87), Conscientiousness (Industriousness and Orderliness; αs = .77 – .85), Extraversion (Assertiveness and Enthusiasm; αs = .83 – .87), Neuroticism (Volatility and Withdrawal; αs = .85 – .91), and Openness (Intellect and Openness; αs = .81 – .83). There are ten items for each aspect and correspondingly 20 items for each domain. All items were on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). In addition to completing the self-reported BFAS, participants also completed the BFAS about their dyadic member, resulting in four completed measures on each trait for each romantic dyad of both actual and partner-perceived personality traits.

Table 3.1

Baseline Bivariate Correlations Among Variables by Participants

First Participants	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Positive Affect - Self-Report[1]	3.49	0.49														
2. Negative Affect - Self-Report[1]	2.29	0.75	-.09													
3. Agreeableness - Self-Report[1]	4.08	0.41	.03	-.25**												
4. Conscientiousness - Self-Report[1]	3.35	0.5	.19*	-.29**	.05											
5. Extraversion - Self-Report[1]	3.5	0.49	.34**	-.21*	.13	.06										
6. Neuroticism - Self-Report[1]	2.99	0.66	-.22*	.68**	-.17*	-.24**	-.08									
7. Openness - Self-Report[1]	3.85	0.43	.23**	-.10	.21*	.02	.33**	-.20*								
8. Relationship Satisfaction[2]	139	19.3	.14	-.25**	.35**	.14	.19*	-.15	.12							
9. Positive Affect - Partner-Report[1]	3.55	0.62	.51**	.05	.21*	-.04	.20*	.00	.28**	.18*						
10. Negative Affect - Partner-Report[1]	1.87	0.66	.03	.43**	-.21*	-.22*	-.16	.06	.02	-.27**	.02					
11. Agreeableness - Partner-Report[1]	4.06	0.55	.18*	-.26**	.34**	.15	.32**	-.17*	.27**	.42**	.24**	-.06				
12. Conscientiousness - Partner-Report[1]	3.32	0.64	.18*	-.13	.15	-.07	.00	-.10	.20*	.12	.44**	-.15	.09			
13. Extraversion - Partner-Report[1]	3.55	0.56	.15	.02	.25**	.06	.15	-.13	.27**	.13	.44**	.03	.19*	.03		
14. Neuroticism - Partner-Report[1]	2.61	0.68	-.13	.02	-.10	-.16	-.14	-.19*	.00	-.37**	-.23**	.65**	-.13	-.18*	.04	
15. Openness - Partner-Report[1]	3.85	0.53	.16	-.08	.31**	-.04	.23**	-.12	.33**	.29**	.43**	.04	.37**	.17	.43**	.00
Second Participants	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Positive Affect - Self-Report[1]	3.57	0.6														
2. Negative Affect - Self-Report[1]	2.26	0.68	-.15													
3. Agreeableness - Self-Report[1]	3.95	0.42	.18*	-.03												
4. Conscientiousness - Self-Report[1]	3.27	0.56	.41**	-.18*	-.01											
5. Extraversion - Self-Report[1]	3.4	0.58	.60**	-.18*	.23**	.23**										
6. Neuroticism - Self-Report[1]	2.83	0.68	-.27**	.61**	-.05	-.27**	-.14									
7. Openness - Self-Report[1]	3.81	0.56	.39**	-.16	.34**	.08	.48**	-.14								
8. Relationship Satisfaction[2]	137	20.7	.22*	-.28**	.31**	.02	.31**	-.18*	.26**							
9. Positive Affect - Partner-Report[1]	3.64	0.59	.45**	.04	.26**	.06	.27**	-.03	.09	.36**						
10. Negative Affect - Partner-Report[1]	2.16	0.77	-.02	.44**	-.20*	-.08	-.10	.05	-.11	-.40**	-.27**					
11. Agreeableness - Partner-Report[1]	4.15	0.52	.21*	-.17*	.32**	.04	.26**	-.14	.31**	.47**	.27**	-.27**				
12. Conscientiousness - Partner-Report[1]	3.51	0.61	.10	-.18*	.00	-.07	.13	-.23**	-.10	.29**	.35**	-.25**	.11			
13. Extraversion - Partner-Report[1]	3.61	0.52	.15	-.14	.24**	-.03	.21*	-.08	.26**	.49**	.48**	-.33**	.37**	.13		
14. Neuroticism - Partner-Report[1]	2.91	0.76	-.08	.22**	-.20*	-.03	-.12	-.03	-.06	-.44**	-.42**	.77**	-.33**	-.33**	-.29**	
15. Openness - Partner-Report[1]	3.91	0.49	.02	.00	.35**	-.01	.22*	.04	.36**	.28**	.22**	-.20*	.27**	.02	.40**	-.21*

Note. * indicates $p < .05$. ** indicates $p < .01$

[1] Range: 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)

[2] Range: 0 to 161 (sum scores)

Positive and Negative Affect Schedules – General (PANAS; Watson et al., 1988b) measure the intensity of 20 discrete emotions, further grouped into two categories of Positive Affect (Cronbach's $\alpha = .79$) and Negative Affect ($\alpha = .86$), with ten items per category. Each discrete emotion was presented as a single adjective, such as "interested," "proud," and "inspired" for Positive Affect or "distressed," "hostile," and "afraid" for Negative Affect. All items were on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (very slightly or not at all) to 5 (extremely). Baseline assessment used the general question stem for a global measure of affect: "Indicate to what extent you generally feel this way, that is, how you feel on the average." In addition to the self-reported version, participants also completed the PANAS about their dyadic member, resulting in four completed measures on each affective trait for each romantic dyad of both actual and partner-perceived general affect.

Couples Satisfaction Index (CSI; Funk & Rogge, 2007) measures global relationship satisfaction. The scale consists of 32 items grouped into 8 different response formats. There was one global happiness item on a seven-point scale ranging from 0 (extremely unhappy) to 6 (perfect). The remaining items are on six-point scales ranging from 0 to 5, with different response formats such as *always agree* to *always disagree* or *never* to *more often*, depending on the question group. Notably, the scale was shown to outperform several common inventories for relationship satisfaction such as the Marital Adjustment Test (Locke & Wallace, 1959) and Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976). A sum score was created from all items, with Cronbach's $\alpha = .86$. Unlike the personality and affective trait measures, only self-reports were obtained for relationship satisfaction.

Experience Sampling State Measures

Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI; Gosling et al., 2003) measures the Big Five personality traits using two items per domain, and it has been demonstrated to perform adequately especially for cases in which lengthy personality measures, and those relying on generalized statements such as “I see myself as a good leader” (BFAS Extraversion; DeYoung et al., 2007), are inappropriate or difficult to adapt to reflect momentary states. The short items rely on adjective pairs. For instance, Extraversion scores are based on “extraverted, enthusiastic” and the reverse-keyed “reserved, quiet.” The seven-point Likert items range from 1 (disagree strongly) to 7 (agree strongly), exactly half of which are reverse-keyed. Following past ESM studies (e.g., Fleeson, 2001), scale instructions was adapted to reflect the momentary nature of the assessment: “During the previous three hours, how well do these words describe you?”

Momentary Positive and Negative Affect. Two strictly unipolar items for positive and negative affect was used: “To what extent do you experience positive/negative emotions right now?” on a sliding scale ranging from 0 (I don’t experience positive/negative emotions right now) to 100 (I experience very strong positive/negative emotions right now). These items, with the lower boundaries as “absence anchors,” were shown to be most appropriate when an association between momentary affect and an external variable is of interest but no discrete emotion (e.g., sadness or pride) is the primary focus (Cloos et al., 2022), as was the case with the current study.

Couple Satisfaction Index – 4 items (CSI-4; Funk & Rogge, 2007) includes four selected items from the full 32-item CSI version. This version was created and psychometrically tested by the original scale authors. It includes questions about general happiness, general satisfaction, warmth/comfort, and how rewarding the relationship is. The item language was adapted to reflect momentary satisfaction by adding the question stem “right now” as opposed to “in general.” Participants also reported on a binary item about whether they were physically in the presence of their romantic partner at the time of the survey.

Results

All analyses were conducted using the R statistical language (R Core Team, 2023). All hypotheses were preregistered on the OSF repository prior to data collection (https://osf.io/t3gnh). Several deviations were made to the preregistration document. Structurally, we changed the order of the confirmatory hypotheses and research question grouping for better clarity but the content remained unchanged. More substantively, we removed a preregistered analysis involving the coupled damped linear oscillator model, which is a multivariate model of dynamics which relies on the first and second derivatives of the time series: velocity and acceleration (Boker, 2001; Steele & Ferrer, 2011). Unfortunately, our derivative calculations were unsuccessful and did not arrive at the optimal parameter values needed for the model (for further information about the model and associated *R* package, see: Butler & Barnard, 2019). All associated code were retained in the analytic script for interested readers. In place of the oscillator model, we added un-preregistered analyses to examine co-fluctuations in the time series between dyad members, which are all explicitly identified as un-preregistered in-text.

In addition, we conducted an a priori power analysis which suggested a recruitment target of 300 dyads. This pilot study only included results on 138 dyads, which is clearly far from our target for all tests to be adequately powered. As a result, although we strictly adhered to the pre-registered alpha level of .05 in interpreting significance, it is important to note that many tests presented were only powered to detect moderate effects. All coefficients are presented in associated tables for further context about the effect sizes, and details for the power calculations are presented in the supplemental materials.

Research Question 1: Evidence of Assortative Mating

Hypothesis 1: Baseline Similarity

Similarity was examined using bivariate Pearson's *r* correlations between dyadic members' self-reported personality traits (including five domains and ten lower-order aspects) and global trait measures of Positive and Negative Affect. We found significant positive between-partner correlations for the personality domains of Agreeableness ($r = .17$, $p = .04$) and Openness ($r = .24$, $p = .005$) as well as trait Negative Affect ($r = .18$, $p = .04$). There was no evidence of assortative mating for Positive Affect or any of the other Big Five domains (*p*s > .05). In addition, between-partner correlations were not significant for either of the aspects within Agreeableness (Compassion $r = .11$, Politeness $r = .15$; *p*s > .05). For the Openness domain, only the Openness aspect was significantly positive ($r = .30$, $p < .001$), and not the Intellect aspect ($r = -.08$, $p = .37$). Interestingly, there was a significant negative between-partner correlation for the Volatility aspect (*r* = -.22, *p* = .01), but the effects for both the Withdrawal aspect and the overarching Neuroticism domain was nonsignificant. All between-partner correlations along with 95% confidence intervals are presented in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2

Baseline Bivariate Between-Partner Correlations on Personality and Affective Traits

	Actual Similarity			P1-Perceived Similarity			P2-Perceived Similarity		
	r	95% CI	*p*	*r*	95% CI	*p*	*r*	95% CI	*p*
Positive Affect	.10	[-.07, .26]	.24	**.51**	**[.37, .62]**	**< .001**	**.45**	**[.30, .57]**	**< .001**
Negative Affect	**.18**	**[.01, .34]**	**.04**	**.43**	**[.28, .55]**	**< .001**	**.44**	**[.29, .57]**	**< .001**
Agreeableness	**.17**	**[.01, .33]**	**.04**	**.34**	**[.19, .48]**	**< .001**	**.32**	**[.16, .46]**	**< .001**
Compassion	.11	[-.06, .27]	.20	**.32**	**[.16, .46]**	**< .001**	**.32**	**[.16, .46]**	**< .001**
Politeness	.15	[-.01, .31]	.07	**.22**	**[.05, .37]**	**.01**	**.20**	**[.04, .36]**	**.02**
Conscientiousness	-.01	[-.17, .16]	.95	-.07	[-.23, .10]	.42	-.07	[-.23, .10]	.43
Industriousness	-.01	[-.17, .16]	.95	-.09	[-.26, .08]	.28	-.04	[-.21, .13]	.65
Orderliness	.03	[-.14, .20]	.71	.04	[-.13, .21]	.63	-.06	[-.23, .11]	.46
Extraversion	.13	[-.04, .29]	.13	.15	[-.01, .31]	.07	**.21**	**[.04, .36]**	**.01**
Assertiveness	.15	[-.02, .31]	.08	.03	[-.13, .20]	.69	.12	[-.05, .29]	.15
Enthusiasm	-.01	[-.18, .16]	.92	.15	[-.02, .31]	.09	**.20**	**[.04, .36]**	**.02**
Neuroticism	-.08	[-.25, .08]	.33	**-.19**	**[-.34, -.02]**	**.03**	-.03	[-.20, .14]	.74
Volatility	**-.22**	**[-.37, -.05]**	**.01**	**-.25**	**[-.40, -.08]**	**.003**	-.12	[-.28, .05]	.15
Withdrawal	.09	[-.08, .25]	.31	-.07	[-.23, .10]	.43	.05	[-.18, .22]	.56
Openness	**.24**	**[.07, .39]**	**.01**	**.33**	**[.17, .47]**	**< .001**	**.36**	**[.21, .50]**	**< .001**
Intellect	-.08	[-.24, .09]	.37	.09	[-.08, .25]	.29	.09	[-.08, .25]	.31
Openness	**.30**	**[.14, .45]**	**< .001**	**.30**	**[.14, .45]**	**< .001**	**.42**	**[.28, .55]**	**< .001**

Note. Bolded are effects that are significant at the .05. alpha level. P1 indicates the first participant in the couple who scheduled the appointment and P2 indicates the other.

In addition to univariate similarities using individual traits, we also examined multivariate similarities using full trait profiles. Profile correlations were computed using raw scores, gender-mean-centered scores, and standardized scores. Standardizing scores before computing profile correlations alleviated the effects of normativeness in assessing similarity, such as the extent that two partners are similar to a typical person (Furr, 2008). The following profiles were analyzed: Big Five personality domain profile, personality aspect profile of the ten aspects, Positive Affect profile of the ten PA items, Negative Affect profile of the ten NA items, and general affect profile of all 20 PANAS items at baseline.

Using personality profiles, we found that only 10.1% of couples showed significant profile correlations with raw scores on the Big Five domains, and only 2.9% remained significant with standardized score vectors. On the other hand, using profiles of the ten aspects, we found that 23.9% couples showed significant raw correlations, which dropped to 12.3% using standardized score vectors. Using affective profiles, we found that 54.1% of couples showed significant affective correlations using raw scores from the entire PANAS vectors. This percentage dropped to 16.7% for both centered and standardized score vectors. Looking at each valence, we found more evidence of profile correlations for Negative Affect with 20.2% showing significant raw correlations versus only 7.5% for Positive Affect. However, this percentage dropped to 9.4% for Negative Affect and 5.8% using standardized score vectors.

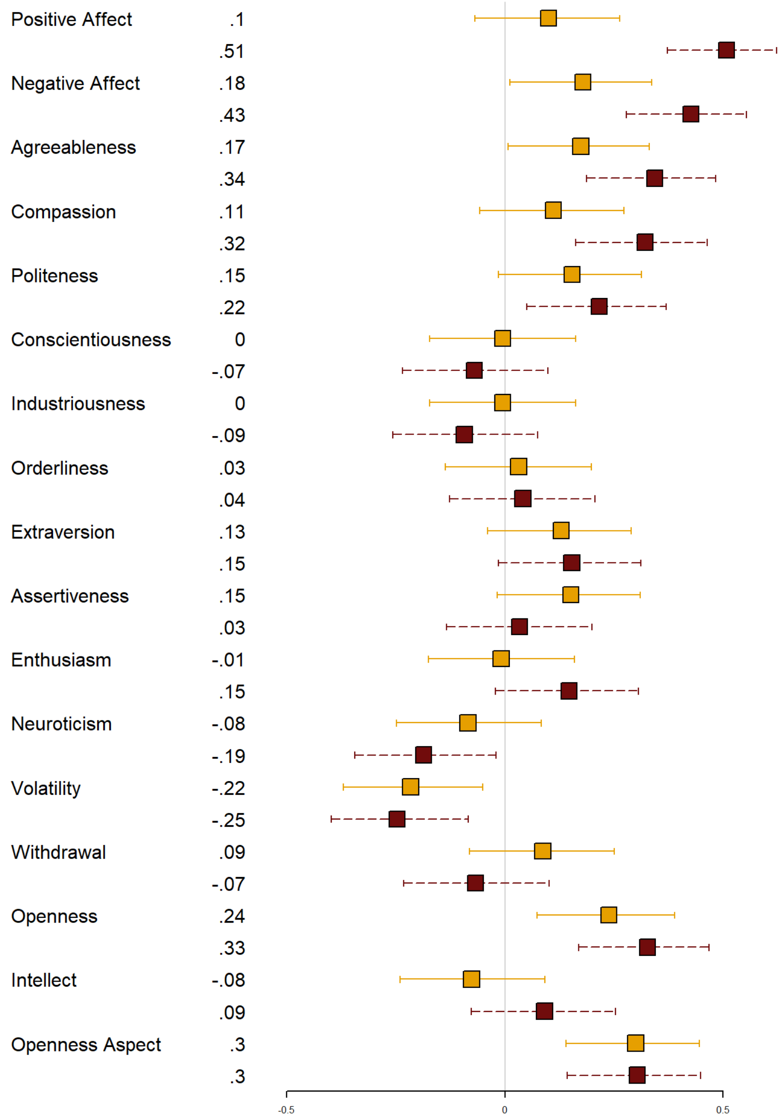
Hypothesis 2: Actual versus Perceived Similarity

To compare the effect sizes of actual and perceived similarity, Fisher's *z*-transformed scores of the Pearson's *r* bivariate correlation were compared between (1) self-reports of both partners as previously computed and (2) self-reports of partner one with perceived-partner's scores completed by partner one about partner two.

We found that perceived similarity was always stronger than actual similarity in magnitude, either when the correlation was in the positive or negative direction. However, this difference was only statistically significant for Positive Affect (actual r = .10 versus first partners' r = .51 and second partners' r = .45) and Negative Affect (actual r = .18 versus first partners' r = .43 and second partners' r = .44). There was also no difference between perceived similarities as reported by the first or second partners, at least none that was significant given the current statistical power. Figure 3.1 presents bivariate correlations and 95% confidence interval for both actual and perceived similarities. There were no substantial differences between similarities as perceived by the first or second participants, and thus only first participants' perceptions were plotted for ease of presentation.

Figure 3.1

Actual Similarity and Perceived Similarity on Baseline Personality and Affective Traits



Note. Actual similarity is represented by the yellow straight lines and perceived similarity by participant 1 is represented by the red dashed line. There was no difference between perceived similarities by participants 1 and 2.

Hypothesis 3: Dynamic Similarity

Momentary variability was operationalized as the standard deviation and relative variability index (RVI) for each participant[8]. The RVI is a weighted version of the standard deviation which accounts for the mean and floor/ceiling effects of bounded measures (Mestdagh et al., 2018). Similarity was examined using bivariate Pearson's *r* correlations between dyadic member's variability indices. All dynamic bivariate between-partner correlations are presented in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3

Dynamic Bivariate Between-Partner Correlations on Personality and Affective States Variability

	Within-Person SD			Within-Person RVI		
	r	95% CI	*p*	*r*	95% CI	*p*
Positive Affect	**.20**	**[.03, .35]**	**.02**	**.19**	**[.02, .35]**	**.03**
Negative Affect	**.23**	**[.06, .38]**	**.01**	.11	[-.06, .28]	.19
Agreeableness	**.26**	**[.10, .41]**	**.002**	**.20**	**[.03, .36]**	**.02**
Conscientiousness	.08	[-.09, .24]	.36	.08	[-.09, .24]	.37
Extraversion	**.21**	**[.04, .36]**	**.02**	**.27**	**[.11, .42]**	**.001**
Neuroticism	**.24**	**[.08, .39]**	**.01**	**.15**	**[-.02, .31]**	**.08**
Openness	**.20**	**[.04, .36]**	**.02**	.17	[-.00, .33]	.052

Note. Bolded are effects that are significant at the .05 alpha level.

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[8] In an un-preregistered exploration, we also conducted analogous analyses using the mean-squared successive difference as well as the relative index for MSSD. Instead of variability, these indices represent the instability in the time series. Although outside of the scope of the current paper, these results are presented in the supplementary Tables B.1 and B.2.

We found significant positive correlations in within-person standard deviations for most dynamic variables: momentary Agreeableness ($r = .26$, $p = .002$), Extraversion ($r = .21$, $p = .02$), Neuroticism ($r = .24$, $p = .01$), and Openness ($r = .20$, $p = .02$), as well as momentary Positive Affect ($r = .20$, $p = .02$) and Negative Affect ($r = .23$, $p = .01$). Conscientiousness was the only personality state for which partners did not show correlated variability using the standard deviation ($r = .08$, $p = .36$). Some of these effects went away with the RVI. Although all correlations remained positive, they were attenuated in magnitude and no longer significant for Neuroticism ($r = .15$, $p = .08$), Openness ($r = .17$, $p = .05$), and momentary Negative Affect ($r = .11$, $p = .19$). This suggested that the variability effect for these variables might have been driven by mean associations rather than true variability effects.

Alternatively, in order to examine whether partners fluctuated together across time during the seven-day period, we also conducted un-preregistered dynamic correlations between partners' response vectors. Specifically, for each ESM variable, each partner has a response vector with a maximum length of 35 for the 35 scheduled digital surveys. Within-couple pairwise deletion was used such that correlations were only computed based on timepoints for which both partners provided a response. Across all variables, an average of 26.05 to 26.13 pairs of observations were used for each couple to compute the aforementioned correlations. Because a correlation estimate was produced for each couple, we were able to see the proportion of couples that showed significant co-fluctuations across time.

Affective states provided the strongest between-partner correlations, with the highest average correlation found for momentary Positive Affect (average $r = .21$, significant correlations found for 20.3% of couples). Most other states showed an average correlation in the .10s range, with between 10.4% and 11.9% couples showing significant state correlations. The weakest associations were found for state Conscientiousness (average $r = .03$, 5.1% significant) and state Openness (average $r = .07$, 9.5% significant).

In sum, our investigation for the first research question showed evidence of baseline univariate assortment on Agreeableness, Openness (and its Intellect aspect), and Negative Affect, all of which were moderate in magnitude. In contrast, there was evidence for negative assortment on the Volatility aspect within Neuroticism. Perceived similarities were often stronger in magnitude than actual similarities, although this was significant only for traits Positive and Negative Affect. There was limited evidence for multivariate profile similarities at baseline using personality traits, but much stronger evidence for affective profiles; however, most of these effects resulted from normative profiles using raw scores rather than standardized scores. That is, much of the effect might reflect the degree to which each participant's profile was similar to the typical person, instead of distinctive patterns unique to each couple. Dynamically, we found more evidence for assortment based on variability indices than baseline measures. Partners shared similarities in personality and affective variability and instability, and they also co-fluctuated across time on these state measures.

Research Question 2: Benefits of Assortative Mating

Hypothesis 4: Baseline Benefits

We first examined whether there was an association between trait measures and relationship quality as measured at baseline. To do so, we ran simple linear regression models in which the absolute value of the difference between partners' scores on a particular variable were used to predict overall relationship quality. In addition to univariate similarity, we also examined the effect of multivariate similarity for which the Fisher's *z*-transformed scores of each couple's profile correlations were used to predict relationship quality. Separate models were conducted with reported relationship quality by the first and second partners as the dependent variables. All univariate results are presented in Table 3.4 and multivariate results are presented in Table 3.5.

Table 3.4

Regression Results for (Dis)similarity and Interaction Effects between Partner's Scores as Predictors of Relationship Quality

	P1 Relationship Satisfaction						P2 Relationship Satisfaction					
	Difference Score			Interaction Effect			Difference Score			Interaction Effect		
	b	*t*	*p*-value	*b*	*t*	*p*-value	*b*	*t*	*p*-value	*b*	*t*	*p*-value
Positive Affect	0.86	0.24	.81	-3.15	-0.54	.59	1.85	0.47	.64	0.35	0.06	.96
Negative Affect	-3.25	-1.13	.26	-3.88	-1.36	.18	-1.01	-0.32	.75	**-6.43**	**-2.15**	**.03**
Agreeableness	-5.41	-1.13	.26	1.29	0.16	.87	-8.12	-1.58	.12	2.38	0.27	.79
Compassion	-2.71	-0.81	.42	3.74	0.81	.42	**-8.00**	**-2.26**	**.03**	1.35	0.27	.79
Politeness	-3.09	-0.76	.45	-11.46	-1.79	.08	-2.07	-0.47	.64	-0.69	-0.10	.93
Conscientiousness	0.02	0.01	1.00	-1.82	-0.27	.79	2.55	0.62	.54	-4.46	-0.61	.54
Industriousness	0.03	0.01	.99	-3.10	-0.76	.45	-1.29	-0.41	.69	-3.78	-0.86	.39
Orderliness	-0.72	-0.21	.84	2.74	0.56	.58	4.23	1.13	.26	-4.29	-0.81	.42
Extraversion	-4.47	-1.13	.26	-1.58	-0.27	.79	**-10.51**	**-2.51**	**.01**	-0.28	-0.05	.96
Assertiveness	0.66	0.20	.84	-6.91	-1.85	.07	-1.01	-0.29	.78	-6.81	-1.72	.09
Enthusiasm	-2.27	-0.77	.44	3.12	0.70	.49	**-7.40**	**-2.37**	**.02**	4.17	0.90	.37
Neuroticism	4.17	1.53	.13	-5.41	-1.55	.13	4.26	1.45	.15	-5.81	-1.58	.12
Volatility	0.23	0.11	.92	-0.82	-0.36	.72	2.10	0.91	.36	-2.09	-0.85	.40
Withdrawal	4.55	1.58	.12	-6.23	-1.83	.07	4.84	1.56	.12	-6.33	-1.76	.08
Openness	-0.88	-0.21	.84	1.73	0.25	.80	-4.89	-1.08	.28	-0.31	-0.04	.97
Intellect	-0.89	-0.30	.77	0.76	0.16	.88	0.58	0.18	.86	-9.13	-1.78	.08
Openness	4.25	1.29	.20	2.83	0.67	.51	-1.85	-0.52	.61	3.84	0.86	.39

Note. Bolded are effects that are significant at the .05 alpha level.

Table 3.5

Regression Results for Profile Similarities as Predictors of Relationship Quality

	P1 Relationship Satisfaction									P2 Relationship Satisfaction								
	Raw Profile			Centered Profile			Standardized Profile			Raw Profile			Centered Profile			Standardized Profile		
	b	*t*	*p*	*b*	*t*	*p*	*b*	*t*	*p*	*b*	*t*	*p*	*b*	*t*	*p*	*b*	*t*	*p*
Overall Affect	-4.54	-1.02	.31	-8.00	-1.92	.06	**-8.35**	**-2.03**	**.04**	-7.17	-1.48	.14	-5.65	-1.25	.22	-3.97	-0.89	.38
Positive Affect	4.31	1.01	.32	1.45	0.38	.71	0.82	0.21	.83	0.82	0.17	.86	-1.78	-0.43	.67	-2.17	-0.52	.60
Negative Affect	5.39	1.33	.19	-7.33	-1.59	.11	-8.68	-1.85	.07	4.13	0.92	.36	**-12.28**	**-2.51**	**.01**	**-11.93**	**-2.38**	**.02**
Personality Domains	2.09	0.80	.43	-2.63	-1.09	.28	-2.48	-0.98	.33	5.05	1.80	.07	-3.77	-1.46	.15	-3.48	-1.27	.21
Personality Aspects	5.81	1.60	.11	-2.29	-0.71	.48	-2.61	-0.78	.44	**8.33**	**2.14**	**.04**	-4.48	-1.30	.19	-4.60	-1.28	.20

Note. Bolded are effects that are significant at the .05 alpha level.

There was no significant effect for any univariate models using the difference score to predict relationship satisfaction as reported by the first participants (all *p*s > .05), which suggested no benefits of assortment on personality and affect traits at baseline for overall relationship quality. On the other hand, there were a few significant effects for relationship satisfaction as reported by the second participants. Specifically, similarity on the Compassion aspect within Agreeableness predicted higher satisfaction ($t = 2.26$, $p = .03$). In addition, there was a significant effect for similarity on Extraversion ($t = 2.51$, $p = .01$) as well as its Enthusiasm aspect ($t = 2.37$, $p = .02$). Using multivariate similarity with standardized profiles, interestingly, we only found significant effects in the opposite direction: profile similarities on overall affect ($t = -2.03$, $p = .04$) and Negative Affect ($t = -2.38$, $p = .02$) were negatively associated with relationship quality for first and second participants, respectively. There was no effects for personality profiles using either the standardized vectors of domains or aspects on relationship satisfaction.

Using an alternative analytic method, we next fit multiple regression models in which both dyad members' scores along with an interaction term were used to predict relationship quality. Only one significant interaction effect emerged for Negative Affect on relationship satisfaction as reported by the second participant ($t = -2.15$, $p = .03$). Specifically, for second participants, there was only a significant negative association between their Negative Affect and relationship satisfaction when their partners reported an average level ($t = -2.73$, $p = .01$) or high level of Negative Affect (+1 SD: $t = -3.80$, $p < .001$). There was no longer a relationship between self-reported Negative Affect and relationship satisfaction when their partners reported low levels of Negative Affect (-1 SD: $t = -0.57$, $p = .57$).

Hypothesis 5: Actor versus Partner versus Similarity Effects on Quality at Baseline

In dyadic data analysis, actor effects refer to the relationship between one's own characteristics and one's own reported outcome, whereas partner effects refer to the relationship between one's partner's characteristics and one's own reported outcome. In this study, measured characteristics included the Big Five domains and aspects and the general affective traits, and the outcome was overall relationship quality, all measured at baseline. Because these relationships or paths are not independent of one another, it is important to account for their intercorrelation in a shared model. As a result, we fit an Actor-Partner Interdependence Model (APIM; Campbell & Kashy, 2002; Cook & Kenny, 2005; Kenny & Ledermann, 2010) to adequately compare the effects of (1) one's own characteristic or actor effects, (2) one's partner's characteristic or partner effects, and (3) the dissimilarity between one's own and one's partner's characteristics on reported relationship quality. Although the conceptual focus was on similarity, we modeled this effect as dissimilarity for ease of analysis (absolute value of the difference between two partners' characteristics) and results were interpreted in the opposite direction as model outputs.

When actor and partner effects were included in the model, there was no significant effect for (dis)similarity on any of the 17 measured characteristics at baseline (all *p*s > .05). Most of the significant effects were for the actor paths, when one partner's characteristic was used to predict their own outcome. This was found for Positive and

Negative Affect, Agreeableness and its aspects, Extraversion and its aspects, Neuroticism and its aspect of Volatility, and Openness and its aspects. All effects were in the positive direction except for Neuroticism and Negative Affect, understandably due to their maladaptive correlates. In fact, the only baseline trait without any actor, partner, or dissimilarity effects was Conscientiousness and its aspects. There were also few partner effects, only for Negative Affect, Agreeableness and its aspects, and Neuroticism and its aspects. Notably, many actor and partner effects were often only significant for one participant. The only trait with consistent associations for which all two actor effects and two partner effects were significant and negatively associated with relationship outcomes was the Volatility aspect within Neuroticism (βs ranging from -.17 to -.25, ps < .05).

Although we could interpret the difference in actor, partner, and (dis)similarity effects based on their difference in significance, we also explicitly compared these effects for all 17 measured characteristics by comparing the 95% confidence intervals of their estimates. We found that actor effects were significantly stronger than partner effects for 3 of the 17 models (Positive Affect, Extraversion, and Enthusiasm aspect). On the other hand, actor effects were significantly stronger than (dis)similarity effects for 9 of the 17 models. The only personality trait without any differences was once again Conscientiousness, for which there was no significant actor, partner, or (dis)similarity effects. All APIM results are presented in Table 3.6.

Table 3.6

Actor-Partner Interdependence Model (APIM) Results of Actual (Dis)similarity

		Relationship Satisfaction		
		β	*SE*	*p*-value
Affective Trait	Positive Affect			
	P1 -> P1 (a1)	0.15	0.08	.07
	P2 -> P2 (a2)	**0.22**	**0.08**	**.01**
	P1 -> P2 (p12)	-0.05	0.08	.59
	P2 -> P1 (p21)	-0.04	0.08	.63
	Diff -> P1 (d1)	0.03	0.08	.69
	Diff -> P2 (d2)	0.04	0.08	.64
	Negative Affect			
	P1 -> P1 (a1)	**-0.22**	**0.09**	**.01**
	P2 -> P2 (a2)	**-0.26**	**0.08**	**.001**
	P1 -> P2 (p12)	**-0.18**	**0.08**	**.03**
	P2 -> P1 (p21)	-0.12	0.08	.15
	Diff -> P1 (d1)	-0.01	0.09	.89
	Diff -> P2 (d2)	0.07	0.08	.43
Agreeableness	Agreeableness Domain			
	P1 -> P1 (a1)	**0.36**	**0.08**	**< .001**
	P2 -> P2 (a2)	**0.27**	**0.09**	**.002**
	P1 -> P2 (p12)	0.12	0.08	.15
	P2 -> P1 (p21)	0.11	0.09	.19
	Diff -> P1 (d1)	-0.12	0.09	.15
	Diff -> P2 (d2)	-0.07	0.09	.46
	Compassion			
	P1 -> P1 (a1)	**0.37**	**0.08**	**< .001**
	P2 -> P2 (a2)	**0.21**	**0.09**	**.02**
	P1 -> P2 (p12)	**0.19**	**0.08**	**.02**
	P2 -> P1 (p21)	-0.03	0.09	.78
	Diff -> P1 (d1)	-0.14	0.09	.11
	Diff -> P2 (d2)	-0.13	0.09	.17
	Politeness			
	P1 -> P1 (a1)	**0.23**	**0.08**	**.01**
	P2 -> P2 (a2)	0.16	0.09	.06
	P1 -> P2 (p12)	0.05	0.09	.57
	P2 -> P1 (p21)	**0.25**	**0.08**	**.002**
	Diff -> P1 (d1)	0.04	0.08	.61
	Diff -> P2 (d2)	0.01	0.09	.96
Conscientiousness	Conscientiousness Domain			
	P1 -> P1 (a1)	0.14	0.08	.10
	P2 -> P2 (a2)	0.02	0.09	.82
	P1 -> P2 (p12)	-0.03	0.09	.69
	P2 -> P1 (p21)	-0.06	0.08	.45
	Diff -> P1 (d1)	-0.01	0.08	.90
	Diff -> P2 (d2)	0.06	0.09	.51
	Industriousness			

	P1 -> P1 (a1)	0.13	0.09	.12
	P2 -> P2 (a2)	0.08	0.09	.39
	P1 -> P2 (p12)	0.00	0.09	.97
	P2 -> P1 (p21)	-0.06	0.09	.46
	Diff -> P1 (d1)	-0.04	0.09	.66
	Diff -> P2 (d2)	-0.02	0.09	.84
	Orderliness			
	P1 -> P1 (a1)	0.11	0.08	.21
	P2 -> P2 (a2)	-0.05	0.09	.53
	P1 -> P2 (p12)	-0.04	0.09	.67
	P2 -> P1 (p21)	-0.06	0.09	.49
	Diff -> P1 (d1)	-0.01	0.09	.88
	Diff -> P2 (d2)	0.09	0.09	.30
Extraversion	Extraversion Domain			
	P1 -> P1 (a1)	**0.19**	**0.08**	**.02**
	P2 -> P2 (a2)	**0.27**	**0.08**	**.001**
	P1 -> P2 (p12)	0.11	0.08	.17
	P2 -> P1 (p21)	-0.02	0.09	.81
	Diff -> P1 (d1)	-0.09	0.08	.31
	Diff -> P2 (d2)	-0.16	0.08	.053
	Assertiveness			
	P1 -> P1 (a1)	0.05	0.09	.59
	P2 -> P2 (a2)	**0.16**	**0.08**	**.048**
	P1 -> P2 (p12)	0.10	0.09	.22
	P2 -> P1 (p21)	-0.07	0.09	.40
	Diff -> P1 (d1)	0.02	0.09	.81
	Diff -> P2 (d2)	0.00	0.08	.99
	Enthusiasm			
	P1 -> P1 (a1)	**0.29**	**0.08**	**< .001**
	P2 -> P2 (a2)	**0.33**	**0.08**	**< .001**
	P1 -> P2 (p12)	0.13	0.08	.09
	P2 -> P1 (p21)	0.09	0.09	.32
	Diff -> P1 (d1)	-0.06	0.09	.46
	Diff -> P2 (d2)	-0.10	0.08	.23
Neuroticism	Neuroticism Domain			
	P1 -> P1 (a1)	-0.16	0.08	.051
	P2 -> P2 (a2)	**-0.19**	**0.08**	**.02**
	P1 -> P2 (p12)	**-0.24**	**0.08**	**.002**
	P2 -> P1 (p21)	-0.15	0.08	.08
	Diff -> P1 (d1)	0.12	0.08	.16
	Diff -> P2 (d2)	0.11	0.08	.19
	Volatility			
	P1 -> P1 (a1)	**-0.17**	**0.08**	**.04**
	P2 -> P2 (a2)	**-0.20**	**0.08**	**.01**
	P1 -> P2 (p12)	**-0.25**	**0.08**	**.002**
	P2 -> P1 (p21)	**-0.22**	**0.08**	**.01**
	Diff -> P1 (d1)	0.00	0.09	.97
	Diff -> P2 (d2)	0.08	0.08	.33
	Withdrawal			
	P1 -> P1 (a1)	-0.12	0.08	.15
	P2 -> P2 (a2)	-0.13	0.08	.12
	P1 -> P2 (p12)	**-0.18**	**0.08**	**.02**

	P2 -> P1 (p21)	-0.04	0.09	.65
	Diff -> P1 (d1)	0.11	0.09	.18
	Diff -> P2 (d2)	0.09	0.08	.28
Openness	Openness Domain			
	P1 -> P1 (a1)	0.12	0.09	.17
	P2 -> P2 (a2)	**0.23**	**0.09**	**.01**
	P1 -> P2 (p12)	0.09	0.08	.29
	P2 -> P1 (p21)	0.02	0.09	.85
	Diff -> P1 (d1)	-0.02	0.09	.86
	Diff -> P2 (d2)	-0.03	0.09	.69
	Intellect			
	P1 -> P1 (a1)	**0.21**	**0.08**	**.01**
	P2 -> P2 (a2)	**0.26**	**0.08**	**.002**
	P1 -> P2 (p12)	0.13	0.08	.10
	P2 -> P1 (p21)	0.02	0.09	.85
	Diff -> P1 (d1)	-0.03	0.09	.76
	Diff -> P2 (d2)	0.10	0.09	.27
	Openness Aspect			
	P1 -> P1 (a1)	-0.03	0.09	.74
	P2 -> P2 (a2)	**0.20**	**0.09**	**.03**
	P1 -> P2 (p12)	0.05	0.09	.58
	P2 -> P1 (p21)	0.14	0.09	.13
	Diff -> P1 (d1)	0.16	0.09	.07
	Diff -> P2 (d2)	0.03	0.09	.70

Note. Bolded are effects that are significant at the .05 alpha level.

Hypothesis 6: Actual versus Perceived Similarity Effects on Quality at Baseline

To compare the effects between actual and perceived similarity on relationship quality, we fit another set of models with similar structures to the APIM in hypothesis 5. However, instead of modeling each partner's self-reports as the predictors, we created two different sets of models, one with self-reports and partner-reports provided by partner 1, and one with self-reports and partner-reports provided by partner 2, along with their respective dissimilarity as the predictors of relationship outcomes. This allowed us to examine the effects of each partner's perceived similarity on relationship quality. Dissimilarity effect estimates and their 95% confidence intervals were compared with those found in previous models to determine whether the effects of perceived similarity were significantly higher than those of actual similarity.

We once again found participant-specific effects, such that (dis)similarity as perceived by only one partner was predictive of relationship satisfaction as reported by only one partner. In fact, there was no consistent effects for which either (dis)similarity as perceived by both partners were predictive of relationship outcomes. Further, there was no significant difference between perceived and actual (dis)similarity effects, and all 95% confidence intervals were overlapping for all of the 17 baseline characteristics. As a result, we conclude that there was difference between the effects of actual versus perceived similarity on relationship satisfaction.

Hypothesis 7: Dynamic Benefits

Dynamically during the seven-day digital data collection period, we examined the relationship between similarity on variability and baseline-reported relationship quality. We first ran simple linear regression models in which the absolute values of the difference between partner's variability indices on a particular variable were used to predict overall relationship quality. Separate models were conducted with reported relationship quality by the first and second partners as the dependent variables. Using an alternative analysis method, we next fit multiple regression models in which both dyad members' scores along with an interaction term were used to predict relationship quality. Across three variability indices on seven state measures for both participants' outcomes and two analytic methods, there were only two significant effects. Specifically, similarity in within-person standard deviation on Negative Affect was positively associated with relationship satisfaction as reported by first participants (*t* = -2.25, *p* = .03). In addition, there was an interaction effect for the relative variability index on Openness states (*t* = -2.14, *p* = .03). Specifically, for second participants, there was a positive association between their Openness variability and their relationship satisfaction when their partners reported low Openness variability (*t* = 1.89), but this association was in the negative direction when their partners reported high Openness variability (*t* = -0.93). Nonetheless, neither of these effects were statistically significant (*p*s > .05). All results are presented in Table 3.7.

Table 3.7

Regression Results for (Dis)similarity and Interaction Effects Between Partner's Variability Indices as Predictors of Relationship Quality

		P1 Relationship Satisfaction						P2 Relationship Satisfaction					
		Difference Score			Interaction Effect			Difference Score			Interaction Effect		
		b	*t*	*p*	*b*	*t*	*p*	*b*	*t*	*p*	*b*	*t*	*p*
Standard Deviation	Positive Affect	-0.11	-0.33	.74	0.01	0.35	.73	-0.22	-0.62	.54	0.00	-0.02	.98
	Negative Affect	**-0.69**	**-2.25**	**.03**	0.06	1.73	.09	-0.33	-0.98	.33	0.01	0.28	.78
	Agreeableness	-3.06	-0.46	.65	9.91	0.68	.50	1.41	0.20	.84	-11.45	-0.74	.46
	Conscientiousness	-1.02	-0.17	.87	-1.19	-0.08	.93	4.23	0.63	.53	-26.93	-1.80	.07
	Extraversion	-5.94	-1.07	.29	-1.36	-0.10	.92	-4.86	-0.81	.42	1.95	0.13	.90
	Neuroticism	-8.56	-1.37	.17	10.83	0.85	.40	-4.12	-0.61	.54	-2.77	-0.20	.84
	Openness	1.62	0.27	.79	-2.23	-0.13	.90	2.92	0.45	.65	-11.94	-0.66	.51
Relative Variability Index	Positive Affect	-12.66	-0.87	.39	40.46	0.67	.50	-11.98	-0.76	.45	-85.13	-1.32	.19
	Negative Affect	-17.81	-1.38	.17	81.98	1.29	.20	-0.82	-0.06	.95	-44.49	-0.65	.51
	Agreeableness	12.19	0.75	.46	-29.89	-0.34	.73	14.19	0.81	.42	-129.82	-1.40	.17
	Conscientiousness	-9.54	-0.64	.53	50.57	0.45	.65	21.49	1.34	.18	-206.93	-1.71	.09
	Extraversion	-12.48	-0.78	.44	-43.43	-0.44	.66	-6.16	-0.36	.72	-104.07	-0.97	.34
	Neuroticism	-13.60	-0.88	.38	29.63	0.34	.74	-5.89	-0.35	.73	-49.94	-0.52	.60
	Openness	13.58	0.93	.36	-76.28	-0.74	.46	11.06	0.70	.48	**-235.36**	**-2.14**	**.03**

Note: Bolded are effects that are significant at the .05 alpha level.

In addition, in an un-preregistered analysis, Fisher's *z*-transformed scores of within-couple correlations were used as predictors in the simple regression model to see if co-fluctuations significantly predicted relationship quality. We found significant positive associations for Positive Affect, Extraversion, and Neuroticism. Specifically, co-fluctuations on momentary Positive Affect predicted relationship satisfaction for both first ($t = 2.61$, $p = .01$) and second participants ($t = 2.39$, $p = .02$). Further, co-fluctuations on state Extraversion predicted relationship satisfaction for first participants ($t = 2.87$, $p = .01$) and co-fluctuations on state Neuroticism predicted relationship satisfaction for second participants ($t = 1.99$, $p = .049$). Regression results are presented in Table 3.8.

Table 3.8

Regression Results for Co-fluctuations as Predictors of Relationship Quality

	P1 Relationship Satisfaction			P2 Relationship Satisfaction		
	b	*t*	*p*-value	*b*	*t*	*p*-value
Positive Affect	**13.93**	**2.61**	**.01**	**13.91**	**2.39**	**.02**
Negative Affect	0.69	0.14	.89	5.49	1.03	.31
Agreeableness	-7.52	-1.40	.17	0.39	0.07	.95
Conscientiousness	4.03	0.57	.57	7.75	1.03	.30
Extraversion	**20.60**	**2.87**	**.01**	14.56	1.85	.07
Neuroticism	6.87	1.07	.29	**13.64**	**1.99**	**.049**
Openness	3.66	0.60	.55	1.97	0.30	.76

Note. Bolded are effects that are significant at the .05 alpha level.

In sum, our investigations of the second research question yielded very limited evidence for the benefits of assortative mating using personality and affective traits measured at baseline, especially when including actor and partner effects in the same models. In other words, after controlling for the effects of each partner's characteristics, there was almost no effect of between-partner similarity on relationship satisfaction. Many baseline effects were also not inconsistent across partners such that traits were often predictive of baseline relationship satisfaction as reported by only one of the two partners. Models of variability indices such as the standard deviation and relative variability index also demonstrated little evidence for the benefits of dynamic assortative mating. However, there was consistent support for the benefits of co-fluctuations on Positive Affect over time for relationship quality.

Discussion

This study presented analytic results on a pilot study of 138 couples who provided both baseline data on personality and affective trait measures as well as dynamic data on personality and affective states across a seven-day period. We examined the evidence for and benefits of assortative mating, and the discussion is further organized into two sections including (1) baseline trait assortment and (2) dynamic state assortment. We found evidence for assortative mating based on both baseline traits and dynamic states for the personality and affective variables. However, there was more evidence for perceived similarities than actual similarities at baseline, and there was more evidence for dynamic similarities on states than baseline similarities on traits. We discussed the importance of including multiple perspectives through self- and partner-reports, multiple levels through personality domains and aspects, and multiple timescales through trait and state assessments.

Assortment Based on Traits

For personality and affective traits at baseline, we found evidence for assortment for Negative Affect, Agreeableness, and Openness as well as its Intellect aspect. The effects were all moderate in magnitude (*r*s ranging from .17 to .30). Although it was expected that trait Openness would have the strongest between-partner correlation among the Big Five given previous meta-analytic results (Horwitz et al., 2023), it was surprising that this was driven completely by its Openness aspect ($r = .30$) and not Intellect ($r = -.08$). Although we have previously attributed the patterns of results for Openness to its association with cognitive abilities and educational attainment (e.g., Harris, 2004; O'Connell & Marks, 2022), this finding indicated that it was the other aspect of Openness that was driving the results. The Openness aspect is often linked with divergent thinking, artistic engagement, and artistic achievements (Kaufman, 2013). Example items for this aspect in our study include: *I enjoy the beauty of nature* and *I get deeply immersed in music* (DeYoung et al., 2007). Interestingly, some research has examined the implication of creativity for romantic relationships. For instance, Carswell and colleagues (2019) found a link between creativity and romantic passion both cross-sectionally and longitudinally. Creativity and everyday artistic behaviors for laypeople were also associated with passion, intimacy, and commitment (Campbell & Kaufman, 2017), and engaging in novel experiences together has been shown to increase relationship quality through enhanced Positive Affect (Strong & Aron, 2006). To summarize this research area, Verger and Duymedjian (2020) coined the term "romantic creativity" to capture the dyadic process in which romantic partners engage in continual self-discovery and expansion which ultimately contribute to dyadic well-being.

On the other hand, we also found a negative between-partner correlation for the Volatility aspect within Neuroticism ($r = -.22$), which was indicative of a complementarity instead of assortment effect (Markey & Markey, 2007). Whereas the Withdrawal aspect was conceptualized and demonstrated to relate to anxiety and depression, the Volatility aspect reflects anger and irritability with example items: *I get angry easily* and *I am a person whose moods go up and down easily* (DeYoung et al., 2007). Because the current study included only established couples of at least 12 months with a median length of 3 years, this complementary pattern may reflect an adaptive process for which only one partner exhibits moody emotional patterns and the other partner acts as a buffer to balance out the dyadic emotional experiences. This buffer effect has been shown for other maladaptive characteristics such as insecure attachment orientations (Simpson & Overall, 2014): partners of anxiously attached individuals exhibited accommodative behaviors (determined by observer-ratings) which then helped promote more constructive discussions on stressful topics (Tran & Simpson, 2009) and partners of avoidantly attached individuals adopted softening communication to balance their counterparts who were often defensive and quick to anger during conflicts (Overall et al., 2013).

Notably, we were only able to uncover these effects because the Big Five Aspect Scale (DeYoung et al., 2007) included not only Big Five domains but also their ten underlying aspects. This further highlighted the bandwidth-fidelity tradeoff with personality research using only the domain level (Cronbach & Gleser, 1957). Although these five domains are often predictive of a diverse array of outcomes, their broad conceptualization and measurement means they are not often strongly predictive of specific and contextualized outcomes. There are many potential directions to expand beyond these domains, such as examining other levels of personality with characteristic adaptations and even life narratives (McAdams & Pals, 2006). However, research has shown that discriminant validity and differential longitudinal trajectories can be achieved in trait research just by adding a bit more granularity with the aspect level (Costello et al., 2017; DeYoung et al., 2007; Nguyen et al., 2023).

In addition to examining the evidence of actual similarities based on correlations between partners' self-reports, we also collected partner-reported measures of all personality and affective traits. As a result, we were able to directly compare actual and perceived similarities to see whether partners were truly similar to one another or if they merely perceived themselves to be. Strikingly, perceived similarities were much stronger than actual similarities for affective traits, although not significantly so for personality traits. Whereas actual similarities on Positive and Negative Affects were *r*s = .10 and .18, respectively, perceived similarities on these traits ranged from *r*s = .43 to .51. In fact, many results for perceived similarities were stronger in magnitude than actual similarities. For instance, the aspects Compassion and Politeness within Agreeableness did not show significant assortment using self-reports (*r*s = .11 and .15) but did so for both partner one- and partner two-perceived similarities (*r*s ranging from .20 to .32). This finding highlighted the contribution of including multiple informants in personality research. This may suggest that assortative mating is a matter of perception as partners made a conscious choice to seek out and maintain relationships with those who they actively perceive to be similar to themselves.

Although there was evidence for assortment based on personality and affective traits at baseline, there was very little evidence for the benefits of assortment for reported relationship satisfaction, either through univariate or multivariate/profile approaches. When an effect emerged, it was often participant-specific and only significant for first or second participants. Importantly, when actor and partner effects were controlled by the Actor-Partner Interdependence Model, no similarity effects remained for actual similarities and effects were sporadic and partner-specific for perceived similarities. As a result, we concluded that no explicit benefits could be found for trait assortment in our sample. Nonetheless, we should note that maintaining a long-term established relationship is itself a positive outcome, and every couple in the current sample had been in the relationship for at least 12 months with high and positively skewed relationship satisfaction. As a result, this could present a range restriction problem in which association effects are attenuated from the full population value (Mendoza & Mumford, 1987).

Assortment Based on States

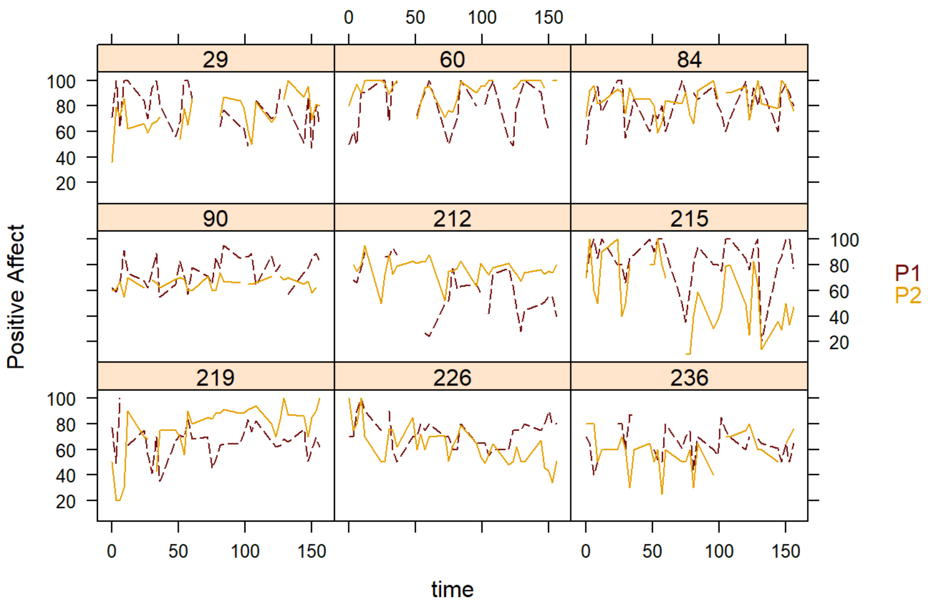
The seven-day experience sampling period allowed us to conceptually replicate many of the trait findings using dynamic processes of personality and affective states. Compared to baseline trait measures, we found more evidence for assortment based on variability indices. Specifically, all variables showed significant between-partner correlations on within-person standard deviation, with the exception of Conscientiousness. Significant effects were again moderate in magnitude (*r*s ranging from .20 to .26). Despite being a popular measure of within-person variability, the standard deviation has been criticized due to its dependency with the mean, which is further exacerbated by the use of bounded scales (Mestdagh et al., 2008). This has been empirically demonstrated for intraindividual variability in affective states (Kalokerinos et al., 2020; see also Chapter 2 of the current dissertation). As a result, we also computed between-partner similarity on variability using the relative variability index (RVI). As expected, results were attenuated with the RVI, particularly for momentary Negative Affect ($r_{\mathrm{SD}} = .23$, $r_{\mathrm{RVI}} = .11$) and also for state Openness ($r_{\mathrm{SD}} = .20$, $r_{\mathrm{RVI}} = .17$). Taken altogether, this pattern of results suggested strong dynamic assortment in romantic relationships such that partners varied in similar ways across the seven-day duration of the study.

Similarly to trait assortment, we also found very limited evidence for the benefits of dynamic assortment using difference scores or interaction approaches. However, an interesting pattern emerged with co-fluctuations. Specifically, we found that co-fluctuations on momentary Positive Affect was predictive of relationship satisfaction for both partners. In other words, couples who reported higher relationship satisfaction also showed more similar fluctuations in their experiences of Positive Affect at the same time points. To further visualize the effects of co-fluctuations, Figure 3.2 presents the dynamic dyadic plot of Positive Affect for the top and bottom 20th percentile on relationship satisfaction. We can see clear patterns of co-fluctuations for the high-satisfaction condition: each partner's scores tend to increase when the other partner's scores increase, and vice versa. In addition, their mean-levels on Positive Affect also tend to be closer together. On the other hand, many of the couples in the low-satisfaction condition have individual lines that fluctuated independently of one another, and some couples also show high gap in mean levels of Positive Affect across the seven-day period. This pattern was in accordance with the *positivity resonance theory*, which emphasizes the importance of shared experiences of Positive Affect, more so than Negative Affect, for relationship quality (Fredrickson, 2016). Indeed, past research has demonstrated the same effects for shared Positive Affect and shared laughter (Kurtz & Algoe, 2015). Although another study found that co-experience Positive and Negative Affect were both found to be predictive of relationship quality (better and worse quality, respectively), the effects were particularly stronger for Positive Affect (Brown et al., 2021).

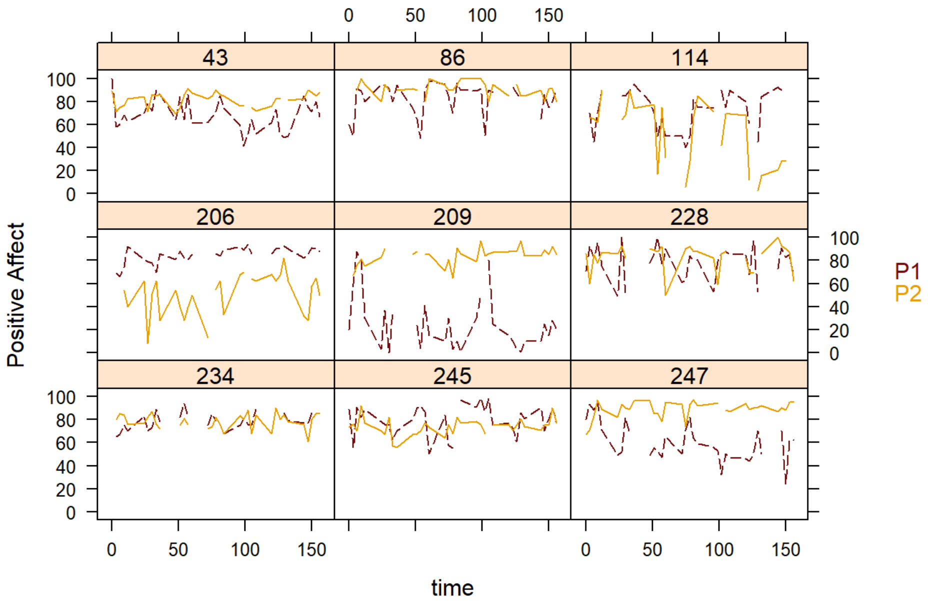
Figure 3.2

Dynamic Measure of Momentary Positive Affect for High- and Low-Satisfaction Couples

Co-Fluctuations on Positive Affect for High Satisfaction Couples



Co-Fluctuations on Positive Affect for Low Satisfaction Couples



Note. High- and low-satisfaction was determined by the top and bottom 20th percentile. Nine couples were randomly selected within each group. P1 indicates the first participants who scheduled the baseline appointment and P2 indicates their partners.

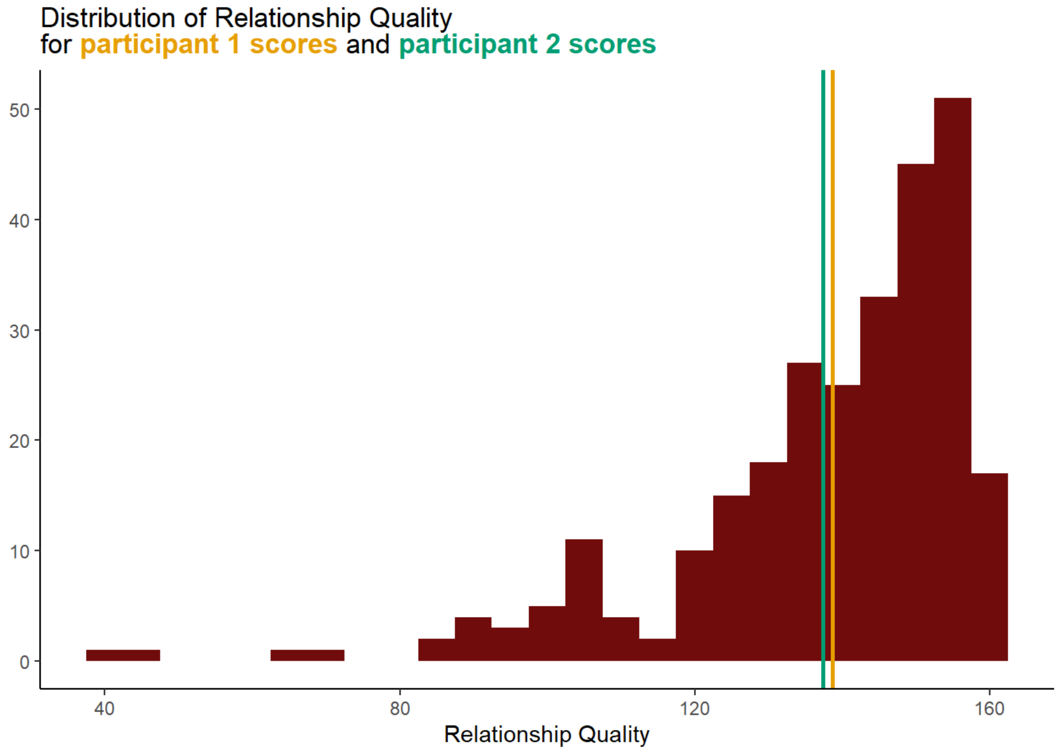
Limitations

The most important limitation of the current study is its limited statistical power due to the pilot design. Our a priori power considerations suggested a recruitment goal of 300 dyads, but the current pilot study only included 138. As a result, we were only adequately powered to detect medium effects between our benchmarks of .20 and .25, and we definitely fell short of the threshold needed for most types of plausible interaction effects. This is evident from our pattern of results, for which many *p*-values were near the alpha thresholds between .01 and .10. We strictly adhered to the alpha threshold and did not interpret “near-significant” results; however, a more adequately powered study might be able to uncover more significant results as well as more consistent ones, especially when results were just below alpha for one dyad member and just above alpha for the other partner. Nonetheless, the current study is intended to provide initial evidence to advocate for including dyadic state measures in assortative mating research, and the results are meant to be hypothesis-generating for future studies. In addition, this evident pattern of near-threshold *p*-values further highlighted the need for well-powered designs. Not only did this investigation include many preregistered tests, but we also reported all estimated effects including null results. As a result, we wish for these pilot results to be informative for researchers in designing their future studies with the knowledge that they should expect small to moderate effect sizes for many of the presented dynamic associations.

Another limitation with our pilot procedures was the recruitment scheme and the resulting threat to external validity. First, recruitment efforts were limited geographically to the metropolitan area of the Twin Cities, Minnesota. In addition, recruitment was most successful through electronic flyers distributed through the University of Minnesota listserv for its graduate students. This resulted in a highly educated sample, many of whom had either completed or were currently pursuing a post-graduate degree. We also used snowball sampling and encouraged participants to share the study flyer with their friends and family, resulting in several referrals, some of whom were related to previous participants. Lastly, the study procedures were intensive with relatively modest compensation. The full procedure included a 90-minute baseline assessment, in which both partners completed not only the baseline surveys but also a 30-minute personal interview on their relationship story (which 126 out of 138 couples completed), then a seven-day online assessment process. Both partners needed to be present for the baseline appointment, which involved further coordination, and very little weeknight or weekend availability was offered. As a result, we expected the final sample to be in relatively stable and happy relationships, which was precisely what we found (Figure 3.3). Not only would this not be representative of the general population, but this range restriction also likely presented a challenge for our analysis of the benefits of assortment, because we used relationship satisfaction as the primary outcome.

Figure 3.3

Histogram of Baseline Relationship Satisfaction as Measured by the Couples Satisfaction Index



Note. The histogram presents the distribution of scores for every participant, and the vertical lines indicates mean scores for participant 1 (yellow) and participant 2 (green).

Conclusion

The current paper presented a pilot study on assortative mating based on personality and affective traits and states, using a dyadic sample of 138 established romantic couples. We found evidence for assortative mating based on both baseline traits and dynamic states for the personality and affective variables. However, there was more evidence for perceived similarities than actual similarities at baseline, and there was much more evidence for dynamic similarities on states than baseline similarities on traits. We also found a complementarity effect such that partners were negatively correlated with one another on Volatility. On the other hand, there was little evidence to support the benefits of assortative mating for relationship satisfaction, either using baseline traits or state fluctuations. Nonetheless, in accordance with positive resonance theory, we found that co-fluctuations on Positive Affect was associated with better relationship satisfaction for both partners. This research highlighted the importance of including finer grain constructs and multiple measurement perspectives of psychological characteristics in the dyadic context.

CHAPTER 4:

Assortative Mating Patterns Based on Longitudinal Trajectories of Personality Traits

and Relationship-Specific Characteristics

Contrary to the popular belief that “opposites attract,” extensive research has demonstrated that “birds of a feather flock together.” Research shows a matching pattern in romantic relationships for many socio-demographic and cognitive-behavioral variables, such that people tend to initiate and maintain relationships with partners who are similar to them. These effects range in size from strong for sociopolitical attitudes, educational attainment, and cognitive abilities to weak for Big Five traits such as Neuroticism, Agreeableness, and Extraversion (Horwitz et al., 2023). Although a range of constructs have been investigated, research on assortative mating can benefit from including more fine-grained constructs specifically related to relationship contexts and from examining longitudinal patterns of trait change over time. Thus, the current research used cross-sectional and longitudinal data from two separate samples of romantic couples at different stages of their relationship. In addition to the Big Five traits, we examined relationship-specific characteristics in order to increase our understanding of the function of psychological individual differences in relationships.

Existing Research on Assortative Mating

Assortative mating is “the tendency for two partners to be matched systematically on one or more characteristics” (Luo, 2017, p. 1). It has been investigated in two main ways: similarity and complementarity. However, the preponderance of current evidence primarily suggests a similarity effect (for a review, see Epstein & Guttman, 1984; Luo, 2017). In the current research, we consider assortative mating to be a systematic matching pattern such that romantic partners are *more similar* to one another than would be expected by chance. Although the notion of non-random mate selection is well-known among both lay people and researchers across disciplines, debate remains regarding what specific selection strategies and which characteristics are considered (either implicitly or explicitly) and the potential consequences of selection for long-term relationship quality. The current research focused on intimate romantic relationships, while acknowledging that a rich body of research exists for matching in other social structures, such as platonic friends and social networks (e.g., Back et al., 2023; Harris & Vazire, 2016).

Prior research on assortative mating has proposed a hierarchical model to organize different variables that may be influential during mate selection (Luo, 2017; for older reviews see: Epstein & Guttman, 1984; Vandenberg, 1972). The most influential variables tend to be demographic variables and sociopolitical attitudes, with between-partner correlations upward of .60s for education and .70s for attitudes. The second group includes values, intelligence, interests, and mental well-being, with correlations upward of .40s to .50s. The third group includes physical characteristics and various personality traits, with estimated correlations for Big Five traits rarely being above .30 in most studies (e.g., Botwin et al., 1997; Luo, 2009; Watson et al., 2004).

A recent meta-analysis of 22 complex traits across 30 studies and approximately 23,000 spousal pairs revealed that social attitudes, substance use behaviors, and cognitive abilities such as intelligence had the highest between-partner correlations, whereas personality traits assessed via surveys and physical characteristics had weaker but still positive and significant correlations: Extraversion = .08, Neuroticism = .10, Agreeableness = .11, Conscientiousness = .16, Openness = .21 (Horwitz et al., 2023). The fact that Openness showed the strongest effect among the Big Five is consistent with its strong association with intelligence, education, and sociopolitical attitudes (Kaufman et al., 2016; O'Connell & Marks, 2022).

Prior research is more mixed and inconclusive with respect to whether assortative mating based on personality traits is beneficial to relationship quality. Most evidence has documented actor or partner effects rather than dyadic effects with respect to personality traits; that is, characteristics of individuals are generally more predictive of relationship quality than are the interactions of both partners' characteristics. A comprehensive examination of large samples (> 20,000) across Australia, Germany, and the United Kingdom showed that actor effects of one's personality traits on one's own relationship satisfaction tends to be strongest, accounting for 6% of variance, with smaller but still significant partner effects of 1-3% of variance and no significant effects of between-partner similarity on either life or relationship satisfaction (Dyrenforth et al., 2010). This pattern in which similarity effects on relationship quality are either null or much weaker than actor/partner effects was also found in smaller studies of dating and married couples (e.g., Becker, 2013; Blum & Mehrabian, 1999; Gattis et al., 2004; Luo, 2009; Robins et al., 2000; Watson et al., 2004). However, some researchers have argued that the lack of existing evidence for the benefits of similarity in personality traits is due to insufficient analytic methods. Instead of using simple between-partner correlations, for example, Luo and Klohnen (2005) showed that profile similarity significantly predicted marital quality, even controlling for individual-level ratings of participants' traits.

Besides true similarity between partners (correlations between their two self-reports), it is also important to consider perceived similarity (correlations between partner A's own self-report and their informant-report of partner B's personality), perceptual accuracy (correlations between partner A's self-report and partner B's informant-report of partner A's personality), and simple partner effects or matters of preference (which trait levels people want from their partners). Research has revealed that people tend to have both absolute preferences for potential partners as well as relative preferences based on their own characteristics (Buss & Barnes, 1986). In addition, research has consistently shown that partners' perceived similarity tends to be stronger in magnitude than their actual similarity (e.g., Montoya et al., 2008; Sillars, 1985). For example, in a meta-analysis involving 460 effect sizes, perceived similarity had stronger associations with interpersonal attraction than actual similarity did, with actual similarity showing an effect only in designs with no- or short-interactions (Montoya et al., 2008). This differential effect of perceived and actual similarity is also present in studies of platonic friendship formation (e.g., Selfhout et al., 2009) as well as initial attraction in speed-dating paradigms (e.g., Tidwell et al., 2013). With the advent of fast-paced online dating, survey data on evaluations of 7,846 online profiles found that people tend to prefer potential partners who they perceived to have a personality similar to themselves judging from just photos and a short description (Neyt et al., 2020). Moreover, in a study of dating and married couples, relationship intimacy increased with perceptual accuracy both for negative and positive self-views (Swann et al., 1994). In other words, for individuals who possessed negative self-views, intimacy was higher even when their spouse perceived them negatively, indicating the importance of authenticity and self-verification in close relationships.

In sum, assortative mating is a strong and consistent phenomenon in various domains, particularly with respect to demographic variables and sociopolitical and spiritual attitudes. Not only are couples generally much more similar than non-couples, but similarity is an important predictor of relationship quality. On the other hand, the literature is more mixed for basic personality traits such as the Big Five, for which most evidence favors either actor or partner effects over dyadic effects. Further, current evidence suggests that perceived similarity between partners, more so than actual similarity between partners, is a stronger indicator of assortative mating processes. However, it is important to emphasize that personality traits are not the whole of personality (DeYoung, 2015; McAdams & Pals, 2006) and that other more specific personality constructs, such as caregiving and support provision, attachment orientations, and interpersonal conflict resolution might contribute to assortative mating process.

Beyond Personality Traits

Although personality is often treated in much of the literature as if it were synonymous with personality *traits*, traits alone are not sufficient to describe the whole person. Despite their utility in organizing broad cognitive and behavioral patterns and their predictive power in important life domains, personality traits largely remain “a psychology of the stranger” (McAdams, 1995). In other words, these broad descriptors are useful to differentiate people in a relatively general, decontextualized way, but they do not provide specific insights to understand individual people on an intimate level and in the context of their specific life situations. Although they have received less attention, personality constructs beyond traits are likely to be influential to relationship quality.

Characteristic adaptations, for example, are constructs at the second level of personality. They broadly include “motives, goals, plans, strivings, strategies, values, virtues, schemas, self-images” specified in relation to a person’s particular life context (McAdams & Pals, 2006, p. 208). Characteristic adaptations can be decomposed into goals, interpretations, and strategies, and they reflect the learned, habitual ways in which a person has adapted to their life experience (DeYoung, 2015). Unlike personality traits, characteristic adaptations can be highly specific to the situation in which they are conceptualized and, unlike traits, constructs at this level might not be applicable or measurable in all cultural or historical contexts. For example, being generally prevention-focused is a trait (which could be observed in any culture in human history) but checking the stove every time one leaves the house is a characteristic adaptation (which could be observed only in cultures with stoves and houses). In the interpersonal domain, consider three scale items: an Agreeableness item, *I sympathizes with others’ feelings* (DeYoung et al., 2007), an attachment Avoidance item, *I feel comfortable sharing my private thoughts and feelings with partners* (Brennan et al., 1998), and a Responsiveness item, *My partner seems interested in what I am thinking and feeling* (Reis, 2004). Although slightly different in content, it is clear that the first item is the broadest, referring to a person’s tendency towards other people in general. The second item is then a bit more specific, referring to a type of target: romantic partners. Then, the last item is the most specific of the three, referring to one particular target: the current partner. It should not then come as a surprise that constructs at these different levels would have differential predictive powers and association patterns for relationship-specific outcomes.

The aim of the current research is not to delineate exactly which constructs should be categorized as a trait or a characteristic adaptation. Instead, we aim to bring further attention to personality constructs outside of the predominant Big Five trait taxonomy. As a result, our two samples included not only one-time measures of the Big Five traits, but also longitudinal measures of a variety of relationship-specific personality constructs that may be relevant to assortative mating patterns in romantic relationships, such as trust (Simpson, 2007), attachment orientations (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2017), perceptions of a partner's responsiveness (Reis & Clark, 2013), caregiving tendencies (Kunce & Shaver, 1994), and conflict resolution strategies (Overall & McNulty, 2017).

There has been some research on assortment based on these relationship-specific constructs. For instance, having a high level of trust in one's partner is the foundation upon which a person's standing on all these variables is often based. Individuals who have high trust in their partners—those who can always count and depend on their partners for help and support, especially in times of need—are more likely to develop secure attachments with their partner, perceive them as more responsive, receive (and provide) better forms of care, and engage in more constructive conflict resolution strategies (see Simpson, 2007). Attachment orientations (i.e., attachment anxiety and avoidance) have shown between-partner similarity in early dating couples (Luo, 2009), although a different sample of newlywed couples found significant correlations only for attachment avoidance (Watson, 2004). Further, partners who both score high on either anxiety or avoidance tend to report lower martial quality (Ben-Ari & Lavee, 2005). Additional research on conflict resolution in romantic relationships by Zeidner & Kloda (2013) found strong between-partner correlations for several conflict strategies, such as constructive resolution ($r = .51$), mutual avoidance ($r = .29$), and demand/withdrawal ($r = .32$), but similarity was not related to marital quality. Interestingly, research designs using both self-reports and partner-reports have shown that perceived similarity in conflict styles was stronger in magnitude than actual similarity between partners' self-reports, and it was also more strongly associated with relationship quality (Acitelli et al., 1993).

Future Directions for Personality Assortment: Longitudinal Trajectories

In addition to expanding constructs beyond standard personality traits, we can also expand personality research within the trait level by including longitudinal repeated measures. Longitudinal patterns can themselves be considered important individual differences because not everyone develops in the same way across their lives or changes in similar ways in response to the same life events or transitions (Schwaba & Bleidorn, 2018). As a result, it is worthwhile to consider longitudinal patterns and changes in addition to one-time trait measures when investigating assortative mating processes. Despite the fact that personality traits are traditionally defined to be relatively stable across time and situations, meta-analytic research has shown that they can and do change (Bleidorn et al., 2022; Roberts et al., 2006) and several mechanisms of change have been both proposed and empirically supported (Donnellan et al., 2007; Roberts et al., 2008).

For example, the *maturity principle* posits that people tend to become higher in Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Emotional Stability as they age. Moreover, the *identity principle* states that the process of identity development and maintenance leads to increased personality consistency with age. Extensive meta-analytic work has supported these principles, showing mean-level changes in the direction of greater maturity and significant increases in rank-order stability in early life, with a plateau beginning in young adulthood following identity formation (Bleidorn et al., 2022). Further, personality traits may change both concurrently with symptomatic changes during psychotherapy (Nguyen et al., 2020; Roberts et al., 2017b) and as a result of direct interventions aimed at changing specific personality traits (e.g., Conscientiousness: Roberts et al., 2017a; Extraversion: Jackson et al., 2021).

Another influential force in personality change is role expectations and demands (Roberts et al., 2008). Personality traits have been shown to change with major life events and transitions, both in work and relationship domains (Bleidorn & Denissen, 2021). Specifically, *social investment principle* posits that positive personality trait change can result during the transition to parenthood, which tends to be a tumultuous and highly influential time for personal development due to dramatic shifts in social investment and social networks (Lodi-Smith & Roberts, 2007). Nonetheless, results of research on transition to parenthood are mixed: Some studies have found no evidence of trait change across the transition (van Scheppingen et al., 2016), whereas others have found *negative* changes, including an increase in Neuroticism and decreases in Agreeableness and Conscientiousness (Hutteman et al., 2014; Jokela et al., 2009; Specht et al., 2011).

Notably, the timing of change appears to be an important factor. Many studies did not have pre-birth data and they varied in the time between trait measurement and childbirth. Thus, the current research examined a sample of first-time parents across the first two years of the transition into parenthood, which included five waves of data starting shortly before childbirth. This more expansive, multi-wave data collection allowed us to capture variation that may occur during this important life transition, both at the individual (partner) level and at the dyadic level.

Surprisingly little dyadic longitudinal research has investigated personality change across important life transitions. A three-wave research design from pregnancy to one-year postpartum revealed that new parents tend to have more similar personality development trajectories compared to childless dyads both for Big Five traits (Galdiolo & Roskam, 2014) and attachment orientations (Galdiolo & Roskam, 2017). In a more normative context of personality change, another study involving almost 4,000 couples indicated that couples generally did not show correlated or persistent patterns of personality change (except for Openness), but they did show evidence of correlated fluctuations (variability) in Neuroticism, Extraversion, and Openness over time (Lewis & Yoneda, 2021). Fluctuations in this study were operationalized as occasion-specific residuals; that is, on occasions when one partner reported higher levels of these three personality traits relative to their own mean level, their partner also reported an increase in their own mean level on these same traits. In addition, another study of 237 couples documented evidence for longitudinal similarity effects on satisfaction over two years, with similar levels of Neuroticism being associated with male partners' relationship satisfaction and similar levels of Openness being associated with female partners' relationship satisfaction (Weidmann et al., 2017). Nonetheless, this gender-specific finding requires replication, and additional research is needed to investigate correlated change or similarity in dyadic change patterns, both during normative time periods and across major life transitions.

The Current Research

The current research investigated the existence of potential matching patterns in personality traits and relationship-specific characteristics, including attachment orientations, caregiving patterns, conflict resolution strategies, partner responsiveness, and trust. We analyzed data from two existing longitudinal studies: one involving early dating couples of between 3 and 12 months, and another involving married or cohabiting couples during the first two years of the transition to parenthood. We examined broad patterns of similarity, both cross-sectionally (at baseline assessment) and longitudinally (overtime). In addition to assortative mating, we also examined the potential benefits of matching patterns on relationship quality. Furthermore, the dyadic self-perception and partner-perception designs of the two studies allowed us to investigate differences between actual and perceived similarities and their differential effects on relationship quality. All hypotheses were preregistered (https://osf.io/b9pj5) and confirmatory, unless stated otherwise, and they were organized into three research questions described below:

Research Question 1: Is there evidence of assortative mating between romantic partners?

H1. At baseline (i.e., the first assessment), romantic partners will be similar in their personality, such that their scale scores on personality traits and characteristic adaptations will be significantly and positively correlated.

H2. At baseline, romantic partners will be more similar in their relationship-specific characteristics than in their personality traits. There are no hypothesized differences among either traits or relationship constructs.

H3. Longitudinally, romantic partners will show a similar change trajectory in self-reported personality across the first two years of parenthood, such that their slopes will be significantly and positively correlated.

Research Question 2: Is assortative mating associated with relationship quality?

H4. At baseline, partner similarity in self-reported personality will be associated with higher relationship quality.

H5. Longitudinally, partner similarity in change trajectories of self-reported personality will be associated with higher relationship quality at baseline.

H6. Longitudinally, partner similarity in change trajectories of self-reported personality will be associated with an increase in relationship quality.

H7. Longitudinally, there may be cross-lagged effects, such that partner similarity in personality at each time-point will be associated with relationship quality at a subsequent time-point, and vice versa. This is an exploratory analysis with no hypothesized direction.

Research Question 3: Which is stronger – actor/partner effects, perceived similarity, or actual similarity – and which effect is more consequential for relationship quality?

H8. At baseline, self-reported personality traits and characteristic adaptations will be most strongly associated with self-reported relationship quality, more so than the effect of partner-reported similarity on these variables.

H9. At baseline, perceived similarity in personality traits and characteristic adaptations will be stronger than actual similarity. That is, the correlation between each partner's self-perception and perception of their partner will be stronger than the correlation between the partners' self-perceptions.

H10. At baseline, each partner's perceived similarity will be more strongly associated with self-reported relationship quality than actual similarity will be.

Method

The current research employed two samples of romantic couples for all analyses. The first consisted of early dating couples, whereas the second consisted of established couples across their first two years of being new parents. These two samples were complementary in that they both measured personality traits and various characteristic adaptations using a longitudinal dyadic design, but they drew from different populations of romantic couples in different stages of their relationship and spanned different time ranges. Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations for all measured variables at baseline are shown in Tables 4.1 and 4.2. We have indicated the variables for which there was a significant difference between male and female participants, using two-tailed paired-samples *t*-test

Table 4.1

Baseline Bivariate Correlations among Variables by Gender for Sample One of Early Dating Couples

	Female	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Big Five Aspect Scale (BFAS)	**1. Agreeableness - Self[1]**	**3.98**	**0.45**														
	2. Conscientiousness - Self[1]	3.42	0.58	.06													
	3. Extraversion - Self[1]	3.67	0.61	.10	.15*												
	4. Neuroticism - Self[1]	**2.90**	**0.62**	-.22**	-.09	-.32**											
	5. Openness - Self[1]	3.69	0.53	.21**	.03	.29**	-.30**										
	6. Agreeableness - Partner[1]	3.79	0.67	.33**	.26**	.23**	-.23**	.16*									
	7. Conscientiousness - Partner[1]	**3.28**	**0.72**	.00	.22**	.04	-.03	.00	.17*								
	8. Extraversion - Partner[1]	3.66	0.63	.30**	.05	.17*	-.14	.18*	.17*	.19**							
	9. Neuroticism - Partner[1]	**2.50**	**0.76**	-0.05	-.16*	-.04	.15*	-.07	-.48**	-.16*	-.25**						
	10. Openness - Partner[1]	3.63	0.69	.26**	.09	.20**	-.15*	.38**	.38**	.22**	.36**	-.20**					
Adult Attachment Questionnaire (AAQ)	11. Global Avoidance[2]	3.30	1.02	-.20**	-.06	-.41**	.33**	-.10	-.18*	-.13	-.23**	.13	-.07				
	12. Global Anxiety[2]	3.33	1.05	-0.07	-.21**	-.24**	.44**	-.11	-.30**	-.18*	-.23**	.21**	-.11	.30**			
Responsiveness Scale	13. Responsiveness Score[3]	7.47	1.20	.11	.27**	.25**	-.28**	.16*	.46**	.22**	.27**	-.28**	.32**	-.29**	-.47**		
Trust Scale	14. Trust Score[2]	5.26	0.85	.12	.21**	.29**	-.41**	.20**	.39**	.21**	.25**	-.30**	.20**	-.39**	-.53**	.48**	
Perceived Relationship Quality Component Scale (PRQC)	15. Overall[4]	6.23	0.77	.17*	.13	.15*	-.21**	.15	.40**	.12	.30**	-.29**	.24**	-.31**	-.43**	.69**	.36**
	Male	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Big Five Aspect Scale (BFAS)	**1. Agreeableness - Self[1]**	**3.77**	**0.48**														
	2. Conscientiousness - Self[1]	3.32	0.51	.09													
	3. Extraversion - Self[1]	3.64	0.58	.13	.21**												
	4. Neuroticism - Self[1]	**2.44**	**0.59**	-.33**	-.25**	-.33**											
	5. Openness - Self[1]	3.76	0.52	.38**	.01	.23**	-.23**										
	6. Agreeableness - Partner[1]	3.81	0.61	.34**	.01	.18*	-.28**	.33**									
	7. Conscientiousness - Partner[1]	**3.55**	**0.58**	.26**	.03	.16*	-.15	.21**	.18*								
	8. Extraversion - Partner[1]	3.57	0.57	.31**	.01	.12	-.05	.24**	.22**	.40**							
	9. Neuroticism - Partner[1]	**2.86**	**0.73**	-.29**	-.13	-.13	.12	-.25**	-.44**	-.15*	-.42**						
	10. Openness - Partner[1]	3.72	0.61	.28**	-.04	.21**	-.16*	.50**	.39**	.27**	.26**	-.26**					
Adult Attachment Questionnaire (AAQ)	11. Global Avoidance[2]	3.23	1.11	-.30**	-.06	-.51**	.38**	-.13	-.27**	-.17*	-.20**	.20**	-.18*				
	12. Global Anxiety[2]	3.13	0.90	-.09	-.05	-.20**	.43**	-.01	-.19*	-.12	-.06	.09	-.08	.22**			
Responsiveness Scale	13. Responsiveness Score[3]	7.35	1.09	.23**	.05	.33**	-.18*	.19*	.54**	.19*	.30**	-.45**	.37**	-.34**	-.23**		
Trust Scale	14. Trust Score[2]	5.18	0.79	.34**	.11	.26**	-.36**	.29**	.45**	.22**	.23**	-.29**	.34**	-.42**	-.40**	.54**	
Perceived Relationship Quality Component Scale (PRQC)	15. Overall[4]	6.21	0.75	.28**	.07	.28**	-.19*	.13	.42**	.29**	.29**	-.36**	.29**	-.40**	-.26**	.64**	.35**

Note. * indicates $p < .05$. ** indicates $p < .01$. Bolded are significant gender differences using a two-tailed paired *t*-test at the .05 alpha level.

[1] Range: 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)

[2] Range: 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree)

[3] Range: 1 (not at all true) to 9 (completely true)

[4] Range: 1 (not at all) to 7 (extremely)

Table 4.2

Baseline Bivariate Correlations Among Variables by Gender for Sample Two of First-Time Parents

	Female	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Big Five Inventory (BFI)	1. Agreeableness[1]	3.78	0.59																												
	2. Conscientiousness[1]	**3.84**	**0.60**	.12																											
	3. Extraversion[1]	3.28	0.89	.25**	.16*																										
	4. Neuroticism[1]	**2.81**	**0.81**	-.37**	-.19*	-.33**																									
	5. Openness[1]	**3.40**	**0.69**	.06	.13	.25**	-.02																								
Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR)	6. Global Avoidance[2]	2.32	0.91	-.29**	-.23**	-.13	.21**	-.11																							
	7. Global Anxiety[2]	**3.29**	**1.04**	-.23**	-.08	-.02	.45**	-.05	.20**																						
Social Support Questionnaire (SSQ)	8. Self to partner[3]	6.34	0.63	.37**	.13	.15	-.28**	.14	-.26**	-.24**																					
	9. Perceived from partner[3]	**6.21**	**0.76**	.27**	.06	.09	-.17*	.06	-.28**	-.30**	.48**																				
Social Provisions Scale (SPS)	10. Self to partner[4]	0.83	0.17	.06	.12	.23**	-.14	.11	-.15	-.07	.32**	.29**																			
	11. Perceived from partner[4]	0.81	0.21	.06	.11	.14	-.20**	.07	-.23**	-.27**	.24**	.51**	.64**																		
Caregiving Questionnaire (CQ)	**12. Proximity v. Distance: Self [5]**	**6.55**	**0.65**	.25**	.14	.17*	-.13	.05	-.35**	-.08	.55**	.31**	.42**	.24**																	
	13. Proximity v. Distance: Partner[5]	6.21	1.01	.23**	.14	.07	-.19*	.03	-.22**	-.39**	.50**	.65**	.34**	.47**	.36**																
	14. Sensitivity v. Insensitivity: Self [5]	**5.32**	**1.03**	.33**	.26**	.15*	-.27**	.13	-.24**	-.30**	.50**	.35**	.35**	.26**	.44**	.44**															
	15. Sensitivity v. Insensitivity: Partner[5]	5.23	1.23	.33**	.18*	.08	-.16*	.02	-.25**	-.36**	.46**	.61**	.31**	.41**	.39**	.66**	.54**														
	16. Cooperation v. Control: Self [5]	**5.21**	**1.09**	.40**	.10	-.05	-.17*	.07	-.23**	-.19*	.46**	.26**	.15	.11	.37**	.25**	.46**	.37**													
	17. Cooperation v. Control: Partner[5]	5.63	1.06	.12	.15*	-.01	-.08	.02	-.23**	-.24**	.42**	.45**	.28**	.25**	.29**	.45**	.47**	.48**	.35**												
	18. Compulsive Caregiving: Self [5]	**4.51**	**1.19**	.27**	.04	.06	-.33**	.02	-.23**	-.29**	.40**	.27**	.12	.14	.30**	.29**	.32**	.28**	.61**	.33**											
	19. Compulsive Caregiving: Partner[5]	**5.45**	**0.79**	.16*	.18*	.06	-.13	.02	-.13	-.24**	.27**	.07	-.08	-.16*	.16*	.12	.19*	.19*	.17*	.40**	.26**										
Conflicts and Problem-solving Scales (CPS)	**20. Collaboration: Self [6]**	**5.13**	**1.12**	.06	.00	.20**	-.06	.18*	-.20*	-.04	.24**	.11	.18*	.04	.24**	.11	.19*	.12	.07	.09	.08	.15*									
	21. Collaboration: Partner[6]	**4.77**	**1.16**	.07	.07	.15	-.09	.07	-.25**	-.13	.32**	.38**	.26**	.30**	.31**	.36**	.25**	.29**	.13	.24**	.12	.02	.65**								
	22. Avoidance – Capitulation: Self [6]	**1.85**	**0.88**	-.19*	-.18*	-.12	.25**	.04	.25**	.22**	-.35**	-.33**	-.22**	-.30**	-.44**	-.43**	-.46**	-.46**	-.32**	-.45**	-.33**	-.11	.10	-.04							
	23. Avoidance – Capitulation: Partner[6]	2.02	0.86	-.28**	-.11	-.07	.23**	.11	.11	.22**	-.23**	-.32**	-.04	-.17*	-.18*	-.39**	-.40**	-.52**	-.34**	-.28**	-.26**	-.19*	.14	.00	.48**						
	24.Stalemate: Self [6]	**1.61**	**0.78**	-.23**	-.19*	-.14	.39**	-.05	.16*	.26**	-.39**	-.40**	-.23**	-.34**	-.31**	-.37**	-.34**	-.41**	-.36**	-.39**	-.31**	-.13	.01	-.08	.64**	.46**					
	25.Stalemate: Partner[6]	**1.29**	**0.56**	-.01	-.11	-.00	.16*	.03	.12	.22**	-.18*	-.50**	-.21**	-.45**	-.22**	-.49**	-.22**	-.42**	-.18*	-.38**	-.13	-.01	.02	-.23**	.44**	.45**	.48**				
	26. Verbal Aggression: Self [6]	2.03	0.98	-.38**	-.16*	-.03	.27**	-.03	.17*	.16*	-.41**	-.33**	-.15	-.22**	-.28**	-.33**	-.44**	-.45**	-.52**	-.28**	-.32**	-.07	.08	-.03	.54**	.60**	.69**	.40**			
	27. Verbal Aggression: Partner[6]	**1.81**	**0.88**	-.15	-.12	-.05	.28**	.08	.14	.28**	-.29**	-.50**	-.22**	-.42**	-.26**	-.47**	-.30**	-.52**	-.23**	-.52**	-.23**	-.17*	.10	-.12	.56**	.52**	.65**	.71**	.60**		
Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS)	28. Satisfaction[7]	43.20	4.29	.23**	.15	.07	-.22**	.01	-.32**	-.22**	.45**	.51**	.35**	.43**	.43**	.51**	.34**	.49**	.27**	.48**	.28**	.24**	.09	.24**	-.45**	-.38**	-.50**	-.48**	-.40**	-.47**	
	29. Cohesion[8]	18.67	2.58	.11	.11	.12	-.11	.18*	-.23**	-.27**	.34**	.37**	.29**	.30**	.34**	.42**	.48**	.41**	.26**	.34**	.28**	.04	.39**	.48**	-.19*	-.18*	-.28**	-.34**	-.21**	-.28**	.33**
	Male	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Big Five Inventory (BFI)	1. Agreeableness[1]	3.81	0.55																												
	2. Conscientiousness[1]	**3.60**	**0.59**	.29**																											
	3. Extraversion[1]	3.39	0.76	.11	.15																										
	4. Neuroticism[1]	**2.19**	**0.65**	-.34**	-.13	-.19*																									
	5. Openness[1]	**3.65**	**0.62**	.06	.12	.18*	-.16*																								
Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR)	6. Global Avoidance[2]	2.43	0.88	-.11	-.16*	-.13	.18*	-.17*																							
	7. Global Anxiety[2]	**2.71**	**0.89**	-.10	-.21**	-.08	.39**	.01	.25**																						
Social Support Questionnaire (SSQ)	8. Self to partner[3]	6.23	0.64	.24**	.24**	.18*	-.26**	.26**	-.29**	-.10																					
	9. Perceived from partner[3]	**6.03**	**0.81**	.10	.21**	.04	-.25**	.18*	-.56**	-.23**	.45**																				
Social Provisions Scale (SPS)	10. Self to partner[4]	0.82	0.17	.03	.22**	.09	-.02	.07	-.29**	.03	.41**	.36**																			
	11. Perceived from partner[4]	0.82	0.18	.10	.30**	.13	-.27**	.04	-.32**	-.15	.37**	.46**	.55**																		
Caregiving Questionnaire (CQ)	**12. Proximity v. Distance: Self [5]**	**6.07**	**0.83**	.12	.25**	.24**	-.09	.10	-.38**	-.01	.56**	.32**	.37**	.30**																	
	13. Proximity v. Distance: Partner[5]	6.27	0.70	.02	.18*	.12	-.09	.21**	-.24**	-.05	.48**	.42**	.26**	.26**	.45**																
	14. Sensitivity v. Insensitivity: Self [5]	**5.11**	**1.03**	.22**	.26**	.24**	-.23**	.16*	-.30**	-.15	.49**	.28**	.33**	.27**	.51**	.45**															
	15. Sensitivity v. Insensitivity: Partner[5]	5.39	1.02	.18*	.28**	.16*	-.25**	.15	-.41**	-.07	.43**	.56**	.39**	.41**	.39**	.58**	.53**														
	16. Cooperation v. Control: Self [5]	**4.96**	**1.03**	.30**	.05	.02	-.22**	.11	-.29**	-.18*	.33**	.15	.15*	.13	.27**	.15	.43**	.27**													
	17. Cooperation v. Control: Partner[5]	5.47	0.97	.21**	.26**	.12	-.39**	.16*	-.40**	-.28**	.45**	.48**	.28**	.38**	.44**	.43**	.39**	.60**	.31**												
	18. Compulsive Caregiving: Self [5]	**4.79**	**0.93**	.13	-.02	.01	-.29**	.05	-.26**	-.36**	.21**	.23**	.01	.15	.17*	.14	.25**	.26**	.42**	.31**											
	19. Compulsive Caregiving: Partner[5]	**5.02**	**0.90**	.22**	.14	.12	-.22**	.13	-.32**	-.25**	.24**	.28**	.12	.14	.33**	.25**	.31**	.27**	.40**	.47**	.42**										
Conflicts and Problem-solving Scales (CPS)	**20. Collaboration: Self [6]**	**4.76**	**1.31**	-.12	.05	.11	-.01	.10	-.11	.04	.19*	.09	.05	.09	.10	.17*	.07	.09	.05	.06	.12	.10									
	21. Collaboration: Partner[6]	**4.47**	**1.23**	-.13	.04	.05	-.04	.03	-.13	-.00	.15	.21**	.17*	.17*	.07	.17*	.03	.21**	-.02	.13	-.03	-.08	.63**								
	22. Avoidance – Capitulation: Self [6]	**2.28**	**1.01**	-.09	-.17*	-.04	.24**	-.11	.32**	.26**	-.26**	-.34**	-.19*	-.26**	-.33**	-.19*	-.35**	-.25**	-.26**	-.46**	-.25**	-.29**	.24**	.12							
	23. Avoidance – Capitulation: Partner[6]	2.08	0.76	-.12	-.01	.01	.12	-.06	.16*	.22**	-.25**	-.19*	.03	-.13	-.19*	-.24**	-.23**	-.16*	-.23**	-.27**	-.19*	-.14	.19*	.23**	.41**						
	24.Stalemate: Self [6]	**1.44**	**0.63**	-.14	-.08	-.04	.26**	-.04	.11	.10	-.26**	-.26**	-.10	-.23**	-.27**	-.26**	-.20*	-.17*	-.28**	-.28**	-.20*	-.19*	.01	-.05	.54**	.32**					
	25.Stalemate: Partner[6]	**1.63**	**0.69**	-.17*	-.16*	-.06	.25**	-.11	.17*	.26**	-.26**	-.30**	-.13	-.21**	-.22**	-.32**	-.23**	-.25**	-.21**	-.46**	-.26**	-.30**	.12	.05	.52**	.56**	.51**				
	26. Verbal Aggression: Self [6]	2.04	0.84	-.27**	-.10	.02	.20**	.09	.13	.12	-.17*	-.20**	-.09	-.14	-.32**	-.16*	-.28**	-.14	-.47**	-.32**	-.15	-.25**	.20**	.20**	.56**	.38**	.62**	.47**			
	27. Verbal Aggression: Partner[6]	**2.02**	**0.99**	-.22**	-.16*	.01	.22**	.07	.14	.18*	-.12	-.27**	-.13	-.25**	-.24**	-.18*	-.19*	-.20*	-.23**	-.43**	-.11	-.23**	.19*	.08	.58**	.47**	.46**	.70**	.68**		
Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS)	28. Satisfaction[7]	42.62	4.75	.03	.30**	.08	-.14	.06	-.30**	-.04	.48**	.45**	.51**	.53**	.51**	.39**	.28**	.41**	.20**	.43**	.09	.21**	.07	.12	-.31**	-.19*	-.34**	-.35**	-.25**	-.34**	
	29. Cohesion[8]	18.21	3.16	-.01	.22**	.15*	-.09	.23**	-.26**	-.12	.38**	.39**	.35**	.35**	.31**	.30**	.32**	.35**	.20*	.30**	.12	.14	.34**	.38**	-.23**	-.12	-.33**	-.17*	-.14	-.12	.42**

Note. * indicates $p < .05$. ** indicates $p < .01$. Bolded are significant gender differences using a two-tailed paired *t*-test at the .05 alpha level.

[1] Range: 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)

[2] Range: 1 (disagree strongly) to 6 (agree strongly)

[3] Range: 1 (not at all) to 7 (very much)

[4] Range: -1 (no) to 1 (yes)

[5] Range: 1 (disagree strongly) to 7 (agree strongly)

[6] Range: 1 (once a month or less) to 7 (just about every day)

[7] Range: 1 to 50 (additive)

[8] Range: 1 to 25 (additive)

Sample One: Early Dating Couples

Participants

This sample included 184 heterosexual couples who were recruited online (on a university department website) and via flyers distributed on the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities campus and in nearby neighborhoods (Weisberg, 2011). There were 184 dyads at Time 1 for which both partners' provided data, 118 at Time 2, and 67 at Time 3. Handling of missing data due to attrition is addressed in the Results section. To be eligible, both members of each couple needed to be at least 18 years of age and have been dating for between 3 and 12 months. Each participant was compensated with up to $25 or 10 extra-credit points for their psychology class. The surveys were administered online using the University survey platform. The study had a dyadic longitudinal design with three waves of data collection eight weeks apart, spanning four months in total. Participants were invited to complete a fourth wave of data collection, but the last wave is not reported due to high attrition and our pre-registration specified a three-wave design. Surveys were completed independently by each partner. Participants were 21.30 years old on average (*SD* = 4.33), ranging from 18 to 58 years old. Female participants were slightly younger on average (*M* = 20.72, *SD* = 3.99) than male participants (*M* = 21.88, *SD* = 4.59). The majority of participants were white (79.1%), followed by Asian (11.7%), Hispanic (3.0%), and African American (2.2%). 6.8% of participants identified with a non-listed racial/ethnic group.

Measures

Big Five Aspect Scale (BFAS; DeYoung et al., 2007) is a 100-item measure of the Big Five domains and ten underlying aspects (two per trait). The current sample used the full 100-item version for self-reports at baseline and a shortened 40-item version with four items per aspect for the remaining assessment waves. Participants answered two versions: one about their own personality, and one about their partner's perceived personality. All items were answered on a five-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The scale at baseline instructed participants to answer about their personality in general, whereas subsequent scales instructed them to answer about their personality during the past two months since the last assessment wave. Cronbach's alphas at baseline are: Agreeableness α = .81, Conscientiousness α = .82, Extraversion α = .87, Neuroticism α = .88, and Openness α = .81.

Adult Attachment Questionnaire (AAQ; Simpson et al., 1992) is a 17-item measure of romantic attachment orientations to partners in general. All items were answered on a seven-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (I strongly disagree) to 7 (I strongly agree). The measure contains two subscales: Avoidance – eight items (baseline α = .80) and Anxiety – nine items (baseline α = .76). Each subscale was computed as the mean across the items.

Responsiveness Scale (Reis, 2004) is an 18-item measure of partner's perceived responsiveness, including the degree to which they are perceived as understanding, validating, and caring. All items were answered on a nine-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (not at all true) to 9 (completely true). A responsiveness score was computed as the mean across all 18 items, with baseline α = .95.

Trust Scale (Rempel et al., 1985) is a 17-item measure of general trust in romantic partners/relationships. The items inquire about romantic partners in general instead of a person's current partner. All items were answered on a seven-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). A trust score was computed as the mean across all 17 items, with baseline α = .87.

Perceived Relationship Quality Component Scale (PRQC; Fletcher et al., 2000) is an 18-item measure of current relationship quality. All items were answered on a seven-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (not at all) to 7 (extremely). There are six subscales, each computed as the mean across three items: Satisfaction, Commitment, Intimacy, Trust, Passion, and Love. We computed a total relationship quality score as the mean across the most representative items from each subscale, as specified by the scale authors, with baseline α = .88.

Sample Two: First-Time Parents

Participants

This sample consisted of 168 heterosexual couples who were recruited from childbirth preparation classes and flyers distributed at a local hospital (Rholes et al., 2011). In order to be eligible, participants had to be married or cohabiting and expecting their first child. Participants were 27.67 years old on average (*SD* = 4.26), with a range from 19 to 45 years old. Female partners were slightly younger on average (*M* = 26.88, *SD* = 4.03) than male partners (*M* = 28.46, *SD* = 4.35). The majority of participants (274 individuals or 81.55%) identified as white, followed by Hispanic (28 individuals or 8.3%), Asian (25 individuals or 7.4%), and Black (only 1 individual).

There were 168 complete dyads at Time 1 in which both partners provided data, 153 at Time 2, 144 at Time 3, 142 at Time 4, and 129 at Time 5. Handling of missing data due to attrition is addressed in the Results section. Surveys were mailed separately to participants' homes and returned separately by each partner, with the exception of Time 2, during which participants completed the surveys in-person at the research lab. The surveys, in other words, were completed independently by both partners. The first two waves were approximately 7.5 months apart and the last four waves were six months apart, spanning a total of two years and six weeks.

Measures

Big Five Inventory (BFI; John et al., 1991; John & Srivastava, 1999) is a short-form version that includes 35 items that measure each of the five personality traits: Agreeableness (α = .68), Conscientiousness (α = .73), Extraversion (α = .86), Neuroticism (α = .85), and Openness (α = .70). All items were answered on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (disagree strongly) to 5 (agree strongly). This measure was administered only at baseline.

Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR; Brennan et al., 1998) is a 36-item measure of adult attachment Avoidance (18 items, baseline α = .91) and Anxiety (18 items, baseline α = .90). The seven-point Likert-type items range from 1 (disagree strongly) to 7 (agree strongly).

Social Support Questionnaire (SSQ; Sarason et al., 1987) is a seven-item measure of social support from romantic partners. Participants answered two versions of the questionnaire: one about their perceived social support from their partner (baseline α = .90), and one about the social support they provide to their partner (baseline α = .88). All items were answered on a seven-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (not at all) to 7 (very much).

Social Provisions Scale (SPS; Cutrona, 1989) is a 14-item measure of social support (Weiss, 1974). Participants answered two versions: one about their perceived social provisions from their current partner (baseline α = .59), and one about the social provisions they provide to their partner (baseline α = .69). All items were answered on a three-point scale with response options being no, sometimes/not sure, and yes.

Caregiving Questionnaire (CQ; Kunce & Shaver, 1994) is a 32-item measure of individual differences in caregiving and care-seeking behaviors. Participants answered two versions: one about their own caregiving behaviors toward their partner, and one about how they perceive their partner's caregiving behaviors toward them. There are four subscales, each with eight items: (1) Sensitivity vs. Insensitivity measures one's ability to perceive a partner's care-seeking signals (baseline self α = .85, partner α = .86); (2) Proximity vs. Distance measures one's willingness to respond and provide care (baseline self α = .90, partner α = .92); (3) Cooperation vs. Control measures one's support of their partner's own effort to solve problems (baseline self α = .88, partner α = .90); and (4) Compulsive Caregiving measures to tendency to overly intrude in a partner's problems (baseline self α = .83, partner α = .76). All items were answered on a seven-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (disagree strongly) to 7 (agree strongly).

Conflicts and Problem-solving Scales (CPS; Kerig, 1996) is a 32-item measure of different conflict resolution strategies. Participants answered two versions: one about their partner's conflict strategies, and one about their own conflict strategies. The scale assesses four dimensions: (1) Verbal Aggression (baseline self α = .86, partner α = .89); (2) Collaboration (baseline self α = .90, partner α = .89); (3) Stalemate (baseline self α = .72, partner α = .72); and (4) Avoidance-Capitulation (baseline self α = .82, partner α = .72). The original 44-item scale (Kerig, 1996) included two more subscales that were not assessed in the current sample: Physical Aggression and Child Involvement. All items were answered on a seven-point scale indicating the frequency of each strategy, ranging from 1 (once a month or less) to 7 (just about every day).

Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS; Spanier, 1976) is a 32-item measure of romantic relationship quality. The sample answered 2 of the 4 original subscales on 6-point scales: (1) Dyadic Satisfaction, with 10 items measuring general satisfaction with one's partner (baseline α =.81), and (2) Dyadic Cohesion, with 5 items measuring the degree to which each couple participated in different activities together (baseline α = .72). Scale scores were computed as the sum across all items and could range from 0-50 for Satisfaction and from 0-25 for Cohesion.

Analytic Plan

All ten hypotheses were preregistered on the OSF repository prior to conducting the analyses (https://osf.io/b9pj5). The datasets have been previously analyzed by members of the author team for separate research projects. The preregistration included analytic code on a simulated dataset using the R statistical language (R Core Team, 2023). As noted in the preregistration, we had multiple alternative approaches for several hypotheses, which we consider to be conceptual robustness checks. Specifically, our hypotheses would be fully confirmed if both approaches met the significance criteria, partially confirmed if only one approach met the criteria, and rejected if neither met the criteria. In addition, exploratory un-preregistered analyses of gender differences were conducted to better understand the patterns of responses at baseline. Although evidence of longitudinal change was not the focus of the current research, this can be extracted from our longitudinal models and is reported in the Results section to clarify patterns of responses across assessment waves (also see Tables 4.3 and 4.4).

All analyses were conducted exactly as planned with two exceptions: (1) removing models with cross-lagged effects, and (2) changing inference criteria to control for false discovery rate (this change led to a more conservative inference threshold). The seventh hypothesis (H7) involving cross-lagged effects did not run successfully due to limited data and numerous convergence errors, so it is excluded. However, the analytic code for this analysis was retained in the final code file for interested readers.

False Discovery Rate

The current research included three research questions with ten total hypotheses. Each hypothesis was tested separately on two samples and again separately across various personality traits and relationship-specific constructs. As a result, we conducted a large number of significance tests. Our pre-registered decision to maintain an alpha level of .05 despite the numerous tests was due to our concern with statistical power. Even though we had repeated-measures data that increases statistical power in longitudinal analyses, our sample sizes were moderate for both studies at baseline, and we did not want to further reduce power with a conservative alpha threshold. However, as a non-preregistered post-hoc decision, we chose to control the False Discovery Rate (FDR), which is the proportion of statistically significant tests that are truly null. Methods to control FDR are less vulnerable to type II error compared to those used to control for Family-Wise Error Rate, such as Bonferroni or employing a more stringent alpha based on the number of comparisons and, therefore, are better equipped to preserve statistical power (Murray & Blume, 2021). Specifically, we used the Benjamini-Hochberg approach, which controls FDR using the extracted *p*-values from all independent or semi-independent significance tests (Benjamini & Hochberg, 1995). Unlike the .05 alpha threshold for *p*-values, there is no established standard FDR threshold, although many researchers use values between 10% and 30%, depending on the research context (James et al., 2013). We chose the conservative 10% in the current research.

Analyses for research question three were not all independent due to multiple tests within the Actor-Partner Interdependence Models. Moreover, some additional tests as well as profile correlation analyses associated with hypothesis H1 did not strictly rely on *p*-values alone. As a result, this adjusted inference criterion was applied to only the first two research questions and excluded the profile correlation analyses, resulting in a total count of 655 *p*-values. A sizeable portion of this total count resulted from hypothesis H2, which involved comparisons of between-partner correlations among all 172 pairs of baseline variables across the two samples. All *p*-values were extracted and transformed into *q*-values using the *p.adjust* function in the *stats* R package (R Core Team, 2023), Values smaller than the desired FDR of .10 were considered significant. For the current research with combined hypothesis tests from both samples, this Benjamini-Hochberg procedure produced an adjusted significance threshold of *p*-values at or below .014. In other words, a *p*-value of .014 was the highest raw *p*-value that was considered significant while controlling FDR at 10%, and any *p*-value higher than .014 was considered not significant. In the result section, raw *p*-values are still reported to conform to typical reporting practices, but they were interpreted using this adjusted threshold.

Results

Missingness Analysis

Attrition is an unavoidable component of nearly all longitudinal studies, and it was evident in both of our samples. Although many of our research questions focused on baseline data, several hypotheses involved analysis of change over time and thus required multiple waves of data collection. As a result, we conducted a missingness analysis to determine whether missing data could be predicted by any of our variables. Specifically, our variables were treated as predictors in a logistic model predicting the presence or absence of any missing data wave for each couple. We did not see any evidence of non-random missingness in sample one; none of the demographic variables or Big Five personality traits at baseline were significant predictors of missingness. In addition, relationship duration and overall quality reported at baseline did not predict missingness.

We saw more evidence of non-random missingness in sample two. This is not surprising given that the data collection was more demanding for participants. Whereas the early dating couples in sample one provided only three waves of data eight weeks apart, the couples in sample two started the study right before the birth of their first child and then completed five data collection waves at roughly six-month intervals across the first two years of parenthood. Age was the only demographic variable that significantly predicted missingness. Couples with older than average male partners had a lower missingness rate, such that a 1-year increase in age was associated with a 9% decrease in missingness likelihood ($z = -2.41$, $p = .02$). Higher female self-reported Extraversion ($z = 2.11$, $p = .03$) and Agreeableness ($z = 2.43$, $p = .01$) were also associated with higher missingness likelihood, but there was no association between relationship quality reported at baseline and missingness likelihood. Taken together, predictors of missingness were few and of generally small magnitude. Our mixed-effects longitudinal models are suitable to handle attrition with Full Information Maximum Likelihood estimation (FIML). Nonetheless, the full model with random slope terms (which are necessary for analyses of correlated slopes) ran into convergence errors with sample one, and listwise deletion was used such that only sample one couples with data across all three waves were included in the longitudinal analyses (hypotheses 3, 5, and 6). No deletion was used for sample two.

Research Question 1: Is there evidence of assortative mating between romantic partners?

Hypothesis 1: Baseline Similarity

At baseline, we examined the bivariate Pearson *r* correlations between dyadic member's self-reported scale scores at baseline, with all results presented in Tables 4.3 and 4.4 and depicted in Figures 4.1 and 4.2. All dyads are distinguishable (i.e., heterosexual couples with one female and one male partner). For sample one, using our FDR-adjusted significance threshold of $p \leq .014$, we found that romantic couples were significantly and positively correlated on Agreeableness ($r = .19$), Openness ($r = .25$), Responsiveness ($r = .46$), and Trust ($r = .24$). There was no evidence of assortative mating in either attachment orientations or the other Big Five traits. For sample two, we found that many relationship-specific variables showed significant and positive assortative mating patterns for both self-reports and partner-reports. This included attachment Anxiety ($r = .20$), Social Provision ($r = .31$), caregiving Sensitivity ($r = .27$), and all conflict strategies (*r*s ranging from .21 to .42). Notably, the other three caregiving styles did not reveal significant between-partner correlations (Proximity, Cooperation, and Compulsive Caregiving; *r*s ranging from .04 to .07). On the other hand, none of the Big Five traits showed significant between-partner similarity, with bivariate correlations ranging from .00 for Extraversion and Neuroticism to .07 for Conscientiousness and .12 and .16 for Agreeableness and Openness, respectively.

Figure 4.1

Between-Partner Similarity (Pearson's r Correlations) at Baseline in Sample One

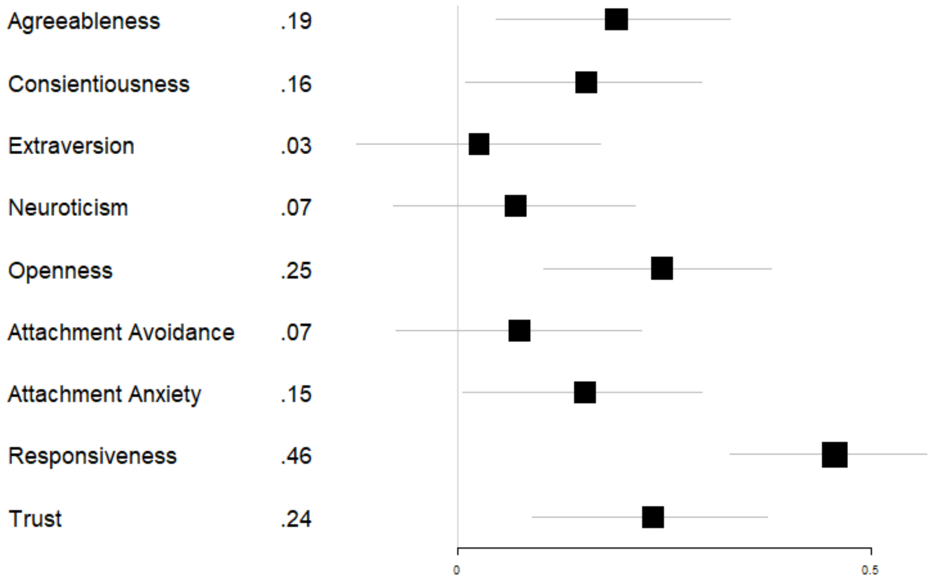


Figure 4.2

Between-Partner Similarity (Pearson's r Correlations) at Baseline in Sample Two

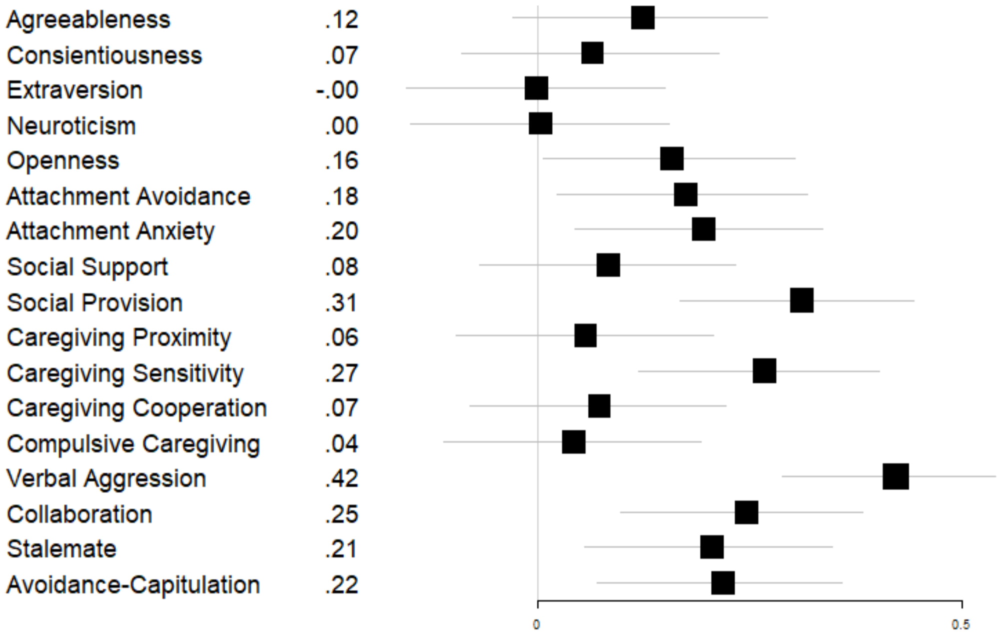


Table 4.3

Baseline Between-Partner Correlations, Longitudinal Change, and Between-Partner Correlated Change for Sample One of Early-Dating Couples

	Baseline				Longitudinal Trajectories							
	N_{pairs}	r	95% CI	p	N_{pairs}	b_{female}	p_{female}	b_{male}	p_{male}	r	95% CI	p_{cor}
Agreeableness	**179**	**0.19**	**[0.05, 0.33]**	**0.01**	67	0.00	0.49	0.00	1.00	-0.23	[-0.45, 0.01]	0.06
Conscientiousness	*179*	*0.16*	*[0.01, 0.30]*	*0.04*	67	0.00	0.33	0.00	0.28	0.04	[-0.20, 0.28]	0.75
Extraversion	179	0.03	[-0.12, 0.17]	0.75	67	0.00	0.66	0.01	0.21	-0.21	[-0.42, 0.04]	0.10
Neuroticism	179	0.07	[-0.08, 0.21]	0.36	67	0.00	0.43	0.00	0.72	0.05	[-0.19, 0.29]	0.68
Openness	**179**	**0.25**	**[0.10, 0.38]**	**0.001**	**67**	-0.01	0.02	-0.01	0.001	**0.42**	**[0.20, 0.60]**	**< .001**
Global Avoidance	174	0.07	[-0.08, 0.22]	0.33	67	-0.01	0.41	0.00	0.47	-0.04	[-0.27, 0.21]	0.77
Global Anxiety	*174*	*0.15*	*[0.01, 0.30]*	*0.04*	67	-0.02	0.02	0.01	0.21	-0.03	[-0.27, 0.21]	0.78
Responsiveness	**174**	**0.46**	**[0.33, 0.57]**	**< .001**	**67**	0.00	0.72	-0.01	0.53	**0.51**	**[0.31, 0.67]**	**< .001**
Trust	**171**	**0.24**	**[0.09, 0.37]**	**0.002**	**67**	0.01	0.13	0.00	0.74	**0.38**	**[0.15, 0.57]**	**0.002**

Note. Bolded are effects that are significant after controlling for FDR and italicized are those only significant using alpha of .05

Table 4.4

Baseline Between-Partner Correlations, Longitudinal Change, and Between-Partner Correlated Change for Sample Two of First-Time Parents

	Baseline				Longitudinal Trajectories							
	N_{pairs}	r	95% CI	p	N_{pairs}	b_{female}	p_{female}	b_{male}	p_{male}	r	95% CI	p cor
Agreeableness	168	0.12	[-0.03, 0.27]	0.11								
Conscientiousness	168	0.07	[-0.09, 0.21]	0.41								
Extraversion	168	0.00	[-0.15, 0.15]	0.99								
Neuroticism	168	0.00	[-0.15, 0.16]	0.96								
Openness	*168*	*0.16*	*[0.01, 0.30]*	*0.04*								
Global Avoidance	*168*	*0.18*	*[0.02, 0.32]*	*0.02*	168	0.00	0.47	0.00	0.26	0.01	[-0.15, 0.16]	0.93
Global Anxiety	**168**	**0.20**	**[0.05, 0.34]**	**0.01**	168	-0.01	< .001	-0.01	0.01	-0.10	[-0.24, 0.06]	0.22
Social Support	168	0.08	[-0.07, 0.23]	0.28	**168**	-0.01	0.02	-0.01	0.002	**0.21**	**[0.06, 0.35]**	**0.01**
Social Provision	**168**	**0.31**	**[0.17, 0.44]**	**< .001**	**168**	0.00	< .001	-0.01	< .001	**0.46**	**[0.33, 0.57]**	**< .001**
Proximity v. Distance	167	0.06	[-0.1, 0.21]	0.46	168	-0.01	< .001	-0.01	0.07	0.11	[-0.04, 0.26]	0.15
Sensitivity v. Insensitivity	**167**	**0.27**	**[0.12, 0.4]**	**< .001**	168	-0.01	0.05	-0.01	0.16	-0.07	[-0.22, 0.08]	0.37
Cooperation v. Control	168	0.07	[-0.08, 0.22]	0.35	168	0.00	0.44	0.00	0.45	0.06	[-0.1, 0.21]	0.47
Compulsive Caregiving	168	0.04	[-0.11, 0.19]	0.58	168	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.07	0.09	[-0.07, 0.24]	0.26
Collaboration	**168**	**0.25**	**[0.1, 0.38]**	**0.001**	168	-0.02	< .001	-0.01	< .001	0.12	[-0.04, 0.26]	0.13
Avoidance – Capitulation	**168**	**0.22**	**[0.07, 0.36]**	**0.004**	168	0.00	0.58	-0.01	0.04	0.05	[-0.10, 0.20]	0.50
Stalemate	**168**	**0.21**	**[0.06, 0.35]**	**0.01**	168	0.00	0.43	0.00	0.06	0.10	[-0.06, 0.25]	0.21
Verbal Aggression	**168**	**0.42**	**[0.29, 0.54]**	**< .001**	**168**	0.00	0.85	0.00	0.66	**0.21**	**[0.06, 0.35]**	**0.01**

Note. Bolded are effects that are significant after controlling for FDR and italicized are those only significant using alpha of .05.

In addition, profile correlations (Humbad et al., 2013) were computed for the self-reported scale scores of the Big Five Aspect Scale BFAS in sample one and the Big Five Inventory, Caregiving Questionnaire, and Conflict and Problem-solving Scale in sample two as indices of multivariate similarity in personality traits, caregiving styles, and conflict strategies. The unit of analysis was at the dyad level. For each of these scales, a bivariate Pearson *r* correlation was computed between the two partners' score vectors. For example, for the Big Five traits, profile correlation for each couple was computed as the bivariate correlation between two vectors of five scores each for each partner. For each scale, three sets of models were run with profiles correlations calculated by raw, gender-mean-centered, and standardized scores. Centering and standardizing scores prior to computing profile correlations alleviate the effects of a "normative" personality profile when assessing similarity. For instance, we might expect Big Five trait profiles of strangers to be correlated simply due to common patterns of personality traits in the population: their personality profiles might both be similar to the average person, or the socially desirable person, and removing this normative component is important to understanding their true similarity (Furr, 2008). For profiles using Big Five traits, roughly 15.1% of early dating couples and 14.4% of first-time parents had significant raw-profile correlations. This percentage dropped to 5% and 5.4% for gender-mean-centered profiles and dropped to 5% and 4.2% for standardized profiles. In contrast, for profiles of relationship-specific characteristics, we found that 76.8% of first-time parents showed significant profile correlations in conflict strategies and 19.2% in caregiving styles using raw scores. These percentages dropped to 21.4% and 7.1% for centered scores and dropped to 19% and 8.9% for standardized scores. These steep drops indicate that much of the profile correlations are due to normativeness and not distinctiveness in participants' reports.

Hypothesis 2: Difference in Correlations

We next compared assortative mating in personality traits and relationship-specific characteristics by conducting a *z*-difference test using Fisher's *z*-transformed bivariate correlations to test for differences between each trait correlation and each CA correlation (Zou et al., 2007). A significant difference was found for several pair-wise comparisons across both samples. Namely, among early dating couples, partner similarity in all Big Five traits was significantly lower than similarity in Responsiveness (but not significantly so for Trust). Partner similarity in all Big Five traits was significantly lower than many of the relationship-specific variables measured in first-time parents. For example, similarity in Verbal Aggression was significantly higher than similarity in all Big Five traits and in Avoidant attachment; similarity in Social Provision was significantly higher than that in Extraversion and Neuroticism; and similarity in caregiving Sensitivity was significantly higher than that in Extraversion and Neuroticism, especially for Verbal Aggression. Notably, attachment orientations behaved similarly to the Big Five traits in sample one, such that similarity in these variables was significantly lower than similarity in the other relationship-specific variables. There were also a few differences among the non-attachment relationship variables, but this was primarily due to the high between-partner correlation in Verbal Aggression ($r = .42$). All of the comparison tests are presented in Tables C.1 and C.2 in the supplementary materials.

Hypothesis 3: Longitudinal Similarity

Longitudinally, we fit linear mixed models for each measured personality variable with random intercepts and random slopes at the individual levels with the 67 couples for whom full data were available for sample one and all couples for sample two, running a separate model for each gender. We extracted the fitted unstandardized slope for each individual and examined the bivariate Pearson r correlations between dyadic member's slopes for each variable. For early dating couples, we found positive and significant slopes for self-reported trait Openness ($r = .42$, $p < .001$), Responsiveness ($r = .51$, $p < .001$), and Trust ($r = .38$, $p = .002$). There were no significant longitudinal correlations involving any of the other Big Five variables or attachment orientations. Notably, participants did not show changes on most of these variables across the short four-month duration of sample one. Although evidence of change was not the focal point of the current research, all fixed effects estimates are shown in Tables 4.3 and 4.4.

The overall picture was quite different for our established couples in sample two, across the first two years of parenthood. Although we did not have longitudinal assessments of the Big Five traits, we saw more evidence of change across the five assessment waves for many relationship-specific variables, such as attachment Anxiety (but not Avoidance), Collaborative conflict strategies, several caregiving styles, and Social Support and Provision. Consistent with our hypothesis, we found evidence of significant positive correlated change in Social Support (slope *r* = .21, *p* = .01) and Provision (slope *r* = .46, *p* < .001). However, we did not find any effect for self-reported attachment orientations, conflict strategies, or caregiving behaviors, with the exception of Verbal Aggression (slope *r* = .21, *p* = .01). Further, interestingly, many of these variables revealed significant correlated changes in partners' perceptions rather than self-reports. For example, partners were more likely to report that each other had changed in the same way, but their self-perceptions did not reflect this similarity. In fact, the only two partner-reported variables that did not show significant correlated change were Compulsive Caregiving (slope *r* = .09, *p* = .24) and Collaboration conflict style (slope *r* = .15, *p* = .06). All of the other caregiving styles and conflict resolution styles showed significant partner-reported correlated change.

Research Question 2: Is assortative mating associated with relationship quality?

Hypothesis 4: Baseline Benefits of Baseline Similarity

We first examined whether there was an association between personality variables and relationship quality at baseline. To do so, we ran simple linear regression models in which the absolute value of the difference between the female and male partner's scores on a particular personality variable was used to predict relationship quality. With this analytic approach, we found limited evidence of assortative mating benefits among early dating couples. These results can be found in Table C.3. Of the nine possible predictors, only Responsiveness significantly predicted both female-reported relationship quality (*t* = -3.67, *p* < .001) and male-reported relationship quality (*t* = -5.79, *p* < .001). These significant effects were in the predicted direction, indicating that higher dissimilarity in Responsiveness was associated with lower relationship satisfaction.

For first-time parents, we did not find any evidence for the benefits of assortment on the Big Five traits (all *p*s > .014), and all significant effects involved relationship-specific constructs. In total, 17 dissimilarity predictors were used to predict male and female relationship Satisfaction and Cohesion. There were three significant predictors of female Satisfaction as well as four significant predictors of male Satisfaction, female Cohesion, and male Cohesion. The most consistent predictors were Social Support, Proximity caregiving, and Stalemate conflict strategies, with higher dissimilarity being associated with lower relationship quality for both males and females. Additionally, dissimilarity in Social Provision predicted lower male relationship quality, dissimilarity in Verbal Aggression predicted lower female Satisfaction, and dissimilarity in attachment Anxiety predicted lower female Cohesion. All predictions were in the hypothesized direction. These results are shown in Table C.4.

Using an alternative analysis method, we next fit multiple regression models in which both dyad members' scores along with an interaction term were used to predict relationship quality. Separate models were fit with female-reported and male-reported relationship quality as the dependent variable. There was one relationship quality variable for sample one (PRQC scores), and there were two for sample two (DAS Satisfaction and Cohesion). Within the set of models for reports by each sex, separate models were run treating each measured personality variable as the predictor. The hypothesis was confirmed if the interaction term was significantly positive, controlling for the two main effects[9].

This interaction approach did not reveal any significant effects using the simple regression model for early dating couples. On the other hand, a significant but negative interaction emerged for Agreeableness on overall relationship quality (PRQC) for male partners (interaction $t = -2.65$, $p = .01$). Specifically, male partners' Agreeableness scores were only significantly and positively associated with their relationship quality at low (-1 SD) and average levels of their partners' Agreeableness (*p*s < .001). There was no longer an effect between male Agreeableness and relationship quality when their female partners scored highly (+1 SD) on Agreeableness ($t = .67$, $p = .50$). No other significant interactions were found for other personality traits or relationship-specific characteristics in sample one.

For first-time parents in sample two, no significant interaction effects were found for Big Five traits or attachment orientations. Interestingly we once again found one negative interaction effect for Social Provision on male Satisfaction (interaction $t = -2.49$, $p = .01$). However, a simple slope analysis showed that, although the magnitude of the effects between male Social Provision and Satisfaction decreased as their female partner's scores increased, they were all significantly positive at each level of female

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[9] Generally, it is not surprising to find fewer significant effects because statistical power is often reduced for interactions compared to main effects (Sommet et al., 2022), which is precisely what we found.

Social Provision (+/-1 SD and average; $p < .001$, Further all other sixteen variables yielded non-significant interaction effects.

Lastly, for the Big Five Aspect Scale in sample one and for the Big Five Inventory, Caregiving Questionnaire, and Conflict and Problem-solving Scale in sample two, we ran a simple linear regression model in which the Fisher's *z*-transformed score of the profile correlations was used to predict relationship quality. After centering and standardizing scores to remove normativity effects, this similarity approach did not indicate any significant association with relationship quality, either for early dating couples or for first-time parents.

Hypothesis 5: Baseline Benefits of Longitudinal Similarity

In addition to baseline benefits, we also examined potential benefits of longitudinal similarity on relationship quality. First, we tested whether partner similarity in change trajectories of personality were associated with better relationship quality at baseline. These analyses were structured similar to those for hypothesis 4, with a simple regression model of the difference in partners' slopes as the predictor and a multiple regression model with each partner's slope and their interaction effect, all predicting baseline relationship quality.

Using the simple regression model with sample one, we found that similarity in changes in only two of the nine longitudinal variables was significantly associated with male-reported relationship quality at baseline in the predicted direction: Responsiveness ($t = -5.00$, $p < .001$) and Trust ($t = -4.33$, $p < .001$). In addition, the interaction model for three variables showed a significant interaction effect: one in the predicted positive direction (attachment Avoidance for male partners: $t = 2.61$, $p = .01$) and two negative interaction effects (Neuroticism for male partners: $t = -2.82$, $p = .01$; Responsiveness for female partners: $t = -3.51$, $p = .001$). Specifically, there was a reversed interaction for male Avoidance: there was a negative association between an increase in Avoidance and baseline relationship quality with low female Avoidance slope over time (-1 SD: $t = -2.10$, $p = .04$) but a positive association when female partners had high Avoidance slope over time (+1 SD: $t = 2.02$, $p = .05$). On the other hand, female changes on Responsiveness were only significantly and positively associated with their relationship quality when their male partners changes at a low or average slope in Responsiveness over time (*p*s < .001). Similarly, a decrease in male Neuroticism over time was associated with higher relationship quality at baseline, but only when their female partners showed an average or higher-than-average increase in Neuroticism over time (*ps* < .05). All findings are shown in Table C.5.

For sample two, out of the twelve longitudinal variables for each male and female Satisfaction and Cohesion outcome, we found only one significant negative interaction effect predicting baseline male Cohesion involving Stalemate conflict strategy (interaction $t = -2.76$, $p = .01$), which was not found in the simple regression effects. Nonetheless, none of the simple slopes at low, average, or high levels of female partners' Stalemate slopes was significant. The only three variables whose differences in partners' slopes over time predicted relationship quality at baseline were Social Provision, Proximity caregiving, and Stalemate conflict strategy (but only for female Satisfaction). Specifically, Social Provision and Proximity caregiving predicted female but not male Satisfaction and Cohesion, and similarity in change in Stalemate predicted only baseline female Satisfaction ($t = -3.89$, $p < .001$). All results for sample two are shown in Table C.6.

Hypothesis 6: Longitudinal Benefits for Longitudinal Similarity

Next, we tested whether partner similarity in personality change trajectories were associated with increases in relationship quality over time. These analyses were structured similar to those for hypothesis 5, but we used the extracted slopes of relationship quality as the dependent variables instead of baseline values on these variables.

Using the simple regression model with sample one, among the nine longitudinal variables we found one significant longitudinal predictor for female partners and two for male partners. Specifically, similarity of change trajectories for Responsiveness was significantly associated with an increase in overall relationship quality for both sexes (female $t = -2.57$, $p = .01$; male $t = -6.74$, $p < .001$), whereas similarity in change trajectories for attachment Anxiety ($t = -3.59$, $p = .001$) and Trust ($t = -5.61$, $p < .001$) predicted only male partners' overall relationship quality. The results were once again different for the interaction model, with only one significant interaction effect out of nine total for female partners (positive interaction effect for attachment Anxiety: significantly positive associations for female slopes when male slopes were average or high, ps $< .001$)

and one for male partners (negative interaction effect for Neuroticism: significantly negative associations for male slopes when female slopes were average or high, *p*s < .001).

The longitudinal association between similar personality change and relationship quality was more pronounced in sample two, primarily for male participants. Using the simple regression model, of the twelve longitudinal predictors we found one significant association for female Satisfaction (Proximity caregiving) and two for female Cohesion (Proximity caregiving and Stalemate). On the other hand, there were seven significant predictors for male Satisfaction and five for male Cohesion. Specifically, attachment Anxiety, Social Support, Social Provision, Stalemate, and Verbal Aggression predicted smaller increases in both male Satisfaction and Cohesion over the two-year period, whereas Proximity caregiving and Avoidance-Capitulation conflict styles longitudinally predicted male Satisfaction. All effects using difference scores were in the hypothesized direction, with higher dissimilarity in slopes of these relationship-specific constructs being associated with a smaller increase (or a larger decrease) in dyadic adjustment scores across the first two years of the transition to parenthood.

There were also several significant effects using the interaction models. However, similar to previous results, they differed in sign (positive or negative interactions) and, at times, emerged for different variables than the simple regression models. The only positive interaction effects that matched significant simple regression effects were for attachment Anxiety for male Satisfaction for which there were significantly negative associations between male slopes with low or average levels of female slopes (*p*s < .001) and a null effect at high female slopes. The full results are presented in Tables C.7 (sample one) and C.8 (sample two).

Research Question 3: Which is stronger – actor/partner effects, perceived similarity, or actual similarity – and which effect is, in turn, more consequential for relationship quality?

Hypothesis 8: Actor versus Partner Effects on Quality

Actor effects refer to the association between a person's rating of an outcome variable (e.g., relationship quality) and their rating on an independent variable (e.g., their personality traits), whereas partner effects refer to the association between a person's rating of an outcome (e.g., relationship quality) and their partner's rating on an independent variable (either their partner's own rating of their personality or the person's perception of their partner's personality). For instance, is our own conflict resolution style or our perception of our partner's conflict resolution style more predictive of our relationship quality? To answer such questions, we conducted Actor-Partner Interdependence Model analyses (APIM; Campbell & Kashy, 2022; Cook & Kenny, 2005; Kenny & Ledermann, 2010) following the general structure as depicted in Figure S1. Our hypothesis would be supported if the actor path estimates were larger than the partner path estimates, using non-overlapping 95% confidence intervals.

Although these models included the effect between dissimilarity scores and relationship quality, they are different than previous models because they control for both actor and partner effects. As a result, the dissimilarity effects reported here may be interpreted as the benefits of assortative mating after controlling for the main effects of each partner's personality scores. In aggregate, these models had six regression paths (two actor, two partner, and two difference effects) for each combination of personality variables and relationship outcomes, which resulted in a large number of total effects. The full results of these analyses are presented in Tables 4.5 and 4.6. We provided a brief summary of the main findings below.

Table 4.5

Actor-Partner Interdependence Model of Actual (Dis)similarity for Sample One of Early-Dating Couples

		β	*SE*	*p*-value
Big Five Aspect Scale (BFAS)	Agreeableness			
	Female -> Female (a1)	**0.24**	**0.05**	**<.001**
	Male -> Male (a2)	**0.33**	**0.05**	**<.001**
	Female -> Male (p12)	0.09	0.05	0.08
	Male -> Female (p21)	0.09	0.05	0.12
	Diff -> Female (d1)	0.00	0.05	0.97
	Diff -> Male (d2)	0.05	0.05	0.31
	Conscientiousness			
	Female -> Female (a1)	**0.12**	**0.05**	**0.02**
	Male -> Male (a2)	**0.17**	**0.05**	**<.001**
	Female -> Male (p12)	0.03	0.05	0.62
	Male -> Female (p21)	**0.10**	**0.05**	**0.05**
	Diff -> Female (d1)	0.10	0.05	0.05
	Diff -> Male (d2)	0.08	0.05	0.12
	Extraversion			
	Female -> Female (a1)	**0.23**	**0.05**	**<.001**
	Male -> Male (a2)	**0.27**	**0.05**	**<.001**
	Female -> Male (p12)	**0.13**	**0.05**	**0.01**
	Male -> Female (p21)	**0.19**	**0.05**	**<.001**
	Diff -> Female (d1)	-0.02	0.05	0.74
	Diff -> Male (d2)	-0.06	0.05	0.23
	Neuroticism			
	Female -> Female (a1)	**-0.27**	**0.06**	**<.001**
	Male -> Male (a2)	**-0.25**	**0.05**	**<.001**
	Female -> Male (p12)	**-0.27**	**0.06**	**<.001**
	Male -> Female (p21)	-0.09	0.06	0.12
	Diff -> Female (d1)	0.04	0.06	0.53
	Diff -> Male (d2)	0.11	0.06	0.07
	Openness			
	Female -> Female (a1)	**0.21**	**0.05**	**<.001**
	Male -> Male (a2)	**0.19**	**0.05**	**<.001**
	Female -> Male (p12)	**0.12**	**0.05**	**0.02**
	Male -> Female (p21)	0.10	0.05	0.07
	Diff -> Female (d1)	**-0.10**	**0.05**	**0.05**
	Diff -> Male (d2)	-0.05	0.05	0.33
Adult Attachment Questionnaire (AAQ)	Global Avoidance			
	Female -> Female (a1)	**-0.25**	**0.05**	**<.001**
	Male -> Male (a2)	**-0.39**	**0.05**	**<.001**
	Female -> Male (p12)	-0.06	0.05	0.19
	Male -> Female (p21)	**-0.18**	**0.05**	**<.001**
	Diff -> Female (d1)	-0.02	0.05	0.71

	Diff -> Male (d2)	-0.09	0.05	0.06
	Global Anxiety			
	Female -> Female (a1)	**-0.35**	**0.05**	**<.001**
	Male -> Male (a2)	**-0.27**	**0.05**	**<.001**
	Female -> Male (p12)	**-0.30**	**0.05**	**<.001**
	Male -> Female (p21)	**-0.15**	**0.05**	**0.001**
	Diff -> Female (d1)	-0.08	0.05	0.10
	Diff -> Male (d2)	-0.01	0.05	0.84
Responsiveness Scale	Responsiveness			
	Female -> Female (a1)	**0.65**	**0.03**	**<.001**
	Male -> Male (a2)	**0.69**	**0.04**	**<.001**
	Female -> Male (p12)	**0.10**	**0.04**	**0.01**
	Male -> Female (p21)	**0.13**	**0.05**	**0.01**
	Diff -> Female (d1)	0.01	0.04	0.77
	Diff -> Male (d2)	-0.06	0.04	0.12
Trust Scale	Trust			
	Female -> Female (a1)	**0.42**	**0.04**	**<.001**
	Male -> Male (a2)	**0.51**	**0.04**	**<.001**
	Female -> Male (p12)	**0.19**	**0.04**	**<.001**
	Male -> Female (p21)	**0.17**	**0.05**	**<.001**
	Diff -> Female (d1)	0.07	0.05	0.12
	Diff -> Male (d2)	0.00	0.04	0.97

Note. Bolded are effects that are significant at the .05 level.

Table 4.6

Actor-Partner Interdependence Model of Actual (Dis)similarity for Sample Two of First-Time Parents

		Satisfaction			Cohesion		
		β	*SE*	*p*-value	*β*	*SE*	*p*-value
Big Five Inventory (BFI)	Agreeableness						
	Female -> Female (a1)	**0.25**	**0.04**	**<.001**	**0.18**	**0.04**	**<.001**
	Male -> Male (a2)	**0.13**	**0.04**	**<.001**	**0.08**	**0.04**	**0.04**
	Female -> Male (p12)	**0.09**	**0.04**	**0.02**	-0.04	0.04	0.36
	Male -> Female (p21)	**0.07**	**0.04**	**0.04**	**0.08**	**0.04**	**0.02**
	Diff -> Female (d1)	0.03	0.04	0.44	**0.07**	**0.04**	**0.04**
	Diff -> Male (d2)	0.01	0.04	0.76	0.00	0.04	0.92
	Conscientiousness						
	Female -> Female (a1)	**0.16**	**0.04**	**<.001**	**0.07**	**0.04**	**0.06**
	Male -> Male (a2)	**0.20**	**0.04**	**<.001**	**0.21**	**0.04**	**<.001**
	Female -> Male (p12)	**0.07**	**0.04**	**0.06**	-0.02	0.04	0.68
	Male -> Female (p21)	**0.11**	**0.04**	**0.00**	**0.14**	**0.04**	**<.001**
	Diff -> Female (d1)	-0.01	0.04	0.83	**0.13**	**0.04**	**0.001**
	Diff -> Male (d2)	0.06	0.04	0.12	**0.15**	**0.04**	**<.001**
	Extraversion						
	Female -> Female (a1)	0.06	0.04	0.09	**0.09**	**0.04**	**0.02**
	Male -> Male (a2)	0.01	0.04	0.79	**0.13**	**0.04**	**0.001**
	Female -> Male (p12)	**-0.08**	**0.04**	**0.03**	-0.03	0.04	0.49
	Male -> Female (p21)	0.00	0.04	0.92	0.05	0.04	0.19
	Diff -> Female (d1)	0.00	0.04	0.98	-0.05	0.04	0.21
	Diff -> Male (d2)	0.03	0.04	0.40	0.01	0.04	0.83
	Neuroticism						
	Female -> Female (a1)	**-0.21**	**0.04**	**<.001**	-0.08	0.05	0.07
	Male -> Male (a2)	**-0.14**	**0.04**	**<.001**	**-0.15**	**0.04**	**0.001**
	Female -> Male (p12)	**-0.14**	**0.05**	**0.002**	0.05	0.05	0.26
	Male -> Female (p21)	-0.08	0.04	0.06	**-0.11**	**0.04**	**0.02**
	Diff -> Female (d1)	0.07	0.05	0.16	**-0.10**	**0.05**	**0.05**
	Diff -> Male (d2)	0.07	0.05	0.21	-0.07	0.05	0.18
	Openness						
	Female -> Female (a1)	-0.01	0.04	0.90	0.07	0.04	0.06
	Male -> Male (a2)	-0.03	0.04	0.44	**0.08**	**0.04**	**0.04**
	Female -> Male (p12)	0.00	0.04	0.95	-0.05	0.04	0.20
	Male -> Female (p21)	0.01	0.04	0.86	-0.01	0.04	0.85
	Diff -> Female (d1)	0.00	0.04	0.98	**0.11**	**0.04**	**0.003**
	Diff -> Male (d2)	-0.03	0.04	0.51	-0.04	0.04	0.32
Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR)	Global Avoidance						
	Female -> Female (a1)	**-0.30**	**0.04**	**<.001**	**-0.17**	**0.04**	**<.001**
	Male -> Male (a2)	**-0.43**	**0.03**	**<.001**	**-0.38**	**0.03**	**<.001**
	Female -> Male (p12)	-0.04	0.04	0.22	0.01	0.04	0.88
	Male -> Female (p21)	**-0.18**	**0.04**	**<.001**	**-0.17**	**0.04**	**<.001**
	Diff -> Female (d1)	0.07	0.04	0.08	-0.01	0.04	0.76
	Diff -> Male (d2)	-0.02	0.04	0.55	-0.06	0.04	0.10
	Global Anxiety						
	Female -> Female (a1)	-0.06	0.05	0.24	-0.09	0.05	0.06

	Male -> Male (a2)	**-0.23**	**0.04**	**<.001**	**-0.24**	**0.04**	**<.001**
	Female -> Male (p12)	-0.07	0.05	0.15	0.02	0.05	0.70
	Male -> Female (p21)	**-0.16**	**0.04**	**<.001**	**-0.11**	**0.04**	**0.004**
	Diff -> Female (d1)	-0.07	0.05	0.16	**-0.15**	**0.05**	**0.001**
	Diff -> Male (d2)	-0.04	0.05	0.35	-0.05	0.05	0.30
Social Support Questionnaire (SSQ)	Social Support						
	Female -> Female (a1)	**0.41**	**0.03**	**<.001**	**0.33**	**0.03**	**<.001**
	Male -> Male (a2)	**0.57**	**0.03**	**<.001**	**0.46**	**0.04**	**<.001**
	Female -> Male (p12)	**0.14**	**0.03**	**<.001**	**0.10**	**0.03**	**0.002**
	Male -> Female (p21)	**0.25**	**0.04**	**<.001**	**0.17**	**0.04**	**<.001**
	Diff -> Female (d1)	0.01	0.04	0.73	-0.05	0.04	0.25
	Diff -> Male (d2)	-0.05	0.03	0.13	-0.02	0.04	0.53
Social Provisions Scale (SPS)	Social Provision						
	Female -> Female (a1)	**0.44**	**0.03**	**<.001**	**0.36**	**0.04**	**<.001**
	Male -> Male (a2)	**0.56**	**0.03**	**<.001**	**0.43**	**0.04**	**<.001**
	Female -> Male (p12)	**0.16**	**0.03**	**<.001**	**0.12**	**0.04**	**0.001**
	Male -> Female (p21)	**0.18**	**0.04**	**<.001**	**0.15**	**0.04**	**<.001**
	Diff -> Female (d1)	-0.04	0.04	0.31	-0.03	0.04	0.50
	Diff -> Male (d2)	-0.01	0.03	0.77	-0.03	0.04	0.36
Caregiving Questionnaire (CQ)	Proximity v. Distance						
	Female -> Female (a1)	**0.36**	**0.03**	**<.001**	**0.22**	**0.04**	**<.001**
	Male -> Male (a2)	**0.58**	**0.04**	**<.001**	**0.38**	**0.04**	**<.001**
	Female -> Male (p12)	**0.13**	**0.03**	**<.001**	**0.13**	**0.04**	**<.001**
	Male -> Female (p21)	**0.28**	**0.04**	**<.001**	**0.17**	**0.05**	**<.001**
	Diff -> Female (d1)	0.03	0.05	0.60	**-0.14**	**0.05**	**0.004**
	Diff -> Male (d2)	0.05	0.04	0.24	-0.03	0.05	0.49
	Sensitivity v. Insensitivity						
	Female -> Female (a1)	**0.35**	**0.03**	**<.001**	**0.35**	**0.03**	**<.001**
	Male -> Male (a2)	**0.34**	**0.04**	**<.001**	**0.37**	**0.04**	**<.001**
	Female -> Male (p12)	**0.16**	**0.04**	**<.001**	**0.15**	**0.04**	**<.001**
	Male -> Female (p21)	**0.15**	**0.04**	**<.001**	**0.12**	**0.04**	**0.002**
	Diff -> Female (d1)	-0.04	0.04	0.29	-0.07	0.04	0.07
	Diff -> Male (d2)	0.04	0.04	0.32	0.05	0.04	0.16
	Cooperation v. Control						
	Female -> Female (a1)	**0.24**	**0.03**	**<.001**	**0.24**	**0.03**	**<.001**
	Male -> Male (a2)	**0.29**	**0.04**	**<.001**	**0.21**	**0.04**	**<.001**
	Female -> Male (p12)	**0.08**	**0.04**	**0.02**	**0.08**	**0.04**	**0.04**
	Male -> Female (p21)	**0.11**	**0.04**	**0.004**	0.01	0.04	0.89
	Diff -> Female (d1)	-0.04	0.04	0.31	-0.06	0.04	0.13
	Diff -> Male (d2)	0.00	0.04	0.95	-0.02	0.04	0.63
	Compulsive						
	Female -> Female (a1)	**0.16**	**0.04**	**<.001**	**0.16**	**0.04**	**<.001**
	Male -> Male (a2)	**0.20**	**0.04**	**<.001**	**0.11**	**0.04**	**0.004**
	Female -> Male (p12)	0.04	0.04	0.28	0.07	0.04	0.08
	Male -> Female (p21)	**0.09**	**0.04**	**0.02**	0.03	0.04	0.39
	Diff -> Female (d1)	0.02	0.04	0.64	0.01	0.04	0.75
	Diff -> Male (d2)	0.05	0.04	0.22	**0.10**	**0.04**	**0.01**
Conflicts and Problem-solving Scales (CPS)	Collaboration						
	Female -> Female (a1)	**0.14**	**0.04**	**<.001**	**0.29**	**0.03**	**<.001**
	Male -> Male (a2)	**0.24**	**0.04**	**<.001**	**0.42**	**0.04**	**<.001**
	Female -> Male (p12)	0.05	0.04	0.21	0.07	0.03	0.05
	Male -> Female (p21)	**0.16**	**0.04**	**<.001**	**0.16**	**0.04**	**<.001**
	Diff -> Female (d1)	**0.22**	**0.04**	**<.001**	**0.17**	**0.04**	**<.001**
	Diff -> Male (d2)	**0.26**	**0.04**	**<.001**	**0.17**	**0.04**	**<.001**
	Avoidance – Capitulation						
	Female -> Female (a1)	**-0.41**	**0.03**	**<.001**	**-0.16**	**0.04**	**<.001**

Male -> Male (a2)	**-0.37**	**0.04**	**<.001**	**-0.25**	**0.04**	**<.001**
Female -> Male (p12)	**-0.13**	**0.03**	**<.001**	**-0.07**	**0.04**	**0.05**
Male -> Female (p21)	**-0.13**	**0.04**	**0.002**	**-0.17**	**0.05**	**<.001**
Diff -> Female (d1)	**-0.09**	**0.04**	**0.04**	-0.06	0.05	0.21
Diff -> Male (d2)	**-0.10**	**0.04**	**0.02**	-0.04	0.05	0.42
Stalemate						
Female -> Female (a1)	**-0.57**	**0.04**	**<.001**	**-0.22**	**0.05**	**<.001**
Male -> Male (a2)	**-0.49**	**0.03**	**<.001**	**-0.34**	**0.04**	**<.001**
Female -> Male (p12)	**-0.24**	**0.04**	**0.00**	**-0.12**	**0.05**	**0.01**
Male -> Female (p21)	**-0.24**	**0.03**	**0.00**	**-0.22**	**0.04**	**<.001**
Diff -> Female (d1)	**0.15**	**0.04**	**0.001**	-0.01	0.05	0.82
Diff -> Male (d2)	**0.11**	**0.04**	**0.01**	0.04	0.05	0.47
Verbal Aggression						
Female -> Female (a1)	**-0.41**	**0.04**	**<.001**	**-0.14**	**0.04**	**<.001**
Male -> Male (a2)	**-0.37**	**0.04**	**<.001**	**-0.17**	**0.04**	**<.001**
Female -> Male (p12)	**-0.13**	**0.04**	**<.001**	-0.05	0.04	0.17
Male -> Female (p21)	-0.04	0.04	0.29	-0.06	0.04	0.11
Diff -> Female (d1)	-0.07	0.04	0.11	**-0.15**	**0.04**	**<.001**
Diff -> Male (d2)	-0.06	0.04	0.16	**-0.11**	**0.04**	**0.01**

Note. Bolded are effects that are significant at the .05 level.

For sample one at baseline, all of the nine variables revealed a significant actor effect for both female and male overall relationship quality. All of the results were in a positive direction except for Neuroticism and attachment Avoidance and Anxiety, for which higher values were associated with lower overall relationship quality. There were fewer partner effects: Responsiveness and Trust yielded partner effects for both sexes, but the results were more limited for the Big Five and attachment orientations. More specifically, there were no significant effects for Agreeableness or Neuroticism for either sex, Openness had a positive partner effect for only male relationship quality, and Conscientiousness and attachment Avoidance had significant partner effects for only female relationship quality. In contrast, only one of the nine models showed a significant difference effect. In particular, after controlling for each partner's levels on these constructs, only the difference scores on Openness had a negative effect on female relationship quality ($\beta = -.10$, $p = .045$).

This difference in significance was then examined by comparing 95% confidence intervals between actor, partner, and dissimilarity effects. We found that actor effects were significantly higher than partner effects for Responsiveness and Trust, and actor effects were also significantly higher than dissimilarity effects for all variables except Conscientiousness. There were no differences between partner and difference effects. These results are shown in Table 4.5.

Within sample two, in models predicting Satisfaction, all but three (Extraversion, Openness, attachment Anxiety) out of 17 variables yielded a significant actor effect for female Satisfaction, and all but two (Extraversion and Openness) did so for male Satisfaction, all in expected directions. There were fewer significant partner effects. In addition to the previously mentioned variables, there were non-significant effects for Neuroticism, both attachment orientations, Compulsive caregiving, and Collaboration conflict resolution style. In contrast, the absolute between-partner difference score significantly predicted only female and male Satisfaction for three of the 17 models, all of which are conflict resolution strategies, with differences in Collaboration and Stalemate predicting *higher* dyadic Satisfaction, contrary to predictions. Conducting comparisons with 95% confidence intervals of the estimates, there were no differences among actor/partner/dissimilarity effects for the Big Five traits or attachment orientations except for a higher actor than dissimilarity effect for Neuroticism and attachment

Avoidance. For the Social Support and Social Provision variables, actor effects were consistently larger than partner and dissimilarity effects, and partner effects were larger than dissimilarity effects. Three of the four caregiving variables and three of the four conflict resolution variables had higher actor than dissimilarity effects, except for Compulsive caregiving. Moreover, three of the four conflict resolution variables had higher actor effects than both partner and dissimilarity, except for Collaboration style for which there were no differences among actor/partner/dissimilarity.

The results were strikingly similar for models predicting dyadic Cohesion. The largest differences involved Avoidance-Capitulation and Verbal Aggression conflict styles, for which there were no differences among actor/partner/dissimilarity effects. In addition, Neuroticism, the only Big Five trait with a significant difference between actor/dissimilarity effects in predicting Satisfaction, no longer showed any difference in predicting Cohesion. However, compared to models predicting Satisfaction, there were more significant dissimilarity effects in predicting Cohesion, after controlling for actor and partner effects. Particularly, dissimilarity in Conscientiousness was *positively* associated with Cohesion for both male ($\beta = .15$, $p < .001$) and female partners ($\beta = .13$, $p = .001$) and dissimilarity in Verbal Aggression was *negatively* associated with Cohesion for both male ($\beta = -.11$, $p = .01$) and female partners ($\beta = -.15$, $p < .001$). All results are presented in Table 4.6.

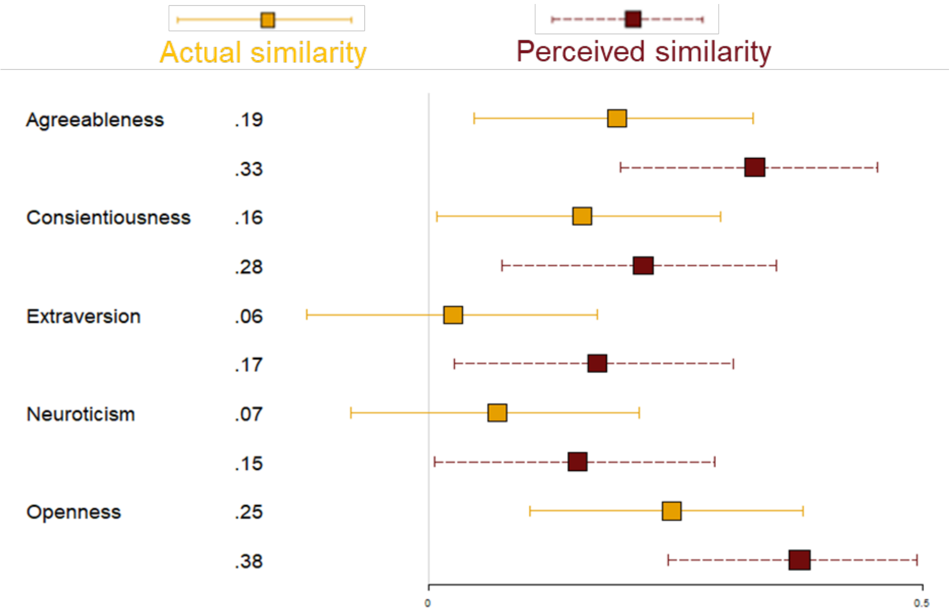
Hypothesis 9: Perceived versus Actual Similarity Comparison

In addition to self-reports of personality traits and relationship-specific characteristics, our two samples also included partner-reports of several variables, which included the Big Five traits for early dating couples, and Caregiving styles and Conflict resolution strategies for first-time parents. As a result, we were able to compare perceived and actual similarity effects. That is, are romantic partners more similar to one another, and/or do they perceive themselves as more similar to one another than they actually are? Further, is perceived similarity or actual similarity more strongly associated with higher relationship quality?

In order to compare the effect size of actual and perceived similarity, we conducted *z*-difference tests using Fisher's *z*-transformed bivariate correlations between: (a) self-reports provided by each partner, (b) the female partner's self-perception and perception of their male partner, and (c) the male partner's self-perception and perception of their female partner. All bivariate correlations are presented in Table 4.7 and 4.8 and depicted in Figures 4.3 and 4.4 for the two samples. For early dating couples, the only difference in trait perception involved Openness, such that male partners reported significantly higher similarity in Openness ($r = .50$, $p < .001$) than their actual similarity ($r = .25$, $p = .001$; z difference score = -2.78). For first-time parents, for all ten measured variables, participants reported higher similarity on these variables than the actual correlations between their self-reports. There was no difference in perceived similarity between female and male partners; all perceived similarities were positive and significant ($ps \leq .001$).

Figure 4.3

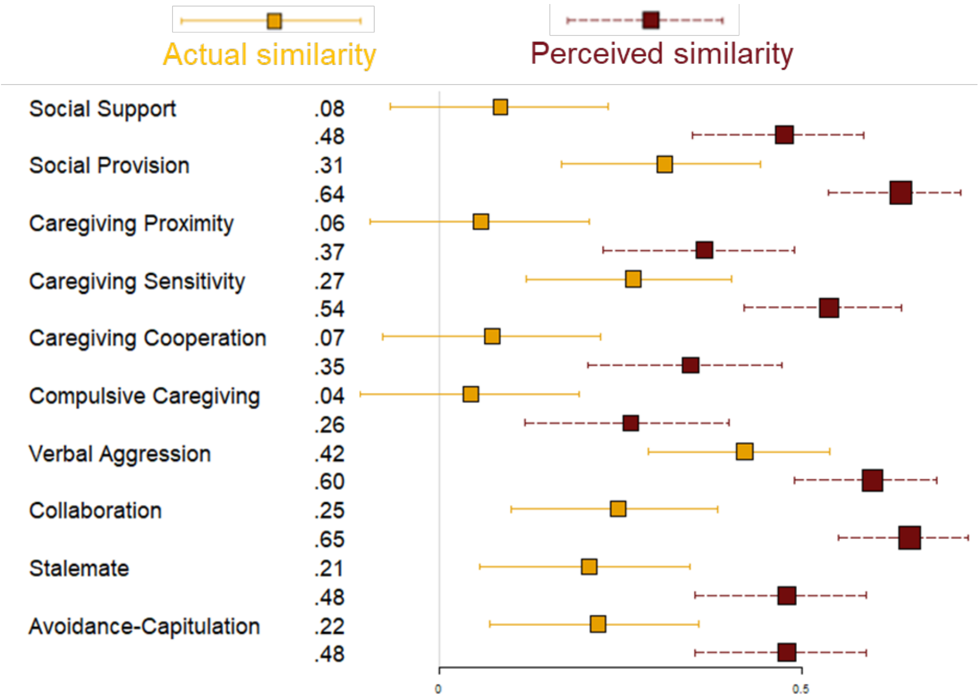
Actual versus Perceived Similarity at Baseline in Sample One



Note. Female-perceived similarity is presented here (Pearson's *r* correlations between female participants' self-reports and perceptions of their male partners). Results were similar between male- and female-perceived similarity.

Figure 4.4

Actual versus Perceived Similarity at Baseline in Sample Two



Note. Female-perceived similarity is presented here (Pearson's *r* correlations between female participants' self-reports and perceptions of their male partners). Results were similar between male- and female-perceived similarity.

Table 4.7

Actual and Perceived Similarity for Sample One of Early Dating Couples

Similarity	*r*	95% CI	*p*
Agreeableness			
Actual similarity	**0.19**	**[0.046 - 0.328]**	**0.01**
Female-perceived	**0.33**	**[0.194 - 0.454]**	**< .001**
Male-perceived	**0.34**	**[0.199 - 0.463]**	**< .001**
Conscientiousness			
Actual similarity	*0.16*	*[0.008 - 0.295]*	*0.04*
Female-perceived	**0.22**	**[0.074 - 0.352]**	**0.003**
Male-perceived	0.03	[-0.115 - 0.181]	0.66
Extraversion			
Actual similarity	0.03	[-0.123 - 0.171]	0.75
Female-perceived	*0.17*	*[0.026 - 0.309]*	*0.02*
Male-perceived	0.12	[-0.029 - 0.263]	0.12
Neuroticism			
Actual similarity	0.07	[-0.079 - 0.213]	0.36
Female-perceived	*0.15*	*[0.006 - 0.29]*	*0.04*
Male-perceived	0.12	[-0.03 - 0.263]	0.12
Openness			
Actual similarity	**0.25**	**[0.103 - 0.379]**	**0.001**
Female-perceived	**0.38**	**[0.243 - 0.494]**	**< .001**
Male-perceived	**0.50**	**[0.379 - 0.603]**	**< .001**

Note. Bolded are effects that are significant after controlling for FDR and italicized are those only significant using alpha of .05.

Table 4.8

Actual and Perceived Similarity for Sample Two of First-Time Parents

	Similarity	*r*	95% CI	*p*
Social Support Questionnaire (SSQ)	Social Support			
	Actual similarity	0.08	[-0.068 - 0.233]	0.28
	Female-perceived	**0.48**	**[0.349 - 0.585]**	**< .001**
	Male-perceived	**0.45**	**[0.318 - 0.562]**	**< .001**
Social Provisions Scale (SPS)	Social Provision			
	Actual similarity	**0.31**	**[0.168 - 0.442]**	**< .001**
	Female-perceived	**0.64**	**[0.537 - 0.719]**	**< .001**
	Male-perceived	**0.55**	**[0.436 - 0.649]**	**< .001**
Caregiving Questionnaire (CQ)	Proximity v. Distance			
	Actual similarity	0.06	[-0.095 - 0.207]	0.46
	Female-perceived	**0.37**	**[0.226 - 0.489]**	**< .001**
	Male-perceived	**0.45**	**[0.316 - 0.561]**	**< .001**
	Sensitivity v. Insensitivity			
	Actual similarity	**0.27**	**[0.12 - 0.402]**	**< .001**
	Female-perceived	**0.54**	**[0.42 - 0.637]**	**< .001**
	Male-perceived	**0.53**	**[0.413 - 0.632]**	**< .001**
	Cooperation v. Control			
	Actual similarity	0.07	[-0.079 - 0.222]	0.35
	Female-perceived	**0.35**	**[0.205 - 0.473]**	**< .001**
	Male-perceived	**0.31**	**[0.167 - 0.441]**	**< .001**
	Compulsive Caregiving			
	Actual similarity	0.04	[-0.109 - 0.193]	0.58
	Female-perceived	**0.26**	**[0.117 - 0.399]**	**0.001**
	Male-perceived	**0.42**	**[0.288 - 0.538]**	**< .001**
Conflicts and Problem-solving Scales (CPS)	Collaboration			
	Actual similarity	**0.25**	**[0.098 - 0.383]**	**0.001**
	Female-perceived	**0.65**	**[0.551 - 0.729]**	**< .001**
	Male-perceived	**0.64**	**[0.535 - 0.717]**	**< .001**
	Avoidance – Capitulation			
	Actual similarity	**0.22**	**[0.07 - 0.358]**	**0.004**
	Female-perceived	**0.48**	**[0.353 - 0.588]**	**< .001**
	Male-perceived	**0.41**	**[0.279 - 0.531]**	**< .001**
	Stalemate			
	Actual similarity	**0.21**	**[0.056 - 0.346]**	**0.01**
	Female-perceived	**0.48**	**[0.353 - 0.588]**	**< .001**
	Male-perceived	**0.51**	**[0.386 - 0.612]**	**< .001**
	Verbal Aggression			
	Actual similarity	**0.42**	**[0.288 - 0.538]**	**< .001**
	Female-perceived	**0.60**	**[0.49 - 0.686]**	**< .001**
	Male-perceived	**0.68**	**[0.592 - 0.755]**	**< .001**

Note. Bolded are effects that are significant after controlling for FDR.

Hypothesis 10: Perceived versus Actual Similarity Effects on Quality

In order to compare the effect sizes of the association between actual/perceived similarity and relationship quality, we next conducted the APIM models following the general structures as depicted in Figure S2. This structure is similar to Figure S1, but it depicts a model for *perceived* similarity, including one partner's perception of their own personality and of their partner's personality. There were two sets of models for perceived similarity: one examining the female partner's perception, and one examining the male partner's perception. We then compared the estimated paths and their standard errors. The difference between these associations was considered significant if the two 95% confidence intervals did not overlap.

First, there were no significant associations between female-perceived or male-perceived similarity on these variables predicting relationship quality in sample one. Further, there were no significant differences between the effects of perceived and actual similarity predicting relationship quality for any of the Big Five models for either female or male overall relationship quality, except for models of actual difference in Openness negatively predicting female relationship quality (β = -.10, p = .045). The full results are presented in Table C.9.

For sample two, the only perceived similarities that significantly predicted relationship quality were all in an unexpected direction and involved the caregiving questionnaire. Higher female-perceived dissimilarity in Compulsive caregiving was associated with higher male-reported Cohesion (β = .25, p = .01), controlling for actor and partner effects of this variable. There were more significant associations for male-perceived similarity, all of which were again in models for caregiving behaviors and all in the opposite hypothesized direction. For example, higher male-perceived dissimilarity in Sensitivity, Cooperation, and Compulsive caregiving were associated with higher male and female relationship quality. Most importantly, and as the focal point of this hypothesis, there were no significant differences between the effects of perceived and actual similarity on relationship quality for any of the models across all female and male outcomes. The full results of these analyses are presented in Table C.10.

Discussion

The current research can be summarized under two central aims: to examine (1) the evidence for and (2) the benefits of assortative mating patterns in romantic relationships. To further examine the evidence for assortative mating patterns, we compared assortment based on perceived versus actual similarities. To further examine its benefits, we compared the effects of assortment to the effects of each partner's scores on relationship quality (i.e., actor and partner effects). The discussion below is organized under these two aims. We found strong support for one of our central expectations—that there would be evidence of stronger assortative mating for relationship-specific constructs than for the broader Big Five personality traits as measured at baseline. We further found evidence for correlated change such that partners showed similar change trajectories, mainly in relationship-specific characteristics, across both samples. However, there was limited evidence for the benefits of assortment for relationship quality, particularly after controlling for the effects of each partner's characteristics, and perceived similarity was often much stronger than actual similarity as examined using self-reports.

Evidence of Assortative Mating Between Romantic Partners

In both samples, between-partner correlations for the Big Five traits were all below .25 and often not statistically significant. Openness showed the highest assortment in both samples, which is consistent with past meta-analytic results (Horwitz et al., 2023) and unsurprising given its association with cognitive abilities (Kaufman et al., 2016). In contrast, relationship characteristics such as Responsiveness, Trust, and specific conflict resolution strategies were not only moderate in magnitude and statistically significant but were also significantly stronger than those of the Big Five traits. Responsiveness showed the strongest between-partner correlation across both samples, at $r = .46$. This variable assessed each person's perception of how understanding, validating, and caring their current partner is to their personal needs. It includes items such as "My partner usually sees the same virtues and faults in me as I see in myself" and "My partner usually seems interested in doing things with me." Unlike the Big Five traits, which describe general personality tendencies across time, different people, and different situations, or attachment orientations, which inquire about the nature of romantic partners and relationships in general, Responsiveness is contextualized to measure what has transpired with one's current partner and in the current relationship.

Interestingly, the effects for attachment orientations were more trait-like in that they tend to be smaller than the relationship-specific variables, even though similarity in attachment was larger in magnitude among established couples in sample two than among the early dating couples in sample one. This may be related to the fact that both samples used assessments of global attachment orientations, rather than with regard to a specific partner, which qualify as personality traits under some definitions (DeYoung, 2015). As a result, they might behave more similarly to the Big Five traits than the other more contextualized relationship constructs. On the other hand, nearly all of the relationship-specific characteristics, such as partner responsiveness, conflict resolution strategies, social support/provision, and caregiving styles, are outcomes of dyadic phenomena that inherently assess how individuals interact with and relate to their current partners. As a result, an extensive body of literature has demonstrated the associations between these variables at the individual levels with relationship outcomes (e.g., Berli et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2015; Stanton et al., 2019), and it was thus reasonable to also expect higher levels of correlations for these variables than the global attachment orientations or Big Five traits.

This basic pattern also emerged in the longitudinal trajectories of traits and relationship-specific characteristics in both samples. Specifically, Responsiveness and Trust in sample one showed strong correlated changes across the duration of that study. Sample two provided additional important insights into self-reports and partner-reports of longitudinal change. Across the first two years of parenthood, self-reports provided by each partner did not show much correlated change, except for Social Support and Provision, yet dyad members reported that they both changed in the same direction on several variables. It is possible that, during this major life transition, partners might be answering questions about their partners in more normative ways or relying on heuristics, which may lead to higher correlations between partner-reports, but not self-reports.

Furthermore, a sizeable portion of dyads in both samples showed significant profile similarity. This is consistent with some past research that has documented different patterns of assortative mating, depending on the analytic approach used and how assortment is operationalized, especially with evidence of profile correlations (Luo & Klohnen, 2005). Nonetheless, in the current research, we found that the majority of profile similarity was due to effects of normative profiles instead of distinctive features in partners' profiles, because the proportion of significant profile similarity dropped markedly between profiles computed using raw versus centered versus standardized scores. Specifically, conflict resolution profiles showed a striking 76.8% significance rate in sample two using raw scores, which dropped to just 19% using standardized scores. This highlights that similarity in conflict resolution profiles across different subscales (e.g., Collaboration and Stalemate) may simply be due to normative patterns in the population rather than anything specific to each dyad.

We also found more support for perceived over actual similarity effects in both samples using different analytic approaches, which is highly consistent with the literature (e.g., Montoya et al., 2008). This poses further questions about the potential mechanisms underlying mating assortment. If perceived similarity is consistently stronger than actual similarity in romantic dyads, are people choosing mates based on their explicit perceptions rather than on who may truly be more similar to them? The fact that this pattern was found for both early dating and established couples suggests that it exists beyond initial attraction and relationship initiation and may extend to relationship maintenance processes. Further, it may be the case that romantic partners possess intimate and unique knowledge of one another above and beyond what can be captured via self-reports, and it might be misleading to consider correlations between self-reports to be indicative of *actual* similarity. Indeed, the Self-Other Knowledge Asymmetry model suggests that self-reports need not be the “golden standard” but are instead just one of many perceptions of a person, each with its own unique perspectives and biases (Vazire, 2010). Meta-analyses have demonstrated that informant-reports were strong predictors of both work and academic performances (Connelly & Ones, 2010; Oh et al., 2011), and another primary study have shown a predictive advantage of informant-reports *over* self-reports in predicting work performance from acquaintances across different contexts (Connelly & Hülsheger, 2011). Informant-reports from well-known raters also provided incremental validity in other evaluative constructs such as prosocial and moral behaviors (Thielmann et al., 2017).

Benefits of Assortative Mating Between Romantic Partners

Although we found evidence in support of assortative mating for many variables, there was more limited evidence that assortment is beneficial to relationship outcomes.

We adopted several analytic strategies to address this question. First, we used absolute difference scores to predict relationship quality. Second, we examined relevant interaction effects in multiple regression models. These two approaches yielded different patterns of findings in the current research. These inconsistent results could be attributable to statistical power differences between these strategies, given that interaction effects require larger sample sizes to achieve acceptable power levels. Following our preregistration, this inconsistency indicates that we did not find full support for the benefits of assortative mating.

Further, we also conducted Actor-Partner Interdependence Models that included actor effects, partner effects, and (dis)similarity effects. Consistent with existing research (Dyrenforth et al., 2010), we found overwhelming support for the predominance of actor effects over partner and (dis)similarity effects. It was often each person's score on a relationship-specific characteristic, more so than their partner's score or their similarity, that significantly predicted their relationship quality. Further, we also found that most evidence for the benefits of assortment did not remain after controlling for each partner's individual scores in the same model. This indicated that many of the associations found using simple linear regression models were statistical artifacts. For instance, similarity on Responsiveness predicted higher relationship quality for both male and female partners in sample one; however, this might be due to the fact that Responsiveness was positively skewed (M = 7.47 out of 9), and thus what was captured in *similarity* was in most cases two partners who were both high in Responsiveness. As a result, after controlling for two partners' scores, there was no longer a benefit for assortment.

Nonetheless, in sample two, there were several variables with consistent dissimilarity effects across both genders even after controlling for actor and partner effects: Conscientiousness and all four conflict resolution strategies. Interestingly, the effects were more often negative rather than positive. For both genders, higher between-partner similarity in Conscientiousness and Collaboration conflict strategy was actually associated with *lower* relationship Cohesion, and higher similarity in Collaboration and Stalemate strategies were also associated with *lower* relationship Satisfaction. These findings were more aligned with *complementarity* patterns, suggesting that the relationship might benefit from the partners sharing differing characteristics.

Lastly, we employed two samples from two different stages: early dating couples and established cohabiting/married couples. However, it is important to note that our research did not capture the initial stage of assortative mating through attraction alone, because even our early-dating couples were required to have been together for at least three months. Some research programs have directly examined assortative attraction when individuals preferred people who seemed similar to them after either no interaction or very short interactions (Montoya et al., 2008) and after viewing an online profile (Neyt et al., 2020). The processes underlying these superficial preferences are likely distinct to those underlying assortment in both of our samples. As a result, although we did not find an association between assortment and reported relationship quality, we cannot say definitively that there are no benefits to assortment because we have pre-selected couples who have made it at all to the dating or marriage/cohabitation stages.

Theoretical Implications

In sum, this research study highlighted the importance of incorporating multiple constructs, perspectives, and time scales in the investigation of assortative mating in romantic relationships. First, by expanding to personality constructs beyond the Big Five traits, we demonstrated that romantic partners shared significantly more similarity in these contextualized constructs, which further highlighted the *bandwidth-fidelity* trade-off: although Big Five traits are predictive of many different outcomes, their broad conceptualization means that each effect may be small in magnitude, particularly in specific domains such as relationship initiation and maintenance. Second, by incorporating both partners' perceptions of themselves and of each other, we demonstrated a consistent pattern that romantic partners perceived one another significantly more similarly than they actually were, highlighting the importance of accounting for multiple sources of truth beyond traditional self-reports. We were also able to examine the differential effects of actor and partner, as well as their interaction and similarity effects on relationship quality. Although evidence for assortative benefits was limited after controlling for the effects of each individual's characteristics, all couples were in an established relationship rather than at the initial attraction stage, so it is therefore not appropriate to state that similarity was not at all beneficial. Finally, we again highlighted the importance of context by including two longitudinal samples across two very different relationship stages. As a result, we found evidence not only of simple bivariate similarity but also some correlated change over time, even with very limited evidence of change from fixed effects estimates. This pattern is indicative of individual differences in change: although the sample did not show a consistent pattern of change on average, individuals may change in unique ways and often times in similarly to their partners.

Limitations and Future Directions

An important limitation of the current research is that its numerous significance tests may have led to occasional false positives, despite our efforts to control False Discovery Rate and our detailed preregistration plan. Our results, therefore, should not be interpreted as definitive, but rather as fodder for more directed research in the future. Future research should use our primary findings as a starting point to decide which variables and hypotheses merit more in-depth investigation. Additionally, some of our findings were not hypothesized, such as the finding of several gender differences in the effects of assortment (e.g., assortment on some variables was beneficial only for female or male partners). Further, even though one of our samples was experiencing a distinct life transition (the transition to parenthood), our research focused on documenting more general assortative mating patterns. Thus, although we used this sample to examine individual differences in change trajectories across different variables, our hypotheses were not formalized with this specific life transition in mind. Future researchers interested in these topics should develop pre-specified justifications and adequately powered designs to target these questions.

In addition, our statistical power was somewhat limited in each study. Although a bivariate correlation of .25 only requires 153 couples to detect with 80% power, we conducted analyses more complex than bivariate baseline correlations. Our numerous hypothesized effects, coupled with the use of previously collected data, made power calculations difficult. We had to conduct our analyses with the data that were available to us. All analytic codes and results are shared in the OSF repository, even those that failed to converge due to limited or missing data, so that future researchers can review them as desired.

Conclusion

The current research investigated assortative mating patterns, using both cross-sectional and longitudinal measures of personality traits and relationship-specific characteristics in two distinct samples of romantic couples. We found evidence for assortative mating across various relationship-specific characteristics, which were often stronger in magnitude than assortment based on Big Five traits. However, couples often perceived each other to be more similar than their actual similarity indicated. Further, we found evidence for longitudinal assortment such that both early dating couples and first-time parents had similar change trajectories for several relationship-specific characteristics over time. Nonetheless, although there was evidence for assortment, there was little evidence to support its benefits. After controlling for actor and partner effects, similarity no longer consistently predicted relationship quality in early dating couples, and it was often negatively associated with relationship quality in first time parents, specifically for conflict resolution strategies. In sum, although romantic couples across stages showed similarity and perceived each other similarly, assortment was not explicitly beneficial to measures of relationship quality.

This research highlighted the importance of incorporating multiple constructs, perspectives, and time scales in this investigation. Specifically, the inclusion of relationship-specific individual differences such as trust, attachment, perceived partner responsiveness, caregiving, and conflict resolution strategies revealed several unique and novel patterns of assortative mating beyond the Big Five traits. Further, employing both self-reports and partner-reports allowed for multiple interesting perspectives in assessing similarity and also emphasized that perceived similarity is more important than actual similarity in assortment. Lastly, we wish to highlight the importance of within-person variability and of examining individuals not as static but flexible to change either normatively during their relationship or due to specific challenges during life transitions.

CHAPTER 5: GENERAL DISCUSSION

The current dissertation provides a broad and thorough examination of intraindividual variability in personality processes. In doing so, it makes substantive contributions to the literature on personality and assortative mating, as well as methodological contributions needed when investigating these psychological processes. In Chapter 1, I introduced the breadth of personality research with specific considerations for the timescales, measurement approaches, and the interpersonal context. Chapters 2 to 4 then provided empirical examinations of these considerations, and in doing so highlighted the importance of including finer-grained constructs both within and outside of the Big Five framework, as well as including multiple measurement perspectives and occasions of psychological characteristics. Although the literature recognizes that personality may be highly influential in various life domains, the current dissertation focused specifically on the interpersonal context of romantic relationships as an illustration of these central arguments.

Chapter 2 laid the foundation by presenting a meta-analysis of the associations between the Big Five personality domains and Big Two metatraits with variability in affective states. I included two indices for within-person variability: the within-person standard deviation across the time-series that is commonly used in the literature and the relative variability index, which alleviates the mathematical dependency between the within-person mean and standard deviation. Across 88 independent samples with a total $N = 20{,}813$ participants, I indeed found a problematic association between the mean and standard deviation, which further promoted the usage of more appropriate variability measurements. I confirmed my hypothesis of a positive association between affective variability and Plasticity as well as its underlying traits. However, the pattern of findings was mixed and valence-specific for the Stability traits, and this metatrait itself was negatively associated with variability in Positive Affect but positively so for variability in Negative Affect. This study not only contributes to our understanding of the affective component and correlates of personality traits at different levels, but it also highlights the importance of an adjusted operationalization of the variability constructs to avoid confounding relationships caused by mean-level associations.

Chapter 3 explored the application of advances in personality assessments in the interpersonal context. Specifically, this pilot study examined the evidence and benefits of assortative mating for established romantic couples using both typical trait measures at baseline as well as dynamic personality and affective state measures across 35 time points during a seven-day period. I found evidence for assortative mating based on both baseline traits and dynamic states. However, there was more evidence for perceived similarities than actual similarities at baseline, and there was much more evidence for dynamic similarities on states than baseline similarities on traits. I also found a complementarity effect such that partners were negatively correlated with one another on the maladaptive Volatility personality aspect, suggesting a buffering or complementarity effect. On the other hand, there was little evidence to support the benefits of assortative mating for relationship satisfaction, either using baseline traits or state fluctuations.

Nonetheless, I did find evidence that co-fluctuations on positive affect were associated with better relationship satisfaction for both partners.

Chapter 4 expanded the timescale from intensive to traditional longitudinal research. I investigated assortative mating patterns in two complementary samples: early dating couples across a four-month period and married and/or cohabiting couples across the first two years of parenthood. I examined this matching pattern based on baseline measures and longitudinal trajectories of Big Five personality traits as well as relationship-specific characteristics such as attachment orientations, caregiving systems, conflict resolution, partner responsiveness, and trust. I found evidence for assortative mating across various relationship-specific characteristics both at baseline and longitudinally, which were often stronger in magnitude than assortment on Big Five traits. Further, consistent with the data presented in Chapter 3, couples often perceived each other to be more similar than their actual similarity indicated. Once again, similar to the general pattern in Chapter 3, there was little evidence to support the benefits of between-partner similarity for relationship quality, especially after controlling for actor and partner effects of both partners' individual characteristics.

Contributions to Personality Science

This research program combined multiple levels of personality constructs both within and outside of the Big Five framework, multiple perspectives through self and informant reports, and multiple timescales from one-time trait measures to dynamic state fluctuations and longitudinal trait changes. A primary focus was placed on intraindividual variability: how people may vary in their psychological characteristics and processes from moment to moment and across time. Here, I will revisit the two major considerations proposed in Chapter 1, that of the timescale and measurement approaches, and discuss our empirical examinations to address these concerns specifically in the domain of assortative mating.

Promoting Personality Measurement across Levels and Perspectives

The most important takeaway from the current research program is that personality researchers should continue to embrace personality constructs beyond the confines of self-reported Big Five domains. This expansion was present in all preceding empirical chapters in three ways: (1) Chapters 2 and 3 investigated multiple levels of personality traits within the Big Five framework, ranging from 10 personality aspects to the five domains and ultimately to the two metatraits; (2) Chapter 4 also investigated multiple levels of personality by including non-Big Five constructs such as adult attachment orientations and relationship-specific characteristics; and (3) Chapters 3 and 4 incorporated multiple perspectives of personality assessments through both self-reports and informant-reports provided by romantic partners.

The meta-analysis in Chapter 2 benefited greatly from including personality traits at both the domain and metatrait levels. Indeed, although I provided theoretical motivations for the hypothesized relationship with affective variability for each individual Big Five domains, these predictions were also highly motivated by their organization into the higher-order Stability and Plasticity. Unlike the latter two chapters, this meta-analysis tackled the research question from a broad perspective; although variability in affective states was the chosen examined construct, much of the theoretical motivation was for intraindividual variability in psychological processes in general. In this sense, instead of adding granularity, I gained a broader unifying perspective of personality traits both by using the metatraits to organize the hypotheses and by estimating mean effects at the metatrait levels. I indeed found that the patterns of findings for individual domains within the same metatrait were similar to one another, and Plasticity in particular showed consistent results at the trait and metatrait level as predicted. Although in an unexpected direction, results for the metatrait Stability helped elucidate the importance of specificity in affective valence. In the same investigation, I thus provided support for both the higher-order unifying framework of the metatraits and more granular conceptualizations of affective traits.

The bulk of evidence for Chapters 3 and 4 converged to highlight the additional predictive powers provided by both multiple personality levels and multi-informant perspectives. By analyzing different levels of personality traits using both the ten underlying aspects and their overarching Big Five domains in Chapter 3, I was able to more clearly identify which component of each domain may be driving the effect. This was most striking for the aspects Volatility within Neuroticism and Openness within Openness domain. Particularly, Volatility showed the rare pattern of complementarity or negative assortment of moderate size, which was not evident at the domain level. This further highlighted the importance of the affective component in the relationship domain, particularly affective regulation, because of Volatility's strong implications for anger and irritability. It is reasonable to expect that a complementary level of Volatility would be more adaptive at least compared to both partners having high levels of this trait. On the other hand, the finding for the Openness aspect, but not Intellect, came as a surprise. From previous meta-analytic research, I was indeed expecting domain-level assortment on Openness to be high, but I expected this to result from its association with various indicators of cognitive abilities, which are often attributed to the Intellect aspect. In contrast, the association existing only for the Openness aspect of creativity and divergent thinking was unexpected and helped direct me to connect this work to the literature on dyadic creativity and passion.

In addition to different Big Five trait levels, both Chapters 3 and 4 highlighted the utility of expanding beyond this framework. Specifically, I found that affective traits, such as global assessments of Positive and Negative Affect, and many relationship-specific constructs, such as Responsiveness, Trust, and conflict resolution strategies, showed much stronger evidence for assortment than Big Five traits. This once again aligned with my central argument that the broad traits may simply lack the granularity needed to be strongly predictive in the specific domain of romantic mate selection. Finally, another approach to add granularity within personality assessment was to use multivariate profile indicators instead of examining all traits in isolation. Unfortunately, this approach is not very common in the literature and also does not follow traditional significance testing frameworks. As a result, findings are more descriptive and difficult to interpret and synthesize. Nonetheless, I was able to provide evidence for an assortment based on profiles of global affect, Big Five traits, conflict resolution strategies, and caregiving behaviors. I was further able to demonstrate that most of these effects resulted from a normative effect, that is, how two partners' profiles are similar to a typical person, rather than distinctive features of the couple themselves.

In accordance with my predictions and consistent with existing research, perceived similarities were almost always stronger in magnitude, and oftentimes significantly so, than actual similarities as obtained through correlating two partners' self-reports. This pattern provided me with further insights into the mechanisms of assortative mating and suggests that it may involve at least some amount of conscious judgment. However, because all studied couples were already in established relationships, it may very well be the case that over time, these individuals had grown to perceive their close others as a more integral part of themselves and thus more similar to their own self perceptions. To further clarify this mechanism, a more extensive and careful consideration of the timescale is needed, which will be the focal point of discussion in the next section. Nonetheless, I would not have gained any of these insights if relying on self-reported personality alone.

Understanding Personality Processes across Varying Timescales

In addition to expanding our personality constructs of interests with multiple levels of assessments and perspectives, the introduction also set forth the notion that personality constructs should be investigated not just statically using one-time trait measures but also dynamically and longitudinally across varying timescales. Indeed, intraindividual variability was the primary focus of the current dissertation and was featured in all three empirical chapters. I investigated variability as both dynamic moment-to-moment fluctuations with intensive longitudinal designs (Chapters 2 and 3) and also longer-term change trajectories with traditional longitudinal designs (Chapter 4). Chapter 2 provided a thorough synthesis of the literature on the relationship between personality traits and intraindividual variability. Although I chose variability in affective states as the focus for this meta-analysis, all hypotheses were motivated by the theoretical implications of personality traits for intraindividual variability in all psychological processes. Substantively, this research contributed to the literature by providing clarity to our conceptualization of personality traits at both the domain (Big Five) and metatraits (Stability and Plasticity) levels. Specifically, I provided evidence that confirmed the importance of intraindividual variability in conceptualizing Plasticity and its underlying traits. Importantly, Chapter 2 provided the foundational knowledge needed prior to our primary research, because personality and affective processes were both used as indicators in our investigation of assortative mating in Chapters 3 and 4. These two latter chapters further showed the importance of the timescale in longitudinal investigations.

Even within traditional longitudinal research as presented in Chapter 4, I indeed found differing results between the two samples of two different time ranges and intervals. In addition, it is also important to consider the significance of the studied time period. For instance, the sample of first-time parents underwent dramatic changes to their personal and interpersonal lives during the duration of the study. In contrast, our sample of early dating couples were captured during a normative period and understandably did not show much longitudinal change patterns throughout the shorter duration of the study. I should thus note that longitudinal studies may also vary widely in the number of assessments, total range of duration, as well as the significance of the time period, and these are all important considerations when designing research to investigate a specific longitudinal process of interest. Notably, none of these studies included the time period prior to or during mate selection. All romantic dyads in our samples have been together for either at least three months (sample 1 in Chapter 4) and at least one year (Chapter 3) or were committed enough to be cohabiting/married and expecting their first child (sample 2 in Chapter 4). As a result, it was difficult to fully examine the *benefits* of assortative mating, because I did not capture the counterfactual: dyads who did not choose to pursue or commit to the relationship. Once again, careful timescale selection proves to be important, because a complete examination of this effect would necessitate expanding the time duration even further back to include the exploration stage. Admittedly, it would be challenging to identify and follow dyad members from when they were single individuals exploring different options in the dating market. However, the advent and rising popularity of online dating environments may provide researchers with exciting new opportunities and research designs in this area.

At a more granular level, I also included an empirical study using an intensive longitudinal design and found strong evidence for its utility in examining assortative mating processes. Specifically, romantic partners showed co-fluctuations and many similar variability patterns in their personality and affective states that were not present with only baseline trait investigations. Because personality evolved as adaptive processes in response to the constantly changing external environment and goal states, treating personality processes as dynamic systems instead of crystalized traits would reasonably enhance our understanding of how they might be influential for our psychological functioning.

Throughout these substantive investigations of intraindividual processes, this dissertation also contributed to personality research by highlighting the methodological pitfall of confounding mean-level and variability-level effects. Specifically, the meta-analysis in Chapter 2 provided empirical evidence for this problematic association in bounded affect scales and demonstrated the differing patterns of results using an alternative variability index. The current research program thus indicated that researchers whose work centers variability constructs should adopt these corrections to help contribute to a more accumulative body of research.

Limitations and Future Directions

This dissertation research program employed a variety of research designs and analytical methods. In doing so, I also showcased the importance of statistical power, especially with complex statistical analyses targeted at relatively small to moderate effect sizes, which is exactly the case for much of personality research. Our two empirical chapters included sample sizes that were clearly shy of the thresholds needed for some of the more ambitious analyses. It was thus evident when examining the patterns of results that I would arrive at much more consistent findings with a well-powered design.

Nonetheless, researchers should keep in mind that strong statistical power results not from sheer sample size alone, and larger effect sizes may be detectable at much lower sample sizes. Indeed, using reliable repeated measures of contextualized and relevant personality constructs is a great way to alleviate the lacking power associated with the small effect sizes often found for the broad trait conceptualizations.

As a result, I wish to further encourage personality researchers to expand their toolkits to include assessments approaches beyond one-time trait measures and personality constructs beyond the Big Five framework. The breadth of analyses and constructs presented by the preceding chapters is intended to be informative for future hypothesis generation. Nonetheless, there exists many more relevant psychological constructs beyond what was included in these studies. For instance, situated at the most contextualized level of personality is narrative identity, or the rich life stories that people continually construct about their personal and interpersonal lives. Although this was outside of the scope of the current research program, narrative research is an exciting emerging area that undoubtedly will provide a wealth of information about an individual's psychological innerworkings and subjective experiences. An integration of all these perspectives would ultimately contribute to a deeper understanding of the whole person.

Conclusions

In sum, the current dissertation highlighted the depth and breadth of personality science. True to the generalist tradition, the research questions of interest for personality psychologists may be answered using a wide array of research designs and analytical techniques. In addition, we have in our toolkits a diverse range of constructs pertaining to various psychological individual differences. Although researchers have developed very structured and efficient frameworks, such as the Big Five or the three-level model of personality, to narrow down this vast number of potential variables, we must be mindful of the specificity level needed for each investigation. I demonstrated this point in examining the phenomenon of assortative mating in romantic relationships, highlighting the added predictive power afforded by finer-grained contextualized constructs as well as dynamic and longitudinal intraindividual processes. Even within the same broad construct, such as affective variability, it is further important to be mindful of different measurement techniques that may lead to diverging patterns of results. This dissertation research program thus contributed both methodologically and substantively to future research in personality science.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Chapter 2 Materials

Meta-Analytic References

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Table A.1

Study Characteristics for All Included Samples

ID	Quality	*N*	*M* Age	*SD* Age	% Female	% White	Location	Duration	Frequency	No. Times
Alshamsi_2015	good	52	36.00		9.00		Italy	30 days	3 times a day	90
Armeli_2007	good	98	43.50	8.69	50.00	95.00		21 days	3 times a day	63
Aurora_2021	good	195	20.05	2.38	79.00	81.00	United States	10 days	5 times a day	50
Balducci_2020	fair	213	45.50	10.40	42.50		Italy	10 days	1 time a day	10
Bartley_2011	good	366	20.14	2.10	68.50	37.60	United States	5 days	1 time a day	5
Brans_2013_study2		95	19.06	1.28	62.11		Belgium	7 days	10 times a day	70
Bringmann_2016_study1	fair	95	19.00	1.00	62.00		Belgium	7 days	10 times a day	70
Bringmann_2016_study2	fair	79	24.00	8.00	63.00		Belgium	14 days	10 times a day	140
Buhler_2020_wave2	good	2626	32.81	13.85			Austria, Germany, Switzerland	14 days	1 time a day	14
Burns_2015	good	45	28.09	10.80	68.00		Australia	14 days	1 time a day	14
Clegg_2021	good	267	20.26	0.70	67.00	60.00	Canada	20 days	1 time a day	20
Conner_2012_condition1	good	54	19.90	2.40	59.00	81.00	New Zealand	13 days	1 time a day	13
Conner_2012_condition2	good	54	19.90	2.40	59.00	81.00	New Zealand	13 days	3 times a day	39
Conner_2012_condition3	good	54	19.90	2.40	59.00	81.00	New Zealand	13 days	6 times a day	78
Conner_2015	good	658	19.80	1.70	70.21	79.20	New Zealand	13 days	1 time a day	13
Dauvier_2019	fair	191	38.50	17.40	64.00		France	14 days	5 times a day	70
Dejonckheere_2019		100	24.12	6.87	77.00		Belgium	14 days	7 times a day	98
Denissen_2008	good	1233	27.67	9.77	88.60		Germany	30 days	1 time a day	30
DMello_2021	good	598	34.36	9.39	42.00		United States	56 days	1 time a day	56
Dunkley_2014_wave1	good	196	40.94	12.25	66.33	78.00	Canada	14 days	1 time a day	14
Eid_1999	fair	180			55.00		United States	51 days	1 time a day	51
Erbas_2018_wave1		200	18.32	0.97	55.00		Belgium	7 days	10 times a day	70
Galla_2015	good	129	14.70	0.35	59.00	85.00	United States	14 days	1 time a day	14
Gartland_2014	good	103	35.00		70.87	90.30	United Kingdom	14 days	1 time a day	14
Geukes_2017_wave1	fair	131	21.01	3.65	81.00		Germany	21 days	event-contingent	112
Greenaway_unpub							United Kingdom	7 days	1 time a day	7
Grommisch_2020		179	27.02	8.98	65.00		Australia	21 days	9 times a day	189
Haines_2016		78	23.26	3.54	61.00		Australia	4 days	10 times a day	40
Hisler_2020_sample1	good	211	18.78	1.05	58.00		United States	30 days	1 time a day	30
Howland_2017_wave1	good	575	18.76	1.09	52.00	86.00	United States	30 days	1 time a day	30
Jimenez_2022_study2	good	279	18.94	1.21	57.20	59.50	United States	7 days	5 times a day	35
Jones_2022	good	121	42.10	12.01	60.00	89.00	United States	7 days	8 times a day	56
Kalokerinos_2017	fair	114	35.23	11.87	50.00			7 days	1 time a day	7
Kalokerinos_2019_study2		101	18.64	1.45			Belgium	9 days	10 times a day	90
Kalokerinos_unpub							United Kingdom	7 days	1 time a day	7
Komulainen_2014	good	104	23.00	3.69	82.69		Finland	7 days	10 times a day	70
Koval_2019_study1		81	22.33	5.47	100.00	46.90	Australia	7 days	10 times a day	70

Koval_2019_study2		87	23.52	4.11	100.00	32.20	Australia	7 days	10 times a day	70
Koval_2019_study3		100	26.46	6.12	100.00	65.00	United States	7 days	10 times a day	70
Kritzler_2020	good	206	25.17	8.03	79.61		Germany	7 days	5 times a day	35
Kroencke_2020	good	1609	33.70	12.70	78.00		Germany	14 days	6 times a day	84
Kuijpers_2022_study1	fair	92	30.00	11.84	62.00		Belgium	20 days	5 times a day	100
Kuijpers_2022_study2	good	80	32.00	12.50	57.00		Belgium	10 days	3 times a day	30
Kukk_2022	good	96	21.50	6.70	100.00	100.00	Estonia	3 days	7 times a day	21
Kuppens_2007_study1	good	58	22.00		68.97		Belgium	7 days	9 times a day	63
Kuppens_2010_study2		60	23.00		66.67		Belgium	4 days	50 times a day	200
Laferton_2020	good	98	25.46	6.65	83.70		Austria, Germany, Switzerland	10 days	1 time a day	10
Leki_2017_study3	good	52	19.54		65.38		United States	21 days	1 time a day	21
Long_2003	good	163	20.00		80.98		United States	7 days	1 time a day	7
Mackinnon_2021_sample1	good	263	21.37	1.89	79.80	78.30	Canada	20 days	1 time a day	20
Medland_2020		132	21.14	3.51	66.70	18.20	Australia	7 days	8 times a day	56
Mey_2020	good	70	23.93	3.15	59.00		Germany	28 days	5 times a day	140
Mill_2016	fair	110	44.75	3.25	63.64		Estonia	14 days	7 times a day	98
Ottenstein_2020	good	72	22.85	2.40	68.00		Germany	21 days	3 times a day	63
Pasyugina_2015		101	21.40	2.15	73.70		Belgium	9 days	10 times a day	90
Pavani_2017	good	78	44.55	18.01	62.00		France	14 days	5 times a day	70
Pelt_2020	good	1223	29.47	10.49	86.26		Germany	30 days	1 time a day	30
Roberts_1997	good	92	18.70	1.30	100.00		United States	7 days	1 time a day	7
Ryvkina_2023_S1W1	good	313	23.00	6.80	78.20		Germany	14 days	6 times a day	84
Ryvkina_2023_S2W2	good	914	41.00	12.40	80.60		Germany	14 days	6 times a day	84
Sels_2017		100	27.75	10.60	50.00		Belgium	7 days	10 times a day	70
Shui_2023	good	80	19.10				China	14 days	1 time a day	14
Slavish_2018	good	242	46.80	10.90	66.50	27.30	United States	14 days	2 times a day	28
Smith-DeNunzio_2022	good	114	36.20	9.30	48.00	86.00		5 days	1 time a day	5
Smith-Pickering_2022	good	290	31.85	1.98	60.00	51.20		13 days	1 time a day	13
Steffens_2017	fair	32	28.80	5.60	53.13		Canada	7 days	11 times a day	77
Sun_2017_study3	good	62	21.40	3.55	62.90		Australia	7 days	6 times a day	42
Sweeny_2020_study1	good	120			68.00	17.00	United States	4 days	1 time a day	4
Sweeny_2020_study2	good	203			61.00	67.00	United States	4 months	2 times a month	8
Sweeny_unpub		102	27.61	7.16	53.00	63.00		8 days	1 time a day	8
Watson_1992_study2	fair	127					United States	45 days	1 time a day	45
Watson_unpub_study1		366			71.31		United States	55 days	1 time a day	55
Watson_unpub_study2		295			69.49		United States	55 days	1 time a day	55
Weltz_2016	good	1634	19.23	1.41	53.70	79.60	United States	30 day	1 time a day	30
Wenzel_2015_study2	fair	108	25.20	6.60	80.56		Germany	6 days	1 time a day	6
Willroth_2020_sampleUSCA	good	130	47.00	17.00	97.48	56.00	United States	16 days	1 time a day	16
Willroth_2020_sampleUSUG	good	184	19.00	2.00	72.11	26.00	United States	21 days	1 time a day	21
Wilson_2017_sample1	good	124	20.10	2.30	67.00	43.50	United States	6 days	6 times a day	36
Wilson_2017_sample2	good	415	19.30	2.00	68.00	50.00	United States	14 days	4 times a day	56
Wilt_2012_sample1	fair	44					United States	13 days	5 times a day	65

Wilt_2012_sample2	fair	62	27.90				United States	10 days	5 times a day	50
Wilt_2012_sample3	fair	48					United States	10 weeks	1 time a week	10
Wilt_2012_sample4	fair	97					United States	10 weeks	1 time a week	10
Wilt_2017_sample1	good	40	23.50	5.61	72.50		United States	14 days	6 times a day	84
Wilt_2017_sample2	good	40	20.60	2.22	82.50		United States	14 days	6 times a day	84
Wilt_2019	good	78	26.60	7.90	80.77	66.67	United States	7 days	4 times a day	28
Windsor_2021	good	73	88.71	2.99	67.00		Australia	7 days	5 times a day	35
Zhang_2019	good	139	19.50	1.07	73.00		China	14 days	1 time a day	14

Table A.2

Robustness Results Using Robust Variance Estimation with {robumeta} and rho = 0.8

	SD				RVI			
	k	*r*	*p*	95% CI	*k*	*r*	*p*	95% CI
Agreeableness								
All affect	58	-.05	< .001	[-.08, -.03]	53	.02	.14	[-.01, .05]
Positive affect	51	.00	.87	[-.04, .03]	46	.01	.62	[-.03, .05]
Negative affect	50	-.10	< .001	[-.13, -.07]	45	.05	.003	[.02, .08]
Conscientiousness								
All affect	63	-.07	< .001	[-.09, -.05]	58	.02	.27	[-.01, .04]
Positive affect	55	-.01	.20	[-.04, .01]	50	.00	.93	[-.04, .03]
Negative affect	55	-.12	< .001	[-.14, -.09]	49	.05	.01	[.01, .09]
Extraversion								
All affect	72	.01	.30	[-.01, .04]	66	.07	< .001	[.04, .09]
Positive affect	63	.07	< .001	[.04, .10]	57	.05	< .001	[.03, .08]
Negative affect	57	-.05	< .001	[-.07, -.02]	51	.07	< .001	[.05, .10]
Neuroticism								
All affect	79	.19	< .001	[.18, .21]	73	.00	.72	[-.02, .03]
Positive affect	68	.08	< .001	[.06, .10]	62	.06	< .001	[.04, .09]
Negative affect	71	.30	< .001	[.28, .32]	65	-.06	< .001	[-.09, -.03]
Openness								
All affect	56	.03	.02	[.01, .06]	51	.05	< .001	[.02, .08]
Positive affect	49	.06	.001	[.03, .10]	44	.06	.002	[.02, .10]
Negative affect	48	.01	.50	[-.02, .04]	43	.05	.01	[.01, .08]

Appendix B: Chapter 3 Materials

Power Calculations

The current study involved many separate analyses, each with their own assumptions and specifications that may have different implications for power calculations. As a result, we considered power calculations for the two straightforward analyses: (1) correlations between partners' scores and (2) interaction terms between self- and partner- scores in predicting one's relationship quality. These two analyses covered the basis of our research questions: the existence of assortative mating and its association with relationship quality.

It is well known that interaction effects provide a challenge with regards to power: although it is an exceedingly common analytic technique, even a straightforward two-way interaction may require a much larger sample size than the main effect, both due to its typically small magnitude and unclear form (Sommet et al., 2023). It has been shown that for a common partial attenuation, in which two simple slopes have positively small and medium effects (*ds* = .20 and .35, respectively), 5,575 participants are needed for the standard 80% power level. Notably, however, this result varies widely depending on not just the effect sizes but also the form of the interaction effect. For instance, merely 125 participants are needed for a reversed interaction effect of two large slopes (*d*s = ±.50). For the current power calculation, the unit of analysis is the dyad, not the individual, and so sample sizes refer to the number of dyads. In this case, the two slopes refer to the actor effect (in which one's own personality affects one's relationship quality) and the partner effect (in which one's partner's personality affects one's relationship quality), and the interaction would refer to their interaction. The literature comparing actor/partner and similarity effects have suggested, although through alternative modeling approaches, that the actor effect would be strongest followed by a much weaker partner effect and minimal similarity effects (Dyrenforth et al., 2010). It is thus reasonable to expect a partial interaction, in which the partner effect still persists instead of being fully attenuated by the inclusion of the actor and interaction effects. This scenario, unfortunately, presents a challenge as it typically requires a sizable sample. Following the guidelines for a small/large effect pair (*d*s = .20 and .50) with a one-tailed test, it is suggested that 1,108 dyads are needed to detect this effect at the 80% power level (Sommet et al., 2023). Alternatively, because partner effects were reportedly much weaker in the literature, if we instead consider a full attenuation in which partner slope is null, 396 dyads would then be required for 80% power.

Extensive meta-analytic works have provided estimates for bivariate correlations in personality traits between romantic partners. In particular, Horwitz and colleagues (2023) meta-analyzed data from 23,000 couples to provide rather weak trait correlations: Extraversion = .08, Neuroticism = .10, Agreeableness = .11, Conscientiousness = .16, Openness = .21, with an average of $r = .11$. Nonetheless, the current study proposes that more contextualized variables, such as personality and affective states, would show stronger evidence for assortative mating compared to the broad one-time personality trait measures. As a result, in addition to $r = .11$, we included benchmarks for the following effect sizes: $r = .15$, .20, .25, .30. At a typical alpha level at .05, a power lever of 80%, and a one-sided test as we are hypothesizing a positive association to support assortative mating, these effect sizes yield the following minimum sample size required: *N* couples = 509, 273, 153, 97, 67. Considering all the aforementioned patterns along with budgetary constraints, we aimed for a goal of 300 dyads recruited. This brief report then included pilot results on 138 couples.

Table B.1

Dynamic Bivariate Between-Partner Correlations on Personality and Affective States Instability

	Within-Person MSSD			Within-Person Relative MSSD		
	r	95% CI	*p*	*r*	95% CI	*p*
Positive Affect	**.18**	**[.01, .34]**	**.04**	**.30**	**[.14, .45]**	**< .001**
Negative Affect	.13	[-.04, .30]	.12	**.18**	**[.01, .34]**	**.04**
Agreeableness	**.20**	**[.03, .35]**	**.02**	.13	[-.04, .29]	.14
Conscientiousness	**.19**	**[.03, .35]**	**.02**	.10	[-.07, .26]	.26
Extraversion	**.19**	**[.02, .34]**	**.03**	**.37**	**[.21, .50]**	**< .001**
Neuroticism	**.24**	**[.08, .39]**	**.01**	.08	[-.09, .25]	.33
Openness	.15	[-.02, .31]	.08	.11	[-.05, .28]	.18

Note. Bolded are effects that are significant at the .05 alpha level.

Table B.2

Regression Results for (Dis)similarity and Interaction Effects between Partner's Instability Indices as Predictors of Relationship Quality

		P1 Relationship Satisfaction						P2 Relationship Satisfaction					
		Difference Score			Interaction Effect			Difference Score			Interaction Effect		
		b	*t*	*p*-value	*b*	*t*	*p*-value	*b*	*t*	*p*-value	*b*	*t*	*p*-value
Mean Squared Successive Difference	Positive Affect	0.00	0.30	.76	0.00	0.01	.99	0.00	-0.86	.39	0.00	0.56	.58
	Negative Affect	-0.01	-1.66	.10	0.00	1.80	.07	-0.01	-1.48	.14	0.00	0.90	.37
	Agreeableness	-0.37	-0.30	.77	0.19	0.26	.80	-1.07	-0.81	.42	-0.66	-0.84	.40
	Conscientiousness	0.87	0.65	.52	-0.36	-0.81	.42	-0.26	-0.18	.86	-0.63	-1.32	.19
	Extraversion	0.47	0.46	.64	-0.38	-0.74	.46	0.11	0.10	.92	0.01	0.02	.98
	Neuroticism	-0.50	-0.42	.68	-0.07	-0.15	.88	-1.43	-1.12	.27	-0.41	-0.83	.41
	Openness	0.36	0.30	.76	-1.03	-1.06	.29	0.61	0.48	.63	-0.70	-0.66	.51
Relative Mean Squared Successive Difference	Positive Affect	-23.42	-1.39	.17	32.49	0.35	.72	-0.34	-0.02	.99	-142.42	-1.44	.15
	Negative Affect	-17.44	-1.08	.28	49.54	0.57	.57	7.95	0.46	.65	-114.80	-1.25	.21
	Agreeableness	34.64	1.75	.08	-143.33	-1.24	.22	28.99	1.36	.18	**-249.89**	**-2.02**	**.045**
	Conscientiousness	-10.28	-0.76	.45	-122.75	-0.61	.55	11.63	0.79	.43	-216.22	-0.97	.33
	Extraversion	24.45	1.02	.31	-267.53	-1.64	.10	3.68	0.14	.89	-272.48	-1.52	.13
	Neuroticism	-7.46	-0.46	.65	-12.80	-0.11	.92	-0.78	-0.05	.96	-182.34	-1.40	.16
	Openness	27.47	1.72	.09	-302.89	-1.46	.15	13.08	0.76	.45	**-469.75**	**-2.12**	**.04**

Note. Bolded are effects that are significant at the .05 alpha level.

Appendix C: Chapter 4 Materials

Gender Differences

For sample one (early dating couples), we found differences in self-perceptions of Agreeableness (females higher than males) and Neuroticism (females higher), as well as partner-perceptions of Conscientiousness (female target rated higher) and Neuroticism (female target rated higher). The only partner-perceived gender difference consistent with self-reports was Neuroticism, with male participants perceiving their female partners to be higher in Neuroticism than female participants perceiving their male partners to be, and with female participants self-reporting higher Neuroticism than male participants. For sample two (first-time parents at baseline, before the birth of their child), self-reported sex differences emerged for the following Big Five traits: Conscientiousness (females higher), Neuroticism (females higher), and Openness (males higher). In addition, female partners reported higher attachment Anxiety than males. There were no partner-perceptions collected on the Big Five or attachment orientations, so we could not examine whether these self-reported differences were also perceived by their partners.

Fortunately, sample two included both self-reports and partner-reports of several relationship-specific constructs, allowing us to compare not only gender differences but also agreement about these differences. There was no gender difference in self-reported Social Support or Provision. However, female partners reported receiving more Social Support than their male partners reported receiving. There also was a significant gender difference for all self-reported caregiving styles. In particular, female partners reported using more Proximity, Sensitivity, and Cooperation, whereas male partners reported using higher Compulsive caregiving. However, these self-reported differences were perceived similarly only for Compulsive caregiving. All conflict strategies showed significant self-reported gender differences except for Verbal Aggression. Female partners reported higher Collaboration and Stalemate strategies, whereas male partners reported higher Avoidance-Capitulation. Interestingly, these differences were perceived similarly for only Stalemate, and the direction was reversed for Collaboration. That is, even though self-reports showed that female partners used more Collaboration, in partner reports, male partners were rated significantly higher. Finally, although there were no significant gender differences in self-reported Verbal Aggression, male participants perceived their partners to be significantly higher in this conflict strategy than female participants reported perceiving their male partners were.

Figure C.1.

General Structure of the Actor-Partner Interdependence Model – Actual Similarity

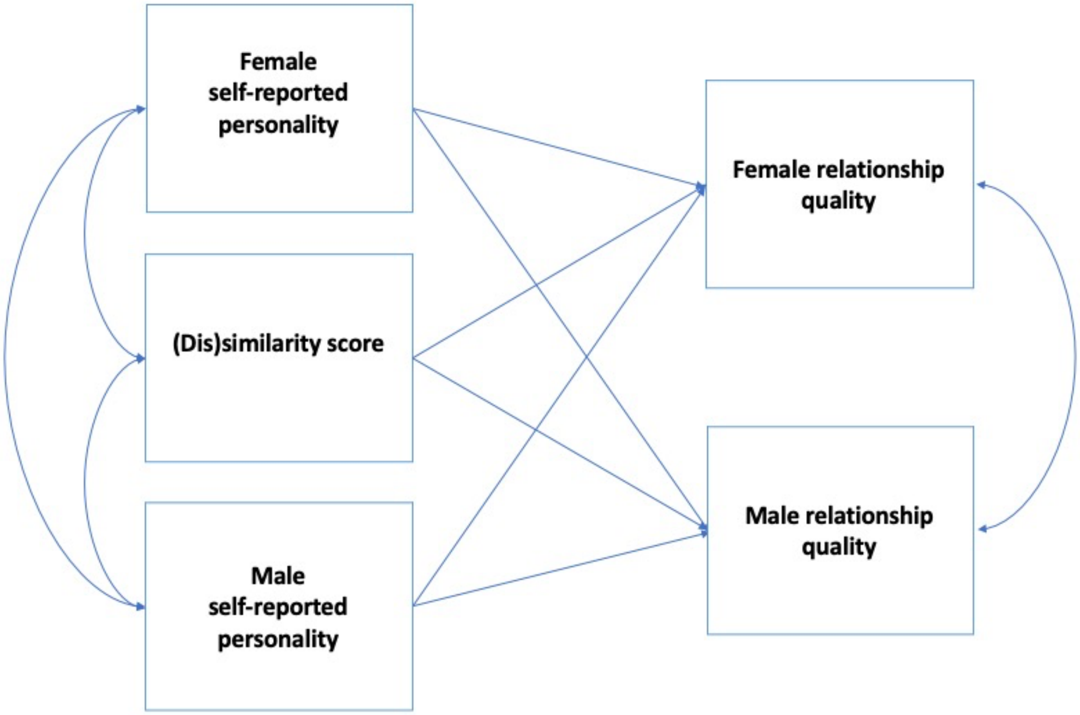
Female
self-reported
personality
(Dis)similarity score
Male
self-reported
personality
Female relationship quality
Male relationship quality

Figure C.2

General Structure of the Actor-Partner Interdependence Model – Perceived Similarity

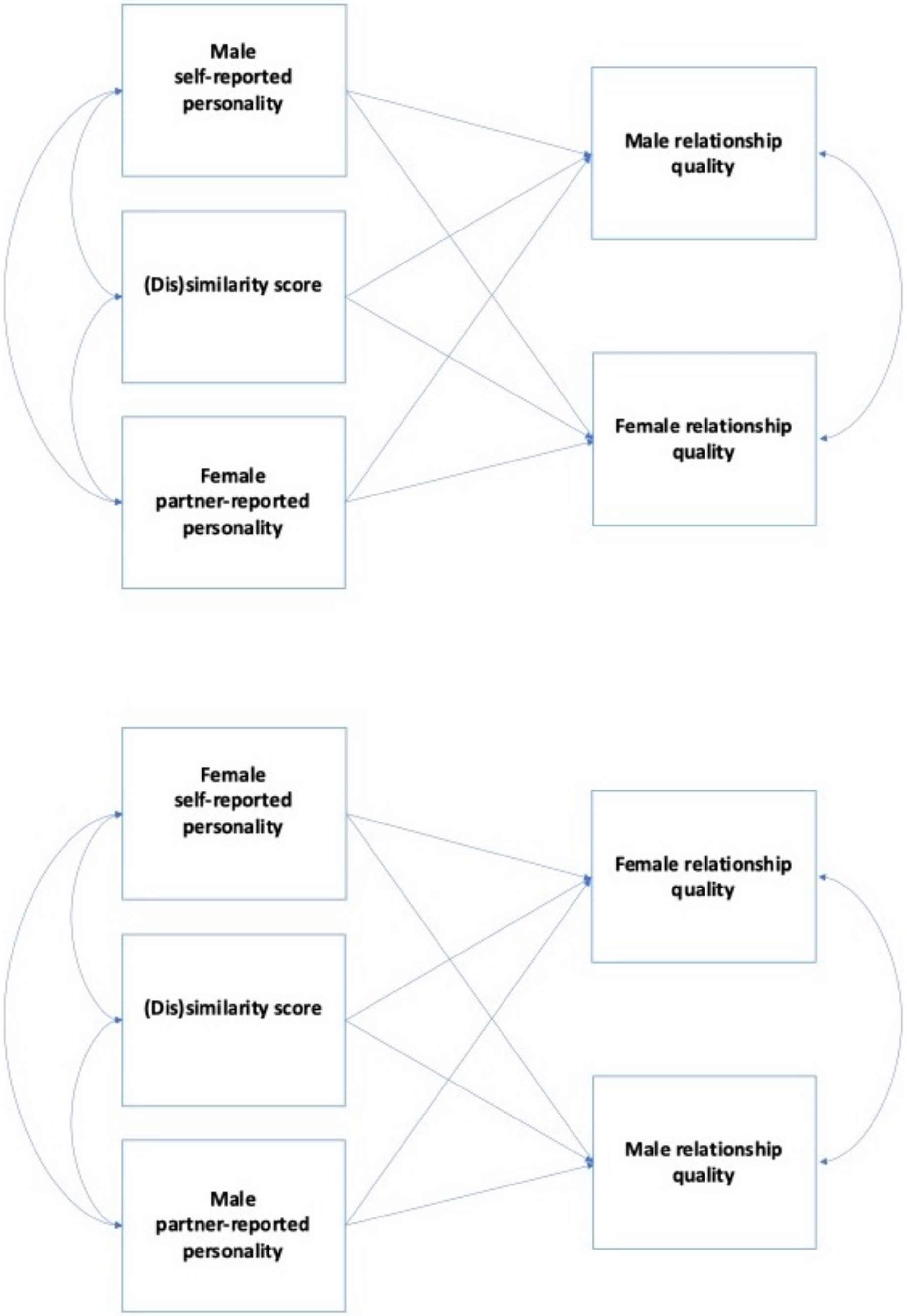
Male self-reported personality
(Dis)similarity score
Female partner-reported personality
Male relationship quality
Female relationship quality
Female self-reported personality
(Dis)similarity score
Male partner-reported personality
Female relationship quality
Male relationship quality

Table C.1

Differences in Baseline Correlations among Variables in Sample One

Variable 1	Variable 2	Correlation	Correlation 2	*z*	*p*
agreeableness	anxiety	0.191 [0.046 - 0.328]	0.153 [0.005 - 0.295]	0.365	0.72
agreeableness	avoidance	0.191 [0.046 - 0.328]	0.074 [-0.075 - 0.221]	1.11	0.27
agreeableness	conscientiousness	0.191 [0.046 - 0.328]	0.155 [0.008 - 0.295]	0.348	0.73
agreeableness	extraversion	0.191 [0.046 - 0.328]	0.025 [-0.123 - 0.171]	1.579	0.11
agreeableness	openness	0.191 [0.046 - 0.328]	0.246 [0.103 - 0.379]	-0.542	0.59
agreeableness	resp	**0.191 [0.046 - 0.328]**	**0.455 [0.329 - 0.566]**	**-2.772**	**0.01**
agreeableness	trust	0.191 [0.046 - 0.328]	0.236 [0.089 - 0.373]	-0.437	0.66
conscientiousness	anxiety	0.155 [0.008 - 0.295]	0.153 [0.005 - 0.295]	0.019	0.98
conscientiousness	avoidance	0.155 [0.008 - 0.295]	0.074 [-0.075 - 0.221]	0.765	0.44
conscientiousness	extraversion	0.155 [0.008 - 0.295]	0.025 [-0.123 - 0.171]	1.231	0.22
conscientiousness	openness	0.155 [0.008 - 0.295]	0.246 [0.103 - 0.379]	-0.89	0.37
conscientiousness	resp	**0.155 [0.008 - 0.295]**	**0.455 [0.329 - 0.566]**	**-3.117**	**0.002**
conscientiousness	trust	0.155 [0.008 - 0.295]	0.236 [0.089 - 0.373]	-0.781	0.44
extraversion	anxiety	0.025 [-0.123 - 0.171]	0.153 [0.005 - 0.295]	-1.203	0.23
extraversion	avoidance	0.025 [-0.123 - 0.171]	0.074 [-0.075 - 0.221]	-0.458	0.65
extraversion	openness	*0.025 [-0.123 - 0.171]*	*0.246 [0.103 - 0.379]*	*-2.121*	*0.03*
extraversion	resp	**0.025 [-0.123 - 0.171]**	**0.455 [0.329 - 0.566]**	**-4.34**	**< .001**
extraversion	trust	*0.025 [-0.123 - 0.171]*	*0.236 [0.089 - 0.373]*	*-1.998*	*0.05*
neuroticism	agreeableness	0.069 [-0.079 - 0.213]	0.191 [0.046 - 0.328]	-1.166	0.24
neuroticism	anxiety	0.069 [-0.079 - 0.213]	0.153 [0.005 - 0.295]	-0.793	0.43
neuroticism	avoidance	0.069 [-0.079 - 0.213]	0.074 [-0.075 - 0.221]	-0.047	0.96
neuroticism	conscientiousness	0.069 [-0.079 - 0.213]	0.155 [0.008 - 0.295]	-0.818	0.41
neuroticism	extraversion	0.069 [-0.079 - 0.213]	0.025 [-0.123 - 0.171]	0.414	0.68
neuroticism	openness	0.069 [-0.079 - 0.213]	0.246 [0.103 - 0.379]	-1.708	0.09
neuroticism	resp	**0.069 [-0.079 - 0.213]**	**0.455 [0.329 - 0.566]**	**-3.929**	**< .001**
neuroticism	trust	0.069 [-0.079 - 0.213]	0.236 [0.089 - 0.373]	-1.589	0.11
openness	anxiety	0.246 [0.103 - 0.379]	0.153 [0.005 - 0.295]	0.903	0.37
openness	avoidance	0.246 [0.103 - 0.379]	0.074 [-0.075 - 0.221]	1.649	0.10
openness	resp	*0.246 [0.103 - 0.379]*	*0.455 [0.329 - 0.566]*	*-2.234*	*0.03*
openness	trust	0.246 [0.103 - 0.379]	0.236 [0.089 - 0.373]	0.098	0.92
anxiety	resp	**0.153 [0.005 - 0.295]**	**0.455 [0.329 - 0.566]**	**-3.114**	**0.002**
anxiety	trust	0.153 [0.005 - 0.295]	0.236 [0.089 - 0.373]	-0.795	0.43
avoidance	anxiety	0.074 [-0.075 - 0.221]	0.153 [0.005 - 0.295]	-0.74	0.46
avoidance	resp	**0.074 [-0.075 - 0.221]**	**0.455 [0.329 - 0.566]**	**-3.854**	**< .001**
avoidance	trust	0.074 [-0.075 - 0.221]	0.236 [0.089 - 0.373]	-1.532	0.13
resp	trust	*0.455 [0.329 - 0.566]*	0.236 [0.089 - 0.373]	*2.383*	*0.02*

Note. Bolded are effects that are significant after controlling for FDR and italicized are those only significant using alpha of .05.

Table C.2

Difference in Baseline Correlations among Variables in Sample Two

Variable 1	Variable 2	Correlation 1	Correlation 2	*z*	*p*
Agreeableness	Anxious Attachment	0.124 [-0.028 - 0.271]	0.195 [0.045 - 0.336]	-0.662	0.51
Agreeableness	Avoidance-Capitulation	0.124 [-0.028 - 0.271]	0.219 [0.07 - 0.358]	-0.89	0.37
Agreeableness	Avoidant Attachment	0.124 [-0.028 - 0.271]	0.175 [0.024 - 0.318]	-0.474	0.64
Agreeableness	Collaboration	0.124 [-0.028 - 0.271]	0.246 [0.098 - 0.383]	-1.149	0.25
Agreeableness	Compulsive Caregiving	0.124 [-0.028 - 0.271]	0.043 [-0.109 - 0.193]	0.741	0.46
Agreeableness	Conscientiousness	0.124 [-0.028 - 0.271]	0.065 [-0.088 - 0.214]	0.541	0.59
Agreeableness	Cooperation vs. Control	0.124 [-0.028 - 0.271]	0.073 [-0.079 - 0.222]	0.468	0.64
Agreeableness	Neuroticism	0.124 [-0.028 - 0.271]	0.004 [-0.148 - 0.155]	1.096	0.27
Agreeableness	Openness	0.124 [-0.028 - 0.271]	0.159 [0.008 - 0.303]	-0.324	0.75
Agreeableness	Proximity vs. Distance	0.124 [-0.028 - 0.271]	0.057 [-0.095 - 0.207]	0.613	0.54
Agreeableness	Sensitivity vs. Insensitivity	0.124 [-0.028 - 0.271]	0.267 [0.12 - 0.402]	-1.351	0.18
Agreeableness	Social Provision	0.124 [-0.028 - 0.271]	0.311 [0.168 - 0.442]	-1.789	0.07
Agreeableness	Social Support	0.124 [-0.028 - 0.271]	0.084 [-0.068 - 0.233]	0.367	0.71
Agreeableness	Stalemate	0.124 [-0.028 - 0.271]	0.206 [0.056 - 0.346]	-0.766	0.44
Agreeableness	**Verbal Aggression**	**0.124 [-0.028 - 0.271]**	**0.421 [0.288 - 0.538]**	**-2.945**	**0.003**
Conscientiousness	Anxious Attachment	0.065 [-0.088 - 0.214]	0.195 [0.045 - 0.336]	-1.203	0.23
Conscientiousness	Avoidance-Capitulation	0.065 [-0.088 - 0.214]	0.219 [0.07 - 0.358]	-1.431	0.15
Conscientiousness	Avoidant Attachment	0.065 [-0.088 - 0.214]	0.175 [0.024 - 0.318]	-1.015	0.31
Conscientiousness	Collaboration	0.065 [-0.088 - 0.214]	0.246 [0.098 - 0.383]	-1.69	0.09
Conscientiousness	Compulsive Caregiving	0.065 [-0.088 - 0.214]	0.043 [-0.109 - 0.193]	0.2	0.84
Conscientiousness	Cooperation vs. Control	0.065 [-0.088 - 0.214]	0.073 [-0.079 - 0.222]	-0.073	0.94
Conscientiousness	Neuroticism	0.065 [-0.088 - 0.214]	0.004 [-0.148 - 0.155]	0.555	0.58
Conscientiousness	Openness	0.065 [-0.088 - 0.214]	0.159 [0.008 - 0.303]	-0.865	0.39
Conscientiousness	Proximity vs. Distance	0.065 [-0.088 - 0.214]	0.057 [-0.095 - 0.207]	0.073	0.94
Conscientiousness	Sensitivity vs. Insensitivity	0.065 [-0.088 - 0.214]	0.267 [0.12 - 0.402]	-1.891	0.06
Conscientiousness	*Social Provision*	*0.065 [-0.088 - 0.214]*	*0.311 [0.168 - 0.442]*	*-2.33*	*0.02*
Conscientiousness	Social Support	0.065 [-0.088 - 0.214]	0.084 [-0.068 - 0.233]	-0.174	0.86
Conscientiousness	Stalemate	0.065 [-0.088 - 0.214]	0.206 [0.056 - 0.346]	-1.307	0.19
Conscientiousness	**Verbal Aggression**	**0.065 [-0.088 - 0.214]**	**0.421 [0.288 - 0.538]**	**-3.486**	**< .001**
Extraversion	Agreeableness	-0.001 [-0.153 - 0.15]	0.124 [-0.028 - 0.271]	-1.141	0.25
Extraversion	Anxious Attachment	-0.001 [-0.153 - 0.15]	0.195 [0.045 - 0.336]	-1.803	0.07
Extraversion	*Avoidance-Capitulation*	*-0.001 [-0.153 - 0.15]*	*0.219 [0.07 - 0.358]*	*-2.031*	*0.04*
Extraversion	Avoidant Attachment	-0.001 [-0.153 - 0.15]	0.175 [0.024 - 0.318]	-1.615	0.11
Extraversion	*Collaboration*	*-0.001 [-0.153 - 0.15]*	*0.246 [0.098 - 0.383]*	*-2.29*	*0.02*
Extraversion	Compulsive Caregiving	-0.001 [-0.153 - 0.15]	0.043 [-0.109 - 0.193]	-0.4	0.69
Extraversion	Conscientiousness	-0.001 [-0.153 - 0.15]	0.065 [-0.088 - 0.214]	-0.6	0.55

Extraversion	Cooperation vs. Control	-0.001 [-0.153 - 0.15]	0.073 [-0.079 - 0.222]	-0.673	0.50
Extraversion	Neuroticism	-0.001 [-0.153 - 0.15]	0.004 [-0.148 - 0.155]	-0.045	0.96
Extraversion	Openness	-0.001 [-0.153 - 0.15]	0.159 [0.008 - 0.303]	-1.466	0.14
Extraversion	Proximity vs. Distance	-0.001 [-0.153 - 0.15]	0.057 [-0.095 - 0.207]	-0.527	0.60
Extraversion	**Sensitivity vs. Insensitivity**	**-0.001 [-0.153 - 0.15]**	**0.267 [0.12 - 0.402]**	**-2.491**	**0.01**
Extraversion	**Social Provision**	**-0.001 [-0.153 - 0.15]**	**0.311 [0.168 - 0.442]**	**-2.931**	**0.003**
Extraversion	Social Support	-0.001 [-0.153 - 0.15]	0.084 [-0.068 - 0.233]	-0.774	0.44
Extraversion	Stalemate	-0.001 [-0.153 - 0.15]	0.206 [0.056 - 0.346]	-1.907	0.06
Extraversion	**Verbal Aggression**	**-0.001 [-0.153 - 0.15]**	**0.421 [0.288 - 0.538]**	**-4.086**	**< .001**
Neuroticism	Anxious Attachment	0.004 [-0.148 - 0.155]	0.195 [0.045 - 0.336]	-1.758	0.08
Neuroticism	*Avoidance-Capitulation*	*0.004 [-0.148 - 0.155]*	*0.219 [0.07 - 0.358]*	*-1.986*	*0.05*
Neuroticism	Avoidant Attachment	0.004 [-0.148 - 0.155]	0.175 [0.024 - 0.318]	-1.57	0.12
Neuroticism	*Collaboration*	*0.004 [-0.148 - 0.155]*	*0.246 [0.098 - 0.383]*	*-2.245*	*0.02*
Neuroticism	Compulsive Caregiving	0.004 [-0.148 - 0.155]	0.043 [-0.109 - 0.193]	-0.354	0.72
Neuroticism	Cooperation vs. Control	0.004 [-0.148 - 0.155]	0.073 [-0.079 - 0.222]	-0.628	0.53
Neuroticism	Openness	0.004 [-0.148 - 0.155]	0.159 [0.008 - 0.303]	-1.42	0.16
Neuroticism	Proximity vs. Distance	0.004 [-0.148 - 0.155]	0.057 [-0.095 - 0.207]	-0.481	0.63
Neuroticism	**Sensitivity vs. Insensitivity**	**0.004 [-0.148 - 0.155]**	**0.267 [0.12 - 0.402]**	**-2.445**	**0.01**
Neuroticism	**Social Provision**	**0.004 [-0.148 - 0.155]**	**0.311 [0.168 - 0.442]**	**-2.885**	**0.004**
Neuroticism	Social Support	0.004 [-0.148 - 0.155]	0.084 [-0.068 - 0.233]	-0.728	0.47
Neuroticism	Stalemate	0.004 [-0.148 - 0.155]	0.206 [0.056 - 0.346]	-1.862	0.06
Neuroticism	**Verbal Aggression**	**0.004 [-0.148 - 0.155]**	**0.421 [0.288 - 0.538]**	**-4.041**	**< .001**
Openness	Anxious Attachment	0.159 [0.008 - 0.303]	0.195 [0.045 - 0.336]	-0.338	0.74
Openness	Avoidance-Capitulation	0.159 [0.008 - 0.303]	0.219 [0.07 - 0.358]	-0.565	0.57
Openness	Avoidant Attachment	0.159 [0.008 - 0.303]	0.175 [0.024 - 0.318]	-0.15	0.88
Openness	Collaboration	0.159 [0.008 - 0.303]	0.246 [0.098 - 0.383]	-0.825	0.41
Openness	Compulsive Caregiving	0.159 [0.008 - 0.303]	0.043 [-0.109 - 0.193]	1.066	0.29
Openness	Cooperation vs. Control	0.159 [0.008 - 0.303]	0.073 [-0.079 - 0.222]	0.792	0.43
Openness	Proximity vs. Distance	0.159 [0.008 - 0.303]	0.057 [-0.095 - 0.207]	0.937	0.35
Openness	Sensitivity vs. Insensitivity	0.159 [0.008 - 0.303]	0.267 [0.12 - 0.402]	-1.027	0.30
Openness	Social Provision	0.159 [0.008 - 0.303]	0.311 [0.168 - 0.442]	-1.465	0.14
Openness	Social Support	0.159 [0.008 - 0.303]	0.084 [-0.068 - 0.233]	0.692	0.49
Openness	Stalemate	0.159 [0.008 - 0.303]	0.206 [0.056 - 0.346]	-0.442	0.66
Openness	**Verbal Aggression**	**0.159 [0.008 - 0.303]**	**0.421 [0.288 - 0.538]**	**-2.621**	**0.01**
Anxious Attachment	Avoidance-Capitulation	0.195 [0.045 - 0.336]	0.219 [0.07 - 0.358]	-0.228	0.82
Anxious Attachment	Collaboration	0.195 [0.045 - 0.336]	0.246 [0.098 - 0.383]	-0.487	0.63
Anxious Attachment	Compulsive Caregiving	0.195 [0.045 - 0.336]	0.043 [-0.109 - 0.193]	1.403	0.16
Anxious Attachment	Cooperation vs. Control	0.195 [0.045 - 0.336]	0.073 [-0.079 - 0.222]	1.13	0.26
Anxious Attachment	Proximity vs. Distance	0.195 [0.045 - 0.336]	0.057 [-0.095 - 0.207]	1.274	0.20
Anxious Attachment	Sensitivity vs. Insensitivity	0.195 [0.045 - 0.336]	0.267 [0.12 - 0.402]	-0.69	0.49

Anxious Attachment	Social Provision	0.195 [0.045 - 0.336]	0.311 [0.168 - 0.442]	-1.127	0.26
Anxious Attachment	Social Support	0.195 [0.045 - 0.336]	0.084 [-0.068 - 0.233]	1.029	0.30
Anxious Attachment	Stalemate	0.195 [0.045 - 0.336]	0.206 [0.056 - 0.346]	-0.104	0.92
Anxious Attachment	*Verbal Aggression*	*0.195 [0.045 - 0.336]*	*0.421 [0.288 - 0.538]*	*-2.283*	*0.02*
Avoidant Attachment	Anxious Attachment	0.175 [0.024 - 0.318]	0.195 [0.045 - 0.336]	-0.188	0.85
Avoidant Attachment	Avoidance-Capitulation	0.175 [0.024 - 0.318]	0.219 [0.07 - 0.358]	-0.416	0.68
Avoidant Attachment	Collaboration	0.175 [0.024 - 0.318]	0.246 [0.098 - 0.383]	-0.675	0.50
Avoidant Attachment	Compulsive Caregiving	0.175 [0.024 - 0.318]	0.043 [-0.109 - 0.193]	1.215	0.22
Avoidant Attachment	Cooperation vs. Control	0.175 [0.024 - 0.318]	0.073 [-0.079 - 0.222]	0.942	0.35
Avoidant Attachment	Proximity vs. Distance	0.175 [0.024 - 0.318]	0.057 [-0.095 - 0.207]	1.086	0.28
Avoidant Attachment	Sensitivity vs. Insensitivity	0.175 [0.024 - 0.318]	0.267 [0.12 - 0.402]	-0.878	0.38
Avoidant Attachment	Social Provision	0.175 [0.024 - 0.318]	0.311 [0.168 - 0.442]	-1.316	0.19
Avoidant Attachment	Social Support	0.175 [0.024 - 0.318]	0.084 [-0.068 - 0.233]	0.841	0.40
Avoidant Attachment	Stalemate	0.175 [0.024 - 0.318]	0.206 [0.056 - 0.346]	-0.292	0.77
Avoidant Attachment	**Verbal Aggression**	**0.175 [0.024 - 0.318]**	**0.421 [0.288 - 0.538]**	**-2.471**	**0.01**
Social Provision	Avoidance-Capitulation	0.311 [0.168 - 0.442]	0.219 [0.07 - 0.358]	0.9	0.37
Social Provision	Collaboration	0.311 [0.168 - 0.442]	0.246 [0.098 - 0.383]	0.64	0.52
Social Provision	**Compulsive Caregiving**	**0.311 [0.168 - 0.442]**	**0.043 [-0.109 - 0.193]**	**2.531**	**0.01**
Social Provision	*Cooperation vs. Control*	*0.311 [0.168 - 0.442]*	*0.073 [-0.079 - 0.222]*	*2.257*	*0.02*
Social Provision	*Proximity vs. Distance*	*0.311 [0.168 - 0.442]*	*0.057 [-0.095 - 0.207]*	*2.4*	*0.02*
Social Provision	Sensitivity vs. Insensitivity	0.311 [0.168 - 0.442]	0.267 [0.12 - 0.402]	0.436	0.66
Social Provision	Stalemate	0.311 [0.168 - 0.442]	0.206 [0.056 - 0.346]	1.023	0.31
Social Provision	Verbal Aggression	0.311 [0.168 - 0.442]	0.421 [0.288 - 0.538]	-1.156	0.25
Social Support	Avoidance-Capitulation	0.084 [-0.068 - 0.233]	0.219 [0.07 - 0.358]	-1.257	0.21
Social Support	Collaboration	0.084 [-0.068 - 0.233]	0.246 [0.098 - 0.383]	-1.516	0.13
Social Support	Compulsive Caregiving	0.084 [-0.068 - 0.233]	0.043 [-0.109 - 0.193]	0.374	0.71
Social Support	Cooperation vs. Control	0.084 [-0.068 - 0.233]	0.073 [-0.079 - 0.222]	0.101	0.92
Social Support	Proximity vs. Distance	0.084 [-0.068 - 0.233]	0.057 [-0.095 - 0.207]	0.246	0.81
Social Support	Sensitivity vs. Insensitivity	0.084 [-0.068 - 0.233]	0.267 [0.12 - 0.402]	-1.718	0.09
Social Support	*Social Provision*	*0.084 [-0.068 - 0.233]*	*0.311 [0.168 - 0.442]*	*-2.157*	*0.03*
Social Support	Stalemate	0.084 [-0.068 - 0.233]	0.206 [0.056 - 0.346]	-1.133	0.26
Social Support	**Verbal Aggression**	**0.084 [-0.068 - 0.233]**	**0.421 [0.288 - 0.538]**	**-3.313**	**< .001**
Proximity vs. Distance	Avoidance-Capitulation	0.057 [-0.095 - 0.207]	0.219 [0.07 - 0.358]	-1.501	0.13
Proximity vs. Distance	Collaboration	0.057 [-0.095 - 0.207]	0.246 [0.098 - 0.383]	-1.76	0.08
Proximity vs. Distance	Compulsive Caregiving	0.057 [-0.095 - 0.207]	0.043 [-0.109 - 0.193]	0.127	0.90
Proximity vs. Distance	Cooperation vs. Control	0.057 [-0.095 - 0.207]	0.073 [-0.079 - 0.222]	-0.146	0.88
Proximity vs. Distance	Sensitivity vs. Insensitivity	*0.057 [-0.095 - 0.207]*	*0.267 [0.12 - 0.402]*	*-1.961*	*0.05*
Proximity vs. Distance	Stalemate	0.057 [-0.095 - 0.207]	0.206 [0.056 - 0.346]	-1.378	0.17
Proximity vs. Distance	**Verbal Aggression**	**0.057 [-0.095 - 0.207]**	**0.421 [0.288 - 0.538]**	**-3.554**	**< .001**
Sensitivity vs. Insensitivity	Avoidance-Capitulation	0.267 [0.12 - 0.402]	0.219 [0.07 - 0.358]	0.463	0.64

Sensitivity vs. Insensitivity	Collaboration	0.267 [0.12 - 0.402]	0.246 [0.098 - 0.383]	0.204	0.84
Sensitivity vs. Insensitivity	*Compulsive Caregiving*	*0.267 [0.12 - 0.402]*	*0.043 [-0.109 - 0.193]*	*2.091*	*0.04*
Sensitivity vs. Insensitivity	Cooperation vs. Control	0.267 [0.12 - 0.402]	0.073 [-0.079 - 0.222]	1.818	0.07
Sensitivity vs. Insensitivity	Stalemate	0.267 [0.12 - 0.402]	0.206 [0.056 - 0.346]	0.586	0.56
Sensitivity vs. Insensitivity	Verbal Aggression	0.267 [0.12 - 0.402]	0.421 [0.288 - 0.538]	-1.59	0.11
Cooperation vs. Control	Avoidance-Capitulation	0.073 [-0.079 - 0.222]	0.219 [0.07 - 0.358]	-1.358	0.17
Cooperation vs. Control	Collaboration	0.073 [-0.079 - 0.222]	0.246 [0.098 - 0.383]	-1.617	0.11
Cooperation vs. Control	Compulsive Caregiving	0.073 [-0.079 - 0.222]	0.043 [-0.109 - 0.193]	0.273	0.78
Cooperation vs. Control	Stalemate	0.073 [-0.079 - 0.222]	0.206 [0.056 - 0.346]	-1.234	0.22
Cooperation vs. Control	**Verbal Aggression**	**0.073 [-0.079 - 0.222]**	**0.421 [0.288 - 0.538]**	**-3.413**	**< .001**
Compulsive Caregiving	Avoidance-Capitulation	0.043 [-0.109 - 0.193]	0.219 [0.07 - 0.358]	-1.631	0.10
Compulsive Caregiving	Collaboration	0.043 [-0.109 - 0.193]	0.246 [0.098 - 0.383]	-1.89	0.06
Compulsive Caregiving	Stalemate	0.043 [-0.109 - 0.193]	0.206 [0.056 - 0.346]	-1.507	0.13
Compulsive Caregiving	**Verbal Aggression**	**0.043 [-0.109 - 0.193]**	**0.421 [0.288 - 0.538]**	**-3.687**	**< .001**
Collaboration	Avoidance-Capitulation	0.246 [0.098 - 0.383]	0.219 [0.07 - 0.358]	0.259	0.80
Collaboration	Stalemate	0.246 [0.098 - 0.383]	0.206 [0.056 - 0.346]	0.383	0.70
Collaboration	Verbal Aggression	0.246 [0.098 - 0.383]	0.421 [0.288 - 0.538]	-1.796	0.07
Avoidance-Capitulation	Stalemate	0.219 [0.07 - 0.358]	0.206 [0.056 - 0.346]	0.124	0.90
Avoidance-Capitulation	*Verbal Aggression*	*0.219 [0.07 - 0.358]*	*0.421 [0.288 - 0.538]*	*-2.055*	*0.04*
Stalemate	*Verbal Aggression*	*0.206 [0.056 - 0.346]*	*0.421 [0.288 - 0.538]*	*-2.179*	*0.03*

Note. Bolded are effects that are significant after controlling for FDR and italicized are those only significant using alpha of .05.

Table C.3

Regression Results for Dis(similarity) and Interaction Effects between Partner's Scores at Baseline as Predictors of Baseline Relationship Quality for Sample One

		Female Overall Quality						Male Overall Quality					
		Difference Score			Interaction Effect			Difference Score			Interaction Effect		
		b	*t*	*p*	*b*	*t*	*p*	*b*	*t*	*p*	*b*	*t*	*p*
Big Five Aspect Scale (BFAS)	Agreeableness	-0.11	-0.74	0.46	0.26	0.91	0.36	-0.10	-0.69	0.49	**-0.71**	**-2.65**	**0.01**
	Conscientiousness	0.19	1.39	0.17	-0.03	-0.16	0.87	0.06	0.49	0.63	-0.02	-0.09	0.93
	Extraversion	-0.09	-0.74	0.46	-0.25	-1.58	0.12	*-0.26*	*-2.28*	*0.024*	0.09	0.60	0.55
	Neuroticism	*-0.22*	*-2.14*	*0.03*	0.09	0.56	0.58	0.03	0.33	0.74	-0.29	-1.84	0.07
	Openness	-0.18	-1.20	0.23	0.30	1.36	0.18	-0.13	-0.89	0.37	0.13	0.62	0.54
Adult Attachment Questionnaire (AAQ)	Global Avoidance	-0.06	-0.83	0.41	-0.04	-0.79	0.43	-0.13	-1.85	0.07	-0.02	-0.33	0.74
	Global Anxiety	*-0.17*	*-2.41*	*0.02*	0.00	-0.02	0.98	-0.03	-0.49	0.63	0.04	0.76	0.45
Responsiveness Scale	Responsiveness Score	**-0.25**	**-3.67**	**< 0.001**	0.03	1.10	0.27	**-0.37**	**-5.79**	**< 0.001**	0.04	1.50	0.14
Trust Scale	Trust Score	0.04	0.47	0.64	-0.06	-0.80	0.42	0.00	0.01	0.99	-0.06	-0.81	0.42

Note. Bolded are effects that are significant after controlling for FDR and italicized are those only significant using alpha of .05.

Table C.4

Regression Results for Dis(similarity) and Interaction Effects between Partner's Scores at Baseline as Predictors of Baseline Relationship Quality for Sample Two

		Female Satisfaction						Male Satisfaction					
		Difference Score			Interaction Effect			Difference Score			Interaction Effect		
		b	*t*	*p*	*b*	*t*	*p*	*b*	*t*	*p*	*b*	*t*	*p*
Big Five Inventory (BFI)	Agreeableness	-0.38	-0.55	0.59	-0.86	-0.87	0.39	0.20	0.26	0.80	-0.33	-0.29	0.77
	Conscientiousness	-0.62	-0.98	0.33	0.40	0.45	0.65	0.11	0.16	0.87	-1.04	-1.11	0.27
	Extraversion	-0.52	-1.07	0.29	0.63	1.24	0.22	-0.50	-0.93	0.35	-0.03	-0.04	0.97
	Neuroticism	-0.56	-1.23	0.22	0.30	0.46	0.65	-0.63	-1.25	0.21	1.20	1.69	0.09
	Openness	0.19	0.31	0.76	1.54	1.92	0.06	-0.37	-0.53	0.60	*1.98*	*2.25*	*0.03*
Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR)	Global Avoidance	0.10	0.21	0.84	-0.45	-1.06	0.29	-0.05	-0.09	0.93	-0.41	-0.88	0.38
	Global Anxiety	-0.60	-1.47	0.14	0.38	0.85	0.40	*-1.07*	*-2.36*	*0.02*	-0.10	-0.20	0.84
Social Support Questionnaire (SSQ)	Social Support	*-1.39*	*-2.41*	*0.02*	-0.35	-0.48	0.63	**-2.89**	**-4.74**	**< .001**	0.80	1.00	0.32
Social Provisions Scale (SPS)	Social Provision	*-5.14*	*-2.22*	*0.03*	*-18.36*	*-2.02*	*0.05*	**-6.48**	**-2.54**	**0.01**	**-23.60**	**-2.49**	**0.01**
Caregiving Questionnaire (CQ)	Proximity v. Distance	**-1.16**	**-2.78**	**0.01**	-0.27	-0.39	0.70	**-2.78**	**-6.60**	**< .001**	0.21	0.29	0.77
	Sensitivity v. Insensitivity	0.22	0.49	0.63	-0.44	-1.49	0.14	0.48	0.99	0.33	*-0.66*	*-2.02*	*0.05*
	Cooperation v. Control	0.66	1.69	0.09	-0.29	-0.98	0.33	*0.94*	*2.18*	*0.03*	-0.48	-1.47	0.14
	Compulsive	-0.09	-0.24	0.81	-0.61	-1.82	0.07	-0.14	-0.34	0.74	-0.05	-0.13	0.90
Conflicts and Problem-solving Scales (CPS)	Collaboration	0.47	1.42	0.16	0.23	0.94	0.35	0.61	1.66	0.10	0.08	0.30	0.76
	Avoidance – Capitulation	-0.57	-1.47	0.14	-0.33	-0.99	0.33	*-1.02*	*-2.41*	*0.02*	-0.10	-0.26	0.80
	Stalemate	**-2.08**	**-4.76**	**< .001**	-0.22	-0.35	0.73	**-1.65**	**-3.30**	**0.001**	0.55	0.73	0.47
	Verbal Aggression	**-1.56**	**-3.09**	**0.002**	0.39	1.13	0.26	-0.75	-1.31	0.19	0.17	0.42	0.68

		Female Cohesion						Male Cohesion					
		Difference Score			Interaction Effect			Difference Score			Interaction Effect		
		b	*t*	*p*	*b*	*t*	*p*	*b*	*t*	*p*	*b*	*t*	*p*
Big Five Inventory (BFI)	Agreeableness	0.11	0.25	0.80	-0.36	-0.60	0.55	0.55	1.07	0.29	-0.31	-0.42	0.68
	Conscientiousness	0.18	0.46	0.65	-0.28	-0.51	0.61	0.43	0.92	0.36	-1.08	-1.69	0.09
	Extraversion	-0.44	-1.51	0.13	0.11	0.37	0.72	-0.10	-0.29	0.77	0.05	0.14	0.89
	Neuroticism	-0.49	-1.80	0.07	0.63	1.58	0.12	0.12	0.36	0.72	0.39	0.79	0.43
	Openness	0.36	0.97	0.34	-0.10	-0.21	0.83	-0.14	-0.30	0.77	*1.37*	*2.40*	*0.02*
Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR)	Global Avoidance	-0.02	-0.06	0.95	0.05	0.18	0.85	-0.33	-0.96	0.34	-0.16	-0.51	0.61
	Global Anxiety	**-0.66**	**-2.70**	**0.01**	0.25	0.96	0.34	-0.05	-0.15	0.88	0.03	0.09	0.93
Social Support Questionnaire (SSQ)	Social Support	**-0.92**	**-2.65**	**0.01**	0.59	1.24	0.22	**-1.60**	**-3.86**	**< .001**	0.98	1.72	0.09
Social Provisions Scale (SPS)	Social Provision	*-3.24*	*-2.33*	*0.02*	-6.27	-1.11	0.27	**-4.60**	**-2.72**	**0.01**	0.98	0.14	0.89
Caregiving Questionnaire (CQ)	Proximity v. Distance	**-1.02**	**-4.16**	**< .001**	*0.86*	*2.07*	*0.04*	**-1.27**	**-4.23**	**< .001**	0.67	1.25	0.21
	Sensitivity v. Insensitivity	-0.31	-1.17	0.24	0.00	-0.02	0.98	0.08	0.25	0.80	-0.18	-0.84	0.40
	Cooperation v. Control	0.05	0.19	0.85	0.09	0.52	0.60	-0.38	-1.32	0.19	*0.47*	*2.17*	*0.03*
	Compulsive	-0.16	-0.74	0.46	-0.03	-0.16	0.87	0.24	0.88	0.38	-0.39	-1.56	0.12
Conflicts and Problem-solving Scales (CPS)	Collaboration	0.28	1.37	0.17	0.01	0.09	0.93	-0.12	-0.50	0.62	0.03	0.16	0.88
	Avoidance – Capitulation	-0.33	-1.40	0.16	0.19	0.87	0.39	-0.55	-1.94	0.05	-0.02	-0.07	0.94
	Stalemate	**-0.68**	**-2.47**	**0.01**	0.06	0.14	0.89	**-1.02**	**-3.05**	**0.003**	0.44	0.86	0.39
	Verbal Aggression	-0.59	-1.89	0.06	0.09	0.41	0.68	*-0.85*	*-2.26*	*0.03*	0.20	0.74	0.46

Note. Bolded are effects that are significant after controlling for FDR and italicized are those only significant using alpha of .05.

Table C.5

Regression Results for (Dis)similarity and Interaction Effects between Partner's Personality Change as Predictors of Baseline Relationship Quality for Sample One

	Female Overall Quality						Male Overall Quality					
	Difference Score			Interaction Effect			Difference Score			Interaction Effect		
	b	*t*	*p*	*b*	*t*	*p*	*b*	*t*	*p*	*b*	*t*	*p*
Agreeableness	16.45	1.27	0.21	-4303.31	-1.95	0.06	5.01	0.39	0.70	-756.10	-0.34	0.73
Conscientiousness	-0.46	-0.04	0.97	170.82	0.16	0.87	12.30	1.00	0.32	-255.02	-0.25	0.81
Extraversion	-0.09	-0.01	0.99	-1429.03	-1.32	0.19	-4.38	-0.42	0.67	-221.07	-0.21	0.84
Neuroticism	24.99	1.85	0.07	-1766.68	-1.03	0.31	22.25	1.67	0.10	**-4271.20**	**-2.82**	**0.01**
Openness	-1.34	-0.10	0.92	62.44	0.06	0.96	-3.82	-0.27	0.79	-316.36	-0.29	0.77
Global Avoidance	4.51	0.98	0.33	647.27	0.82	0.42	-6.13	-1.36	0.18	**2012.60**	**2.61**	**0.01**
Global Anxiety	-5.86	-0.92	0.36	1995.72	0.56	0.58	*-13.88*	*-2.29*	*0.03*	2840.60	0.80	0.43
Responsiveness Score	-5.84	-1.61	0.11	**-261.80**	**-3.51**	**0.001**	**-15.43**	**-5.00**	**< .001**	9.38	0.14	0.89
Trust Score	*-11.07*	*-2.24*	*0.03*	*-1177.42*	*-2.17*	*0.03*	**-19.29**	**-4.33**	**< .001**	-593.50	-1.14	0.26

Note. Bolded are effects that are significant after controlling for FDR and italicized are those only significant using alpha of .05.

Table C.6

Regression Results for (Dis)similarity and Interaction Effects between Partner's Personality Change as Predictors of Baseline Relationship Quality for Sample Two

	Female Satisfaction						Male Satisfaction					
	Difference Score			Interaction Effect			Difference Score			Interaction Effect		
	b	*t*	*p*	*b*	*t*	*p*	*b*	*t*	*p*	*b*	*t*	*p*
Global Avoidance	11.18	0.66	0.51	-1688.38	-1.68	0.09	-2.59	-0.14	0.89	469.29	0.42	0.68
Global Anxiety	15.86	0.75	0.46	1997.20	1.14	0.26	26.83	1.14	0.26	166.75	0.09	0.93
Social Support	-26.26	-1.06	0.29	4688.69	2.46	0.02	-19.13	-0.70	0.49	3768.60	1.75	0.08
Social Provision	**-197.53**	**-2.56**	**0.01**	6846.80	1.31	0.19	-128.75	-1.49	0.14	3264.18	0.57	0.57
Proximity v. Distance	**-62.59**	**-3.04**	**0.003**	1989.95	1.92	0.06	*-49.57*	*-2.15*	*0.03*	1584.65	1.36	0.18
Sensitivity v. Insensitivity	-3.04	-0.09	0.93	2571.41	0.53	0.60	-25.92	-0.67	0.50	2581.66	0.48	0.63
Cooperation v. Control	10.82	0.28	0.78	1329.24	0.35	0.72	42.04	0.98	0.33	-3560.20	-0.86	0.39
Compulsive Caregiving	15.93	0.55	0.59	6589.06	1.60	0.11	42.00	1.30	0.19	3007.67	0.65	0.52
Collaboration	37.01	0.94	0.35	-6694.38	-0.47	0.64	-20.58	-0.47	0.64	13355.82	0.85	0.40
Avoidance – Capitulation	13.86	0.41	0.69	6641.08	0.94	0.35	-40.07	-1.07	0.29	8674.89	1.12	0.27
Stalemate	**-183.33**	**-3.89**	**< .001**	2703.53	0.40	0.69	*-110.77*	*-2.06*	*0.04*	500.77	0.07	0.95
Verbal Aggression	11.70	0.31	0.76	-1131.84	-0.13	0.90	-21.63	-0.52	0.60	3542.16	0.36	0.72

	Female Cohesion						Male Cohesion					
	Difference Score			Interaction Effect			Difference Score			Interaction Effect		
	b	*t*	*p*	*b*	*t*	*p*	*b*	*t*	*p*	*b*	*t*	*p*
Global Avoidance	7.51	0.74	0.46	-587.46	-0.97	0.34	-0.57	-0.05	0.96	-48.31	-0.06	0.95
Global Anxiety	-3.08	-0.24	0.81	1431.34	1.35	0.18	20.12	1.29	0.20	-1282.14	-0.99	0.32
Social Support	-26.35	-1.78	0.08	226.45	0.19	0.85	-20.72	-1.14	0.26	607.48	0.42	0.68
Social Provision	**-117.44**	**-2.53**	**0.01**	799.46	0.25	0.80	-102.58	-1.79	0.08	341.32	0.09	0.93
Proximity v. Distance	**-34.61**	**-2.78**	**0.01**	423.91	0.67	0.50	*-35.40*	*-2.31*	*0.02*	31.68	0.04	0.97
Sensitivity v. Insensitivity	-9.94	-0.47	0.64	-687.90	-0.25	0.81	-9.43	-0.37	0.71	-1315.39	-0.37	0.71
Cooperation v. Control	37.57	1.63	0.11	278.22	0.12	0.90	46.46	1.64	0.10	-2987.30	-1.08	0.28
Compulsive Caregiving	-6.97	-0.40	0.69	-581.10	-0.24	0.82	-10.50	-0.49	0.63	-419.01	-0.14	0.89
Collaboration	-37.71	-1.60	0.11	-8409.91	-1.01	0.32	13.86	0.48	0.63	1214.58	0.13	0.90
Avoidance – Capitulation	23.37	1.14	0.26	3182.01	0.76	0.45	-36.06	-1.44	0.15	-185.50	-0.04	0.97
Stalemate	-6.99	-0.24	0.81	*-9045.00*	*-2.27*	*0.03*	-12.56	-0.35	0.73	**-13652.26**	**-2.76**	**0.01**
Verbal Aggression	10.11	0.45	0.66	4300.64	0.79	0.43	15.44	0.56	0.58	-6234.92	-0.93	0.35

Note. Bolded are effects that are significant after controlling for FDR and italicized are those only significant using alpha of .05.

Table C.7

Regression Results for Dis(similarity) and Interaction Effects between Partner's Personality Change as Predictors of Change in Relationship Quality for Sample One

	Female Overall Quality						Male Overall Quality					
	Difference Score			Interaction Effect			Difference Score			Interaction Effect		
	b	*t*	*p*	*b*	*t*	*p*	*b*	*t*	*p*	*b*	*t*	*p*
Agreeableness	-0.02	-0.05	0.96	-16.40	-0.35	0.73	-0.49	-0.88	0.38	80.72	0.86	0.39
Conscientiousness	0.34	1.30	0.20	-30.47	-1.33	0.19	0.49	0.95	0.35	-34.59	-0.78	0.44
Extraversion	0.06	0.27	0.79	-31.06	-1.28	0.21	-0.08	-0.18	0.86	-43.82	-0.98	0.33
Neuroticism	0.16	0.53	0.60	-58.08	-1.69	0.10	0.76	1.32	0.19	**-196.67**	**-3.36**	**0.001**
Openness	0.01	0.02	0.98	-28.07	-1.20	0.23	0.16	0.28	0.78	-26.40	-0.59	0.56
Global Avoidance	0.03	0.27	0.79	20.71	1.22	0.23	-0.27	-1.41	0.17	55.22	1.67	0.10
Global Anxiety	-0.13	-0.92	0.36	**213.45**	**2.71**	**0.01**	**-0.89**	**-3.59**	**.001**	184.87	1.30	0.20
Responsiveness Score	**-0.20**	**-2.57**	**0.01**	0.63	0.35	0.73	**-0.81**	**-6.74**	**< .001**	-1.74	-0.74	0.46
Trust Score	*-0.24*	*-2.27*	*0.03*	*-29.23*	*-2.36*	*0.022*	**-1.00**	**-5.61**	**< .001**	-37.04	-1.78	0.08

Note. Bolded are effects that are significant after controlling for FDR and italicized are those only significant using alpha of .05.

Table C.8

Regression Results for Dis(similarity) and Interaction Effects between Partner's Personality Change as Predictors of Change in Relationship Quality for Sample Two

	Female Satisfaction						Male Satisfaction					
	Difference Score			Interaction Effect			Difference Score			Interaction Effect		
	b	*t*	*p*	*b*	*t*	*p*	*b*	*t*	*p*	*b*	*t*	*p*
Global Avoidance	-0.05	-0.08	0.93	-41.54	-1.25	0.21	-1.17	-2.03	0.04	-5.21	-0.16	0.87
Global Anxiety	-0.97	-1.39	0.17	65.10	1.14	0.26	**-3.41**	**-4.99**	**< .001**	**154.09**	**2.75**	**0.01**
Social Support	-0.74	-0.91	0.37	-105.12	-1.89	0.06	**-5.20**	**-6.91**	**< .001**	**-124.40**	**-2.81**	**0.01**
Social Provision	-4.50	-1.76	0.08	**-553.31**	**-4.14**	**< .001**	**-13.18**	**-5.26**	**< .001**	**-448.92**	**-3.65**	**< .001**
Proximity v. Distance	**-2.12**	**-3.14**	**0.002**	25.61	0.81	0.42	**-1.86**	**-2.61**	**0.01**	-21.85	-0.79	0.43
Sensitivity v. Insensitivity	-1.94	-1.71	0.09	-173.71	-1.17	0.24	-1.65	-1.38	0.17	94.79	0.66	0.51
Cooperation v. Control	0.79	0.62	0.53	41.67	0.34	0.73	0.28	0.21	0.83	-8.94	-0.08	0.94
Compulsive	1.12	1.17	0.24	7.70	0.06	0.96	-0.07	-0.07	0.94	-32.13	-0.23	0.82
Collaboration	*-2.66*	*-2.08*	*0.04*	-727.79	-1.59	0.11	-1.31	-0.97	0.33	**-1204.58**	**-2.54**	**0.01**
Avoidance – Capitulation	*-2.40*	*-2.17*	*0.03*	*517.03*	*2.46*	*0.02*	**-3.22**	**-2.81**	**0.01**	180.25	0.87	0.39
Stalemate	-0.84	-0.52	0.61	-171.81	-0.86	0.39	**-7.84**	**-4.96**	**< .001**	-310.97	-1.82	0.07
Verbal Aggression	-1.63	-1.33	0.19	368.40	1.33	0.18	**-7.03**	**-5.98**	**< .001**	215.06	0.82	0.42
	Female Cohesion						Male Cohesion					
	Difference Score			Interaction Effect			Difference Score			Interaction Effect		
	b	*t*	*p*	*b*	*t*	*p*	*b*	*t*	*p*	*b*	*t*	*p*
Global Avoidance	-0.07	-0.25	0.80	-18.02	-1.18	0.24	-0.48	-1.73	0.09	3.90	0.25	0.80
Global Anxiety	-0.54	-1.68	0.10	49.11	1.85	0.07	**-1.36**	**-4.02**	**< .001**	*56.65*	*2.04*	*0.04*
Social Support	*-0.79*	*-2.12*	*0.04*	-30.68	-1.10	0.27	**-1.89**	**-4.91**	**< .001**	-15.29	-0.59	0.56
Social Provision	*-2.67*	*-2.26*	*0.03*	-40.18	-0.58	0.56	**-5.52**	**-4.47**	**< .001**	-95.76	-1.27	0.21
Proximity v. Distance	**-1.13**	**-3.62**	**< .001**	6.03	0.39	0.70	-0.55	-1.59	0.11	11.70	0.79	0.43
Sensitivity v. Insensitivity	-0.89	-1.67	0.10	-35.64	-0.49	0.63	0.02	0.04	0.97	-80.39	-1.16	0.25
Cooperation v. Control	-0.26	-0.44	0.66	63.90	1.11	0.27	0.67	1.05	0.30	-13.00	-0.22	0.83
Compulsive	0.52	1.17	0.24	24.74	0.39	0.70	-0.61	-1.26	0.21	-16.74	-0.24	0.81
Collaboration	*-1.40*	*-2.35*	*0.02*	-229.31	-1.09	0.28	-0.68	-1.04	0.30	-188.68	-0.82	0.41
Avoidance – Capitulation	-0.76	-1.47	0.14	*210.32*	*2.02*	*0.05*	-0.25	-0.45	0.66	89.27	0.82	0.41
Stalemate	**-2.07**	**-2.80**	**0.01**	*-206.83*	*-2.11*	*0.04*	**-2.54**	**-3.20**	**0.002**	-37.86	-0.38	0.70
Verbal Aggression	-0.58	-1.00	0.32	147.58	1.10	0.28	**-2.12**	**-3.52**	**0.001**	261.83	1.84	0.07

Note. Bolded are effects that are significant after controlling for FDR and italicized are those only significant using alpha of .05.

Table C.9

Actor-Partner Interdependence Model (APIM) Results of Actual and Perceived (Dis)similarity Effects on Relationship Quality for Sample One

	Outcome					
	Female Relationship Quality			Male Relationship Quality		
	β	*SE*	*p*-value	*β*	*SE*	*p*-value
Agreeableness						
Actual difference	0.00	0.05	0.97	0.05	0.05	0.31
Female-perceived difference	-0.12	0.09	0.20	0.01	0.10	0.93
Male-perceived difference	0.01	0.08	0.86	0.01	0.07	0.84
Conscientiousness						
Actual difference	0.10	0.05	0.05	0.08	0.05	0.12
Female-perceived difference	-0.03	0.07	0.69	-0.03	0.08	0.65
Male-perceived difference	0.05	0.08	0.54	0.10	0.08	0.19
Extraversion						
Actual difference	-0.02	0.05	0.74	-0.06	0.05	0.23
Female-perceived difference	0.03	0.07	0.64	0.01	0.07	0.93
Male-perceived difference	-0.07	0.08	0.38	0.03	0.07	0.73
Neuroticism						
Actual difference	0.04	0.06	0.53	0.11	0.06	0.07
Female-perceived difference	-0.06	0.08	0.48	-0.08	0.09	0.38
Male-perceived difference	-0.15	0.09	0.11	-0.08	0.09	0.34
Openness						
Actual difference	**-0.10**	**0.05**	**0.05**	-0.05	0.05	0.33
Female-perceived difference	-0.10	0.07	0.18	-0.03	0.08	0.69
Male-perceived difference	-0.04	0.08	0.63	-0.09	0.07	0.20

Note. Bolded are effects that are significant at the .05 level.

Table C.10

Actor-Partner Interdependence Model (APIM) Results of Actual and Perceived (Dis)similarity Effects on Relationship Quality for Sample Two

	Female Outcome						Male Outcome					
	Satisfaction			Cohesion			Satisfaction			Cohesion		
	β	*SE*	*p*-value	*β*	*SE*	*p*-value	*β*	*SE*	*p*-value	*β*	*SE*	*p*-value
Social Support												
Actual difference	0.01	0.04	0.73	-0.05	0.04	0.25	-0.05	0.03	0.13	-0.02	0.04	0.53
Female-perceived difference	-0.06	0.51	-0.22	-0.16	0.09	-0.34	-0.26	0.00	-0.44	-0.12	0.22	-0.32
Male-perceived difference	0.08	0.08	0.33	-0.06	0.09	0.55	0.02	0.07	0.77	-0.09	0.08	0.27
Social Provision												
Actual difference	-0.04	0.04	0.31	-0.03	0.04	0.50	-0.01	0.03	0.77	-0.03	0.04	0.36
Female-perceived difference	-0.06	0.53	-0.24	-0.20	0.04	-0.38	0.07	0.47	-0.12	-0.02	0.82	-0.22
Male-perceived difference	0.04	0.08	0.59	0.11	0.08	0.18	0.07	0.07	0.32	0.04	0.08	0.62
Proximity v. Distance												
Actual difference	0.03	0.05	0.60	**-0.14**	**0.05**	**0.004**	0.05	0.04	0.24	-0.03	0.05	0.49
Female-perceived difference	0.11	0.24	-0.08	0.03	0.81	-0.18	-0.27	0.01	-0.47	-0.03	0.80	-0.26
Male-perceived difference	0.01	0.08	0.92	0.14	0.08	0.10	0.07	0.08	0.35	0.07	0.09	0.42
Sensitivity v. Insensitivity												
Actual difference	-0.04	0.04	0.29	-0.07	0.04	0.07	0.04	0.04	0.32	0.05	0.04	0.16
Female-perceived difference	-0.03	0.66	-0.17	-0.06	0.36	-0.20	-0.01	0.88	-0.16	0.01	0.90	-0.14
Male-perceived difference	0.16	0.08	0.04	0.13	0.08	0.12	0.13	0.08	0.09	0.03	0.08	0.74
Cooperation v. Control												
Actual difference	-0.04	0.04	0.31	-0.06	0.04	0.13	0.00	0.04	0.95	-0.02	0.04	0.63
Female-perceived difference	-0.01	0.91	-0.17	-0.03	0.72	-0.21	-0.08	0.36	-0.26	-0.04	0.64	-0.22

Male-perceived difference	**0.23**	**0.08**	**0.003**	**0.21**	**0.08**	**0.01**	**0.19**	**0.08**	**0.02**	-0.01	0.09	0.95
Compulsive Caregiving												
Actual difference	0.02	0.04	0.64	0.01	0.04	0.75	0.05	0.04	0.22	**0.10**	**0.04**	**0.01**
Female-perceived difference	0.12	0.35	-0.13	-0.07	0.58	-0.32	0.00	0.99	-0.25	**0.25**	**0.04**	**0.01**
Male-perceived difference	**0.20**	**0.08**	**0.01**	-0.01	0.08	0.91	**0.18**	**0.08**	**0.02**	0.05	0.08	0.49
Collaboration												
Actual difference	**0.22**	**0.04**	**<.001**	**0.17**	**0.04**	**<.001**	0.26	0.04	<.001	**0.17**	**0.04**	**<.001**
Female-perceived difference	-0.13	0.15	-0.30	-0.07	0.42	-0.22	-0.08	0.38	-0.25	0.06	0.47	-0.11
Male-perceived difference	-0.03	0.08	0.72	0.10	0.08	0.22	0.12	0.08	0.14	-0.01	0.07	0.93
Avoidance – Capitulation												
Actual difference	**-0.09**	**0.04**	**0.04**	-0.06	0.05	0.21	**-0.10**	**0.04**	**0.02**	-0.04	0.05	0.42
Female-perceived difference	0.02	0.79	-0.14	-0.16	0.07	-0.33	0.05	0.55	-0.12	0.11	0.21	-0.06
Male-perceived difference	0.02	0.09	0.83	-0.11	0.09	0.21	0.06	0.09	0.53	0.01	0.09	0.88
Stalemate												
Actual difference	**0.15**	**0.04**	**0.001**	-0.01	0.05	0.82	**0.11**	**0.04**	**0.01**	0.04	0.05	0.47
Female-perceived difference	-0.04	0.78	-0.29	-0.25	0.08	-0.54	-0.21	0.13	-0.48	-0.32	0.04	-0.62
Male-perceived difference	0.00	0.10	0.97	0.15	0.10	0.12	-0.02	0.09	0.83	0.06	0.09	0.48
Verbal Aggression												
Actual difference	-0.07	0.04	0.11	**-0.15**	**0.04**	**<.001**	-0.06	0.04	0.16	**-0.11**	**0.04**	**0.01**
Female-perceived difference	-0.16	0.05	-0.33	-0.12	0.19	-0.30	-0.26	0.00	-0.43	-0.12	0.20	-0.31
Male-perceived difference	0.05	0.08	0.59	0.00	0.09	0.96	0.07	0.08	0.42	-0.02	0.09	0.86

Note. Bolded are effects that are significant at the .05 level.