A LONGITUDINAL STUDY OF RELATIONSHIP SCRIPT CORRESPONDENCE WITHIN THE ROMANTIC DYAD: DOES SIMILARITY PREDICT RELATIONAL WELL-BEING?

by

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Table of Contents

List of Appendices

List of Tables

Abstract

This longitudinal study investigated the link between relationship script similarity within the romantic dyad and relational well-being. In session one, 93 heterosexual couples (46 dating and 47 married) provided descriptions of their personal (actual) and ideal relationship scripts for both dating and marriage. Relationship well-being was assessed via questionnaires. Approximately one year later, 46 couples (16 dating & 30 married) and 12 single people returned, and the study was repeated. Results varied by gender, script type (ideal or personal), and relationship type (dating or married). Findings showed that: (1) script agreement between partners for their personal relationship is moderately predictive of relationship well-being; (2) there is modest support to indicate that as couples' scripts converge over time, they are higher in well-being, and; (3) dating females who saw the progression of their personal relationship as resembling their ideal relationship were higher in relationship well-being.

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A Longitudinal Study of Relationship Script Correspondence Within the Romantic Dyad: Does Similarity Predict Relational Well-Being?

...Then the Prince and Sleeping Beauty were married with all splendour, and they lived happily all their lives. "Living happily ever after" is a phrase with which most people are quite familiar. It is during the early years of our childhood, when numerous fairy tales and parables are told to us, that this expression becomes embedded in our minds. An excellent example is the fairy tale, *Sleeping Beauty.* As most people will recall, this is the story of a young woman who fell into a deep sleep, unable to be awakened. It was only when a young prince came along and kissed her that she suddenly woke from her slumber. Like most other childhood favourites, this childhood tale comes to a happy ending of lifelong marital devotion. While we may, with maturity, come to realize that nothing is quite that simple, we do like to hold on to this attractive notion.

Most couples enter into marriage with optimistic expectations about their future together, with no anticipation of an eventual separation. Nonetheless, according to Statistics Canada's Vital Statistics Compendium for 1996, approximately one third (369 out of 1000) of all marriages are expected to dissolve before their 30th wedding anniversary[1]. Clearly, this rate is very disconcerting; however, most couples regard themselves as the exception, believing that they will prove to be the ones to defy any possibility of a break-up. Unfortunately, as the high divorce rate attests, many marriages do terminate. Therefore, it is crucial to understand what transpires during the course of the relationship that results in discontented, unsatisfied partners.

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1 This divorce statistic is based on previous statistics and is dependent on them remaining stable.

Consequently, social psychologists have begun to investigate how factors such as individuals' beliefs and expectations about relationships, as well as couple similarity, may predict relationship well-being. Previous research, for example, has demonstrated that higher satisfaction in romantic relationships is positively correlated with similarity between partners (Burleson & Denton, 1992; Hatfield & Rapson, 1992). Hatfield and Rapson (1992) believe that relationships are strongly influenced by similarity/dissimilarity; however, the degree of the influence depends on the kind of similarity/dissimilarity that is being explored. In other words, in what specific areas is similarity important? Presumably, having similar tastes in music is not going to be as meaningful as is having similar religious beliefs.

Ideas about how relationships progress is one area in which couple similarity may influence relationship well-being. Relationship scripts are ideas or beliefs that individuals hold about how a romantic relationship should develop over time (Ginsburg, 1988). The convictions that individuals hold about romantic relationships, what they expect to happen, and when they expect these events to happen, may play a fundamental role in the development of a relationship and the level of well-being in that relationship. These convictions can vary with each individual, depending on many different factors, such as previous experience with dating, cultural/societal expectations, etc. (Ginsburg, 1988; Lord & Foti, 1986).

The purpose of this study is to investigate the association between (1) relationship well-being and (2) a couple's similarity in ideas about how a romantic relationship should progress (i.e., similarity in relationship scripts). A second goal in conducting this study is to determine how couples will react when they do have discrepancies in their relationship

scripts. Couples who have very different scripts may not be able to overcome these differences, resulting in a later break-up. Conversely, individuals may alter their relationship script to match that of their partner, in order to remain together. Such increased similarity may predict increased relationship well-being over time. Therefore, the overall purpose of this study is to explore whether relationship script similarity predicts relationship well-being over time. In beginning this discussion, an overview of the concept and function of cognitive scripts will be provided, along with a description of how scripts are applied to romantic relationships. Following this, there will be a review of the literature regarding couple similarity and how it relates to relationship scripts.

What Are Cognitive Scripts?

People rely on cognitive scripts to perform many day-to-day functions, often without even realizing scripts are guiding their behaviour. For instance, shopping for groceries is an activity that most people have experienced countless times, and generally do without thinking about the steps involved, yet we do have a script for this event. To start, one usually takes a shopping cart from the designated area assigned to shopping carts. Next, the customer pushes the cart throughout the grocery store, looking specifically for those items he or she wishes to purchase. Once all of the items have been selected, the customer makes his or her way to the cluster of checkout stands to pay for the groceries. Often, if the customer has only a few items to buy, there is a "speedy" checkout lane that he or she can use. This is typically reserved for those shoppers with little to purchase. As a general rule, people with many grocery items do not use this checkout. At the checkout, the customer must wait in line to be served. When his or her turn arrives, he or she places the items on the counter and the cashier proceeds to ring

them in and places them in bags. The cashier then totals up the bill and the customer pays for the food. Once the food has been purchased, the customer is free to leave the store with the items.

Referring back to this example may be helpful in understanding cognitive scripts. To begin, a quick review of the research regarding knowledge structures is important. According to Fletcher and Fitness (1993), a knowledge structure refers to any fairly permanent set of cognitions or cognitive structures that exist in long-term memory. A schema is one form of cognitive structure that represents organized knowledge about a person or situation, as well as the rules that direct information processing. A schema provides individuals with a foundation of knowledge that functions as a guide for interpreting information, actions, and expectations (Lord & Foti, 1986).

A cognitive script, or an event schema, is a particular type of knowledge structure that follows a typical sequence of events in specific situations (Ashforth & Fried, 1988; Lord & Foti, 1986). Abelson (1981) described a script as a cognitive structure that organizes one's understanding of event-based situations, or in other words, provides a description of the appropriate sequence of events in a given situation. Distinct from other schemas, scripts contain temporal ordering. Although events may or may not be causally related, generally early events enable later events (Lord & Foti, 1986). In the grocery-shopping example, one must select the items before paying for them, and one cannot leave the store before paying for those items.

Scripts also tend to be shared by the members of a community or culture (Duck 1991; Ginsburg, 1988). As a result, certain scripts are implicit and need not be stated (Ginsburg, 1988). Most people in our culture know that we cannot leave a store without

paying for our groceries. We do not need to be told that when we enter the store. However, as small children, we had to be told by our parents that we had to pay for our candy bar before we could eat it or leave with it. Thus, through previous experience in that situation, we developed scripts of how to behave.

Additionally, some scripts may be stronger than other scripts. According to Abelson (1981), in its weak sense, a script is merely speculation of the possible occurrence of events in a specific situation. In its strong sense, it is comprised of expectations about the progression of events in a situation. Clearly, we hold fairly strong scripts for grocery shopping, as we have clear expectations of what will occur in this situation, such as how we should behave and how others should behave, and the order in which these events should occur.

What Is the Purpose of Cognitive Scripts?

Scripts serve several practical functions. As Ashforth and Fried (1988) pointed out, scripts facilitate control. Since scripts contain a fixed sequence of events, they supply individuals with a guide to current behaviour and enable them to predict future behaviour, both their own and that of others (Lord & Foti, 1986). As Wilson and Capitman (1982) found, making scripts available in memory can affect one's behaviour. They demonstrated that people will react to a given situation by following a previously learned script for that situation. Having a fixed sequence of events to follow, in turn, provides structure to the progression of an event-based situation; consequently, individuals are able to anticipate what will occur next. This allows them some amount of control over a situation that, if not for the script, may have been somewhat ambiguous, confusing, or daunting (Ashforth & Fried, 1988).

Furthermore, scripts present a basis for evaluating behaviour. They provide normative standards or expectations against which others' behaviour can be compared (Ashforth & Fried, 1988). When we arrive at the checkout to pay for our groceries, we expect the cashier to serve us. If we stood at the counter and waited while the cashier read a magazine, we would certainly deem this behaviour to be very inappropriate. We know, from our script, that the cashier's role is to ring in the items. Similarly, we know that if we were to jump ahead of everyone in line and demand immediate service, others would judge us as very rude and inconsiderate.

In addition, to the extent that scripts are performed habitually, they preserve cognitive capacity (Ashforth & Fried, 1988). Individuals have a restricted amount of cognitive capacity; therefore, they have a tendency to concentrate on information that is new, complex, surprising, etc. Scripts allow people to concentrate on other important things, rather than on the current situation. In doing this, they enable people to be more cognitively efficient. In other words, scripts help to reduce the information-processing demands that are associated with social situations/activities by supplying a ready-made knowledge system for interpreting and accumulating information about others (Lord & Foti, 1986). Consequently, scripts permit people to engage in mindless behaviour, provided they have a well-defined script. Behaviours that are repeated become cognitively encoded as generalized event sequences (Ashforth & Fried, 1988). These behaviours can be done without much thought as to what one is actually doing. Therefore, to recap, scripts facilitate understanding of situations and play a key role in comprehension and inference making. Importantly, they guide individuals to engage in situation-appropriate behaviours (Lord & Foti, 1986).

How Are Cognitive Scripts Relevant To Relationships?

Relationships are key elements in people's lives, and it is reasonable to expect that people will develop relatively detailed theories, beliefs, and expectations about relationships (Fletcher & Fitness, 1993). Baldwin (1992) concurred with this view, suggesting that people do indeed develop cognitive structures, or relational schemas, concerning relationship patterns. Associated with relational schemas are relationship scripts, which can be described as predicted stages of relationship development and the expected succession of relationship events. Relationship events can consist of those events individuals believe constitute a relationship, such as "first date", "first kiss", and "begin to disclose personal information about oneself". As the relationship progresses, the events that occur may be "first expression of a definite commitment" and "become engaged".

Honeycutt and Cantrill (1991) and Holmberg, Prosser, and Reeder (1999), have established that individuals do hold such knowledge structures for how dating relationships progress. They have demonstrated that there is general agreement among people in our culture regarding which events constitute a dating relationship, as well as the order in which they occur.

In addition, Rose and Frieze (1993) found that first dates are highly scripted. Both men and women have strong scripts for both a hypothetical first date and an actual first date. Research regarding scripts for "getting a date" and for "a first date" has also been conducted by Pryor and Merluzzi (1985). They discovered that there was no difference in scripts for beginning and experienced daters. Likewise, Honeycutt, Cantrill, and Greene (1989) found that the number of romantic partners individuals have had was not

correlated with the number of relational events that they generated when asked to describe the progression of a romantic relationship. This indicates that, as a general rule, most people are aware of dating scripts.

Nonetheless, people more experienced with dating tended to complete script-related tasks with greater speed than those less experienced. Honeycutt and colleagues (1989) found that the fewer relationships individuals had been in, the longer it took them to order a series of relationship events into the order of a typical dating relationship. Furthermore, Honeycutt and Cantrill (1991) stated that people with more dating experience also have more expectations of what should happen in the progression of a relationship. In addition, according to Hatfield and Rapson (1992), as people grow older they become more mindful of their likes and dislikes and, consequently, what they want in a relationship. These findings are reminiscent of those of Fiske and Taylor (1984) and Lord and Foti (1986), whose research revealed that the greater one's experience, the more elaborate, organized, and generalized one's script becomes. One can see how people's scripts can become more and more complex with experience.

Evidently, people hold relatively strong scripts for the typical development of a dating relationship. This is not surprising, as the media bombards society with information about dating. We merely have to turn on the television, listen to the radio, or open a magazine or book and we are regularly supplied with information about dating relationships.

Consequently, we know what to expect in a dating relationship; but do we know as much about marriage? Do we have equally developed and elaborate scripts for marriage, as compared to our dating scripts? According to Holmberg and Cameron

(1997), peoples' dating scripts contain significantly more events than their marriage scripts. Moreover, individuals demonstrated greater consensus about the events that comprise a dating relationship than for the events that comprise a marriage. As a result, dating couples may not have as readily available a script for the progression of a typical marriage.

Research has shown, however, that dating couples may have a script for the progression of the ideal marriage. Scott (1999) found that dating couples were able to provide descriptions of the ideal marriage. Furthermore, they tended to envision their own future marriage progressing along the path of their ideal marital script, unlike married couples. Blagojevic (1989) also examined the attitudes of unmarried individuals towards marriage. Results indicated that the widespread attitude towards marriage was positive and that these positive attitudes generally contained some definition of the ideal marriage. Furthermore, females were more inclined towards an ideal description of marriage than were males.

In addition, research by Rusbult, Onizuka, and Lipkus (1993) investigated college students' views regarding their ideal romantic relationship. These responses were then classified into various two-dimensional constructs (i.e., romantic versus practical), and then were further divided into four categories (i.e., superficial and romantic-traditional; intimate and romantic-traditional; superficial and practical-nontraditional; and intimate and practical-nontraditional). The results showed that females were classified most often in the category labelled "marital bliss", which consisted of responses describing intimate and traditionally romantic views. "Partners in these ideals "had it all" – closeness, trust, and intimacy in the context of a highly committed relationship..." (p.508). Likewise,

Knobloch and Knudson (1998) found that engaged women, more so than men, relied heavily on ideals of intimacy, romanticism, and traditionalism.

Thus, research suggests that dating individuals, and particularly dating women, hold rather idealized views of future married life. As in the fairy tale *Sleeping Beauty*, we have been taught that once we are married, we will live happily ever after. Yet, this is just the beginning, and many people do not have realistic expectations of what comes next. With little detailed information available to us about married life, we may be required to rely on our own ideas of what should happen in a marriage. Without a strong culturally shared script, couples may find that they have very different ideas about how their marriage should progress. This may result in difficulties and dissatisfaction in the relationship.

Likewise, even in dating relationships, where stronger scripts are held, people may still hold different ideas about what events should happen and when they should occur. Both may agree that physical intimacy is a legitimate part of the dating experience, but should it consist of kissing, or of sexual intercourse? Both may even agree that sexual intercourse is part of the dating experience, but should it occur prior to, or after, expressions of love and commitment? Such disagreements could certainly lead to couple tension and discomfort. Therefore, regardless of whether a couple is dating or married, problems could potentially emerge when partners have divergent scripts of how their relationship should be developing.

Couple Similarity or Dissimilarity?

Research regarding couple similarity/dissimilarity has been investigated throughout the past century (Sunnafrank, 1991). The idea that birds of a feather flock

together is one that has generally been accepted, and the literature frequently supports this belief (Sunnafrank, 1991). For example, Burleson and Denton (1992) found that married couples were significantly more similar with regards to their social-cognitive and communication skill levels, as compared to random pairs of people. Sunnafrank (1991) also maintained that married couples have a high degree of attitude similarity. Furthermore, this similarity appeared to be present from the earlier stages of the relationship, rather than developing over time.

In general, couples do tend to exhibit similarity on a number of dimensions. However, research has also found that couples do exhibit some degree of dissimilarity. Duyssen and Teske (1993) conducted a study which involved having romantic couples state their position on 22 issues, and then prioritize these issues. They found that romantic couples ranked these issues more similarly than did noncouple pairs, supporting the theory that overall attitudinal similarity is characteristic of established couples. For less important issues, however, attitudinal dissimilarity was actually positively correlated with relationship closeness. Apparently, agreement on major issues is important, but some disagreement is acceptable, and perhaps even desirable, with regard to less important matters.

Evidently, then, there is a link between attraction and some areas of couple similarity, but not other areas. While the research shows that couple similarity seems to be more common than dissimilarity, the question of why remains to be answered. According to Burleson and Denton (1992), individuals are attracted to others who are like themselves, because having a relationship with those people is cognitively easier, which may in turn lead to greater satisfaction.

Furthermore, Hatfield and Rapson (1992) stated that people become involved with others who have personalities similar to their own, as conflicting personalities are more apt to lead to misunderstandings in the relationship. They explained that individuals become involved with others who are similar to them because it is comfortable. One could speculate that they are more at ease in the initial phase of the relationship, knowing that their partner has similar likes, beliefs, and interests. Hatfield and Rapson argued that personality similarity is important for relationship satisfaction. For some couples, temperaments do not seem to match. One person may be quiet and reclusive, while the partner may be an outgoing, gregarious person. He may enjoy spending time with a small number of close friends, while she may crave the excitement of being surrounded by many people. They may genuinely love each other, but their differences may eventually cause problems in their relationship. She may want to go out often to socialize, while he may want to stay at home and be alone. With time, they may come to the realization that life would be much easier with someone whose temperament, and therefore expectations, matched their own.

Thus, overall, the literature seems to demonstrate that (1) partners tend to be similar, and (2) couple similarity is beneficial, probably because of the comfort involved in interacting with similar others. Klohnen and Mendelsohn (1998), in contrast, hold a somewhat different theory. They propose that people find attractive in others what they value in themselves. However, people do not always possess themselves the very characteristics they value. Thus, they postulated that people who were content with themselves, or in other words, had little discrepancy between their actual and ideal self-descriptions, would be more similar to their partners than would individuals who have a

greater discrepancy between their actual and ideal self-descriptions. They based this assumption on their theory that individuals who are satisfied with themselves would find similarity in their partner to be positively reinforcing. Conversely, individuals who are dissatisfied with themselves would seek those characteristics in their partner that they would like to possess themselves. At the core of this theory is the supposition that people are attracted to, and remain with, a partner who closely resembles their perception of their ideal self.

The results of their study did support their hypothesis. They found that, on average, romantic partners were no more similar to each other than they were to the other opposite-sex participants. However, individuals who were happy with themselves had partners who were similar to them, while individuals who were dissatisfied with themselves had partners who were not similar to them. Furthermore, there was a propensity for participants to view their partners as resembling their own ideal self. Thus, for many couples, similarity may be the key to relationship well-being; for others, matching of ideals may be more important than actual similarity.

Script Similarity and Well-Being

Just as similarity in personality and attitudinal variables may predict relationship well-being, likewise, having consensually-shared relationship scripts may be important in enhancing relationship well-being. As Ashforth and Fried (1988) state, one function of scripts is to help individuals coordinate their behaviour over time. If people share a common script for how relationships typically progress, they can each confidently predict what will happen next in their relationship. Both can work together to smoothly facilitate the necessary progress in that relationship, without laborious negotiation at each stage.

Consider, for example, two people who meet, and both believe that initially people should date casually, and then gradually get to know each other over time. These two people have similar ideas about the proper progression of a relationship. In contrast, consider two other people who meet; one person believes it is important for couples to become exclusively involved right away, while the other person believes the ideal course is to take things slowly, perhaps keeping open the option to date other people for some time. Already, there could be conflict for this couple, as they both expect different things. As a result, one person, or both people, may not feel satisfied with the course of the relationship. Just as in other sorts of couple similarity, sharing similar scripts with one's partner can facilitate well-being because of the feelings of comfort and the ease that develops from interacting with others sharing similar perspectives and expectations. Thus, one may expect that as couple agreement in scripts for the normative, typical relationship script increases, so too would their relationship well-being.

It should be noted, however, that while many individuals may model the development of their own relationship after a normative script, this is not always the case. For example, some people may think that it is generally a good idea to take things slowly, but end up happily committing quite quickly when they find the right partner. Therefore, it is important to examine couple similarity for their own relationship in particular. Thus, I predicted that as couple similarity in scripts for the development of their own relationship increases, so will relationship well-being.

Finally, sensitive to the findings of Klohnen and Mendelsohn (1998), it is important to realize that for some, actual similarity to one's partner may be less crucial; what may be more important is correspondence to one's ideals. Accordingly, I also

predicted that close similarity between one's own relationship script and one's ideal relationship script would predict high relationship well-being.

Previous Research on Relationship Scripts and Well-Being

Two previous studies have explored similar hypotheses to the ones outlined above, with mixed results. A study conducted by Holmberg and Mackenzie (under review), largely supported these hypotheses. As correspondence between individuals' actual relationship progression and their script for normative relationship progression increased, so too did their relationship well-being. This result held for both males and females. In contrast, couple agreement on the script for their own relationship did predict well-being, but much more strongly for women than men.

Holmberg and Mackenzie's work does demonstrate a connection between script agreement and relationship well-being. However, such a correlation does not, of course, indicate that script agreement causes well-being. The causal connection could run the other way (higher well-being leads to greater couple agreement). In addition, a number of possible "third variables" could account for this link. Holmberg and Mackenzie (under review) examined one such "third variable", that of relationship progression. It may well be that couples who have progressed further in their relationship are higher in well-being. These couples would likely demonstrate greater script correspondence as well, because they have progressed further and would be remembering events that have already happened rather than predicting hypothetical future events. Thus, higher relationship well-being and higher script agreement might be associated simply because both tend to occur in long-standing relationships which have progressed far. Consequently, Holmberg and Mackenize also included a measure of relationship progression in their study, in

order to determine whether script similarity predicts relationship well-being, even after taking relationship progression into account. Couple agreement on the constituent events of a relationship, as well as their order, was still significant in predicting well-being for females, even over and above the effects of relationship progression. However, the results for males were weakened even further. Thus, the findings of Holmberg and Mackenzie point out the importance of considering the effects of relationship progression in the current study, as well as the merits of investigating possible gender differences.

A replication of the preceding study was conducted by Allen (1998), who also added a longitudinal component by following couples over a time span of three months. In addition to the hypotheses examined in the Holmberg and Mackenzie (under review) study, two additional hypotheses were formulated concerning what would happen if couples' relationship scripts were very divergent at Time 1. Allen (1998) surmised that such couples might end the relationship over the 3-month period, as their scripts would be very different and they would be less able to successfully negotiate future events. Second, if couples did stay together, Allen (1998) hypothesized that their scripts would converge over time. Through discussion and negotiating, those who did stay together would come to share a more common vision of their relationship's progression over time.

Unfortunately, Allen's results did not support the hypotheses, although there were some trends in the appropriate direction. Contrary to Holmberg and Mackenzie's (under review) results, couple script similarity did not predict relationship well-being, nor did correspondence between individuals' scripts for their own relationship and a typical dating relationship. Furthermore, couple script disagreement did not predict break-up, nor did scripts converge over time.

Allen (1998) suggested several possible improvements in future studies which might increase the chances of finding significant results. First, a three-month time period may not have been an adequate amount of time to allow script changes and break-ups to occur. Allen (1998) suggested that the study should be conducted over a longer period of time, such as over a span of one or two years. Second, it was recommended that instead of investigating individuals' typical or normative scripts, an individual's actual script should be compared to his/her ideal script. Especially for long-term, committed couples, as were obtained in Allen's (1998) study, having a relationship that is "typical" might not be perceived as especially complimentary. Many see their relationship as better then "typical" (Van Lange, Rusbult, Semin-Goossens, Goerts, & Stalpers, 1999). Correspondence to ideals, on the other hand, has been shown to predict well-being in other lines of research (Fletcher, Simpson, Thomas, & Giles, 1999; Murray, Holmes, & Griffin, 1996a; Murray, Holmes, & Griffin, 1996b), so may prove a better choice. People may have a clear image of what their ideal relationship is, and they may not feel satisfied unless their own relationship closely matches their perception of that ideal script.

Third, when comparing the study by Holmberg and Mackenzie (under review) to the replication by Allen (1998), the key difference seemed to be that the participants in the latter study tended to be involved in longer relationships. This may lead one to the conclusion that time may play a key role in determining how influential a script is to one's relationship. Future research should explicitly take into account the length of time individuals have been in their relationship, and should directly investigate couples in both shorter-term and longer-term relationships.

Current Study and Hypotheses

As Holmberg and Mackenzie (under review) demonstrated, similarity in relationship scripts between partners can at times be associated with well-being in a relationship. However, Allen (1998) did not find similar results and suggested several refinements for future studies to take into account. Accordingly, this study is a replication and extension of Allen's work.

Therefore, in this study, I intended to examine the importance of relationship script similarity among couples in predicting relationship well-being. As recommended by Allen (1998), I conducted a longitudinal study. Couples were studied twice, with an interval of one year between interviews.

In contrast to the earlier studies, I explored the importance of ideal relationship scripts to relationship well-being, as opposed to typical relationship scripts. Allen (1998) was unable to replicate the findings of Holmberg and Mackenzie (under review), and perhaps examining individuals' ideal scripts will reveal significant findings. Finally, I not only looked at dating couples and dating scripts, as in previous studies, but also married couples and marriage scripts.

In the present study, I wanted to measure what Sabatelli (1988) labelled as "relationship satisfaction quality". This is defined as an individual's overall appraisal or attitude about the relationship and his or her partner. While several suggestions have been put forth to assess a global construct of relationship well-being, there are no widely agreed upon measures of relationship well-being for romantic relationships (Sabatelli, 1988). Consequently, for the purpose of this study, as with the Allen (1998) study which I am replicating, relationship well-being was measured by looking at how much

individuals trust their partners, like and love their partners, are satisfied with the relationship, and are committed to their relationship. Using several measures in an attempt to assess well-being may show if certain components relate more strongly than others. This could subsequently guide dependent variable selection in future research.

In conducting this study, I examined both ideal and personal scripts. For my first hypothesis, I proposed that as couple similarity for (a) their personal (or actual) scripts and (b) their ideal scripts increases, so will their relationship well-being. By "similarity", I mean that the personal and ideal scripts of couples higher in relationship well-being will have more events in common, and the sequence of these events will match more closely, as compared to couples lower in relationship well-being.

In addition, those couples who have very divergent personal and ideal scripts at Time 1 may not know how to overcome their differences. They may experience difficulty coming to agreement on certain matters. Accordingly, I hypothesized that couples whose (a) personal or (b) ideal scripts are very divergent at Time 1 will be more likely to break up by Time 2 than couples with more similar scripts.

Third, I proposed that those couples who do stay together will have (a) personal and (b) ideal scripts that become more similar over time. These couples may be able to successfully negotiate differences in their scripts. They will be able to come to agreement on matters where they had once disagreed, resulting in increasingly similar scripts.

Further, I predicted that if couples' (a) personal and (b) ideal scripts converge, becoming more similar over time, then their level of relationship well-being will also increase.

Finally, I hypothesized that the more individuals' personal relationship script resembles their ideal relationship script, the higher their relationship well-being. As Klohnen and Mendelsohn (1998) demonstrated in their study, participants tended to be more attracted to partners who resembled their perception of their ideal self. In addition, their analyses indicated that while individuals' perceptions of their partners were fairly accurate, they were still influenced by their own ideal self-descriptions. Although they may tend to seek out partners who possess traits they value most, they may also idealize their partners. Similarly, individuals may also idealize their relationship (e.g., Fletcher, et al., 1999; Murray, et al., 1996a; Murray, et al., 1996b); they may strive to have a relationship that resembles their perception of the ideal relationship. Therefore, those individuals who view their own relationship as resembling their ideal relationship may be higher in well-being than those who do not.

To test my hypotheses, couples will begin by completing a demographics questionnaire, along with questionnaires assessing relationship trust, liking, loving, satisfaction, and commitment. Following this, couples will be given a set of cards with relationship events printed on them. They will be first asked to pick out the cards that apply to their relationship script (ideal or personal), and then asked to order both the dating event and marriage event cards (1) according to how they believe their own relationship has progressed in the past and will continue to progress in the future, and (2) according to how they believe the ideal relationship progresses. These scripts will then be compared for (1) how much each couple agrees on the events that comprise each particular script (e.g., did they choose similar or different events), and (2) how much the couple agrees on the order of the events they both included for that particular script.

Event agreement and order agreement scores will then function as predictor variables for relationship well-being scores.

Thus, a review of my hypotheses is as follows: (1) as couple script similarity increases, so will relationship well-being; (2) couples whose scripts are very divergent at Time 1 will be more likely to break up by Time 2; (3) couples who do stay together will have scripts that become more similar over time; (4) the more couples' scripts converge over time, the higher their relationship well-being at Time 2; and (5) similarity between personal and ideal relationship scripts will predict higher relationship well-being.

Method: Session 1

Participants

The sample consisted of 93 heterosexual couples (47 married & 46 dating) who were recruited from Acadia University, the communities of Wolfville, Kentville, New Minas, and other surrounding areas. A variety of recruitment strategies were used to advertise for the study. These consisted of posters, flyers, the radio, the local television channel, and the community newspaper. All participants had their names entered into a prize draw for the chance to win one of various prizes. The prizes included one first place prize of $500, three second place prizes worth $100 each, six third place prizes worth $25 each, and five fourth place prizes worth $10 each. Participants who won either a second or third place prize were given the option of taking the cash, or choosing from an assortment of gifts equivalent to the cash value.

The mean age for the entire sample was 33.49 years, with 16 years being the minimum age and 78 being the maximum age. The median age was 31 years. For the

dating couples, the mean age was 26.49 years, and for the married couples, the mean age was 40.34 years.

The mean level of education last completed for the sample was 14.39 years, or two years in a university or college. There was very little difference in the mean level of education last completed for the two groups, with dating individuals having a mean of 14.10 years and married individuals having a mean of 14.67 years.

The number of people that the participants dated in the past was also examined and it was found that the median was six people, with one being the minimum number of past partners and 300 being the maximum. For the dating individuals, the median was six past partners and for the married individuals, it was seven past partners.

Finally, it was found that the median length of relationship was 48 months (four years) for the entire sample. The minimum length was one month and the maximum length was 600 months (50 years). For the dating and married couples, the medians were 12.50 months (1.08 years) and 156.00 months (13 years), respectively.

Materials

Participants were each provided with the following supplies: a pen/pencil, a Participant Consent Form (see Appendix A), a questionnaire containing the demographics and well-being measures (see Appendix B), dating and marriage event cards (see Appendix C), elastic bands, blank note paper, a paper clip, a Participant Contact Form (see Appendix D), and a Debriefing Form (see Appendix E). As a way of thanking couples for their participation, each individual was given a small gift, which consisted of a lotto scratch ticket and candy, as well as an entry into the prize draw.

Event Cards

The relationship events selected for use in this study were collected in a study conducted by Holmberg and Cameron (1997). Participants in this previous study completed open-ended scripts, in which they reported the sequence of events that they thought should occur in a dating relationship, a wedding, and a marriage. Subsequently, two coders, working independently, created summary statements of the events. The inter-rater reliability for these summary statements was 82% agreement for the dating scripts and 76% agreement for the marriage scripts. The final list of events was established through discussion amongst the coders and supervisor. A second set of coders, given the set of summary events, were able to apply them to the open-ended scripts with 78% agreement. The data from the study by Holmberg and Cameron (1997) resulted in a total of 49 marriage events and 51 dating events. For the purpose of the present study, only the events that were endorsed 10 percent of the time or more by the participants in the previous study were used, resulting in 29 marriage events and 33 dating events. Each event was then written on an index card, one event per card (See Appendix C).

Well-Being Questionnaire

The questionnaire used in this study was comprised of some general demographic questions, as well as questions concerning the participant's relationship history, status of the current relationship, and duration of the current relationship. In addition, the questionnaire consisted of several scales to assess well-being and relationship beliefs, described below. Participants were also given Knee's (1998) Implicit Theories of Relationships Scale; however, it was not examined in the current study, and thus is not described further. See Appendix B for the full text of all measures.

Satisfaction. The Relationship Assessment Scale (Hendrick, 1988) was used as a measure to determine the level of satisfaction in the relationship. It included seven items in the form of a Likert scale. The individual is required to circle the response that is most fitting concerning his/her relationship. This scale has been used to correctly distinguish between couples who stay together and those who end their relationship (Hendrick, 1988). This scale has been found to have a 6-7 week test-retest reliability of .85, and with the current study, a 1-year test-retest reliability of .54. In the present study the Cronbach's alpha coefficients for females and males were .83 and .82, respectively.

Commitment. Three items from Rusbult's General Measures of Satisfaction and Commitment (1983) were used to assess the degree to which an individual is committed to the relationship. In a study by Mackenzie (1997), five commitment items were used. It was found that there was a fairly strong inter-relationship (alpha = .76) for these items. There were two items, however, that did not correlate as strongly (item total correlations = .26 and .45), so these two items were eliminated. This resulted in an alpha of .87 for the three remaining items. In the present study, therefore, only the three items that were largely inter-related were used; the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for females was .75 and for males was .74. A 1-year test-retest reliability with the current sample was calculated to be .65.

Liking and Loving. Rubin's Measurement of Romantic Love (1970) was used to measure the amount of liking and loving in the relationship. The scale consisted of 13 liking items and 13 loving items. The participants responded by choosing the most appropriate choice on a 9-point Likert scale. The scale ranged from a response of "not at all true" to "definitely true". The Loving scale has been found to have a 1-year test-retest

reliability of .78 with this sample; for the Liking scale, the 1-year reliability was .80. In the present study, the Cronbach's alpha coefficients for females for the liking and loving items were .80 and .82, respectively; for males they were .86 and .90, respectively.

Trust. The Dating Trust Scale (Rempel, Holmes, & Zanna, 1985) is in the form of a 7-point Likert scale, and it is used to measure trust in relationships. The scale contains 26 statements in which the responses range from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". Test-retest reliability with the current sample for a 1-year period was found to be .68. Trust is measured by considering three dimensions of a relationship: faith (believing that one's partner will respond in a loving and caring manner), dependability (the belief that one's partner will exhibit personality and interpersonal traits that are stable), and predictability (the belief that one's partner will behave consistently across various situations). These three dimensions showed high inter-correlations with an alpha of .82 (Mackenzie, 1997), therefore, they were united to form a single measure of trust. In the present study, the respective alpha coefficients for females and males were .83 and .85.

Procedure

The duration of the study was approximately one hour. Couple were given the option of doing the study in their own home for purposes of convenience; however, most chose to come to the university. When the couples arrived, they were thanked by the experimenter for volunteering in the study and told briefly what would be taking place. Next, Participant Consent Forms were distributed, read, and signed by both participants. Participants were given the opportunity to ask questions before beginning. Following

this, the demographic and well-being questionnaires were distributed and completed. To guarantee confidentiality, an identification number was used on all materials.

Once both participants had completed the questionnaires, the dating event cards were distributed. Participants were asked to sort through the cards based on a) how they believe the ideal relationship progresses, and b) how their own personal relationships have progressed in the past, and are expected to progress in the future. Which sorting task was completed first, ideal or personal, was determined randomly; however, the order was held constant within each couple.

When completing the ideal dating card sort, participants were asked to consider what they had learned about ideal relationships from friends, family, books, and television. They were told to imagine a relationship where circumstances were good and things were going right. They were instructed to order the cards according to how they believed the ideal dating relationship would progress. They were told that they could remove any cards from the stack, and add any of their own events, if they wished to do so (see Appendix F for complete instructions).

For dating couples doing the personal dating card sort, their instructions were to sort the cards according to how their own relationship together had progressed. They were instructed to use a paperclip to mark the dating event card that best represented the point at which they currently were at in their relationship. Following that card, they were told to sort the remaining cards in the order of how they believed their dating relationship would progress in the future. The participants were given the option of removing any cards which they did not want to include. Participants were also permitted to add an

event to the card sort if it was not already included in the cards, and they were given small pieces of blank paper they could use (see Appendix G for complete instructions).

The married couples doing the personal dating card sort were told to sort the cards in the order in which their dating relationship together had progressed up until before they were married. If they wished to remove any cards, or make up their own, they were permitted to do so (see Appendix H for complete instructions).

After the couples completed the dating card sorts, they proceeded to the marriage card sorts. Married couples doing the personal marriage card sort followed similar procedures as the dating couples doing the personal dating scripts: sorting the cards according to how their marriage had progressed up until the present time, using the paperclip to mark the marriage event card that best represented the point at which they currently were at in their marriage, sorting the cards in the order of how they believed the rest of their marriage would progress in the future, and if they wished, they could add or remove any cards (see Appendix I for complete instructions).

When completing the personal marriage card sort, the dating participants were instructed to order the cards according to how they believed their marriage together would progress if they were to be married in the future. Again, the participants were permitted to remove any cards that they did not think belonged in their marriage together, and they could make their own cards if they chose to do so (see Appendix J for complete instructions).

Following the card sorts, participants completed a Participant Contact Information Form enabling the experimenter to contact the couple for the follow-up study. Prize

ballots were filled out and the debriefing form was handed out. Before the couple left, any questions or concerns were addressed, and they were given their thank-you gift.

Method: Session 2

Participants

All of the participants from the first session were contacted one year later (plus or minus 2 months) to take part in the second session. Forty-six couples (16 dating and 30 married) returned. Among the couples who did not return, 17 had moved away, two indicated they were not interested in participating, and 20 could either not be reached or repeatedly failed to show up for their scheduled appointment. Additionally, eight couples broke up during the one-year interval and some decided not to participate again, although 12 individuals from those eight couples did return. Those individuals who did participate were entered into a prize draw giving them the opportunity to win prizes matching those of the first session.

The mean age of the sample was 38.40 years. The minimum and maximum ages were 17 years and 79 years. The mean ages of the dating and married individuals were 29.5 years and 42.5 years, respectively.

The mean level of education last completed for the sample was 14.5 years (i.e., two years in a university or college program). Similar to the Time 1 sample, there was little difference in the mean level of education last completed for the two groups; dating individuals had a mean of 14.28 years and married individuals had a mean of 14.63 years.

The median number of people that the participants had dated in the past was six, with one being the minimum number of past partners and 300 being the maximum.

Similar to the Time 1 sample, dating and married individuals' respective median number of past partners was five and eight.

The median length of relationship was 85 months (approximately 7 years) for the sample. The minimum length was 15 months (approximately 1 year) and the maximum length was 608 months (approximately 50 years). For the dating and married couples, the medians were 25 months (approximately 2 years) and 169 months (approximately 14 years), respectively.

Materials

The materials used were the same as those used in the first session, with a few minor alterations. Participants were given a new Participant Debriefing Form (see Appendix K), providing them with more information than did the previous debriefing form. It was important that the debriefing form given at Time 1 did not reveal the full purpose of the study, so as not to bias the participants upon return.

A Participant Contact Form was not necessary, but individuals were asked to write their address on an envelope allowing the experimenter to mail the results of the study to them.

Also, those individuals who terminated the relationship were given a modified questionnaire (see Appendix L) comprised of demographic questions and questions concerning the termination of the relationship (i.e. who ended the relationship, why did the relationship end, etc.). The well-being measures were not included for those who broke up, to avoid dredging up negative feelings about the past relationship; however, the Implicit Theories of Relationships Scale (Knee, 1998) did remain. Once again, this will not be described any further, as it is not being examined in the current study.

In addition, those individuals who broke up with their partner were given a Participant Consent Form (see Appendix M) that had been altered to correspond with the new questionnaire that was administered. Otherwise, participants received the same materials – a writing utensil, elastics, paper clips, blank notepaper and, for the couples who stayed together, the same demographics and well-being questionnaire. At the end of the session, participants also received another lotto ticket with some candy to thank them for their participation, and another prize draw entry form.

Procedure

The procedure remained exactly the same for those couples who were still together at Time 2. However, for those couples whose relationship terminated, the members were asked to come in separately. The sessions lasted approximately 45 minutes, instead of one hour. These individuals were given the new Participant Consent Form, and the modified questionnaire.

The card-sorting task also changed slightly for those participants who were no longer with their partner. The dating individuals were asked to order the dating event cards according to how their dating relationship had progressed until it reached the point of termination (see Appendix N for complete instructions). These couples, however, did not complete the future marriage card-sorting task, as this task would require them to imagine how married life would have progressed if they had been married to their former partner. This would be inappropriate, given that they were no longer a couple, so this card sort was excluded in the follow-up session.

One married individual who was separated returned. This individual was asked to order the dating event cards according to how the dating relationship had progressed up

until the point of the marriage, just as had been done in session one. When sorting through the marriage event cards, the participant was instructed to order the events according to how the marriage had progressed up until the point it ended (see Appendix O for complete instructions). All participants completed the ideal dating and marriage card sorts, just as in session one.

Results

For descriptive purposes, tables 1 through 4 show the average order of ideal and personal dating and marriage scripts as described by participants in the current study, as well as the percentage of participants retaining each event in their script.

Prior to running the analyses, the distributions of the data for both the independent and dependent variables were analysed to determine if the scores were distributed normally. All of the variables were negatively skewed; consequently, all of the dependent variables were transformed, which resulted in them approaching normality. The commitment variable was transformed using the reflected log method, and the remaining four dependent variables were transformed using the reflected square root method (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996). A series of exploratory transformations proved unable to adequately normalize the independent variables. As a result, the original untransformed data were used in the analyses.

Hypothesis 1

The first hypothesis was that couples' script similarity at Time 1 will predict higher relationship well-being. Script similarity consisted of having similar events (event agreement), as well as similar order for those events (order agreement).

Table 1

Average Rank Order of the Personal Dating Script with Percentage of People Retaining Each Event

Two people meet	95%
Two people begin to casually talk to one another about, for example, common interests	86%
One is attracted to the other	72%
Mutual attraction	97%
Invitation for a first date	81%
Begin to talk on the telephone to get to know one another	71%
Enjoy each other's company	99%
Become friends	97%
First date	88%
First kiss	99%
Begin to discuss personal interests	95%
Short duration dates in public, i.e. movies, mini putt, etc.	68%
Begin to spend more time together	97%
Begin to discover new things about each other, i.e., likes/dislikes	98%
Begin to go out on informal dates more often	76%
Dates become more comfortable	81%
Relationship begins to grow	98%
Have honesty in the relationship	99%
Romantic aspects of the relationship develop, i.e., flowers, romantic dinners, etc.	88%
Begin to date exclusively, i.e. "go steady"	91%
Self-disclosure, i.e. goals, dreams, secret thoughts, etc.	95%
Meet partner's family	97%
First sexual intercourse	96%
Discuss expectations of the relationships	88%
Sexual intimacy begins to increase	96%
Become involved in each other's routine life	94%
Begin to trust partner fully	95%
First expression of a definite commitment to the person	96%
Begin to discuss a future together	97%
Decide you want to spend the rest of your life with this person	98%
Move in together	86%
Become engaged	89%
Public announcement of lifelong commitment	88%

Table 2

Average Rank Order of the Personal Marriage Script with Percentage of People Retaining Each Event

Be each other's friend	98%
Respect each other	99%
Open communication	99%
Be comfortable in each other's company	97%
Honeymoon phase	90%
Support each other	100%
Plan future together as a couple	95%
Do activities as a couple	98%
Adjust to each other's lifestyles and habits	99%
Learn to compromise	98%
Couple settle into home	98%
Discuss careers, i.e. goals, who will work, etc.	91%
Share finances	95%
Divide housekeeping responsibilities	90%
Overcome challenges and conflicts together	97%
Take time to be alone together	99%
Financial plans are made for the future	94%
Maintain active sex life	98%
Discuss having children	83%
Honeymoon phase wears off	66%
Growing and changing together	98%
Travel	95%
Have children	80%
Share parenting responsibilities	85%
Stay together until death do you part	90%
Children leave home	81%
Retire	92%
Grow old together	95%

Table 3

Average Rank Order of the Ideal Dating Script with Percentage of People Retaining Each Event

Two people meet	99%
One is attracted to the other	68%
Two people begin to date casually talk to one another about, for example, common interests	97%
Mutual attraction	98%
Begin to talk on the telephone to get to know one another	84%
Enjoy each other's company	99%
Become friends	98%
Invitation for a first date	95%
First date	96%
Short duration dates in public places, i.e. movies mini putt, etc.	88%
First kiss	100%
Begin to discuss personal interests	99%
Begin to discover new things about each other, i.e. likes/dislikes.	99%
Begin to spend more time together	99%
Begin to go out on informal dates more often	90%
Have honesty in the relationship	100%
Dates become more comfortable	95%
Romantic aspects of the relationship develop, i.e. flowers, romantic dinners, etc.	98%
Relationship begins to grow	99%
Self-disclosure, i.e. goals, dreams, secret thoughts, etc.	100%
Begin to date exclusively, i.e. "go steady"	96%
Discuss expectations of the relationship	95%
Meet partner's family	95%
Begin to trust partner fully	97%
Become involved in each other's routine life	94%
First expression of a definite commitment to the person	95%
First sexual intercourse	92%
Sexual intimacy beings to increase	95%
Begin to discuss a future together	99%
Decide you want to spend the rest of your life with this person	99%
Move in together	87%
Become engaged	99%
Public announcement of lifelong commitment	95%

Table 4

Average Rank Order of the Ideal Marriage Script with Percentage of People Retaining Each Event

Be each other's friend	98%
Open communication	99%
Trust each other	99%
Respect each other	99%
Be comfortable in each other's company	98%
Honeymoon phase	95%
Plan future together as a couple	97%
Support each other	99%
Adjust to each other's lifestyles and habits	98%
Do activities as a couple	99%
Learn to compromise	98%
Discuss careers, i.e. goals, who will work, etc.	96%
Couple Settles into home	98%
Share finances	97%
Financial plans are made for the future	99%
Divide housekeeping responsibilities	94%
Overcome challenges and conflicts together	97%
Take time to be alone together	99%
Honeymoon phase wears off	68%
Discuss having children	98%
Maintain active sex life	99%
Growing and changing together	98%
Travel	95%
Have children	98%
Share parenting responsibilities	98%
Stay together until death due you part	95%
Children leave home	97%
Retire	96%
Grow old together	100%

Analysis Strategy

Analyses consisted of obtaining measures of both event and order agreement. The former concept was assessed using the percentage of events that the partners within a couple share in common. The event agreement score can vary from 0 to 100% (i.e., having no common events, to having all the same events). This score was calculated by dividing the number of events on which couples agreed (i.e., events retained in both partners' scripts, or discarded from both scripts) over the sum of the agreements plus disagreements (i.e., events retained in one partner's script but discarded in the other). Events which were added by participants (those which were written on the paper provided) were coded as to whether they matched an event added by their partner or not. In a few cases, they did, and were counted as agreements; in most cases, however, they were counted as disagreements.

The ordering of the partners' events was also compared to obtain an order agreement score. This was done by numbering the shared events according to how they appeared in Partner A's script, assigning the same number to the corresponding events in Partner B's script, and obtaining a Spearman's rank order correlation coefficient between the sets of numbers. Theoretically, this number could range from –1 to +1. A perfect negative correlation would indicate that the two scripts were ordered in exactly the opposite directions. A score of 0 would show that there was absolutely no correspondence in the order of the two scripts. A perfect positive correlation would show that the scripts were ordered in exactly the same sequence. Before further analysis was completed, those r-scores were each transformed into a z-score using Fisher's r – z transformation, to improve the normality of the distribution. Two sets of event agreement

and order agreement scores were obtained for each couple, one for their personal (actual) scripts and one for their ideal scripts.

Next, a series of hierarchical multiple regressions were performed, predicting well-being measures using a measure of relationship progression, the couple event agreement score, and the couple order agreement score. In Step 1 of the equation, a measure of relationship progression was entered, as it had proved important in the Holmberg and Mackenzie (under review) study. The measure of relationship progression is a percentage that indicates how far along a couple has progressed in their relationship. For instance, those who have only been together a few months have probably not experienced as many different relationship events yet as those who have been together for many years. The amount of progress through the list of relationship events was measured by examining how far through the list of cards, the card that represented the couple's current relationship status (i.e., the card with the paperclip) appeared. Depending on the location of this card (i.e., the very first event in the relationship or the last event in the relationship) the score could theoretically range from 0 to 100%. When the distribution of scores for relationship progression was examined, it was found to be markedly bimodal. As a result, these scores were calculated separately for dating and married couples. This score was entered in step 1 of the equation.

Then, in Step 2, the event agreement and order agreement scores between the partners' scripts were entered. The hypothesis would be supported if higher event agreement and order agreement scores predict higher levels of relationship well-being, over and above the influence of relationship progression.

Initial exploratory analyses, seeking to avoid unnecessary complications, involved combining the dating and married scripts together into one long script, and did not analyze dating and married couples separately. However, further analyses revealed that at times complications are necessary; results did differ somewhat by couple type and by script type. Accordingly, separate analyses were run for dating and married ideal and personal scripts, and for dating and married couples. Ideally, a structural equation model or a multi-level model should be constructed, explicitly modelling the effects of couple type and script type; however, such analyses were deemed to be beyond the scope of the current investigation.

In order to avoid violating assumptions of independence of observations, males and females from the same couple could not be included in the same analysis (Kashy & Kenny, 2000). Accordingly, the data had to be examined at the couple level, or else analyses had to be run separately for males and females. Initially, the effects of relationship script similarity on couple well-being were examined, rather than looking at individual well-being. An overall score for each well-being measure was calculated by averaging together the well-being scores for each partner. Likewise, the relationship progression score for each couple was computed by averaging together the relationship progression scores for both members of the couple. Because the Holmberg and Mackenzie (under review) study revealed some gender differences, however, follow-up analyses were also run separately for males and females. All analyses are presented in tables in text.

Results

As indicated in Table 5, the analyses reveal that, in general, relationship progression was a significant predictor of relationship well-being for dating couples. Those who had progressed further in their relationship also showed higher relationship well-being. In contrast, relationship progression was not predictive of married couples' relationship well-being.

Tables 5 and 6 present the results for the ideal dating and marriage scripts. Here, the hypothesis was not supported. Script agreement (between partners) for ideal dating and married relationships was not predictive of relationship well-being, as indicated by the non-significant changes in R^2 for Step Two of each analysis.

Tables 7 and 8 present the results for couples' personal dating and marriage scripts. Here, the hypothesis was partially supported. Overall, the results were strongest for the dating couples' agreement on their future marriage (see Table 8). For three of the five measures of well-being (i.e., satisfaction, loving, and commitment), dating couples' agreement on the future progression of their marriage was in fact predictive of relationship well-being. Event agreement was, in general, a better predictor than order agreement. Results for married couples, and agreement on scripts for a dating relationship, were much less strong, with only satisfaction showing consistent relationships to the script measures.

All of the findings were in the expected direction (i.e., as script similarity increased, well-being increased), with two exceptions. Results indicate that as the order of dating couples' scripts for their personal married relationship became more alike, they were less committed to the relationship, not more, as one would expect. In addition,

Table 5

Hierarchical Regression Analyses, Predicting Individuals' Relationship Well-Being with (a) A Measure of Relationship Progression, and (b) Measures of Agreement Between Partners' Ideal Scripts for Dating Relationships

	Step One		Step Two			
Well-Being Measure	β for Rel. Progression	R^2	β for Event Agreement	β for Order Agreement	Change in R^2	Final R^2
			Dating Couples			
Trust	.252+	.064+	.081	-.090	.014	.077
Satisfaction	.317*	.100*	-.063	-.107	.015	.115
Liking	.306*	.094*	.052	.022	.003	.097
Loving	.469**	.220**	.035	.078	.007	.227*
Commitment	.422**	.178**	.023	-.016	.001	.179*
			Married Couples			
Trust	.163	.027	-.308	-.141	.013	.040
Satisfaction	.072	.005	-.075	.130	.024	.029
Liking	.057	.003	-.064	-.108	.013	.016
Loving	-.124	.015	-.135	-.205	.048	.064
Commitment	.161	.026	-.177	-.205	.058	.084

+ p<.10 *p<.05 **p<.01 ***p< .001

Table 6

Hierarchical Regression Analyses, Predicting Individuals' Relationship Well-Being with (a) A Measure of Relationship Progression, and (b) Measures of Agreement Between Partners' Ideal Scripts for Married Relationship

	Step Two			
Well-Being Measure	β for Event Agreement	β for Order Agreement	Change in R^2	Final R^2
		Dating Couples		
Trust	-.071	-.097	.011	.074
Satisfaction	-.081	-.013	.006	.106
Liking	-.099	.001	.010	.103
Loving	.106	-.085	.021	.241*
Commitment	-.034	-.235	.048	.226*
		Married Couples		
Trust	-.240	-.037	.053	.079
Satisfaction	-.259	-.001	.057	.062
Liking	-.224	.060	.043	.046
Loving	-.100	.245	.061	.076
Commitment	-.022	.057	.003	.029

+ p<.10 *p<.05 **p<.01 ***p< .001

Note: See Table 5 for Step One information.

Table 7

Hierarchical Regression Analyses, Predicting Individuals' Relationship Well-Being with (a) A Measure of Relationship Progression, and (b) Measures of Agreement Between Partners' Personal Scripts for Dating Relationships

	Step Two			
Well-Being Measure	β for Event Agreement	β for Order Agreement	Change in R^2	Final R^2
	Dating Couples			
Trust	.059	.171	.034	.097
Satisfaction	.155	.346*	.149*	.249**
Liking	.016	.215	.047	.140
Loving	-.001	.185	.034	.254**
Commitment	.146	.189	.059	.337*
	Married Couples			
Trust	-.061	.197	.034	.061
Satisfaction	-.048	.283+	.067	.073
Liking	-.066	.282+	.068	.071
Loving	.017	.198	.035	.050
Commitment	.019	.260	.059	.085

+ p<.10 *p<.05 **p<.01 ***p< .001

Note: See Table 5 for Step One information.

Table 8

Hierarchical Regression Analyses, Predicting Individuals' Relationship Well-Being with (a) A Measure of Relationship Progression, and (b) Measures of Agreement Between Partners' Personal Scripts for Married Relationships

	Step Two			
Well-Being Measure	β for Event Agreement	β for Order Agreement	Change in R^2	Final R^2
		Dating Couples		
Trust	-.001	-.025	.001	.064
Satisfaction	.342*	.088	.130*	.230*
Liking	.279+	-.012	.072	.166+
Loving	.404**	-.019	.152*	.372***
Commitment	.271+	-.288*	.120*	.298**
		Married Couples		
Trust	-.236	.174	.067	.093
Satisfaction	-.370*	.312*	.182*	.188*
Liking	-.189	.216	.065	.068
Loving	.044	.071	.008	.023
Commitment	.045	.150	.026	.052

+ p<.10 *p<.05 **p<.01 ***p< .001

Note: See Table 5 for Step One information.

married couples' event agreement scores were negatively related to satisfaction. The more a couple agreed on the events in their marriage, the less satisfied they were. Possible explanations for these unexpected findings will be addressed in the discussion section.

Tables 9 to 16 show the same results examined in Tables 5 to 8, broken down by gender. Gender differences did seem to emerge for the relationship progression variable. Running the analyses separately for males and females presents a clearer picture of what the preliminary couple-level data revealed. As shown in Table 9, for dating males relationship progression is a significant predictor of how much they love their partners and how committed they are to the relationship. The further along they have progressed in their relationship, the more in love and more committed to the relationship they are. Conversely, relationship progression was not as important for dating women; they showed only a trend towards being more in love with their partners as they progressed further in their relationship.

Otherwise, however, no clear gender differences emerged for the key script variables. As before, agreement between partners on ideal scripts is generally not a significant predictor of relationship well-being for either males or females (see Tables 13 through 16). Only one finding emerged; event agreement regarding the ideal marriage was a significant predictor of trust for married females (see Table 16). There were no corresponding findings for married males.

As Tables 9 through 12 show, findings for personal script agreement are not as strong as before; constructing couple-level well-being variables may have resulted in more reliable measurement. The basic pattern of results is the same, however. There may

Table 9

Hierarchical Regression Analyses, Predicting Individuals' Relationship Well-Being with (a) A Measure of Relationship Progression, and (b) Measures of Agreement Between Dating Partners' Scripts, by Gender, for Personal Dating Relationships

	Step One		Step Two			
Well-Being Measure	β for Rel. Progression	R^2	β for Event Agreement	β for Order Agreement	Change in R^2	Final R^2
			Females			
Trust	.076	.006	.137	.258	.089	.095
Satisfaction	-.025	.001	.251	.290+	.157*	.158+
Liking	-.111	.012	.227	.161	.081	.093
Loving	.263+	.069+	.101	.233	.067	.136
Commitment	.160	.026	.129	.190	.055	.081
			Males			
Trust	.175	.031	-.033	-.017	.001	.032
Satisfaction	.256	.065	.006	.278+	.077	.143
Liking	.157	.025	-.160	.296+	.107	.131
Loving	.477**	.277**	-.081	.026	.007	.234*
Commitment	.509**	.259**	.120	.072	.020	.280**

+ p<.10 *p<.05 **p<.01 ***p< .001

Table 10

Hierarchical Regression Analyses, Predicting Individuals' Relationship Well-Being with (a) A Measure of Relationship Progression, and (b) Measures of Agreement Between Married Partners' Scripts, by Gender, for Personal Dating Relationships

	Step One		Step Two			
Well-Being Measure	β for Rel. Progression	R^2	β for Event Agreement	β for Order Agreement	Change in R^2	Final R^2
			Females			
Trust	.057	.003	-.202	.107	.046	.049
Satisfaction	-.068	.005	-.071	.188	.036	.041
Liking	.003	.000	-.002	.345*	.115+	.115
Loving	-.162	.026	-.044	.151	.023	.050
Commitment	.076	.006	.056	-.042	.004	.010
			Males			
Trust	.217	.047	-.058	.128	.017	.065
Satisfaction	.067	.004	.001	.157	.021	.025
Liking	.207	.043	-.158	.080	.031	.073
Loving	.071	.005	-.106	.105	.020	.025
Commitment	.144	.021	-.105	.217	.051	.072

+ p<.10 *p<.05 **p<.01 ***p< .001

Table 11

Hierarchical Regression Analyses, Predicting Individuals' Relationship Well-Being with (a) A Measure of Relationship Progression, and (b) Measures of Agreement Between Dating Partners' Scripts, by Gender, for Personal Marriage Relationships

	Step Two			
Well-Being Measure	β for Event Agreement	β for Order Agreement	Change in R^2	Final R^2
	Females			
Trust	-.088	-.066	.014	.020
Satisfaction	.186	.289+	.120+	.121
Liking	.170	-.008	.028	.041
Loving	.286+	.198	.138*	.207*
Commitment	.232	-.123	.060	.086
	Males			
Trust	.124	.003	.014	.045
Satisfaction	.307+	.108	.090	.156+
Liking	.228	.074	.063	.088
Loving	.330*	-.120	.107	.334**
Commitment	.125	-.294*	.089	.348**

+ p<.10 *p<.05 **p<.01 ***p< .001

Note: See Table 9 for Step One information.

Table 12

Hierarchical Regression Analyses, Predicting Individuals' Relationship Well-Being with (a) A Measure of Relationship Progression, and (b) Measures of Agreement Between Married Partners' Scripts, by Gender, for Personal Marriage Relationships

	Step Two			
Well-Being Measure	β for Event Agreement	β for Order Agreement	Change in R^2	Final R^2
		Females		
Trust	-.423*	.094	.146*	.149+
Satisfaction	-.352*	.303*	.161*	.166*
Liking	-.196	.221	-.070	.070
Loving	.096	.108	.022	.049
Commitment	.040	.181	.036	.042
		Males		
Trust	-.077	.196	.038	.086
Satisfaction	-.303+	.186	.100	.104
Liking	-.226	.163	.062	.104
Loving	-.116	.098	.016	.021
Commitment	.025	.018	.001	.022

+ p<.10 *p<.05 **p<.01 ***p< .001

Note: See Table 10 for Step One information

Table 13

Hierarchical Regression Analyses, Predicting Individuals' Relationship Well-Being with (a) A Measure of Relationship Progression, and (b) Measures of Agreement Between Dating Partners' Scripts, by Gender, for Ideal Dating Relationships

	Step Two			
Well-Being Measure	β for Event Agreement	β for Order Agreement	Change in R^2	Final R^2
		Females		
Trust	.141	.117	.034	.039
Satisfaction	-.079	-.000	.006	.007
Liking	.132	.156	.041	.054
Loving	-.009	.086	.007	.077
Commitment	-.026	.065	.005	.030
		Males		
Trust	.039	-.233	.050	.081
Satisfaction	-.005	-.145	.020	.085
Liking	-.033	-.010	.001	.026
Loving	-.131	-.083	.025	.253*
Commitment	-.021	-.138	.018	.277*

+ p<.10 *p<.05 **p<.01 ***p< .001

Note: See Table 9 for Step One information.

Table 14

Hierarchical Regression Analyses, Predicting Individuals' Relationship Well-Being with (a) A Measure of Relationship Progression, and (b) Measures of Agreement Between Married Partners' Scripts, by Gender, for Ideal Dating Relationships

	Step Two			
Well-Being Measure	β for Event Agreement	β for Order Agreement	Change in R^2	Final R^2
		Females		
Trust	-.198	-.181	.061	.064
Satisfaction	-.111	.182	.052	.056
Liking	-.045	-.052	.004	.004
Loving	-.191	-.096	.038	.064
Commitment	-.105	-.062	.013	.018
		Males		
Trust	-.057	.090	.012	.060
Satisfaction	-.007	.010	.000	.005
Liking	-.109	-.074	.014	.057
Loving	-.166	-.219	.058	.063
Commitment	-.242	-.199	.079	.100

+ $p<.10$ *$p<.05$ **$p<.01$ ***$p<.001$

Note: See Table 10 for Step One information.

Table 15

Hierarchical Regression Analyses, Predicting Individuals' Relationship Well-Being with (a) A Measure of Relationship Progression, and (b) Measures of Agreement Between Dating Partners' Scripts, by Gender, for Ideal Marriage Relationships

	Step Two			
Well-Being Measure	β for Event Agreement	β for Order Agreement	Change in R^2	Final R^2
		Females		
Trust	.026	-.158	.027	.033
Satisfaction	-.121	-.077	.017	.017
Liking	.048	.027	.002	.015
Loving	.102	.032	.010	.079
Commitment	.014	-.142	.021	.046
		Males		
Trust	-.081	.011	.007	.037
Satisfaction	-.064	.131	.023	.089
Liking	-.165	-.009	.027	.254*
Loving	.027	-.163	.027	.254*
Commitment	-.117	-.057	.013	.272**

+ p<.10 *p<.05 **p<.01 ***p< .001

Note: See Table 9 for Step One information.

Table 16

Hierarchical Regression Analyses, Predicting Individuals' Relationship Well-Being with (a) A Measure of Relationship Progression, and (b) Measures of Agreement Between Married Partners' Scripts, by Gender, for Ideal Marriage Relationships

	Step Two			
Well-Being Measure	β for Event Agreement	β for Order Agreement	Change in R^2	Final R^2
		Females		
Trust	-.376*	.032	.116+	.119
Satisfaction	-.190	.055	.028	.033
Liking	-.178	.061	.025	.025
Loving	.008	.219	.048	.074
Commitment	.123	.157	.041	.047
		Males		
Trust	-.029	-.077	.007	.054
Satisfaction	-.226	-.091	.056	.061
Liking	-.221	.044	.041	.083
Loving	-.128	.094	.018	.023
Commitment	-.038	-.083	.009	.030

+ $p<.10$ *$p<.05$ **$p<.01$ ***$p<.001$

Note: See Table 10 for Step One information.

be a slight tendency for the results to be stronger for females (e.g., all the significant increases in R^2 are for the female partners); however, systematic gender differences are not readily apparent.

To summarize, Hypothesis 1 was partially supported. Couple agreement on their ideal relationship scripts was not predictive of relationship well-being. Couple agreement on their personal relationship scripts was somewhat predictive of relationship well-being. There was some tendency for higher couple agreement to predict higher well-being. Results were strongest for satisfaction and for dating couples' agreement on their future marriage. The results may be slightly stronger for females, but any gender differences are not large.

Hypothesis 2

The second hypothesis was that the more dissimilar couples' scripts were at Time 1, the more likely they would be to break up by Time 2.

Analysis Strategy

A hierarchical logistic regression analysis was run, using the relationship progression score and event agreement and order agreement scores at Time 1 as predictors. Relationship progression was entered in Step 1, and event agreement and order agreement scores were entered in Step 2. The dependent variable was the status of the relationship at Time 2 – whether the couple was together or separated. Those couples who reported over the phone that they had broken up, but declined to come in for session 2, could still be included in this analysis. This analysis provides an odds ratio, which indicates how much more likely a couple is to break up, with each one-unit decrease in script agreement scores.

Results

Hypothesis 2 was not supported. The analyses revealed no significant findings; couples with lower script agreement scores at Time 1 were no more likely to break up over the course of the study than were those with high agreement scores. The rate of break-up overall was relatively low; only eight of the couples we were able to contact had broken up.

Hypothesis 3

The third hypothesis was that couples' scripts would become more similar over time.

Analysis Strategy

For this analysis, a repeated-measures ANCOVA was run, comparing event agreement and order agreement scores at Time 1 and Time 2. Relationship progression was entered as the covariate. Couple type (dating vs. married) was entered as a between-subjects variable and script types (dating vs. married scripts, and ideal vs. personal scripts) were entered as within-subjects variables. The hypothesis would be supported if script agreement scores showed a significant increase over time, over and above any effects of relationship progression.

Results

Overall, no main effects directly related to the hypothesis emerged. Listed in Table 17 are the Time 1 and Time 2 means for the event and order agreement scores for those couples who participated at both Times 1 and 2. As can be seen, couple agreement started out relatively high, and remained high.

Although there were no main effects indicating an overall increase in script agreement over time, there were significant interactions. A three-way interaction was found between time, ideal versus personal scripts, and dating versus marriage scripts, for order agreement ($F(1, 87) = 3.96$, $p = .05$). As indicated by the mean order agreement scores in Table 18, marriage scripts appear to change more over time, while dating scripts remain more or less stable. Although personal marriage scripts do converge slightly over time, ideal marriage scripts show the opposite tendency, actually becoming slightly more discrepant over time.

A two-way interaction also emerged between time and couple type, for event agreement ($F(1, 87) = 6.74$, $p = .011$). Married couples showed a slight tendency to agree more over time ($M = .90$ and $M = .92$, for Time 1 and Time 2, respectively), while event agreement for dating couples tended to decrease slightly over time ($M = .94$ and $M = .92$, for Time 1 and Time 2, respectively).

Running the ANCOVA also showed several other significant results, not directly related to the hypothesis, but worth mentioning briefly. There was a significant two-way interaction between ideal versus personal scripts and couple type for both event agreement scores ($F(1, 87) = 6.77$, $p = .011$) and order agreement scores ($F(1, 87) = 5.29$, $p = .024$). Compared to dating couples, married couples tended to agree a little less on the events that comprise their personal scripts ($M = .93$ for dating couples vs. $M = .89$

Table 17

Couple Event and Order Agreement Mean Scores for Time 1 and Time 2.

Script	Mean (Time1)	Mean (Time 2)
Event Agreement – Ideal Dating	.92	.92
Event Agreement- Ideal Marriage	.92	.94
Event Agreement- Personal Dating	.88	.89
Event Agreement- Personal Marriage	.91	.93
Order Agreement – Ideal Dating	.82	.80
Order Agreement – Ideal Marriage	.66	.62
Order Agreement – Personal Dating	.78	.80
Order Agreement – Personal Marriage	.60	.64

Note The maximum possible event agreement score is 1.0. Initially, the order agreement scores were correlation coefficients with a range of –1 to +1. Although these scores were transformed to z-scores for analysis purposes, they have been transformed back to correlation coefficients here, to aid interpretation.

Table 18

Mean Order Agreement Scores at Time 1 and Time 2 for Ideal Versus Personal Dating and Marriage Scripts.

Dating Scripts		Marriage Scripts	
Time 1 Ideal Scripts	Time 2 Ideal Script	Time 1 Ideal Script	Time 2 Ideal Script
.82	.80	.68	.63
Time 1 Personal Script	Time 2 Personal Script	Time 1 Personal Script	Time 2 Personal Script
.79	.80	.62	.65

Note Initially, the order agreement scores were correlation coefficients with a range of −1 to +1. Although these scores were transformed to z-scores for analysis purposes, they have been transformed back to correlation coefficients here, to aid interpretation.

for married couples); they also tend to agree less on the order of these events (M = .74 for dating couples vs. M = .70 for married couples)[2]. No couple type differences are apparent for the ideal scripts (EA = .93 and OA = .75 for both dating and married couples).

The ideal script may be more culturally shared, resulting in more agreement. Conversely, there may be more room for disagreement with regards to personal scripts since these reflect one's own individualistic ideas of how one's own relationship should progress. These disagreements may be more apparent for married couples, as their relationship has had ample time to develop its own trajectory, possibly different from the cultural norm.

Furthermore, there may be more disagreement for personal marriage scripts because people are less clear about how a marriage should progress, as compared to a dating relationship. Marriage events may also be inherently less ordered than dating events, with more room for a variety of events to occur at their own time and pace. In support of this, a main effect was found for dating versus marriage scripts ($F(1, 87) = 7.47$, $p = .008$). Overall, there was better agreement for the order of dating scripts than for marriage scripts (M = .80 and M = .64 for dating and marriage, respectively). Moreover, this supports findings by Holmberg and Cameron (1997), who found that participants agreed more on the events that constitute a dating relationship than they did for a marriage.

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[2] To facilitate interpretation, mean order agreement scores are reported as correlation coefficients, rather than Fisher's z scores.

Hypothesis 4

The fourth hypothesis was that a couple's script convergence over time would predict higher relationship well-being at Time 2.

Analysis Strategy

Convergence of couples' scripts over time was assessed using a measure of change from Time 1 to Time 2 for event and order agreement scores, for each individual script. The change scores were calculated by subtracting the event agreement/order agreement score at Time 1 from the corresponding event agreement/order agreement score at Time 2. The higher the change score (in the positive direction), the more similar the scripts had become over time. Due to the smaller sample size at Time 2, hierarchical multiple regression analyses could not be run for this hypothesis. Therefore, partial correlations were run, assessing the relationship between the well-being measures at Time 2 and the change scores, while controlling for the measure of relationship progression and the well-being measures from Time 1. Significant positive partial correlations would provide support for the hypothesis.

Results

Tables 19 and 20 present the couple-level partial correlation coefficients for the well-being measures at Time 2, and the event and order agreement change scores from Time 1 to Time 2. Modest support was found for the hypothesis; although not many correlations are significant, those that are were almost all in the predicted direction. Table 18 presents the results for the fourth hypothesis regarding ideal scripts. The results indicate that, as agreement on the events in ideal dating scripts converges over time, dating couples become higher on measures of satisfaction and commitment. They also

showed a trend towards being more committed as their marriage scripts converged over time. For married couples, ideal scripts appear less important. Only one significant finding emerged; they liked their partner more as their ideal dating scripts converged in their order over time.

Table 20 presents the data for personal scripts, again showing modest support for the hypothesis. Findings indicate that convergence over time on personal dating scripts is predictive of commitment for both married and dating couples. Similar to previously mentioned findings, the correlations for commitment for married couples was found to be negative. The more scripts converged in their order over time, the less committed are married couples. Lastly, convergence on personal marriage scripts was significantly positively correlated with liking for both dating and married couples.

Tables 21 to 24 show these same findings broken down by gender. When examined at the individual level, the data reveal that script convergence over time appears to be more highly correlated with well-being for males than for females. Surprisingly, although the trends for females were largely in the positive direction, as hypothesized, the significant partial correlations for the males were all negative. These unexpected gender differences are addressed in more detail in the discussion section.

Table 19

Partial Correlation Coefficients for Well-Being Measures at Time 2 and Event/Order Agreement Change Scores for Ideal Scripts, Controlling for (a) Well-Being Measures at Time 1 and (b) A Measure of Relationship Progression, for Dating and Married Couples.

Measure	Ideal Dating Event Agree	Ideal Dating Order Agree	Ideal Marriage Event Agree	Ideal Marriage Order Agree
		Dating Couples		
Trust	-.0369	.0514	.3167	-.0248
Satisfaction	.6673**	-.2714	.3120	-.3159
Liking	.3623	-.2583	.3778	-.0821
Loving	-.3180	.0530	.0306	.1627
Commitment	.4682*	-.2025	.4337+	-.2268
		Married Couples		
Trust	.1080	.1776	.2342	.0157
Satisfaction	.1902	.2461	.0747	.1965
Liking	-.0146	.3293*	-.1677	.2525
Loving	.0380	-.0186	.1627	.2205
Commitment	.1590	.1998	.0960	.1441

+ p<.10 *p<.05 **p<.01 ***p< .001

Table 20

Partial Correlation Coefficients for Well-Being Measures at Time 2 and Event/Order Agreement Change Scores for Personal Scripts, Controlling for (a) Well-Being Measures at Time 1 and (b) A Measure of Relationship Progression, for Dating and Married Couples.

Measure	Personal Dating Event Agree	Personal Dating Order Agree	Personal Marriage Event Agree	Personal Marriage Order Agree
		Dating Couples		
Trust	.2552	-.2203	.1287	.3205
Satisfaction	.3718	-.3830	-.0279	.3128
Liking	.0996	-.0979	.6753**	.0071
Loving	.3352	-.2407	-.0311	.1173
Commitment	.5735*	-.3477	.0067	.0714
		Married Couples		
Trust	.0497	-.1715	.2424	.0613
Satisfaction	.0421	-.1386	.31248	.1625
Liking	.0701	-.0107	-.0150	.4091**
Loving	.0217	-.2212	.0096	.1390
Commitment	-.0961	-.3763*	.0883	.1671

+ p<.10 *p<.05 **p<.01 ***p< .001

Table 21

Partial Correlation Coefficients for Well-Being Measures at Time 2 and Event/Order Agreement Change Scores for Ideal Scripts, Controlling for (a) Well-Being Measures at Time 1 and (b) A Measure of Relationship Progression, for Dating Individuals, by Gender.

Measure	Ideal Dating Event Agree	Ideal Dating Order Agree	Ideal Marriage Event Agree	Ideal Marriage Order Agree
		Females		
Trust	-.2923	.3833	-.0034	-.1532
Satisfaction	-.0314	.7033+	-.0741	-.0237
Liking	.1153	.5591	.4977	.2333
Loving	-.0972	.2324	.5722	.4260
Commitment	.3207	.2713	.5261	-.0775
		Males		
Trust	-.1443	-.5538	-.6137	-.3641
Satisfaction	.0042	-.5173	-.2988	-.5005
Liking	.0757	-.8012*	-.4016	-.2475
Loving	-.2287	-.4917	-.1714	-.3000
Commitment	.0636	-.5895	.2270	-.7333*

+ $p<.10$ *$p<.05$ **$p<.01$ ***$p<.001$

Table 22

Partial Correlation Coefficients for Well-Being Measures at Time 2 and Event/Order Agreement Change Scores for Personal Scripts, Controlling for (a) Well-Being Measures at Time 1 and (b) A Measure of Relationship Progression, for Dating Individuals, by Gender.

Measure	Personal Dating Event Agree	Personal Dating Order Agree	Personal Marriage Event Agree	Personal Marriage Order Agree
		Females		
Trust	.3824	-.2709	-.5394	.4804
Satisfaction	-.1515	.1549	-.6794+	.6207
Liking	.0260	.3098	.3603	.0930
Loving	.5402	.0385	.0810	.2071
Commitment	.5376	-.1828	-.3112	.0176
		Males		
Trust	.5439	-.4385	-.0723	.0570
Satisfaction	.0751	-.2798	-.2793	-.3259
Liking	.0217	-.3225	.0488	.0813
Loving	.2111	-.2567	.0666	.0068
Commitment	.5652	-.6742+	.1747	-.3271

+ p<.10 *p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

Table 23

Partial Correlation Coefficients for Well-Being Measures at Time 2 and Event/Order Agreement Change Scores for Ideal Scripts, Controlling for (a) Well-Being Measures at Time 1 and (b) A Measure of Relationship Progression, for Married Individuals, by Gender.

Measure	Ideal Dating Event Agree	Ideal Dating Order Agree	Ideal Marriage Event Agree	Ideal Marriage Order Agree
		Females		
Trust	.1627	.0170	-.0488	.1952
Satisfaction	.0144	.1240	-.0844	-.2842
Liking	.1862	.2863	-.1224	.4380*
Loving	.1649	.1187	-.2603	.4047+
Commitment	.1539	.4067+	-.0388	.2544
		Males		
Trust	-.5661*	.3667	-.0454	-.1690
Satisfaction	.0191	.2655	-.0197	-.1858
Liking	-.1940	.0574	-.1910	-.0892
Loving	.0554	-.3097	-.0356	.3843
Commitment	.0185	.2847	.0428	.1690

+ p<.10 *p<.05 **p<.01 ***p< .001

Table 24

Partial Correlation Coefficients for Well-Being Measures at Time 2 and Event/Order Agreement Change Scores for Personal Scripts, Controlling for (a) Well-Being Measures at Time 1 and (b) A Measure of Relationship Progression, for Married Individuals, by Gender.

Measure	Personal Dating Event Agree	Personal Dating Order Agree	Personal Marriage Event Agree	Personal Marriage Order Agree
		Females		
Trust	-.0819	.3686+	.1258	.0427
Satisfaction	-.2157	.1725	.0267	.4293+
Liking	-.0983	.2393	.0527	.2595
Loving	.0244	.3133	.2191	.0550
Commitment	-.2258	-.0342	.0954	.2381
		Males		
Trust	.0264	-.3158	.0753	.0940
Satisfaction	.2770	-.2326	.1046	.0971
Liking	.3131	-.2550	-.1833	-.0130
Loving	.3206	-.7702***	-.1642	.0464
Commitment	.0469	-.4908*	.1713	.4165+

+ p<.10 *p<.05 **p<.01 ***p< .001

Hypothesis 5

The fifth hypothesis was that as similarity between personal and ideal relationship scripts increases, so will relationship well-being.

Analysis Strategy

Analyses consisted of calculating event agreement and order agreement scores for each individual. Script comparison was done by comparing the personal and ideal scripts within each individual, rather than comparing scripts within each couple. The event agreement and order agreement scores for each person were used as predictor variables in a series of hierarchical multiple regressions, with trust, liking, loving, satisfaction, and commitment as the criterion variables. In Step 1 of the equation, the measure of relationship progression was entered. Then in Step 2, event agreement and order agreement scores between the actual and ideal scripts were entered. The hypothesis would be supported if higher event agreement and order agreement scores predict higher levels of well-being, over and above any effects of relationship progression.

Results

Tables 25 to 28 show the results for dating and married males and females (couple level analyses are obviously not relevant here, as the comparisons are done at the individual level). As in the individual level analyses for Table 10, relationship progression was not found to significantly predict relationship well-being for married couples (see Table 27). For dating males, relationship progression was found to be a significant predictor of loving and commitment, while for dating females it was only a marginal predictor of loving (see Table 25).

The findings reveal that the only significant results to emerge were for dating

females. As Tables 27 and 28 show, having corresponding personal and ideal scripts for individuals' previous dating relationship and current marriage did not predict relationship well-being for married individuals.

In Table 25, the findings indicate that as dating females' personal and ideal scripts become increasingly alike, they are more satisfied in the relationship, and liked their partners more, and are marginally more committed to the relationship. Order Agreement seems to be the most important predictor. There were no significant findings for males.

In Table 26, one can see that dating females were significantly more satisfied, and loved their partners more, as their script for their future marriage increasingly resembled that of their ideal marriage. Ideal and personal script similarity is also a marginal predictor of loving for dating males.

Table 25

Hierarchical Regression Analyses, Predicting Individuals' Relationship Well-Being with (a) A Measure of Relationship Progression, and (b) Measures of Agreement Between Dating Individuals' Ideal and Personal Dating Scripts, by Gender

	Step One		Step Two			
Well-Being Measure	β for Rel. Prog.	R^2	β for Event Agreement	β for Order Agreement	Change in R^2	Final R^2
			Females			
Trust	.076	.006	-.053	.187	.029	.034
Satisfaction	-.025	.001	-002	.542**	.280*	.280*
Liking	.111	.012	.147	.354*	.155*	.167+
Loving	.263+	.069+	-.061	.166	.021	.091
Commitment	.160	.026	-.025	.376*	.119+	.145+
			Males			
Trust	.175	.031	.037	.003	.001	.032
Satisfaction	.256	.065	.103	.130	.038	.104
Liking	.157	.025	-.092	.046	.105	.031
Loving	.477**	.277**	-.210	.065	.032	.259*
Commitment	.509**	.259**	.176	-.095	.020	.279**

+ p<.10 *p<.05 **p<.01 ***p< .001

Table 26

Hierarchical Regression Analyses, Predicting Individuals' Relationship Well-Being with (a) A Measure of Relationship Progression, and (b) Measures of Agreement Between Dating Individuals' Ideal and Personal Marriage Scripts, by Gender

	Step Two			
Well-Being Measure	β for Event agreement	β for Order Agreement	Change in R^2	Final R^2
		Females		
Trust	-.027	.069	.003	.009
Satisfaction	.075	.389*	.166*	.167+
Liking	.159	.121	.056	.069
Loving	.398*	.072	.187*	.257**
Commitment	.147	.193	.074	.100
		Males		
Trust	-.043	.252	.055	.086
Satisfaction	.176	.022	.033	.098
Liking	.062	.198	.047	.071
Loving	.320*	.049	.110+	.338**
Commitment	.118	-.032	.013	.272**

+ p<.10 *p<.05 **p<.01 ***p< .001

Note: Step One is presented in Table 25.

Table 27

Hierarchical Regression Analyses, Predicting Individuals' Relationship Well-Being with (a) A Measure of Relationship Progression, and (b) Measures of Agreement Between Married Individuals' Ideal and Personal Dating Scripts, by Gender

	Step One		Step Two			
Well-Being Measure	β for Rel. Progression	R^2	β for Event agreement	β for Order Agreement	Change in R^2	Final R^2
			Females			
Trust	.057	.003	-.265	.253	.057	.060
Satisfaction	-.068	.005	-.196	.205	.034	.039
Liking	.003	.000	-.102	.151	.015	.015
Loving	-.162	.026	-.267	.305+	.076	.102
Commitment	.076	.006	-.147	.109	.016	.022
			Males			
Trust	.217	.047	.020	-.177	.029	.077
Satisfaction	.067	.004	.039	-.089	.008	.012
Liking	.207	.043	-.068	-.014	.005	.048
Loving	.071	.005	-.026	-.138	.021	.027
Commitment	.144	.021	-.234	-.077	.069	.089

+ p<.10 *p<.05 **p<.01 ***p< .001

Table 28

Hierarchical Regression Analyses, Predicting Individuals' Relationship Well-Being with (a) A Measure of Relationship Progression, and (b) Measures of Agreement Between Married Individuals' Ideal and Personal Marriage Scripts, by Gender

	Step Two			
Well-Being Measure	β for Event agreement	β for Order Agreement	Change in R^2	Final R^2
		Females		
Trust	-.207	.204	.049	.052
Satisfaction	-.191	.189	.045	.040
Liking	-.137	.115	.019	.019
Loving	-.137	.253	.051	.077
Commitment	-.068	.023	.006	.012
		Males		
Trust	.226	.148	.082	.129
Satisfaction	-.089	.160	.029	.033
Liking	-.087	.031	.007	.050
Loving	.051	-.136	.017	.022
Commitment	.162	-.190	.049	.069

+ p<.10 *p<.05 **p<.01 ***p< .001

Note: Step One is presented in Table 27.

Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the link between script similarity for romantic relationships, and relationship well-being. As noted previously, since no agreed upon measure of overall relationship well-being exists, relationship well-being was assessed in this study through the use of several measures. In fact, all of these indicators of well-being were significantly moderately correlated (range from .420 and .589); $p < .01$), suggesting that, although the measures are not identical, they may well be tapping into a core underlying construct. Furthermore, all of the measures were found to be significantly predicted by script similarity in at least some analyses (the results varied depending on the script type, couple type, or gender being analysed). Thus, the findings of this study suggest that relationship script similarity is related to relationship well-being broadly defined, rather than to any specific aspect of well-being. Future analyses using structural equation modelling might use each of the dependent variables from the current study as an indicator of one underlying latent variable, relationship well-being.

The first hypothesis was that partners whose scripts were more congruent would show increased relationship well-being. Initially, the data was analysed at the couple level, and then broken down by gender. Significant results emerged; however, due to the large number of analyses run, Type I error (finding a significant result purely by chance) may have been inflated, both here and throughout the study. A Bonferroni correction could have been used to control for Type 1 error; however, with a large number of analyses (as in this study) it may also prove to be overly conservative, actually concealing significance. Since this study was at an exploratory stage regarding which measures of well-being are related to script similarity, the Bonferroni correction was not

used. Thus, the results, especially at the gender-level, should be regarded with some caution. Throughout this discussion, I attempt to focus the overall patterns that emerged, rather than putting excessive weight on any one particular finding. As previously mentioned, a structural equation model would be an ideal strategy of analysis, and would control adequately for overall Type 1 error (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996).

For hypothesis 1, the strongest results emerged for dating couples' agreement on their future marriage. Three of the five well-being measures were significantly predicted by script agreement. Dating couples were also found to be significantly more in love with their partners and more satisfied in the relationship as agreement for their scripts for their future marriage increased. Understandably, dating couples may feel more secure in their relationship when they know that they share the same goals. Marriage is often considered a lifelong commitment; dating couples may want to be confident that they are with someone whom they know will want the same things in life. For instance, partners may not feel very secure in their relationship if they know that they disagree on certain matters, such as whether or not, or when, to have children, or where they will live. Conversely, knowing that they share the same plan may foster feelings of security, which may lead to increased well-being. These findings are in line with a priori hypotheses.

Unexpectedly, however, dating couples were significantly less committed to their current relationship if both partners saw their future marriage progressing in the same fashion. Upon further examination, the data revealed that this pattern applies to dating males only; the more they agreed with their partner, the less committed they were. Any explanation of this unexpected finding remains tentative. One possible explanation arises from the fact that women tend to be more interested in thinking and talking about

relationships than are men (Acitelli & Young, 1996; Burnett, 1987). Conceivably, some dating males who are agreeing with their partners regarding the order of their future marriage may not have actually given much thought to a future together, and simply tend to go along with the female partner, who has thought about these issues more. Such a tendency would result in low commitment scores paired with high agreement. When the males do start to think about marriage in earnest, they may discover that they actually hold different marital expectations than their partners. Paradoxically, lower script agreement might signal higher commitment for dating males, because it indicates that they are beginning to carefully consider a future together as a married couple. Asking dating individuals the extent to which they have really thought or talked about their future marriage might prove revealing in future research.

When examining couples' scripts for their current relationship, the findings suggest that similarity is moderately predictive of well-being for both dating and married couples. Dating and married couples were more satisfied in their relationships when they agreed with their partners on the order of their personal dating or marriage scripts, respectively. One role of scripts is to assist individuals in coordinating their behaviour over time (Ashforth & Fried, 1988). Couples who hold consensually-shared scripts may be able to work together more easily to guide the relationship, which may result in less conflict and perhaps more satisfaction.

Conversely, and unexpectedly, married couples were found to be less satisfied in their relationship the more they agreed with their partners on the events that comprise their marriage, or, stated another way, the less they agreed with their partners on marriage events, the more satisfied they were. Again, this finding contradicts the hypotheses, and

any explanation remains tentative. One possibility is that low agreement may be indicative of low communication and assumed similarity in the relationship, for some couples. Conceivably, those couples who are lower in agreement may not have discussed the future course of their marriage in any significant detail. Consequently, they may both assume that they have similar desires, goals, and future plans, while in actuality they may be incompatible on certain dimensions necessary for satisfaction. For example, a couple may disagree on having children; he may desire children, while she is certain she does not want to be a parent. However, if they each mistakenly believe that the other shares their view on the issue, they may be more satisfied than a couple who has already communicated about the matter. Research by Murray et al. (1996a) showed that individuals who idealized their partners were more satisfied in their relationship than those who did not. They stated that, "viewing their partners through the filter of their ideals, individuals may simply assume compatibility on...dimensions even when latent conflict exists" (p.95). Likewise, individuals who hold idealized, yet divergent, perceptions about the progression of their relationship may be more satisfied, as they too may assume compatibility with regards to their expectations. This, however, could potentially lead to a future decrease in satisfaction for these couples, once they become aware of the hidden reality of their disparity. Conversely, the couple that has communicated about their expectations will have had the opportunity to discuss and negotiate their future. Since marriage is considered a lifelong commitment by most, married couples may not be willing to separate upon learning that they hold clashing views. They may instead choose to compromise, thus, each sacrificing for the other. Those couples may be more likely to agree on the exact events of their marriage, but may

be slightly less satisfied than those couples who envision a marriage proceeding according to their ideals. Again, further research should explicitly assess the degree to which couples have discussed their future plans, to see if these speculations hold true.

Finally, script similarity for married couples' past relationships was also examined. Results showed trends for married couples to be more satisfied and to like their partners more when they agreed on how their dating relationship had progressed. One explanation may be that this demonstrates to individuals that their partners care enough to remember the events of their relationship, starting with the beginning of their dating history, which may increase feelings of fondness towards their partners. Findings by Pringle (1999) did show that when males and females believed that their partners recalled their first date well, they had more positive reactions towards them. Consequently, sharing similar scripts or memories with one's partner, for one's previous dating relationship may be associated with increased relational well-being.

The second hypothesis stated that couples whose scripts were more divergent at Time 1 would be more likely to break up by Time 2; however, this prediction was not supported. Fortunately for the participants, very few couples broke up. Unfortunately, that left a group of separated couples that was too small to test this hypothesis with any power. A longer time period or a larger sample size might allow a stronger test of this hypothesis. Examining a group of dating couples in the earliest stages of their relationship might prove especially fruitful, as any perceived incompatibilities might predict break-ups best in the very early stages of dating. The couples in this study may have already passed this initial "screening period", resulting in fewer script discrepancies and higher relationship stability.

It was postulated for hypothesis 3 that couples' scripts would become more similar over time; this was partially supported. First, the results showed that marriage scripts seem to change more over time, while dating scripts tend to stay the same. Personal marriage scripts became more similar, while ideal marriage scripts became less similar. Research has suggested that people have a relatively clearer perception of how a dating relationship progresses than for a marriage (e.g., Holmberg & Cameron, 1997). Conceivably, as people gather more information about marriage and experience more in their own relationship, their ideas of marriage script progression may alter. Their personal scripts may become more similar because, at least for the married couples, they have experienced more to agree on. Additionally, as they gather more information, they may come to agree more on a realistic perception of marriage, while agreeing less on what they believe to be the ideal marriage.

Secondly, married couples were inclined to agree more on their scripts over time; dating couples, on the other hand, disagreed more. Again, it may be that married couples have experienced more to agree on. The increased agreement may be a reflection of their memory for those events that have already happened. While dating couples, too, have experienced more, they may still be uncertain of their future. They may begin with similar dating scripts, in part because they could be following a culturally shared script for dating. However, as dating couples continue to invest more time in the relationship, they may also spend more time considering their future and what they want. Thus, as they progress further into their relationship, they may start to deviate from a culturally shared script, focusing more on their own personal goals, and possibly discovering that they disagree.

Only modest support was found for hypothesis 4; consequently, any conclusions are made cautiously. It was hypothesized that the more couples' scripts converged over the year, the higher they would be in well-being. Several measures of well-being were positively correlated with script convergence over time for females, suggesting a positive association between relational well-being and script similarity. However, the opposite occurred for males. As script similarity increased for males, well-being decreased. These findings were unexpected, and the following explanation is offered tentatively.

Previous research by Davis and Oathout (1987) found that relational satisfaction for females was significantly associated with their perceptions of good communication; they were more satisfied when they believed they had good relationship communication. In contrast, males' level of satisfaction was not related to whether they perceived their partners' communication skills as good (i.e., being a good listener or being willing to disclose to them). Therefore, communicating about where the relationship is heading may be more important for women than it is for men. In fact, previous research has shown that women do tend to think and talk more about their relationships than men (Acitelli & Young, 1996; Burnett, 1987).

Likewise, increased script similarity may in many cases be indicative of good relationship communication; couples may be discussing their relationship expectations and negotiating what will happen in the future. Accordingly, script convergence over time may suggest increased discussion concerning their relationship, which is satisfying to women. Men, on the other hand, may find that continually discussing their relationship is unnecessary and, perhaps, annoying. Rather than strengthening the bond they have with their partners, too much communication may weaken it. Their irritation may then

lead to a diminished level of well-being. Explicit assessment of the amount of time couples spend discussing their relationship and its future would prove valuable in future research. Clearly, further research is also needed to clarify under what conditions couple script agreement signals good couple communication about a relationship, and under what conditions it signals a mere assumed similarity, not based on actual relationship knowledge.

Finally, for hypothesis 5, it was proposed that individuals whose personal relationship scripts closely match their ideal relationship scripts would be higher in well-being. This hypothesis was partially supported. The results showed that dating females were more satisfied with the relationship, and more committed to their partners, when they saw their dating relationship progressing like their vision of the ideal dating relationship. Moreover, as similarity between these two scripts grew, dating females also liked their partners more. In contrast, there were no corresponding findings for males' dating scripts.

Perhaps females buy into the myth that relationships are supposed to be like the ideal to be good. As Fletcher et al. (1999) state, "there is no shortage of material from which people can develop their ideal standards" (p.72). Often this information is presented in such a fashion that romantic relationships are depicted as ideal. Soap operas and romantic films frequently portray perfect relationships. An abundance of romance novels are also available to the public, illustrating idealized relationships. Furthermore, consumers of such entertainment appear to be primarily women. Accordingly, it may be that women are taught more about the ideal relationship, thus, developing such expectations for their own. Additionally, because females seem to think more about

romantic relationships, they may pay more attention to the media-supplied information. Contrary to women, men do not appear to focus as much on relational material that emphasizes the importance of idealized, romantic relationships. Perhaps women have been taught that to have a good relationship, it should resemble the fictional ones portrayed by the entertainment media.

Dating males, therefore, may be more realistic than females; they may recognize that marriage will entail conflict and compromise, negotiations and sacrifice. In support of this supposition, Scott (1999) found that males tended to show more growth-oriented beliefs, as opposed to destiny-oriented beliefs, than females. "Destiny", as Knee (1998) explained, is the idea that a relationship is either destined to happen or not destined to happen, that fate is in control of whether or not two people are together. Conversely, "growth" is the belief that a relationship takes time to grow. People who have growth-oriented beliefs are of the conviction that conflicts will arise, but that this is not necessarily indicative of an impending break-up. Here again, males' emphasis on growth suggests a less idealized vision of relationships than females'.

Dating females were also more satisfied and liked their partners more when they believed their future marriage would resemble their ideal marriage. Only one finding for males was discovered: they were more in love with their partners when they, too, saw their future marriage as being similar to their ideal marriage. Interestingly, there were no similar findings for married individuals. The findings of the current study, as well as past studies (Blagojevic, 1989; Knobloch & Knudson, 1998), show, therefore, that the ideal relationship script appears to be especially important only to dating individuals (and especially females). Married individuals do not seem to emphasize the ideal to the same

extent.

Perhaps dating individuals tend to idealize their future marriage simply because they do not have enough concrete information regarding how a marriage typically progresses. Previous research by Holmberg and Cameron (1997) does support the idea that information about marriage is more sparse. In their study, participants completed open-ended questionnaires, describing the events they believed typically occur in a dating relationship and in a marriage. They found that dating scripts contained significantly more information than the marriage scripts. Additionally, participants agreed more on the events that comprise a dating relationship than they did for the events that comprise a marriage. In the current study, too, average order agreement scores were substantially higher for a dating relationship than for a marriage relationship (see Table 5). People seem to have clearer ideas about dating relationships than about marriage relationships. Perhaps dating individuals simply do not know what to expect in marriage, and therefore model their future marriage script after the ideal.

Another possibility is that dating individuals are merely being optimistic about their future. They may be very aware of the potential realities of marriage, but are simply hoping for the ideal, just as many dating individuals are quite aware of divorce statistics, but do not believe divorce will ever happen to them. However, even in wanting the best possible relationship, it is important to be realistic and, as was reported by Holmberg and Cameron (1997), individuals who were not married had considerably less realistic views of what to expect in marriage. They found that, even when describing typical married life, married individuals were more likely to mention "adjust to each other's lifestyles and habits" and "overcome challenges and conflicts" than were dating individuals. Even the

best marriages are not perfect, and conflict is inevitable; however, it seems that dating individuals, particularly females, are less cognisant of this reality.

Conclusions

Due to the fact that the well-being measures were assessed via questionnaires, one must bear in mind the impact of social desirability on the results. Although participants were assured that their data would remain confidential and that their partners would not see their questionnaires or card sorts, they may have felt compelled to respond in a way they believed to be socially acceptable. Those whose true responses may have been low, indicating, for instance, dissatisfaction in the relationship, may have responded falsely. As with the use of any questionnaire, there is always the issue of self-report bias, which must be taken into consideration.

The current study revealed both expected and surprising findings. Partial support was found for three of the five hypotheses. Overall, the findings suggest that relationship script similarity may be somewhat more important to women than men, and more important to dating couples than married couples. Findings indicate that, depending on the script being examined and whether the individual is dating or married, well-being does increase as couples' personal scripts become more alike.

Individuals' ideal scripts were also compared to their own personal scripts. Dating females, it appears, want a relationship that matches their ideal vision of a relationship, be it a dating relationship or marriage. Interestingly, these findings do not generalize to males or to married individuals.

What implications could having idealistic notions of romantic relationships have for couple well-being? According to Blagojevic (1989), "An overly idealistic picture of

marriage is certainly one of the deepest causes of broken marriages, especially among young people, which, were the expectations more realistic, would have a chance of making it" (p. 222). Although the causes of unhappy relationships are continually being researched, it is clearly a multifaceted issue. Having idealized perceptions of relationships may contribute to the dissolution of a relationship. Additionally, having very divergent ideas of how one's relationship should progress could also lead to future difficulties.

For that reason, understanding how scripts play a role in relational well-being could provide couples' counsellors/therapists with valuable information, which may aid couples who are seeking relationship counselling. Therefore, it would be valuable to continue to investigate well-being and script similarity.

Future Research

Following newly dating couples over a long-term period may prove to be beneficial in continuing with the investigation between script similarity and well-being. The couples in this study were relatively well-established, and also had quite similar scripts overall. However, it is impossible to know if they began their relationship with such similar scripts, or if they adjusted their scripts to converge along the way. One way to address this question would be to follow couples over an extended period of time, beginning with all newly-dating couples. Their scripts could be examined and measures of well-being could be assessed. If couples are followed over a span of years (e.g., five years), beginning when they first start to date, researchers may learn worthwhile information. Findings may show whether or not couples start out with similar relationship scripts, as well as whether or not couples who stay together over a long period of time

began with similar scripts or altered their scripts to match their partners' scripts. As noted previously, including measures of the degree to which couples have explicitly discussed their relationship would also be valuable in clarifying some unexpected findings.

Furthermore, there was some variability in the sample in this study, with couples ranging from newly dating (one month) to couples married for up to fifty years, which may have complicated interpretation of the results. Although the analyses were done separately for couples in dating versus married relationships, it may be even more useful to compare couples who have just begun dating (e.g., under 6 months) to those who have established relationships (e.g., been together for several years).

Secondly, the majority of the events in this study, as generated by previous participants, were positive (i.e., 'travel', 'do activities as couple', etc.). Such uniformly positive events may be setting individuals up to provide idealized scripts. While couples were given the option of adding in their own events, most couples used only the events given to them. Future research would benefit from examining the effects of including negative events (i.e., 'not having enough time for partner/conflicting schedules', 'conflict surrounding family and friends', etc.) in with the positive events. Such research is currently underway. It would be interesting to see how people perceive their own relationship when given the option to include the negative events.

A final point worth mentioning is that, overall, couples were fairly high in well-being. This is not surprising, as all of the couples in the study were volunteers. It seems reasonable to conclude that unhappy couples would most likely not volunteer for a study about romantic relationships, since for them this would be an area of discontent. To get a sample that approximates the normal distribution may prove to be difficult, however. One

option could be to work in conjunction with a mental health clinic that offers counselling services to couples. Provided that couples are willing to participate, data could then be collected from couples experiencing relational difficulties.

Evidently, there is much to be learned regarding scripts and relational well-being. Continuing in this area of research could prove to be quite valuable.

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Appendix A

Participant Consent Form

You are invited to participate in an investigation of romantic relationship "scripts" that describe the course of events that occur in dating and marital relationships. We are interested to know whether aspects of these scripts are related to relationship well-being and couple similarity.

Today you will be asked to order romantic relationship events, which will be provided for you on cards, in the way in which your relationship has progressed up until now, as well as how you feel it will continue to progress in the future. You will also be asked to order the same events as you think they progress in most romantic relationships. This task will be completed for events that occur in dating relationships, and in marital relationships. Finally, you will be asked to provide background information about yourself, your relationship history, and your beliefs about romantic relationships.

All information collected is confidential and will be identified only by code numbers. All data will be coded and grouped for analysis and reporting. No individual data will be reported.

Since your participation in this study is completely voluntary, you may withdraw at any time. To thank you for your time, you will receive a thank-you gift, and an entry into a random prize draw. First prize is $500, and there are three second-place prizes valued at $100 each. There is a list of several third-and fourth-place prizes such as gift baskets and gift certificates for theatres. The experimenter can show you the list of prizes and their values. Thank you for your time. If you have any questions or would like more

Appendix A cont

information in the future, please contact Dr. Diane Holmberg at 585-1226 or Jennifer Pringle or Anita Scott at 585-1745.

Signature of Participant:_____ Date:_____

Signature of Experimenter:_____

Appendix B

Individual Characteristics and Well-Being Questionnaire

The following information is strictly confidential, so please feel free to answer honestly and completely. Fill in the blanks or check the responses that are appropriate to you. PLEASE REMEMBER TO ANSWER BOTH SIDES OF THE SHEETS.

1. Your age _____.

2. Your gender _____.

3. Level of education last completed _____.

4. Your occupation _____.

5. Average hour worked weekly _____.

6. Personal annual income _____ rather not say _____

7. Did you live with both of your parents up until the age of 16 years?

   _____ yes _____ no

   If no, why not? _____.

8. How close do you live to your family of origin (i.e. brothers, sisters, and parents)?

Not at all close						very close
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

9. How often do you see your family of origin? (please check one only):

   Daily _____

   Weekly _____

   Monthly _____

   Once a year _____

   Several times a year _____

   Other (please specify) _____

Appendix B cont (Demographics Questionnaire)

10. How emotionally close do you feel to your family of origin?

Not at all close						very close
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

11. How close do you feel to your partner's family (i.e. brother, sisters, and parents)?

Not at all close						very close
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

12. At which one of the following stages would you place your current relationship (please check one only):

Casually dating _____

Seriously dating _____

I've thought about marriage but we haven't discussed it _____

We've discussed marriage but we have no formal plans _____

We are engaged _____

We are married _____

13. How long have you and your partner been together?
_____ years _____ months

14. Are you and your partner living together?
_____ yes _____ no

15. Do you and your partner have children?
_____ yes _____ no

If yes, how many? _____.

What are their ages? _____.

Appendix B cont (Demographics Questionnaire)

16. Do you plan on having children in the future?
_____ yes _____ no not sure _____

17. Starting with your first dating relationship, and including your current relationship, approximately how many people have you dated?
_____.

18. How many of these relationships would you classify as serious?
_____.

19. How long was the longest of these relationships?
_____.

20. Is your longest relationship also your current relationship?
_____ yes no _____

21. In general, who in your relationship makes more of the decision?
_____ my partner _____me _____both equal

22. In general, how well do you remember events that have occurred over the course of your current relationship?

Not at all well						extremely well
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

23. In general, how well does your partner remember events that have occurred over the course of your current relationship?

Not at all well						extremely well
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

24. In general, how often do you think or talk about past relationship events with your partner?

Hardly ever						very frequently
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Appendix B cont (Demographics Questionnaire)

25. In general, how often do you think or talk about past relationship events with people other than your partner?

Hardly ever						very frequently
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

26. If you are married, did you and your partner live together before your marriage?
_____ yes _____ no

If yes, for how long? _____.

27. Do you consider yourself to be a religious person?
_____ yes _____ no

28. How important a role does religion play in your life?

Not at all important								extremely important
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

29. Do you identify yourself with a specific ethnic background (e.g.: Chinese, Scottish, Irish, Jamaïcain, etc.)
_____ yes _____ no

If yes, then what ethnicity do you identify yourself as:
_____.

29. How important a role does your ethnicity play in your daily life?

Not at all important								extremely important
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Appendix B cont (Trust Questionnaire)

Please answer each of the following questions by circling the number that you feel is most representative of your own answer, consider your current relationship when answering each question.

1. When we encounter difficult and unfamiliar new circumstances, I would not feel worried or threatened by letting my partner do what s/he wanted.

strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree
-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3

2. I can count on my partner to be concerned about my welfare.

strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree
-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3

3. In general, my partner does things in a variety of different ways. S/he almost never sticks to one way of doing things.

strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree
-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3

4. My partner has proven to be trustworthy and I am willing to let him/her engage in activities which other partners find too threatening.

strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree
-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3

5. I am familiar with the patterns of behaviour my partner has established and I can rely on him/her to behave in certain ways.

strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree
-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3

6. Even when I don't know how my partner will react, I feel comfortable telling him/her anything about myself, even those things of which I am ashamed.

strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree
-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3

7. Though times may change and the future is uncertain, I know my partner will always be ready and willing to offer me strength and support.

strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree
-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3

8. I am never certain that my partner won't do something that I dislike or will embarrass me.

strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree
-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3

Appendix B cont. (Trust Questionnaire)

9. My partner is very unpredictable. I never know how s/he is going to act from one day to the next.

strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree
-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3

10. I feel very uncomfortable when my partner has to make decisions that will affect me personally.

strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree
-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3

11. I have found that my partner is unusually dependable, especially when it comes to things which are important to me.

strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree
-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3

12. My partner behaves in a very consistent manner.

strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree
-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3

13. In my relationship with my partner, the future is unknown, which I worry about.

strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree
-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3

14. Whenever we have to make an important decision in a situation we have never encountered before, I know my partner will be concerned about my welfare.

strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree
-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3

15. Even if I have no reason to expect my partner to share things with me, I still feel certain that s/he will.

strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree
-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3

16. I can rely on my partner to react in a positive way when I expose my weaknesses to him/her.

strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree
-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3

17. I usually know how my partner is going to act. S/he can be counted on.

strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree
-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3

Appendix B cont.(Trust Questionnaire)

18. When I share my problems with my partner, I know s/he will respond in a loving way even before I say anything.

strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree
-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3

19. In our relationship I have to keep alert or my partner might take advantage of me.

strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree
-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3

20. I am certain that my partner would not cheat on me, even if the opportunity arose and there was no chance that s/he would get caught.

strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree
-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3

21. I sometimes avoid my partner because s/he is unpredictable and I fear saying or doing something which might create conflict.

strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree
-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3

22. I can rely on my partner to keep the promises s/he makes to me.

strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree
-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3

23. I would never guarantee that my partner and I will still be together and not have decided to end our relationship 10 years from now.

strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree
-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3

24. When I am with my partner I feel secure in facing unknown new situations.

strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree
-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3

25. Even when my partner makes excuses which sound rather unlikely, I am confident that s/he is telling the truth.

strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree
-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3

26. I am willing to let my partner make decisions for me.

strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree
-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3

Appendix B cont (Satisfaction Questionnaire)

Please answer the following questions by closely considering your current relationship. Circle the letter or number that most closely represents your answer.

1. How well does your partner meet you needs?

A	B	C	D	E
Poorly		Average		Extremely well

2. In general. how satisfied are you with your relationship?

A	B	C	D	E
Unsatisfied		Average		Extremely satisfied

3. How good is your relationship compared to most?

A	B	C	D	E
Poor		Average		Excellent

4. How often do you wish you hadn't gotten into this relationship?

A	B	C	D	E
Never		Average		Very often

5. To what extent has your relationship met you original expectations?

A	B	C	D	E
Hardly at all		Average		Completely

6. How much do you love your partner?

A	B	C	D	E
Not much		Average		Very much

7. How many problems are there in your relationship?

A	B	C	D	E
Very few		Average		Very many

Appendix B cont (Commitment Questionnaire)

1. How likely is it that you will end your relationship in the near future?

not at all likely								extremely likely
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

2. For what length of time would you like your relationship to last?

week or so								lifetime
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

3. To what extent are you "attached" to your partner?

not at all								extremely
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Appendix B cont (Liking and Loving Questionnaire)

Please answer each of the following questions by circling the number that best represents how you feel. Keep in mind that all your answers must come from your current dating relationship and not relationships in general.

1. If my partner were feeling badly, my first duty would be to cheer him/her.
   not at all true — definitely true
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

2. I feel that I can confide in my partner about virtually everything.
   not at all true — definitely true
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

3. I find it easy to ignore my partner's faults.
   not at all true — definitely true
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

4. I would do almost anything for my partner.
   not at all true — definitely true
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

5. I feel very possessive toward my partner.
   not at all true — definitely true
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

6. If I could never be with my partner, I would feel miserable.
   not at all true — definitely true
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

7. If I were lonely, my first thought would be to seek my partner out.
   not at all true — definitely true
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

8. One of my primary concerns is my partner's welfare.
   not at all true — definitely true
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

9. I would forgive my partner for practically anything.
   not at all true — definitely true
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Appendix B cont (Liking and Loving Questionnaire)

10. I feel responsible for my partner's well-being.

not at all true — definitely true

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

11. When I am with my partner, I spend a good deal of time just looking at him/her.

not at all true — definitely true

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

12. I would greatly enjoy being confided in by my partner.

not at all true — definitely true

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

13. It would be hard for me to get along without my partner.

not at all true — definitely true

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

14. When I am with my partner, we are almost always in the same mood.

not at all true — definitely true

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

15. I think that my partner is unusually well-adjusted.

not at all true — definitely true

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

16. I would recommend my partner for a responsible job.

not at all true — definitely true

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

17. In my opinion, my partner is an exceptionally mature person.

not at all true — definitely true

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

18. I have great confidence in my partner's good judgment.

not at all true — definitely true

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

19. Most people would react very favourably to my partner after a brief acquaintance.

not at all true — definitely true

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

20. I think that my partner and I are quite similar to each other.

not at all true — definitely true

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Appendix B cont (Liking and Loving Questionnaire)

21. I would vote for my partner in a class or group election.

not at all true definitely true

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

22. I think that my partner is one of those people who quickly wins respect.

not at all true definitely true

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

23. I feel that my partner is an extremely intelligent person.

not at all true definitely true

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

24. My partner is one of the most likeable people I know.

not at all true definitely true

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

25. My partner is the sort of person whom I myself would like to be.

not at all true definitely true

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

26. It would seem that it is very easy for my partner to gain admiration

not at all true definitely true

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Appendix C

Dating Events

01 First sexual intercourse
03 Begin to talk on the telephone to get to know one another
04 Begin to date exclusively, i.e., "go steady"
05 Become involved in each other's routine life
06 Become engaged
07 Begin to discuss personal interests
08 First expression of a definite commitment to the person
09 Sexual intimacy begins to increase
13 Discuss expectations of the relationship
14 Begin to spend more time together
15 Begin to go out on informal dates more often
20 Romantic aspects of relationship develop, i.e., flowers, romantic dinners, etc.
21 Public announcement of lifelong commitment
22 Begin to trust partner fully
24 Have honesty in the relationship
25 Invitation for a first date
26 Two people begin to casually talk to one another about, for example, common interests.
27 Move in together
28 First kiss
29 Mutual attraction
30 Meet partner's family
33 One is attracted to the other
34 Enjoy each other's company
35 Relationship begins to grow
40 Short duration dates in public places, i.e., movies, mini putt, etc.
41 Become friends
43 Two people meet
44 Self-disclosure, i.e., dreams, secret thoughts, etc.
45 Dates become more comfortable
46 Decide you want to spend the rest of your life with this person
48 First date
49 Begin to discover new things about each other, i.e., likes/dislikes.
50 Begin to discuss a future together

Appendix C cont

Marriage Events

01	Travel
03	Divide housekeeping responsibilities
04	Discuss careers. i.e.. who will work. etc.
07	Open communication
08	Learn to compromise
09	Trust each other
11	Support each other
12	Maintain active sex life
13	Share parenting responsibilities
15	Discuss having children
16	Have children
17	Honeymoon phase
18	Honeymoon phase wears off
21	Share finances
23	Couple settle into home
24	Respect each other
26	Children leave home
27	Plan future together as a couple
28	Overcome challenges and conflicts together
29	Be each other's friend
30	Adjust to each other's lifestyles and habits
33	Growing and changing together
34	Take time to be alone together
35	Grow old together
36	Stay together until death do you part
37	Retire
40	Financial plans are made for the future
41	Do activities as a couple
47	Be comfortable in each other`s company

Appendix D

Participant Contact Information

The study you have just completed will be followed by a second part that will be conducted at approximately the same time next year. Your participation in the second part of the research would be greatly appreciated. If you wish to participate in the second part of the study next year, please record your permanent address and phone number on this form, as well as the permanent address and phone number of a relative or friend who would be able to assist us in locating you next year, if necessary. We thank you in advance for your time.

(PLEASE PRINT)

Your Name:

Your Permanent Address:

Your Phone Number:

Name of Contact Friend(s) or Relatives(s):

Permanent Address of Friend(s) or Relative(s):

Phone Number of Friend(s) or Relative(s):

Appendix E

Participant Debriefing Form

Research has shown that individuals hold many cognitive blueprints, or "scripts", for the typical progression of everyday events. One example we are all familiar with would be the events involved in eating out at a restaurant. We know that the usual progression is to enter the restaurant, be seated, read the menu, order our meals, eat our meals, pay the server, and leave. We know these events will likely occur when dining out, and should occur in that order. In a given culture, these cognitive scripts make it easier for us to deal with everyday events, because we can predict what will happen in a given situation.

Research also suggests that individuals in a given culture have scripts for events in various types of interpersonal relationships, such as dating and marriage. If we do possess such cognitive scripts, they may help us to understand what is happening in a relationship as it progresses. If the script is shared between partners, both partners will know what events to expect over time.

This study investigates the content of scripts for dating and marital relationships. The goal is to discover which events individuals think typically make up these relationships, and in what order they are thought to occur. If most people sort the events into the same order it can be shown that social scripts for each of these relationships do exist. Additionally, the study will compare the scripts made by both dating and married couples to determine if more experienced couples have different or more complex scripts. Please note that these ideas are not yet confirmed and are merely predictions at this point.

Appendix E cont

We are planning to examine script development in couples over time, and will be conducting a second session of this study with a second prize draw in approximately one year. We would greatly appreciate if you and your partner would consider participating in the follow-up session next year. Please let the experimenter know if you would consider participating in the second session, so that we can keep your name and phone number on file to contact you then. We are also conducting other unrelated studies with couples, so please let the experimenter know if you are interested to participate in one of those as well.

Please remember that all data collected will remain confidential and will be analyzed as a group; no individual will be identified in any way. It is your right to remove the information you provided from the study if you so wish. If you know other couples who may be participating in this study, please do not discuss all the details of the task with them before they participate.

We thank you very much for your time and your participation in this research. If you have questions or concerns about this study, please contact Dr. Diane Holmberg at 585-1226, or Jennifer Pringle or Anita Scott at 585-1745.

Appendix F

Ideal Dating and Marriage Card Sort Instructions

Ideal Dating Card Sort

In this task, you will be asked to take the stack of cards I give you and arrange them in order based on how you think the ideal dating relationship would progress. This ideal dating relationship may or may not represent the progression of a dating relationship you are or have been involved in. Rather, what I mean by *ideal* is how dating relationships ought to progress if circumstances are good and things go right. You may want to keep in mind what you have learned about dating through books, television, friends, family, and your own experiences throughout this task.

(Hand out dating event cards, blank cards, elastics, & paperclips.)

Now that you have the first stack of cards, read the event on each card and, if necessary, make two piles of cards. The first pile should include all the events you think occur in the ideal dating relationship. If an event doesn't fit with your idea of the ideal, put it in the second pile. Put the second pile aside. Please use as much space as you need, but concentrate on your own task, and not on that of your partner. There are no right or wrong answers.

(Wait until both partners make two piles of cards.)

Now take the cards in the first pile and arrange them in the order you think the events would occur in the ideal dating relationship, starting with the first event and progressing forward. Notice that some events will seem as if they develop gradually and not just at one time, so place them where you think they first begin to develop in the order of events. If you think an event has been omitted, clearly print it on one of the blank cards I've given you and add it where you think it belongs in the order of events.

(Wait until both partners order cards in pile 1)

When you are finished, secure the cards in the proper order with one of the elastic bands provided, and hand them in to me. Hand in the extra cards from the second pile separately.

(As participants finish, collect the cards and insure the elastics are secure.)

Ideal marriage card sort:

In this task, you will be asked to take the stack of cards I give you and arrange them in order based on how you think the ideal marriage would progress, if circumstances were good and things were going right. You may want to keep in mind

Appendix F cont

what you have learned about marriage through books, television, friends, family, and your own experiences throughout this task. Are there any questions?

(Answer questions. Hand out marriage event cards, blank cards, elastics, & paperclips.)

Read the event on each card and, if necessary, make two piles of cards. The first pile will include all the events you think occur in the ideal marriage. If an event doesn't fit with your idea of the ideal marriage, put it in the second pile. Put the second pile aside. Please use as much space as you need, but concentrate on your own task, and not that of your partner.

(Wait until both partners make two piles of cards.)

Take the cards in the first pile and arrange them in the order you think the events would occur in the ideal marriage, starting with the first event and progressing forward. If you think an event has been omitted, print it on one of the blank cards and add it where you think it belongs in the order of events. When you are finished, secure the cards from pile 1 in the proper order with one of the elastic bands provided and hand them in to me.

(As participants finish, collect the cards and insure the elastics are secure.)

Appendix G

Personal Dating Card Sort Instructions for Dating Couples

This time, I want you to take a stack of event cards and order them according to how you think your actual dating relationship with your current partner has progressed, and how you think it will continue to progress in the future. Are there any questions?

(Answer questions.)

(Hand out dating event cards, blank cards, elastics, & paperclips.)

Please read over these dating events cards and place each in one of three piles. In the first pile, you will place the events that have already occurred in your current dating relationship. In the second pile, place those events that have not yet occurred in your dating relationship but that you think will occur in the future. And in the third pile, place those events that have neither occurred in your relationship nor do you think will occur in the future.

(Wait for both partners to make three card piles)

Now I'll ask you to take the cards from the first pile, the events that have already occurred in your current relationship, and arrange them in the order they actually occurred in your relationship. If you need to add an event that is not written on a card, take one of the blank cards and print the event on it so you can put it in the appropriate place in the order of events.

(Wait for both partners to arrange cards in pile 1)

Now please take the paperclip I gave you and clip it on the card that you think best represents where you are now in your relationship -- this should be the last card in the stack made from the first pile of cards.

(Wait for both partners to paperclip the card)

Next please take the second pile of cards you made, which are the events you think will occur in your dating relationship in the future, and order them as you think the events will progress. If you need to add an event that is not written on a card, you can take one of the blank cards and print the event on it so you can put it in the appropriate place in the order of events.

(Wait for both partners to arrange cards in pile 2)

Now please place your stack of expected future event cards behind the stack of actual events and secure them all with an elastic band. If there are extra cards from pile three, please hand them in to me separately.

Appendix G cont

(As participants finish, collect cards and insure the elastics are secure)

Appendix H

Personal Dating Card Sort Instructions for Married Couples

This time, I want you to take a stack of event cards and order them according to how your actual dating relationship with your spouse progressed up until the time you got married. Are there any questions?

(Answer questions.)

(Hand out dating event cards, blank cards, elastics, & paperclips.)

Please read over these dating event cards and place each in one of two piles. In the first pile, please place the events that actually occurred in your dating relationship together. In the second pile, place those events that never occurred in your dating relationship. Put the second pile aside.

(Wait for both partners to make two card piles)

Now I'll ask you to take the cards from the first pile, the events that did occur in your dating relationship, and arrange them in the order they occurred in your relationship. If you need to add an event that is not written on a card, take one of the blank cards and print the event on it so you can put it in the appropriate place in the order of events. Hold the cards together with an elastic band and hand them back to me when you're done. Hand in the second pile to me separately.

(Wait for both partners to arrange cards in pile 1)

(As participants finish, collect cards and insure the elastics are secure)

Appendix I

Personal Marriage Card Sort Instructions for Married Couples

For this card sort, I'll ask you to take this stack of marriage event cards and order them according to how you think your actual marriage together has progressed, and will continue to progress in the future. Are there any questions?

(Answer questions. Hand out marriage event cards, blank cards, elastics, & paperclips.)

Read over the marriage event cards and place each in one of three piles. In the first pile, please place the events that have already occurred in your marriage. In the second pile, place those events that have not yet occurred in your marriage but that you think will occur in the future. And in the third pile, place those events that have neither occurred in your marriage nor do you think will ever occur. Again, take all the space you need, but focus on your own task and not your partner's.

(Wait for both partners to each make three card piles)

Now please take the cards from the first pile, the events that have already occurred in your marriage, and arrange them in the order they occurred in your marriage. If you need to add an event that is not written on a card, take one of the blank cards and print the event on it so you can put it in the appropriate place in the order of events.

(Wait for both partners to arrange cards in pile 1)

Now please take the paperclip and clip it on the card that you think best represents the stage where you are now in your marriage -- this should be the last card in the stack made from the first pile of cards.

(Wait for both partners to attach paperclip)

Next please take the second pile of cards, which are the events you think will occur in your marriage in the future, and order them as you think the events will progress. If you need to add an event that is not written on a card, you can take one of the blank cards and print the event on it so you can put it in the appropriate place in the order of events.

(Wait for both partners to arrange cards in pile 2)

Now you should place your stack of expected future event cards behind the stack of actual events and secure them all with an elastic band. Please pass them in to me. If there are extra cards from pile three, please hand them in to me separately.

(As participants finish, collect the cards and ensure the elastics are secure.)

Appendix J

Personal Marriage Card Sort Instructions for Dating Couples

For this last card sort, I have to ask you to imagine that you are going to be married to each other someday! I know this might be hard for you to imagine right now, but please try your best. We just want a general idea. No one is going to hold you to this, and your partner will not see your order of cards at any time.

I need you to take this stack of marriage event cards, pick out which events you think would happen if you were married to each other, and order the events according to how you think your actual marriage together would progress in the future. Again, take all the space you need, but focus on your own task and not your partner's. There are no right or wrong answers. Are there any questions?

(Answer questions; remind them we just want a general order of possible events.)
(Hand out marriage event cards, blank cards, elastics, & paperclips.)

Read over these marriage event cards and place each in one of two piles. In the first pile, place the events that you think might occur in your imaginary marriage to each other. In the second pile, place those events that you don't think would ever occur if you were married to each other, and put that pile aside.

(Wait for both partners to make two card piles)

Once you've made the piles, please take the cards from the first pile, the events that you think would occur, and arrange them in the order they might realistically happen in your imaginary marriage to each other. If you need to add an event that is not written on a card, take one of the blank cards and print the event on it so you can put it in the appropriate place in the order of events.

(Wait for both partners to arrange cards in pile 1)

Then secure them with the elastic band I gave you and hand them back to me. Hand in the second pile of extra events separately.

(As participants finish, collect the cards and insure the elastics are secure.)

Appendix K

Participant Debriefing Form

Research has shown that individuals hold many cognitive "blueprints", or scripts, for the typical progression of everyday events. One example we are all familiar with would be the events involved in eating out at a restaurant. We know that the usual progression is to enter the restaurant, be seated, read the menu, order our meals, eat our meals, pay the server, and leave. We know these events will likely occur when dining out, and should occur in this order. In a given culture, these cognitive scripts make it easier for us to deal with everyday events, because we can predict what will happen in a given situation.

Research also suggests that individuals in a given culture have scripts for various types of interpersonal relationships, such as dating and marriage. If we do possess such cognitive scripts, they may help us to understand what is happening in the relationship as it progresses. If the script is shared between partners, both partners will know what events to expect over time.

This study investigates the content of scripts for dating and marital relationships. The goal is to discover which events individuals think typically make up these relationships, and in what order they are thought to occur. If most people list the events in the same order it can be shown that social scripts for each of these relationships do exist. Additionally, the study will compare the scripts made by both dating and married couples to determine if more experienced couples have different or more complex scripts. Preliminary results indicate that dating individuals tend to have more idealized conceptions of marriage, whereas married couples tend to view marriage in a

Appendix K cont

more realistic manner. We are also examining script development in couples over time and will compare how partners' views may have changed over the past year. We are interested to see whether dissimilar scripts between partners become more similar over time. Please note that these ideas are not yet confirmed and are merely predictions at this point.

Please remember that all data collected will remain confidential and will be analyzed as a group; no individual will be identified in any way. It is your right to remove the information you provided for the study if you wish to do so. If you know other couples who may be participating in the study, please do not discuss all the details of the task with them before they participate.

We thank you very much for you time and your participation in this research. If you have questions or concerns about this study, please contact Dr. Diane Holmberg at 585-1226, or Jennifer Pringle or Anita Scott at 585-1745.

Appendix L

Individual Characteristics and Well-Being Questionnaire

The following information is strictly confidential. so please feel free to answer honestly and completely. Fill in the blanks or check the responses that are appropriate to you.

PLEASE REMEMBER TO ANSWER BOTH SIDES OF THE SHEETS.

1. Your age _____

2. Your gender _____.

3. Level of education last completed _____.

4. Your occupation _____.

   If self-employed, what type of business?_____

   If retired, what was former occupation?_____

5. Current average hours worked weekly _____.

6. Personal annual income _____ or Rather not say _____

7. Do you have children?
   _____ yes _____ no

   If yes, how many? _____. What are their ages? _____.

8. Do you plan on having children in the future?
   _____ yes _____ no not sure _____

9. Starting with your first dating relationship, approximately how many people have you dated?
   _____.

10. How many of these relationships would you classify as serious?
    _____.

11. How long was the longest of these relationships?
    _____.

Appendix L cont

12. When did the relationship end between you and your former partner (the partner who participated in this study with you last time)?
_____.

13. How long had you and that partner been together when the relationship ended?
_____ years & _____ months

14. What reason **best** explains why the relationship ended? Please check one. (If more than one reason applies to the break-up, please rank them in order of importance.)

Disagreed about getting married	_____
Disagreed about having children	_____
Incompatible	_____
Feelings for partner changed	_____
Met someone else	_____
Infidelity	_____
One partner moved away/Long distance	_____
Family disapproval	_____
Financial difficulties	_____
Religious differences	_____
Traumatic incident	_____
Death of partner	_____
Rather not say	_____

Other _____ (please specify)

15. Are you involved in a new relationship? _____ yes _____ no
For how long? _____

16. Do you identify yourself with a specific ethnic/cultural background (e.g.: Chinese, Scottish, Irish, Jamaican, etc.)
_____ yes _____ no

17. Which culture/ethnicity would you **best** identify with?

North American	_____	Australian/Pacific Islander	_____
European	_____	South American	_____
Asian	_____		
Middle Eastern	_____	Other	_____

Appendix L cont

African _____ (please specify)

Appendix M

Participant Consent Form

You are invited to participate in the final session of a study investigating romantic relationship "scripts". Scripts describe the course of events that occur in dating and marital relationships. We are interested to know what events comprise the scripts for dating and marriage relationships, and whether aspects of these scripts are related to relationship well-being.

Today you will be asked to order romantic relationship events, which will be provided for you on cards, in the way in which your relationship had progressed up until the point at which your relationship ended. You will be asked to order those same events as you they progress in most romantic relationships, and in marital relationships. Finally you will be asked to provide general background information about yourself, the break-up of your relationship, and your beliefs about romantic relationships.

All the information collected is confidential and will be identified only by code numbers. All data collected will be coded and grouped for analysis and reporting. No individual data will be reported.

Since your participation in this study is completely voluntary, you may withdraw at any time. To thank you for your time, you will receive a thank-you gift and an entry into a random prize draw. First prize is $500, and there are three second-place prizes valued at $100 Each. There is a list of several third and fourth-place prizes, such as gift baskets and gift certificates for theatres. The experimenter can show you the list of prizes and their values.

Thank you for you time. If you have any questions or would like more information in the future, please contact Dr. Diane Holmberg at 585-1226, or Jennifer Pringle or Anita Scott at 585-1745.

I consent to participate in the above-mentioned study.

Signature of Participant: _____. Date: _____

Signature of Experimenter: _____

Appendix N

Researcher's Script to Greet Single Participants

FORMERLY DATING

Personal dating card sort:

I'd like for you to take a stack of event cards and order them according to how your actual dating relationship progressed with the partner who did this study with you last year, up until the time you broke up. Take out any cards that did not happen before the relationship ended. I know this may be difficult to share, but your answers are valuable to us and will be confidential amongst the group.

(Answer questions.)

(Hand out dating event cards, blank cards, & elastic.)

Take the cards representing the events that did occur in that relationship, and arrange them in the order they actually happened. If you need to add an event that is not written on a card, take one of the blank cards and print the event on it so you can put it in the appropriate place in the order of events.

(Wait for participant to arrange cards in pile 1)

(As participant finishes, collect cards and insure the elastic is secure)

Appendix O

Researcher's Script to Greet Single Participants

FORMERLY MARRIED

Personal dating card sort:

I want you to take a stack of event cards and order them according to how your actual dating relationship with your former spouse progressed up until the time you got married. I know this may be difficult to share, but your answers are valuable to us and will be confidential amongst the group. Are there any questions?

(Answer questions.)

(Hand out dating event cards, blank cards, & elastic.)

Please read over these dating event cards and place each in one of two piles. In the first pile, please place the events that actually occurred in your dating relationship together. In the second pile, place those events that never occurred in your dating relationship. Put the second pile aside.

(Wait for participant to make two card piles)

Now I'll ask you to take the cards from the first pile, the events that did occur in your dating relationship, and arrange them in the order they occurred in your relationship. If you need to add an event that is not written on a card, take one of the blank cards and print the event on it so you can put it in the appropriate place in the order of events. Hold the cards together with an elastic band and hand them back to me when you're done. Hand in the second pile to me separately.

(Wait for participant to arrange cards in pile 1)

(As participant finishes, collect cards and insure the elastic is secure)

Personal marriage card sort:

For this last card sort, I'll ask you to take this stack of marriage event cards and order them according to how you think your marriage progressed up until your separation. Again, I'm sure this is difficult but I hope you can share your experiences for the study. Are there any questions?

(Answer questions. Hand out marriage event cards, blank cards, & elastic.)

Appendix O cont

Read over the marriage event cards and place each in 1 of 2 piles. In the first pile, please place the events that have occurred in your marriage. In the second pile, place those events that did not occur in your marriage. Again, take all the space you need.

(Wait for both participant to each make 2 card piles)

Now please take the cards from the first pile, the events that occurred in your marriage, and arrange them in the order they happened in your marriage. If you need to add an event that is not written on a card, take one of the blank cards and print the event on it so you can put it in the appropriate place in the order of events.

(Wait for participant to arrange cards in pile 1)

(As participant finishes, collect the cards and ensure the elastic is secure.)