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Dating relationship quality in the U.S. and Taiwan: Does similarity or parental approval matter?

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Dating relationship quality in the U.S. and Taiwan:

Does similarity or parental approval matter?

by

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated how personality or value similarity between the members of a couple (an influential factor in Western people's close relationships) and parental approval (a unique characteristic in close relationships of Chinese people) affect dating relationship satisfaction and commitment (relationship quality) of Americans and of Taiwanese. Data were collected from 269 Americans and 237 Taiwanese undergraduate students, and culturally sensitive scales were used to estimate people's personality and values. Our results indicate that, perceived personality similarity plays a more influential role in relationship quality for Americans than for Taiwanese. Perceived value similarity, however, plays an important role for both American and Taiwanese relationship quality. Furthermore, secondary control moderated the association between perceived personality or value similarity and relationship satisfaction for Americans. For those Americans who highly value the importance of adjusting themselves to fit the needs or expectations of their partners, they may receive positive reinforcement from their partner and become close to their partner, regardless of the level of personality or value similarity within the couple. Finally, for both Americans and Taiwanese, when they perceived high levels of parental approval for their dating decisions, they reported higher relationship quality.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Studies have shown that individualism and collectivism, which are related to different cultural backgrounds, have different influence on Western and Eastern people's psychological characteristics and behavior (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Few studies, however, have investigated close relationships in people from East Asian countries (e.g., Adams, Anderson, & Adonu, 2004; Goodwin & Tang, 1996; Zhang & Kline, 2009). As a result, it is important to determine (a) whether the theories built on Western culture (e.g., the importance of similarity) can be generalized to Eastern people and (b) whether some unique characteristics of East Asians' close relationships (e.g., the importance of parental approval) are ignored by Western theories. By increasing knowledge about these two aspects, researchers and clinical workers can more effectively improve the quality of close relationships among Western and East Asian people.

In this study, I investigated how similarity between the members of a couple (an influential factor in Western people's close relationships) and parental approval (a unique characteristic in close relationships of Chinese people) affect dating relationship satisfaction and commitment of Americans and of Taiwanese. Relationship satisfaction and commitment are referred to as relationship quality in this study. Surprisingly, currently no studies have investigated the association between similarity of a couple and relationship quality for Chinese, although the positive association is well established and investigated for Western people. No studies have investigated cross-cultural differences in the influence of similarity and parental approval on relationship quality between Chinese and Americans. This study increases our understanding of Chinese people's close relationships and the differences in close relationships between Chinese and Americans.

Close Relationships in an Individualistic versus a Collectivistic Society

Western countries (e.g., the U.S.) are characterized as individualistic societies, whereas Asian countries (e.g., Taiwan) are viewed as collectivistic societies. Markus and Kitayama (1991) argued that these two kinds of cultures have different goals and societal expectations, which have different implications for people's psychological characteristics and behaviors. For example, the cultural goal of a member of an individualistic society is "to become independent from others and to discover and express one's unique attributes" (Markus & Kitayama, 1991, p.226). Under this cultural influence, each person is viewed as unique, autonomous, and separate from his or her context (e.g., social background). Others serve as a basis of comparison for individuals to reflect upon and to understand who they are as a person (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Consequently, in an individualistic culture, autonomy, personal choices, personal decisions, and personal goals are valued over group decisions (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Studies have indicated that individualism is associated with self-reliance and personal freedom (e.g., Gibbons, Richter, Wiley, & Stiles, 1996).

In terms of close relationships in an individualistic society, researchers have argued that the Western couple is a relatively independent and autonomous social unit, and mate selection is relatively free (Altman, Brown, Staples, & Werner, 1992). Most Western studies of close relationships also focus on how characteristics of the couple (e.g., similarity between the couple) influence the couple's relationship quality and tend to ignore how external factors (e.g., the extended family) influence the couple's relationship quality (e.g., Bradbury, Fincham, & Beach, 2000; Brehm, Miller, Perlman, & Campbell, 1992).

In contrast, the cultural goal of a member of a collectivistic society is to maintain harmonious and interdependent relationships with others (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Under this cultural influence, personal uniqueness is not highly valued. People tend to have very close relationships with others and to define themselves by these relationships. They are

motivated to fit in with others and to fulfill various obligations in order to have good

interpersonal relationships (Chen, 2009; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). In this kind of society,

group decisions and group harmony are emphasized over individual benefits. Studies also

have indicated that "collectivism is related to family integrity and family unity" (Gibbons et al.,

1996, p. 532). Likewise, in close relationships (e.g., dating relationships), people have

strong needs to maintain harmonious relationships both with their dating partners and with

the members of their family of origin (Dion & Dion, 1993). Married couples are expected to

establish close relationships with their extended families. Consequently, mate selection

often is "a synthesis of the personal interests of the couple members and the collective

interests of kin and family" (Altman et al., 1992, p. 199). Empirically, unmarried Taiwanese

males asked to describe their ideal marriage partners frequently mentioned feelings of love,

good communication, good relationships with the man's family members, and being

respectful toward the man's parents (Hung, 2005).

In summary, we know that Western people (e.g., Americans) and Eastern people

(e.g., Taiwanese) develop their close relationships in different cultural contexts. That is, the

dating couple is viewed as an independent social unit in the United States, whereas in

Taiwan, the dating relationship is associated with the couple's kinship systems (e.g., their

extended families). Therefore, different factors (e.g., similarity between the members of the

couple and parental approval regarding mate selection) may have different levels of

importance and influence on the quality of dating relationships of Western and Eastern

people.

Similarity and Culture

In countries that value individualism (e.g., the United States), similarity between the

couple is an important research topic. Researchers have argued that the reason that

similarity causes attraction between the couple is because individuals can self-enhance their

own beliefs and values by associating with similar dating partners (e.g., Brehm et al., 1992; Rusbult, Kumashiro, Kubacka, & Finkel, 2009). Self-enhancement is an influential motivation for Americans, compared with the emphasis on self-improvement in East Asians (Heine, Lehman, Markus, & Kitayama, 1999; Heine et al., 2001; Heine & Renshaw, 2002). Americans tend to define themselves by "a distinct set of attributes and qualities" and believe that those attributes are stable and unchangeable (Heine et al., 2001, p. 600). As a result, Americans are motivated to view those attributes in a positive and self-enhancing light and to maintain "the sense of self as an efficacious agent" (Heine et al., 2001, p. 600). A similar partner provides an individual with opportunities to obtain reinforcement of his or her own beliefs and attributes. In addition, on the basis of the concept of balance theory, Americans prefer and seek consistency and coherence among their beliefs, feelings, and interpersonal relationships (Brehm et al., 1992; Heider, 1958). A similar partner helps an individual maintain a consistent sense of self (Heine & Renshaw, 2001).

Finally, a high degree of similarity between the couple will require the least effort for the couple to change and adjust to fit with their partners' expectations during their interactions (e.g., Brehm et al., 1992; Davis, 1981). Interacting with a partner who has similar values, beliefs, and preferences would reduce the likelihood of conflicts and may increase the potential for the couple to feel satisfied about the relationship.

Empirically, a high degree of personality similarity has been found to be associated with a high level of mutual attraction, relationship satisfaction, and relationship stability for American couples (e.g., Botwin, Buss, & Schackelford, 1997; Byrne & Nelson, 1965; Gattis, Berns, Simpson, & Christensen, 2004; Gonzaga, Campos, & Bradbury, 2007; Lutz-Zois, Bradley, Mihalik, & Moorman-Eavers, 2006). Dissimilarity has been shown to be an important reason for dating relationship breakups among American undergraduate students. For example, lack of similarity (including interest or personality) has been rated among the

top five reasons for dating relationship breakups (e.g., Hill, Rubin, & Peplau, 1976; Sprecher, 1994). Sprecher asked Americans participants to rate the importance of 20 reasons for a breakup. The mean score of "different interests between the partners" was the highest among the scores for the 20 reasons.

Similarity, however, may play a less important role in relationship quality of East Asian couples than of American couples. First, East Asians have less need for self-enhancement (enhancement of their own thoughts and beliefs), value self-improvement, and use self-criticism as a means of becoming a better person (Heine, Lehman, Markus, & Kitayama, 1999). They tend to view the self as malleable and believe that people should be flexible and change themselves in order to fulfill societal expectations or role obligations (Heine et al., 2001). Because East Asians have less concern than Americans have about maintaining a positive and distinct view of the self (Heine & Renshaw, 2002; Kim & Markus, 1999), they may have less need to find dating partners who are similar to themselves. Second, because East Asians tend to view the self as changeable, depending on the situation, and because they are inclined to take into account situational factors in making decisions (Heine et al., 2001), they may be more likely to accept discrepancies among their thoughts, feelings, and social relationships. As a result, East Asians may not have a strong need to seek partners with beliefs and values similar to their own. Third, East Asians are motivated and highly willing to adjust themselves to their social relationships (Morling, Kitayama, & Miyamoto, 2002). East Asians have been shown to value "secondary control" (adjustment to their environment) and voluntarily adjust their own behavior in interpersonal relationships (e.g., Morling et al., 2002). Likewise, East Asians may voluntarily adjust themselves in order to get along with their dating partners who are dissimilar to them. Therefore, theoretically, similarity may play a less important role in dating relationship quality for East Asians than for Americans.

Empirically, no studies have investigated cross-cultural differences of the relation between similarity and dating relationships in Americans and Chinese. In one study (Gao & Gudykunst, 1995), Chinese dating partners reported less perceived similarity than did their American counterparts, although the study simply asked people to respond to three questions (i.e., "Please rate how similar you are with your partner in terms of values [personality, or beliefs]). Further, the findings of cross-cultural differences in perceived personality similarity and friendship satisfaction provided indirect support for our hypothesis. Heine and Renshaw (2002) found a positive association between perceived personality similarity and friendship satisfaction for American, but not for Japanese, undergraduate students. Therefore, I hypothesized that the association between similarity and relationship quality is weaker for Taiwanese people than for their American counterparts. In particular, I focused on the effect of perceived rather than actual similarity, because studies have found that perceived similarity has a stronger association with relationship quality than actual similarity has (e.g., Heine & Renshaw, 2002; Kammann, Smith, Martin, & McQueen, 1984; Murray, Holmes, Bellavia, & Griffin, 2002).

In terms of the specific dimensions of perceived similarity, personality and value dimensions were chosen. For the personality dimension, studies have shown that personality similarity is significantly associated with American dating relationship quality (e.g., Lewak, Wakefield, & Briggs, 1985; Schmitt, 2002; Gonzaga et al., 2007). In this study, I anticipated that culture would moderate the association between perceived personality similarity and relationship quality (relationship satisfaction and commitment). For the value dimension, I explored whether culture would moderate the association between perceived value similarity and relationship quality (relationship satisfaction and commitment). It is possible that values similarity would also play an important role on Taiwanese's people dating relationship quality, because Taiwanese value societal norms/shared cultural values

and may view certain values (e.g., respecting parents, older people, or collectivism) as important guideline in their lives. For example, in a collectivistic society, social norms such as respecting parents or older people are highly valued. A Taiwanese person may be motivated to follow these cultural norms and prefer to find a partner who is similar to him or her on these values. No specific hypothesis was included for the relation of the two-way interaction of culture and perceived value similarity on dating relationship quality, because no study has investigated the moderating effect of culture on this association.

To estimate American and Taiwanese people's personality and values, I used both Western scales and Chinese indigenous scales. Although studies have shown that the Big Five personality dimensions are universal (e.g., Costa & McCrae, 1992; McCrae, Costa, & Yik, 1996), some researchers have found that some Chinese personality characteristics, the interpersonal relatedness factor (harmony, Ren-Qing, face, and flexibility subscales), are not included in the Big-Five. Examples for these four subscales are: (a) Harmony: "I always maintain a peaceful frame of mind.", (b) Ren Qing: "When dealing with institutions, things can work out more smoothly through the connections of friends working inside.", (c) Face: "Usually when I talk with people, I take great care not to offend them.", and (d) Flexibility: "I hate things that are uncertain or unpredictable.". Therefore, including both personality scales (the Big-Five Personality Scale and the Interpersonal Relatedness Factor scales of the Chinese Personality Assessment Inventory) would provide better understanding of personality in these two groups. To estimate Americans and Taiwanese people's values, I also included both Western scales (the Schwartz's Value Scale) and Chinese indigenous scales (Asian Values Scale).

In summary, the first hypothesis regarding perceived similarity states that culture would moderate the relation between perceived personality similarity and relationship quality. That is, the magnitude of the association between perceived personality similarity and

relationship quality was expected to be weaker for Taiwanese than for Americans (Figure 1). No specific hypothesis was included regarding whether culture moderates the association between perceived value similarity and relationship quality.

Relations among Similarity, Culture, and Secondary Control

The associations among perceived similarity, culture, and relationship quality may also depend on levels of secondary control. Secondary control is defined as the behavior of adjusting oneself to fit with one's circumstances, including social relationships, and to accept these circumstances as what fate, luck or God brings to them (Morling & Evered, 2006; Morling, Kitayama & Miyamoto, 2002; Weisz, Rothbaum & Blackburn, 1984). In particular, Morling and Evered identified two dimensions (fit versus control) of secondary control and argued that fit-focused secondary control should include two actions, "adjusting the self and accepting the environment" (Morling & Evered, 2006, p. 269). Further, Morling and Evered have argued that fit-focused secondary control may have a similar function to that of accommodation and is adaptive in interpersonal relationships. When individuals try to adjust themselves to fit the expectations of others, they may receive positive responses from others and may feel increased closeness to others (Morling, Kitayama, Miyamoto, 2002). Morling and her colleagues provided Americans and Japanese participants with scenarios of adjustment situations (the situations in which participants have adjusted themselves to fit with their surrounding peoples or environment) and influence situations (the situations in which participants have influenced or changed their surrounding people or events to fulfill their own needs). Participants were asked to imagine those situations and to rate their level of relatedness with other people. Morling and her colleagues found that in an adjustment situation, both Americans and Japanese reported higher levels of closeness as well as more interpersonal relatedness compared to influence situations. They concluded that adjustment situations promote feelings of relatedness.

Currently, no studies have investigated the relations among these three variables (perceived similarities, culture, and secondary control) on relationship quality. I explored the three-way interaction among these three variables in predicting relationship quality (my second hypothesis). Because of the positive effect of secondary control on interpersonal relationships, it is possible that secondary control may buffer or mitigate the association between perceived similarity and relationship quality for Americans.

Parental Approval and Culture

The influence of parental approval on mate selection may play a more important role in Chinese close relationships than American close relationships, because filial piety and respect for elders are highly valued in Chinese society. Filial piety, the most influential Confucian value, requires children to obey and accept their parents' decisions in return for the support and love that parents provide (Wang, Slaney, & Rice, 2007; Yeh & Bedford, 2003). Children's attempts to resist parents' expectations or decisions are regarded as disrespectful to parents and may be criticized or punished (Sheu & Fukuyama, 2007). Consequently, parents' opinions often play an important role in Chinese mate selection (Altman et al., 1992; Pimentel, 2000; Li, 2005). The Chinese traditionally view marriage as a means of continuation of the family line and as a combination of two families, the family of origin of the groom and the family of origin of the bride (Altman et al., 1992; Pimentel, 2000; Li, 2005). Chinese people tend to have intense interactions with their extended families after marriage (Altman et al., 1992). They expect that their partners will get along with their extended family and that their parents will approve of their mate. Empirically, one study used a representative sample of married Chinese couples (1,985 pairs) and found support for a strong influence of the extended family on marital relationships (Pimentel, 2000). Disapproval by the husband's parents was positively associated with the couple's level of disagreement (e.g., how often the couple fights). In terms of dating relationship breakups, a

Taiwanese report indicated that Taiwanese rated parental disapproval of mate selection as one of the top five reasons for relationship breakups (Chung, 1990).

Parental approval, however, may play only a minor role in Americans' dating relationship quality. Due to their individualistic culture, Americans generally view dating relationships as personal choices and parental approval may be relatively less important. Empirically, American undergraduate students rated others' disapproval for the dating relationship as 13th among the top 20 reasons for a breakup (Sprecher, 1994). The mean score of perceived importance of disapproval by others to a breakup was 2.7 on a 1 (not at all important) to 7 (extremely important) Likert type scale. Therefore, it is reasonable to hypothesize that culture would moderate the relation between perceived parental approval and relationship quality (the third hypothesis). In particular, the association between perceived parental approval and relationship quality would be stronger for Taiwanese than for Americans (Figure 2).

It is, however, possible that the association between perceived parental approval and relationship quality may be stronger for Americans than for Taiwanese. Although dating during college is viewed as normal by American parents, dating during college is not encouraged by Taiwanese parents. Taiwanese college students are expected to focus on their academic studies, and Taiwanese parents tend to view dating as a distraction from studying. A Taiwanese student who is dating may not want his or her parents to know of his or her dating; consequently, this may reduce the influence of parental approval on Taiwanese college students' dating relationship quality.

Relations among Motivation to Comply, Culture, and Perceived Parental Approval

I also investigated the moderating role of motivation to comply with parents' opinions regarding mate selection on the relation between perceived parental approval and relationship quality among Americans and Taiwanese. From the perspective of the Theory

of Reasoned Action (TRA; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Albarracin, Johnson, Fishbein, & Muellerleile, 2001), the influence of a social referent (normative beliefs) on one's behavioral intention depends on the individual's motivation to comply with the opinions of the social referent. That is, the effect of parental approval on one's relationship satisfaction and on one's commitment may be moderated by one's motivation to comply with one's parents' opinions regarding mate selection. One study found that motivation to comply with the opinions of members of important social networks regarding mate selection moderated the association between perceived approval from one's social network and relationship commitment for American college students (Etcheverry & Agnew, 2004). Etcheverry and Agnew did not, however, separate parental approval from the approval of other social network members (e.g., friends).

In summary, I explored the three-way interaction of motivation to comply with parents' opinions about mate selection, culture, and perceived parental approval in predicting dating relationship quality (my fourth hypothesis). In particular, we hypothesized that the association between perceived parental approval and dating relationship quality was stronger for those who were highly motivated to comply with their parents regarding dating decisions than those who were less motivated to comply.

Variable-Centered versus Couple-Centered Approach

In terms of calculating of similarity scores between the members of a couple, Luo and Klohnen (2005) suggested using the couple-centered approach (CCA) instead of variable-centered approach (VCA; a traditional way for calculating similarity score). For VCA, researchers focus on a specific characteristic (e.g., extraversion) and compute a correlation between husband and wife across all couples within a sample; consequently, the results of VCA focus on the characteristic of the entire sample instead of each couple. Luo and Klohnen pointed out several limitations of using VCA in calculating the similarity scores. For

example, the VCA "can only be applied to study couple similarity on a single characteristic, such as extraversion, extrinsic values, and so forth. It cannot provide any information on how similar partners are in terms of more global, overarching individual difference domains, such as partners' overall personality, value system, attitudes, and so on." (p. 304). In addition, the VCA focuses on the variable (e.g., extraversion) and uses the total or mean score of the variable as the unit for the analysis instead of focusing on the characteristic of each couple. Finally, using the VCA would be difficult to examine the association between similarity score and outcome variables (e.g., relationship satisfaction), because the VCA does not provide an index of similarity for each couple (Luo & Klohnen, 2005).

In contrast, the couple-centered approach (CCA) focuses on the members of each paired couple and computes a profile similarity index for each couple through calculating the correlation of a husband and wife's scores across an overarching domain (e.g., values or attitudes) or across a set of responses (e.g., all items of the Schwartz's value scales). The CCA can capture the pattern of each couple's response on a broad range of values (e.g., the level of similarity across various values, including family, politics, and religion values) or personality instead of only focusing on the similarity score of a specific domain (e.g., the similarity of family values). For example, by using the CCA, a similarity index would allow us to know the similarity level of the members of a couple on their value system (a broad range of values), including family values, political values, and religious values. Luo and Klohnen (2005) provided evidence that using CCA can provide "a more complete understanding of similarity between the member of a couple and its consequences for relationship quality than the VCA" (p. 324). In this study, we used the CCA in calculating the similarity score for participants' personalities and values.

Overview of Hypotheses

In light of the influences of the two different cultural contexts, I hypothesized that first, Americans may view similarity as a more important factor in dating relationship quality than Taiwanese do. That is, I expect to find a two-way interaction of perceived similarity and culture in predicting relationship quality. In addition, there may be a three-way interaction of perceived similarity, culture, and secondary control in predicting relationship quality. For those with a high level of secondary control, perceived personality similarity may not be as strongly related to relationship quality as for those with a low level of secondary control. Second, parental approval is expected to be more strongly related to relationship quality for Taiwanese than for Americans. That is, I expect a two-way interaction of parental approval and culture in predicting relationship quality. I also hypothesized a three-way interaction of perceived parental approval, culture, and motivation to comply with parents regarding mate selection in predicting relationship quality. For those who are highly motivated to comply with their parents' opinions regarding mate selection, perceived parental approval may be more strongly and positively associated with relationship quality than for those who are low in motivation to comply with their parents' opinions about mate selection.

CHAPTER 2. METHOD

Participants

A total of 505 undergraduate students participated in this study. Two hundred sixty-eight Americans (29.9% men) and 237 Taiwanese (25.3% men) undergraduate students were recruited from Iowa State University and six universities in Taiwan. The result of a chi-square test indicated the percentage of men and women was not different in these two samples, χ^2 (1, N=505) = 1.29, $p = .15$. All participants indicated that they were in a dating relationship (not married) over 3 months, heterosexually oriented, and identified themselves as Caucasian Americans or Taiwanese.

Procedure

All items of measures used in this study were translated into traditional Chinese and back translated into English to ensure that the language was equivalent across the English and Chinese versions. The orders of our measures were counterbalanced to reduce order effects. Data were collected through two versions of on-line surveys because dating is not encouraged in college in Taiwan and usually only a very small portion of Taiwanese undergraduates within one class is in a dating relationship. American participants were enrolled in introductory psychology classes and received one research credit as compensation. We recruited Taiwanese participants through two methods. First, we contacted three Taiwanese professors and asked them to distribute our research information (including our on-line survey) to their students. Second, we contacted with over 30 department secretaries (within four universities) in Taiwan and asked them to distribute our research information to their students. Taiwanese participants who completed our study had the opportunity to enter a drawing for a $25, $50, or $100 cash prize.

Measures

Participants completed questionnaires related to their perceptions of their own and their partners' personality as well as values. They also completed a measure of secondary control, a measure of perceived parental approval regarding mate selection, a measure of motivation to comply with parents' opinions regarding mate selection, and a measure of their current dating relationship satisfaction and commitment.

Demographic variables. The demographic questionnaire consisted of questions (see Appendix) about gender, educational level, ethnicity, sexual identity (e.g., homosexual or heterosexual), relationship status (e.g., single, in a dating relationship, or married), the length of the current dating relationship, the frequency of seeing dating partner, the frequency of calling dating partner, whether their parents are alive, financial support from parents, which parent's (the father's or the mother's) opinion has the most influence on the participant's dating decision, whether the parent who has the most influence on the participant's dating decision knows that the participant is dating his or her current partner, and whether the participant has brought the current dating partner home to meet the parent.

Personality similarity. Personality similarity was assessed through two scales, the Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI; Gosling, Rentfrow, & Swann Jr., 2003) and the Interpersonal Relatedness Factor Scale of the Chinese Personality Assessment Inventory (CPAI-IRF; Cheung et al., 2001).

The Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI) estimates people's personality dimensions and two items represented each dimension of the Big-Five personality inventory: Neuroticism (e.g., "Anxious, easily upset."), Agreeableness (e.g., "Sympathetic, warm."), Conscientiousness (e.g., "Dependable, self-disciplined"), Openness (e.g., "Open to new experiences, complex"), and Extraversion (e.g., "Extraverted, enthusiastic"). Participants were asked to rate the extent to which each item can describe them on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*disagree strongly)* to 7 (*strongly agree).* A high score on each subscale

indicates that a person highly possesses that personality trait. The Cronbach's coefficient alphas of the TIPI ranged from .40 to .73 and the test-retest reliability correlation was .72 in an American college sample (Gosling et al., 2003). Gosling found evidence which indicated the TIPI has appropriate convergent validity and external validity. They found the five subscales of TIPI highly correlated with the five subscales of the long-form of the Big Five Inventory (BFI with 42 items; Benet-Martinez & John, 1998) respectively; the correlations coefficients ranged from $r = .65$ to $r = .87$. Gosling et al also found that the patterns of correlations between each subscale of TIPI and several scales (e.g., anxiety or depression) were identical to those of the long-form of the Big Five Inventory (BFI). For calculating the index of perceived similarity between the members of the couples, each participant rated his or her own and partner's personality on the TIPI.

The Interpersonal Relatedness Factor Scale (CPAI-IRF). The unique Chinese personality was measured by the Interpersonal Relatedness Factor scale of the Chinese Personality Assessment Inventory (CPAI; 352 items). The Interpersonal Relatedness Factor scale includes four subscales (15 items for each subscale) of the CPAI: Harmony (e.g., "I always maintain a peaceful frame of mind."), Ren Qing (e.g., "When dealing with institutions, things can work out more smoothly through the connections of friends working inside."), Face (e.g., "Usually when I talk with people, I take great care not to offend them."), and Flexibility (e.g., "I hate things that are uncertain or unpredictable."). Cheung et al. (2001) found that the interpersonal relatedness factor scale was not overlapped with or measured by the Big Five; they argued that this factor represented a unique Chinese personality dimension. We selected three items from each of the four subscales and asked participants to rate his or her own and partner's personality on the 12-item CPAI-IRF. The Cronbach's coefficient alphas of the four subscales were all above .58 in a Chinese college sample (Cheung et al., 1996). The construct validity of these four subscales were supported by: (a)

the positive relations between Harmony and agreeableness and conscientiousness, (b) the

positive relations between Face and neuroticism and conscientiousness, (c) the positive

relations between Ren Qing and agreeableness, neuroticism, and conscientiousness, (d)

the negative relations between flexibility and neuroticism and conscientiousness (Cheung et

al., 2001).

Value similarity. Value similarity was estimated through two scales, the Short

Schwartz's Value Survey (SSVS; Lindeman & Verkasalo, 2005) and the Asian Value Scale

(AVS; Kim, Atkinson, & Yang, 1999).

The Short Schwartz's Value Survey (SSVS) contains 10 items and estimates

people's opinions on 10 values: Stimulation, Self-Direction, Hedonism, Tradition, Conformity,

Security, Power, Achievement, Universalism, and Benevolence. The 10 scales can be

categorized into two dimensions: (a) Openness to Change versus Conservation (Stimulation,

Self-Direction, Hedonism, Tradition, Conformity, and Security) and (b) Self-Enhancement

versus Self-Transcendence (Hedonism, Power, Achievement, Universalism, and

Benevolence). The SSVS was rated on a 9-point scale ranging from 0 (*opposed to my*

principles), 1 (*not important*), 4 (*important*), to 8 (*of supreme importance*). The general

reliability coefficients for the Openness to Change dimension and the Self-Enhancement

dimension were .78 and .72 in an American undergraduate sample (Lindeman & Verkasalo,

2005). The convergent validity of the two dimensions of SSVS were supported by positive

correlations (r = .75 and r = .78) between the scores of the two dimensions of SSVS and the

scores of original Schwartz's Value Survey (45 items; Lindeman & Verkasalo, 2005).

The Asian Value Scale (AVS) estimates the degree to which an individual adheres to

traditional Asian cultural values; the AVS contains 36 items and is rated on a 7-point Likert-

type scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). The AVS has six subscales:

collectivism (e.g., "One should think about one's group before oneself."), conformity to

norms (e.g., "One should not deviate from familial and social norms."), emotional self-control (e.g., "The ability to control one's emotions is a sign of strength."), family recognition through achievement (e.g., "Occupational failure does not bring shame to the family."), filial piety (e.g., "Children are not expected to take care of their parents when the parents become unable to take of themselves."), and humility (e.g., "Modesty is an important quality for a person."). Kim et al. recommended using the total score of the AVS to represent people's adherence to traditional Asian cultural values instead of using only certain subscales. The Cronbach's coefficient alpha of the total scores of the AVS was .81 in a sample of Asian American college students (Kim et al., 1999). The construct validity of the AVS was supported by a positive correlation with collectivism and a negative correlation with acculturation to the American culture in a sample of Asian American college students (Kim et al., 1999). The two items with the highest factor loadings from each subscale of the AVS were chosen; in total, 12 items were used. In this study, participants rated themselves and their partners on the AVS.

Secondary control. The Harmony Control Scale (HC; Morling & Fiske, 1999) estimates people's tendency to adjust and to fit with the environment and interpersonal relationships. HC includes 21 items and five subscales: Higher Power (HP; e.g., "I know that a higher power will arrange for my ultimate well-being."), Friends Care (FD; e.g., "I feel secure knowing my friends will take care of me, should I need it."), Anticipate Others (AO; e.g., "Getting along with others is easier when I try to anticipate what they want or need."), Merge with Others (MO; e.g., "Sometimes when I am with others, I become fully absorbed in what they do."), and Wait on Luck (WL; e.g., "Periods of good and bad luck even out in the end."). The HC is rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*), and people who have a high total score on the HC are flexible, accept the environment, and tend to adjust to fit into their interpersonal relationships (Morling & Fiske,

1999). The Cronbach's coefficient alphas in the HC scores were around .74 in several American college samples (Morling & Fiske, 1999). The construct validity of the HC was supported by positive correlations with collectivism for Caucasian and Hispanic American college students (Morling & Fiske, 1999). In this study, two items with the highest factor loadings from each subscale of the HC were chosen; in total, 10 items were used. In this study, the Cronbach's coefficient alphas of the 10-items were .71 for American participants and .71 for Taiwanese participants.

Parental approval regarding mate selection. The Perceived Normative Beliefs scale (PNB; Etcheverry & Agnew, 2004) estimates people's perceptions regarding their social network members' (including parents) approval of their current dating partners. In the PNB, four items assess perceived father approval regarding dating partners, and four estimate perceived mother approval. One example of an item in the PNB is "My father thinks I should not continue in my current romantic relationship". The PNB is rated on a 8-point scale ranging from 0 (*do not agree at all*) to 7 (a*gree completely*). The Cronbach's coefficient alpha of the PNB scores was around .96 in a sample of American college students (Etcheverry & Agnew, 2004). In this study, we asked participants to choose one parent (either the mother or the father) who has the most influence on his or her dating decision and to rate the parent's approval on his or her current dating partner. In this study, the Cronbach's coefficient alphas of the 4-items were .92 for American participants and .92 for Taiwanese participants. The construct validity was supported by a negative correlation between parental approval regarding mate selection and the extent to which parents exert a negative influence on dating relationship (Etcheverry, Le, Wu, & Wei, 2008).

Motivation to comply with parental opinions regarding mate selection. The Motivation to Comply with Parental Opinions regarding Mate Selection scale (MC; Etcheverry & Agnew, 2004) estimates an individual's motivation to comply with the opinions

of social network members (e.g., father or mother) regarding mate selection. In Etcheverry

and Agnew's study, five items are used to estimate an individual's motivation to comply with

each social network member's opinions about mate selection. One example of the MC is

"When making decisions about my romantic partners, I am likely to let my father's opinion

affect my actions". Each item is rated on a 8-point scale ranging from 0 (*do not agree at all*)

to 7 (*agree completely*). The Cronbach's coefficient alphas were around .78 in a sample of

American college students (Etcheverry & Agnew, 2004). In this study, we asked the

participant to choose one parent (either the mother or the father) who has the most influence

on his or her dating decision as the target to answer the five questions. In this study, the

Cronbach's coefficient alphas of the 5-items were .95 for American participants and .89 for

Taiwanese participants. The construct validity of the MC was supported by a positive

correlation with perceived closeness with parents (Etcheverry, Le, Wu, & Wei, 2008).

Relationship satisfaction and commitment. The Investment Model Scale (Rusbult,

Martz, & Agnew, 1998) includes four subscales; only the relationship satisfaction subscale

(RS; 5 items) and relationship commitment subscale (RC; 7 items) were used in this study.

The RS subscale estimates the extent to which an individual is satisfied with his or her

current dating relationship (e.g., "I feel satisfied with our relationship."). The RC estimates

the degree to which an individual is committed to the dating relationship (e.g., "I am

committed to maintaining my relationship with my partner."). The two subscales are rated on

a 9-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (*do not agree at all*) to 8 (*agree completely*). The

Cronbach's coefficient alphas for the two subscales were .91 and .92 in a sample of

American college students (Rusbult et al., 1998). In this study, the Cronbach's coefficient

alphas of the relationship satisfaction and commitment scales were .90 and .86 for American

participants and were .91 and .90 for Taiwanese participants. Construct validity of the two

subscales was supported by positive correlations among relationship trust between the

dating partners and relationship closeness of the dating partners (Rusbult et al., 1998).

CHAPTER 3. RESULTS

Preliminary Analyses

Several chi-square analyses or independent t-tests were performed to investigate whether the demographic variables already mentioned were significantly different between American and Taiwanese participants. If any of the demographic variables was significantly different between American and Taiwanese participants, the variable was treated as a covariate and was controlled in the following analyses. As described already, the percentage of men and women was not different among these two samples. The results of independent t-tests also indicated that the length of dating relationships, the frequency of seeing dating partners, and the frequency of calling partners were not different between these two samples, all $ps > .05$. The results of independent t-tests indicated that, however, Taiwanese participants received more financial support from their parents than their American counterparts, $t(502) = -8.07$, $p < .001$. American participants reported a higher frequency than Taiwanese of seeing and calling their parents, $t(502) = 4.44$, $p < .001$ and $t(503) = 3.75$, $p < .001$. Finally, results of chi-square tests indicated that the percentages of (a) whether the parent (either the mother or the father who has the most influence on the participant's dating decision) knew that the participant is dating his or her current partner and of (b) whether the participant has brought the current dating partner home to meet the parent were higher for American participants than Taiwanese, $\chi^2(1, N=503) = 52.83$, $p < .001$ and $\chi^2(1, N=505) = 117.71$, $p < .001$. Because of the significant differences in the five demographic variables (financial support from parents, frequencies of seeing and calling parents, and whether parents have known and seen participants' dating partners) between our American and Taiwanese participants, these five variables were controlled in the following three-way interaction analyses in which parental approval hypotheses were involved.

Before we conducted a series of regression analyses, we assessed the normality of our dependent variables (relationship satisfaction and commitment). For Americans, the skewness and kurtosis were -1.25 and 1.94 for relationship satisfaction and were -1.23 and 1.41 for relationship commitment. For Taiwanese, the skewness and kurtosis were -.95 and .43 for relationship satisfaction and were -1.01 and 1.10 for relationship commitment. Those values indicated a moderate violation of the normality assumption. In the multiple regression analysis, however, the moderate violation of the normality assumption would often be ignored when the sample sizes are large because there is no adverse influence on the analysis (Mertler & Vannatta, 2005; Tate, 1992). In this study, because we have a large sample size for Americans ($N = 268$) and Taiwanese ($N = 237$), the moderate violation of the normality assumption is less of an issue in the following regression analyses.

Culture, Similarity, and Secondary Control

Computing the similarity index. To create the similarity index, for each participant, on each similarity dimension, I computed the intra-class correlation between the self-rating scores and the participant's perception of the dating partner over all items of each of the four measures: the Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI), the Interpersonal Relatedness Factor Scale (CAPI-IRF), Short Schwartz's Value Survey (SSVS), and the Asian Value Scale (AVS). For example, for the TIPI similarity score, I computed the intra-class correlation between a participant's self-rating scores and his/her perception of dating partner over the 10 items. The intra-class correlation coefficient ranged from -1.0 to 1.0. A high score on the similarity index indicates that the participant perceives a high level of similarity between his or her own characteristics (i.e., personality or values) and those of the dating partner. Because the couple-centered approach (CCA) focus on the pattern of similarity between each couple across a broad range of items, the reliability issue among the items is less important than

when using the traditional method of the variable-centered approach (VCA; Luo and Klohnen, 2005).

Are Americans and Taiwanese dating people different on their perceived similarity level? As shown in Table 1, results of the independent t-test indicated that Americans reported a higher perceived similarity than Taiwanese on the Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI), $t(503) = 7.74$, $p < .001$. In contrast, Americans reported a lower perceived similarity than Taiwanese on the Asian Value Scale (AVS), $t(503) = -4.99$, $p < .001$. Americans and Taiwanese were not different on the other two perceived similarity scores: (a) the Chinese Interpersonal Relatedness Factor Scale (CPAI-IRF), $t(503) = 1.07$, $p = .28$, and (b) the Short Schwartz's Value Survey (SSVS), $t(503) = 1.71$, $p = .09$. Finally, two independent t-tests were conducted to investigate the cultural differences in relationship satisfaction and commitment. Results indicated that Americans reported a higher level of dating relationship satisfaction than Taiwanese, $t(503) = 5.99$, $p < .001$; Americans and Taiwanese were not different on their dating relationship commitment, $t(503) = .84$, $p = .40$.

Do perceived personality similarity or value similarity correlate with relationship quality for Americans and Taiwanese? As shown in Table 2 (the zero-order correlations among the nine main variables), for Americans, all four of the perceived similarities (TIPI, CPAI-IRF, SSVS, and AVS) were significantly correlated with dating relationship satisfaction (ranging from $r = .25$ to $r = .34$) and commitment (ranging from $r = .26$ to $r = .34$). For Taiwanese, the SSVS (Short Schwartz's Value Survey) and AVS (Asian Value Scale) similarities were significantly correlated with relationship satisfaction ($r = .15$ and $r = .21$) and commitment ($r = .21$ and $r = .33$). The TIPI (Ten-Item Personality Inventory) and CPAI-IRF (Chinese Interpersonal Relatedness Factor Scale) similarities, however, were not significantly correlated with relationship satisfaction ($r = .08$ and $r = -.03$) and commitment ($r = -.06$ and $r = .10$).

Do perceived personality similarity or value similarity correlate with relationship quality differently for Americans and Taiwanese? For relationship satisfaction, Americans had higher correlation coefficients than Taiwanese for TIPI similarity (p = .002) and CPAI-IRF similarity (p = .001); they were not different on the correlation coefficients for SSVS and AVS similarities. Likewise, for relationship commitment, Americans had higher correlation coefficients than Taiwanese for TIPI similarity (p < .001) and CPAI-IRF similarity (p = .04); they were not different on the correlation coefficients for SSVS and AVS similarities.

Which type of personality or value domain is most important for Americans or Taiwanese? When all similarity measures are entered simultaneously as the predictors in a single regression analysis, which type of similarity is significantly associated with relationship satisfaction and commitment for Americans and Taiwanese, respectively? Two regression analyses were conducted for each ethnic group; in one regression analysis, relationship satisfaction was the dependent variable and in the other regression analysis, relationship commitment was the dependent variable (Table 3). For Americans, when all four similarity indices were entered simultaneously as the predictors in a single multiple regression, only the TIPI (Ten-Item Personality Inventory) and AVS (Asian Value Scale) similarities were significantly associated with dating relationship satisfaction and commitment (Table 3). For Taiwanese, only the AVS (Asian Value Scale) similarity was significantly and positively associated with relationship satisfaction and commitment. Interestingly, the association between the TIPI similarity and relationship commitment changed from a non-significant coefficient, r = -.06 (p > .05), into a negatively significant coefficient, r = -.13 (p =.04), after controlling for the influence of the other three similarity scores.

The interaction among culture, perceived similarity, and secondary control. To investigate (a) whether the association between perceived similarity and relationship quality

is weaker for Taiwanese than for Americans (two-way interaction of culture and perceived similarity on relationship quality) and (b) whether the association among culture, perceived similarity, and relationship quality depends on levels of secondary control (three-way interaction of culture, perceived similarity and secondary control on relationship quality), eight hierarchical regression analyses were conducted. That is, I conducted one hierarchical regression analysis for each perceived personality or value similarity score. Among the eight hierarchical regression analyses, four analyses are for the dependent variable of relationship satisfaction and for the dependent variable of relationship commitment, respectively. For each hierarchical regression analysis, first, the predictor (i.e., perceived personality or value similarity) and the moderator, secondary control, were standardized to reduce the multicollinearity with the interaction terms (Aiken & West, 1991; Frazer, Tix, & Barron, 2004). Second, the moderator, culture, was dummy coded as American = 0 and Taiwanese = 1. Third, two-way interaction terms were created for culture and secondary control, for similarity variables and secondary control, and for similarity variables and culture. Fourth, three-way interaction terms were created (e.g., culture × perceived Ten-Item Personality Inventory similarity × Secondary Control). Finally, for testing the two-way and three-way interaction of similarity hypotheses, in each hierarchical regression analysis, the standardized predictor (the similarity score) and the two moderators (culture and secondary control) were entered into the first block. Then, in the second block, the two-way interaction terms were entered. In the third block, the three-way interaction term was entered.

Perceived similarity on the Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI). For relationship satisfaction (Table 4), the results of the hierarchical regression analysis indicated (a) a significant two-way interaction of culture and TIPI similarity and (b) a significant three-way interaction of culture, TIPI similarity, and secondary control; our first and second hypotheses related to TIPI similarity were supported. For the hierarchical

regression analysis, in Step 1, the TIPI similarity, culture, and secondary control accounted for 13% of the variance ($p < .001$; Table 4). In Step 2, the three two-way interaction terms accounted for an additional 2% of the variance ($p < .05$), in which only the TIPI similarity x culture interaction was significant. Finally, in Step 3, the three-way interaction term accounted for an additional 1% of the variance ($p < .01$).

These results indicated a significant and positive main effect of TIPI (Ten-Item Personality Inventory) similarity. As predicted, however, this main effect was qualified by culture. To explore the significant two-way interaction of the TIPI similarity x culture on relationship satisfaction, I plotted the interaction figure (Figure 3) by using one standard deviation above and below the predictor (TIPI similarity). I also tested the significance level of the two simple slopes (one for Americans and the other for Taiwanese). The results of the simple-effect test indicated that TIPI similarity was positively associated with relationship satisfaction for Americans ($B = 1.59$, $\beta = .32$, $p < .001$) but not for Taiwanese ($B = .46$, $\beta = .09$, $p = .18$).

Because the three-way interaction term was significant, the two-way interaction of culture and TIPI (Ten-Item Personality Inventory) similarity described above cannot fully explain American and Taiwanese relationship satisfaction; the culture and TIPI similarity interaction depends on the level of secondary control. To understand the nature of the significant three-way interaction, I followed the suggestions of Cohen, Cohen, West, and Aiken (2003) and tested the significance levels of the two-way interactions between the predictor (perceived similarity) and the moderator (secondary control) for Americans and Taiwanese respectively (Figure 4A and Figure 4B). The two two-way interactions were plotted by using one standard deviation above and below the predictor (TIPI similarity) and moderator (secondary control) with relationship satisfaction as the dependent variable

(Figure 4A and Figure 4B). Finally, I tested whether the two slopes of each simple interaction, for Americans and Taiwanese, were significantly different from zero.

The simple interaction results indicated that, for Americans, the TIPI (Ten-Item Personality Inventory) similarity x secondary control interaction was significant and accounted for an additional 2% of the variance in relationship satisfaction, $F(1, 264) = 5.53$, $p = .019$. Then, I tested whether the simple slope for each group was different from zero. As shown in Figure 4A, the association between TIPI similarity and relationship satisfaction was not significantly different from zero for those Americans who reported a high level of secondary control (B = .76, β = .15, $p = .09$), but the TIPI similarity was positively associated with relationship satisfaction for those Americans who reported a low level of secondary control (B = 1.81, β = .39, $p < .001$). For Taiwanese, the TIPI similarity x secondary control interaction was not significant, $F(1, 233) = 2.43$, $p = .12$. As shown in Figure 4B, the association between TIPI similarity and relationship satisfaction was not significantly different from zero for those Taiwanese who reported a high or low level of secondary control: B = .82, β = .16, $p = .08$ (for a high level of secondary control) and B = -.15, β = -.03, $p = .73$ (for a low level of secondary control).

For relationship commitment (Table 4), the results of the hierarchical regression analysis indicated a significant two-way interaction of culture and TIPI (Ten-Item Personality Inventory); our first hypothesis related to TIPI similarity was supported. For the hierarchical regression analysis, in Step 1, the TIPI similarity, culture, and secondary control accounted for 4% of the variance ($p < .001$). In Step 2, the three two-way interaction terms accounted for an additional 4% of the variance in relationship commitment ($p < .001$). Among all two-way interaction terms, only the regression coefficient of the TIPI similarity x culture was significant. Finally, in Step 3, the three-way interaction term did not significantly account for

additional variance above beyond the variance from the main effects and two-way interactions in relationship commitment.

These results revealed a significant and positive main effect of TIPI (Ten-Item Personality Inventory) similarity. As predicted, however, this main effect was qualified by culture. For the significant two-way interaction of the TIPI similarity x culture (Figure 5), the results of the simple-effect test indicated that the TIPI similarity was positively associated with relationship commitment for Americans ($B = 2.32$, $\beta = .34$, $p < .001$) but not for Taiwanese ($B = -.46$, $\beta = -.07$, $p = .34$).

Perceived similarity on the Interpersonal Relatedness Factor (CPAI-IRF). For relationship satisfaction (Table 5), the results of the hierarchical regression analysis indicated a significant two-way interaction of culture and CPAI-IRF similarity; our first hypothesis related to CPAI-IRF was supported. For the hierarchical regression analysis, in Step 1, the CPAI-IRF similarity, culture, and secondary control accounted for 12% of the variance ($p < .001$). In Step 2, although the sum of the three two-way interaction terms did not significantly account for an additional variance above and beyond the main effects from Step 1, the CPAI-IRF similarity x culture interaction was significantly associated with relationship satisfaction ($p < .05$). Finally, in Step 3, the three-way interaction terms did not significantly account for additional variance above and beyond the effects from Step 1 and Step 2.

These results revealed a significant and positive main effect of CPAI-IRF (Chinese Interpersonal Relatedness Factor Scale) similarity. As predicted, however, this main effect was qualified by culture. For the significant two-way interaction of the CPAI-IRF similarity x culture, as shown in Figure 6, the simple effect test indicated that the CPAI-IRF similarity was positively associated with relationship satisfaction for Americans ($B = 1.14$, $\beta = .23$, $p < .001$) but not for Taiwanese ($B = .16$, $\beta = .03$, $p = .64$).

For relationship commitment (Table 5), the results of the hierarchical regression analysis indicated a significant two-way interaction of culture and CPAI-IRF (Chinese Interpersonal Relatedness Factor Scale) similarity; our first hypothesis related to CPAI-IRF similarity was supported. For the hierarchical regression analysis, in Step 1, the CPAI-IRF similarity, culture, and secondary control accounted for 6% of the variance ($p < .001$). Again, in Step 2, although the sum of the three two-way interaction terms did not significantly account for additional variance above and beyond the main effects of Step 1, the CPAI-IRF similarity x culture interaction was significantly associated with relationship commitment ($p < .05$). Finally, in Step 3, the three-way interaction terms did not significantly account for an additional variance above and beyond the effects from Step 1and Step 2.

These results revealed a significant and positive main effect of CPAI-IRF (Chinese Interpersonal Relatedness Factor Scale) similarity. As predicted, however, this main effect was qualified by culture. As shown in Figure 7, for the significant two-way interaction of the CPAI-IRF similarity x culture, the simple effect test indicated that the CPAI-IRF similarity was positively associated with relationship commitment for Americans ($B = 1.94$, $\beta = .28$, $p < .001$) but not for Taiwanese ($B = .72$, $\beta = .10$, $p = .13$).

Perceived similarity on the Short Schwartz's Value Survey (SSVS). For relationship satisfaction (Table 6), the results of the hierarchical regression analysis indicated (a) a significant main effect of SSVS and (b) a significant three-way interaction of culture, SSVS similarity, and secondary control. For the hierarchical regression analysis, in Step 1, the SSVS similarity, culture, and secondary control accounted for 13% of the variance ($p < .001$). In Step 2, the two-way interaction terms did not account for additional variance above and beyond the main effects of Step 1. Finally, in Step 3, the three-way interaction term significantly accounted for an additional 2% of the variance in relationship satisfaction ($p < .001$).

These results revealed a significant and positive main effect of SSVS similarity. Yet this main effect was qualified by the significant three-way interaction among culture, SSVS similarity, and secondary control. To explore the significant three-way interaction among the SSVS similarity, culture, and secondary control, I followed the same procedure described above for testing the significant three-way interaction. The simple interaction results indicated that, for Americans (Figure 8A), the SSVS (Short Schwartz's Value Survey) similarity x secondary control interaction was significant and accounted for an additional 3% of the variance in the relationship satisfaction, $F(1, 264) = 8.04$, $p = .01$. The significant interaction indicated that the slope of the SSVS similarity at a high level of secondary control was different from the slope of the SSVS similarity at a low level of secondary control. As shown in Figure 8A, the association between the SSVS similarity and relationship satisfaction was not significantly different from zero for those Americans who reported a high level of secondary control (B = .27, $\beta = .06$, $p = .49$), but the SSVS similarity was positively associated with relationship satisfaction for those Americans who reported a low level of secondary control (B = 1.79, $\beta = .39$, $p < .001$). For Taiwanese (Figure 8B), the SSVS similarity x secondary control interaction was not significant, $F(1, 233) = 3.50$, $p = .06$. This non-significant interaction indicated that there was no difference between the two SSVS similarity slopes at the high and low levels of secondary control.

For relationship commitment, the results of the hierarchical regression analysis indicated (a) a significant main effect of SSVS (Short Schwartz's Value Survey) similarity and (b) non-significant two-way or three-way interactions. For the hierarchical regression analysis, in Step 1, the SSVS similarity, culture, and secondary control accounted for 7% of the variance in relationship commitment ($p < .001$; Table 6). The main effect of the SSVS similarity was significantly and positively associated with relationship commitment. In Step 2

and Step 3, the two-way and three-way interaction terms did not account for additional variance above and beyond the main effects of Step 1.

Perceived similarity on the Asian Value Scale (AVS). For relationship satisfaction, the results of the hierarchical regression analysis indicated (a) a significant main effect of AVS (Asian Value Scale) similarity and (b) non-significant two-way or three-way interactions. For the hierarchical regression analysis, in Step 1, the AVS similarity, culture, and secondary control accounted for 16% of the variance ($p < .001$; Table 7). The main effect of AVS similarity was significantly and positively associated with relationship satisfaction. In Step 2 and Step 3, the two-way and three-way interaction terms did not account for additional variance above and beyond the main effects of Step 1.

For relationship commitment, the results of one hierarchical regression analysis indicated (a) a significant main effect of AVS (Asian Value Scale) similarity and (b) non-significant two-way or three-way interactions. For the hierarchical regression analysis, in Step 1, the AVS similarity, culture, and secondary control accounted for 12% of the variance ($p < .001$; Table 7). The main effect of the AVS similarity was significantly and positively associated with relationship commitment. In Step 2 and Step 3, the two-way and three-way interaction terms did not account for an additional variance above and beyond the main effects of Step 1.

In short, our first and second hypotheses related to personality similarity were supported. Our moderation results indicated that the association of personality similarity (including Big-Five personality similarity and Chinese personality similarity indices) and relationship quality was weaker for Taiwanese than for Americans. That is, personality similarity plays a more influential role in relationship quality for Americans than for Taiwanese. Further, the association among culture, Big-Five personality similarity, and relationship satisfaction depend on the level of one's secondary control. When Americans

work hard to adjust themselves to their partner, their personality similarity was no longer related to their dating satisfaction.

For value similarity, however, the results presented a different pattern. As predicted in the introduction section, our results indicated that value similarity (including SSVS and AVS value similarity indices) was important for both American and Taiwanese people's dating relationship quality. Our moderation results indicated a significant main effect of value similarity on relationship quality and no significant two-way interaction of culture and value similarity on relationship quality. Interestingly, secondary control also moderated the association between value similarity and relationship satisfaction for Americans. For those Americans who adjust themselves to the needs of their partners, value similarity was no longer associated with their dating satisfaction.

Perceived Parental Approval, Culture, and Motivation to Comply. To investigate (a) whether the association between parental approval and relationship quality is stronger for Taiwanese than for Americans (two-way interaction of culture and parental approval on relationship quality) and (b) whether the association among culture, parental approval, and relationship quality depends on levels of motivation to comply with parents regarding dating decisions (three-way interaction of culture, parental approval and secondary control on relationship quality), I conducted two hierarchical regression analyses (one regression analysis for relationship satisfaction, and the other for relationship commitment; Table 8). In the analysis, the five covariates described already were entered into the first block (including financial support from parents, frequencies of seeing and calling parents, and whether parents have known and seen participants' dating partners). In the second block, the standardized predictor (parental approval), culture, and the standardized moderator (motivation to comply with parental opinions for mate selection) were entered. In the third block, the three two-way interaction terms were entered: culture x parental approval, culture

x motivation to comply, parental approval x motivation to comply. Finally, the three-way interaction term (culture x parental approval x motivation to comply) was entered in the fourth block (Table 8).

For relationship satisfaction, in Step 1, the five covariates accounted for 4% of the variance ($p < .01$; Table 8). In Step 2, parental approval, culture, and motivation to comply accounted for an additional 22% of the variance ($p < .001$). In Step 3, the three two-way interaction terms accounted for an additional 2% of the variance ($p < .05$), but only the regression coefficient for the parental approval x culture interaction was significant. Finally, in Step 4, the three-way interaction term did not significantly account for additional variance above and beyond the variance from the main effects and two-way interactions.

These results revealed a significant main effect of parental approval. Yet this main effect was qualified by culture. To explore the significant parental approval x culture interaction, I plotted the two-way interaction figure (Figure 9) and tested whether each simple slope was significantly different from zero. The results of the simple effects test indicated that the parental approval score was positively associated with relationship satisfaction for Americans ($B = 2.83$, $\beta = .57$, $p < .001$) and for Taiwanese ($B = 1.81$, $\beta = .36$, $p < .001$). The significant parental approval x culture interaction indicated that the slope for Americans was steeper than the slope for Taiwanese, although both slopes were significantly different from zero.

For relationship commitment, in Step 1, the five covariates did not account for a significant proportion of variance in relationship commitment (Table 8). In Step 2, parental approval, culture, and motivation to comply significantly accounted for an additional 17% of the variance ($p < .001$). In Step 3, the three two-way interaction terms accounted for an additional 3% of the variance in relationship commitment ($p < .001$), but only the regression coefficient of parental approval x culture interaction was significant. Finally, in Step 4, the

three-way interaction term did not significantly account for additional variance above beyond the variance from the main effects and two-way interactions in relationship commitment.

Similarly, these results revealed a significant main effect of parental approval. Yet this main effect was qualified by culture. For the significant parental approval x culture interaction (Figure 10), the results of the simple effects test indicated that parental approval was positively associated with relationship satisfaction for Americans ($B = 4.63$, $\beta = .67$, $p < .001$) and for Taiwanese ($B = 2.20$, $\beta = .32$, $p < .001$). Again, the significant parental approval x culture interaction indicated that the slope for American was deeper than the slope for Taiwanese, although both slopes were significantly different from zero.

CHAPTER 4. DISCUSSION

Individualistic and collectivistic societies have different goals and social expectations which shape people's behavior in different ways. Likewise, culture also influences the development of one's close relationships and dictates the factors that may importantly affect relationship quality. For example, in an individualistic society, mate selection tends to be viewed as a personal choice; Western researchers focus on investigating how characteristics within the members of a couple influence their relationship quality. Conversely, in a collectivistic society, a person may prefer a partner who not only can fulfill his or her personal needs but also satisfy the expectations of the extended family. Few studies, however, have questioned whether factors related to close relationships may play different roles in the relationship quality for Western and East Asian people. This study contributes to our understanding of how individualistic (similarity between the couple) and collectivistic (parental approval) factors are associated with dating relationship quality (relationship satisfaction and commitment) for Americans and Taiwanese dating people.

Before further discussion of the findings, it is important to point out three strengths of this paper. First, although researchers have found similarity between the couple is an important factor in Americans' close relationships (e.g., Gonzaga et al., 2007), surprisingly no research has questioned or investigated whether similarity has the same function for East Asians' close relationships. This study sheds light on whether perceived similarity plays an influential role in Chinese dating relationships. Second, to accurately capture both American and Taiwanese personality and values, both Western and indigenous Chinese scales were used to estimate personality and value similarities. Previous studies tended to use only Western scales in investigating the personality and values similarities for Americans. Using only Western scales for cross-cultural studies would generate misleading results or conclusions because some important characteristics of East Asians cannot be

accurately estimated through Western scales (Goodwin & Tang, 1996; Zhang & Kline, 2009). Third, using the couple-centered approach ,instead of the traditional variable-centered approach, to calculate the similarity between the members of a couple provides more accurate understanding of the pattern of similarity among a set of characteristics between a couple.

Culture, Similarity, and Secondary Control

For the effects of similarity on relationship quality between Americans and Taiwanese, this study provides answers for four questions: (a) Do Americans perceive more similarity to partner than Taiwanese? (b) Whether perceived personality and value similarities between the couple predict relationship quality for Americans and Taiwanese respectively? (c) Whether perceived personality and value similarities play different roles in relationship quality for Americans and Taiwanese? and (d) Whether secondary control moderates the association between perceived similarity and relationship quality for Americans and Taiwanese? I discuss the results of personality similarity first, followed by value similarity.

Personality similarity and culture*.* The results of the personality similarity analyses provide consistent support for our first hypothesis that perceived personality similarity plays a more influential role in relationship quality for Americans than for Taiwanese. People in an individualistic society (e.g., the United States) may believe that the self is unable to change; they may be motivated to find a similar partner to enhance their own beliefs or values and to maintain coherence among their beliefs or values. In addition, a similar partner requires less effort to adjust and reduces the possibility of conflict. Conversely, in a collectivistic society (e.g., Taiwan), people may view personality as changeable and are motivated to adjust themselves to fit the need of others. Consequently, personality similarity is not an important consideration for Taiwanese dating decisions. As shown in Table 1, American participants

perceived more similarity to their partners than Taiwanese participants on the personality

domains measured by the Big-Five but not by the indigenous Chinese personality scale (the

interpersonal relatedness factor scale). Similarly, the results of the zero-order correlation

(Table 2), simultaneous regression (Table 3), and two-way interaction (Table 4 and Table 5)

indicated that personality (particularly for the Big-Five) played an important role in

Americans' dating relationship quality (relationship satisfaction and commitment) but not in

Taiwanese participants. For Americans, the Big-Five and Interpersonal Relatedness Factor

similarities were all positively correlated with relationship quality. When all similarity scores

were entered simultaneously as predictors in one regression analysis (Table 3), the Big-Five

similarity (not the Interpersonal Relatedness Factor similarity) still significantly predicted

relationship quality for Americans. Conversely, for Taiwanese, the Big-Five and

Interpersonal Relatedness Factor similarities were not significantly correlated with

relationship quality. When all similarity scores were entered simultaneously as predictors in

one regression analysis, the Big-Five similarity was negatively associated with relationship

commitment for Taiwanese. Further, the results of the significant two-way interactions

indicated that , the Big-Five similarity and the Interpersonal Relatedness Factor similarity

was significantly associated with dating relationship satisfaction or commitment for

Americans but not for Taiwanese (Figure 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7).

How does secondary control interact with culture and personality similarity to predict

relationship quality? Consistent with our three-way interaction hypothesis, the results of this

study support the moderating effect of secondary control on the relation between personality

similarity and relationship satisfaction for Americans. For those Americans who highly value

the importance of adjusting themselves to fit the needs or expectations of their partners,

they may receive positive reinforcement from their partner and become close to their partner,

regardless of the level of personality similarity within the couple. As shown in Figure 4A, for

those Americans who had high scores of secondary control, the personality similarity

between them and their partners was not significantly related to their dating satisfaction.

Conversely, for those Americans who had low scores of secondary control, the personality

similarity between them and their partners was still positively associated with their dating

satisfaction (Figure 4A). Our results implies that when interacting with their partners, those

Americans who highly value the importance of adjusting themselves to meet with their

partners' need may put most attention on what their partners do, always try to anticipate

what their partner wants or needs, and work hard to adjust or reduce the discrepancies

which may be generated from the personality dissimilarity between them and their partners.

They may focus on how to create a harmony relationship with their partner instead of

focusing on whether their personal needs are fulfilled through the relationship. Because their

goal is to maintain a harmony relationship or to meet their partner's needs, personality

similarity between them and their partners is not their primary focus and they would less

likely be influenced by the personality dissimilarity between them and their partners. In

addition, for those Americans who highly value the importance of adjustment, their partners

may perceive a high level of support from them, provide positive reinforcement for them, and

increase the relationship closeness or satisfaction with each other. For Taiwanese (Figure

4B), Big-Five similarity was not significantly associated with relationship satisfaction no

matter whether Taiwanese had a high or low level of secondary control. Those results were

consistent with our expectations that personality similarity has less influence on Taiwanese

close relationships.

Value similarity and culture. Consistent with our first hypothesis that value

similarity may be important for Taiwanese people's dating relationships, our results indicate

that value similarity plays an important role for both American and Taiwanese relationship

quality. In a collectivistic society, people value social norms and view those norms or values

as important guidelines for their daily lives. Consequently, East Asians may prefer to find a partner who has similar values. As shown in Table 1, Taiwanese participants reported greater similarity than Americans on the value domains measured by the Asian value scale; Taiwanese and Americans did not differ on value similarity scores measured by the short Schwartz's value scale. Similarly, results of the zero-order correlation (Table 2) indicated that two measures of value similarity significantly and positively correlated with relationship satisfaction and commitment for Americans and Taiwanese. When all similarity scores were entered simultaneously as predictors in one regression analysis, the Asian Value similarity (but not the short Schwartz's value similarity) still significantly predicted relationship quality for Americans and Taiwanese, respectively (Table 3). Further, the results of regression analyses (the non significant two-way interactions)also revealed that value similarity was important for both Americans and Taiwanese in predicting relationship quality. None of the two-way interactions between perceived value similarity and culture was significant; the main effect of value similarity was significant when the main effects of culture and secondary control were controlled (Table 5 and 6).

How does secondary control interact with culture and value similarity to predict relationship quality? The results of one significant three-way interaction indicated that secondary control mitigated the positive association between value similarity (short Schwartz's value scale) and relationship satisfaction for those Americans who reported a high level of secondary control (Figure 8A). For those Americans who highly value the importance of adjusting themselves to the needs of others or their environment, the value similarity between them and their partners were not significantly related to their dating satisfaction. This is similar to our discussion of the moderating effect of secondary control on the association between personality similarity and relationship satisfaction, those Americans who highly value the importance of secondary control may focus on how to

create a harmonious relationship with their partner instead of focusing on whether their personal needs are fulfilled by the relationship or whether their partners have similar values to their own. Because their goal is to maintain a harmonious relationship or to meet their partner's needs, value similarity between themselves and their partners is not their primary focus and they would less likely be influenced by the value dissimilarity between themselves and their partners.

In short, these personality and value similarity results were consistent with previous studies which found a significant association between similarity (i.e., personality similarity and value similarity) and relationship quality for Americans (e.g., Gonzaga et al., 2007). In particular, our results contribute to the current similarity literature by highlighting the influence of culture on people's close relationships and by providing a moderator for the association between similarity and relationship quality. Our results indicated that American participants perceived a higher level of personality similarity to their partners than Taiwanese participants did. Further, personality similarity plays a more influential role in Americans' dating relationship quality than in Taiwanese people's dating relationships. Interestingly, our results indicated that value similarity (especially for Asian cultural values) also played an important role in Taiwanese dating relationships. Taiwanese participants perceived more similarity with their partners on the Asian cultural values than Americans did, and value similarity also significantly predicted Taiwanese dating relationship quality, like their American counterparts.

Because both Western and indigenous Chinese scales were used to estimate personality and value similarities, this study was able to examine the domains of personality and values that were important to people of both cultures and to provide a more comprehensive understanding of personality and value similarity than only using Western personality and value scales. If this study had used only Western scales, different findings or

conclusions would be generated: (a) American participants perceived more similarity to their partners on personality domain than Taiwanese did, and (b) American and Taiwanese participants were not different on their perceived value similarity. Instead, these findings revealed two different results: (a) Taiwanese participants perceived more similarity to their partners on Asian culture values than Americans did, and (b) Taiwanese and Americans were not different on the perceived similarity measured by the Chinese personality scale.

Further, our findings support the predicted moderating role of secondary control in the association between personality or value similarities and relationship satisfaction, especially for Americans. For Americans who had high secondary control (e.g., valued the importance of adjusting themselves to fit the needs of others or the environment), the association between similarity and relationship satisfaction was no longer significant. When conflicts occur resulting from dissimilarity, those with high secondary control may tend to accommodate to the needs of their partners and adjust themselves. Consequently, they may receive positive reinforcement from their partners and maintain a satisfying relationship even if the personality or value similarity between them and their partners is low.

Culture, Parental Approval, and Motivation to Comply

For both Americans and Taiwanese, when they perceived high levels of parental approval for their dating decision, they reported higher relationship quality. Culture, however, moderated the association between parental approval and relationship quality in an unexpected direction; the association was stronger for Americans than for Taiwanese. That is, compared with Taiwanese, Americans' relationship quality was more likely to be influenced by their perceptions of their parents' approval. This moderating result was different from our original hypothesis. There is one potential reason for this contradictory finding. In this study, 96.6% and 94.4% of Americans reported that their parents knew that they were dating their partner or that they had brought their dating partner home to meet

their parents; only 74.2% and 52.3% of Taiwanese did that. It is not surprising to see these differences because during the college years in Taiwan, dating is not encouraged; parents tend to view dating as a distraction which can negatively influence their children's academic performance. Taiwanese college students are less likely than Americans to tell their parents that they are dating or bring their partners home to meet their parents. Consequently, parental approval may play a less influential role in Taiwanese dating relationship quality than for Americans.

Limitations and Future Research

This study may contain several limitations and future research directions. First, these data were collected from only one partner of dating couples, and the perception of their partners' personality and values may be different from the actual personality and values of their dating partners. Because dating is not encouraged for Taiwanese college students, it is difficult to collect data from both parties. Research, however, has shown that perceived personality and value similarities have stronger effects on relationship quality than does actual similarity (Heine & Renshaw, 2002; Kammann et al., 1984; Murray et al., 2002). Future researchers may also explore whether the discrepancy between actual and perceived personality and value similarities would be bigger for Americans than for Taiwanese. Because the emphases of different motivations in two cultures (self-enhancement for Americans and self-criticism for Taiwanese), Americans may tend to view their partners as similar to themselves and Taiwanese may have a more objective view of their partners. Second, this study used a correlational design with self-report data. This study was unable to demonstrate a causal relation for the association between similarity and relationship quality. Researchers, however, have used a longitudinal design and found that, among American dating people, personality similarity predicts relationship satisfaction instead of the reverse (Gonzaga et al., 2007). Third, we used the shortened versions of

personality and value measures instead of the completed versions. Consequently, we are unable to know whether our findings could be replicated with full versions of personality and value measures and to analyze data on a single dimension of personality or value. Future researchers may replicate our findings with the completed version of personality and value measures. Fourth, few studies explored the role of secondary control in close relationships. It is possible that a high level of secondary control may enhance personality or value similarity between the members of a couple. Future research may explore how secondary control contributes to the level of similarity between the couple (using secondary control as the predictor) instead of treating secondary control as the moderator. In addition, secondary control may associate with personality or value similarity differently across Americans and Taiwanese couples (although in this study, the correlation coefficients were not different between Americans and Taiwanese). For example, for Americans, there may be a positive prediction between secondary control and personality or value similarity. For Taiwanese, because cultural norms value the importance of secondary control and adjustment, they may view adjusting oneself to fit with others' expectations as normal. Consequently, a high level of secondary control may not predict a high level of personality or value similarity for Taiwanese couples.

Fifth, the results of this study indicated that personality and value similarity play a less important role in Taiwanese close relationships than in American close relationships. Future research may continue to explore, in addition to parental approval, what are the most important factors which would predict relationship quality for Chinese in order to provide a better understanding of Chinese close relationships. Sixth, we only collected American data from a Midwestern university (Iowa State University); future researchers may replicate our study with Americans from other diverse areas or diverse population (e.g., those undergraduates who live in the capital cities or do not live close to their parents). Seventh,

because personality similarity is associated with relationship quality differently between Americans and Taiwanese, future researchers may want to further explore what personality similarity means or how it functions in American and Taiwanese close relationships. Eighth, future researchers may use different research designs (e.g., using scenarios) to test our parental approval hypotheses. In this study, we asked participants to report their perceptions of parental approval regarding their dating partners. Because of the motivation of self-enhancement, Americans may tend to report a higher level of perceived parental approval of their dating partners. Future researchers may use different research design to avoid the social desirability. Ninth, although in this study, there was no sex difference on the association between similarity and relationship quality for Americans and Taiwanese, future studies may continue to investigate how sex plays a role in the effect of personality or value similarity on relationship quality.

Implication

Currently, most close relationship theories are generated from Western assumptions or culture (emphasizing the importance of independent and unique self) and are examined with Western people. It raises the question of whether those Western theories and findings can be generalized to people in other societies with different cultural assumptions or emphases. For example, East Asians devalue the importance of the unique self; instead, they value the importance of adjusting the self to fit the needs of others. The results of this study point out the need to examine Western close relationship theories and findings by taking into account cultural variations. Personality similarity between couples is a very popular topic, which is positively associated with Americans' dating relationship quality (Gonzaga et al., 2007). Personality similarity, however, plays a less important role in the relationship quality of Taiwanese than of Americans, because Taiwanese people may be motivated to adjust themselves to their partners and may have less need to find similar

partners (Heine & Renshaw, 2002). Future research may investigate what underlying mechanisms (e.g., the differences on the self; independent self vs. interdependent self) contribute to cultural differences in close relationships between Americans and East Asians. Finally, to accurately represent the close relationships of Americans and East Asians, it is important to include measures that are important for each culture; otherwise, researchers may generate misleading conclusions due to the limitations of their measures. For example, in this study, through using culturally sensitive scales to estimate people's values (Asian value scales), we found that Taiwanese people perceived more similarity to their partners in the Asian cultural values than Americans, although Taiwanese and Americans people were not different on the Schwartz value similarity scale.

Conclusion

Cross cultural research on close relationships is a relatively new and unexplored research area, although there is increased attention to cross-cultural research on topics related to self, emotion, and cognition. This study sheds light on cross-cultural differences in perceived similarity between the members of a couple on relationship quality and of parental approval on relationship quality. To understand East Asian's close relationships, it is important not only to validate western findings of close relationships with Asian population, but also to investigate how some culturally specific characteristics influence East Asian's close relationships. Through research on cross-cultural differences in close relationships, we hope to stimulate future researchers to develop a more comprehensive theory or model to explain East Asian's close relationships.

Table 1

Cross-Cultural Differences on the Nine Main Variables

		Americans	Taiwanese	t	*d*
Ten-Item Personality similarity	M	0.43	0.18	7.34***	.67
	SD	(0.39)	(0.35)		
CPAI-IRF similarity	M	0.25	0.22	1.07	.09
	SD	(0.34)	(0.30)		
Short Schwartz's Value similarity	M	0.36	0.31	1.71	.14
	SD	(0.34)	(0.36)		
Asian Value similarity	M	0.46	0.60	-5.00***	.46
	SD	(0.33)	(0.28)		
Secondary control	M	46.21	47.76	-2.36*	.21
	SD	(7.89)	(6.80)		
Parental approval	M	24.70	20.08	9.42***	.85
	SD	(4.66)	(6.13)		
Motivation to comply with parents	M	18.16	21.53	-5.35***	.47
	SD	(7.68)	(6.47)		
Relationship satisfaction	M	30.22	27.66	5.99***	.53
	SD	(4.62)	(5.00)		
Relationship commitment	M	41.93	41.42	.84	.07
	SD	(7.21)	(6.46)		

Note. Americans = 268. Taiwanese = 237. CPAI-IRF similarity = Perceived similarity on the Interpersonal Relatedness Factor Scale of the Chinese Personality Assessment Inventory. Parental Approval = Parental approval for the dating decision. Motivation to Comply with Parents = Motivation to Comply with Parental Decisions regarding Dating.

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

Table 2

Zero-Order Correlations of Nine Main Variables for Americans and Taiwanese

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1.Ten-Item Personality similarity	----	.42a***	.33b***	.25***	.22***	.24***	-.00	.34c***	.32d***
2. CPAI-IRF similarity	.07a	----	.36e***	.27***	.10	.23***	-.02	.26f***	.28g***
3. Short Schwartz's Value similarity	.12b	.15e*	----	.28***	.12	.17**	-.15*	.25***	.26***
4. Asian Value similarity	.16*	.16*	.33***	----	.16**	.28***	.06	.32***	.34***
5. Secondary control	.12	.10	.03	.18**	----	.09	.13*	.18**	.15*
6. Parental approval	.09	.13	.09	.18*	.14*	----	.03	.47***	.51h***
7. Motivation to comply with parents	-.01	.06	-.05	.14**	.22***	-.04	----	-.04	-.08
8. Relationship satisfaction	.08c	.03f	.15*	.21***	.20**	.35***	-.14*	----	.73i***
9. Relationship commitment	-.06d	.10g	.21***	.33***	.14*	.35h***	-.01	.62i***	----

Note. Americans = 268. Taiwanese = 237. Numbers above the diagonal are for Americans; numbers below the diagonal are for Taiwanese. CPAI-IRF similarity = Perceived similarity on the Interpersonal Relatedness Factor Scale of the Chinese Personality Assessment Inventory. Parental Approval = Parental approval for the dating decision. Motivation to Comply with Parents = Motivation to Comply with Parental Decisions regarding Dating. Subscripts in the columns indicate that the correlation coefficient was significant difference between American and Taiwanese at the *p* < .05 level.
* *p* < .05. ** *p* < .01. *** *p* < .001.

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Table 3

Simultaneous Regressions of Four Perceived Similarity on Relationship Satisfaction or Commitment for Americans vs.
Taiwanese

Variable	Americans				Taiwanese			
	B	*SEB*	β	R^2	*B*	*SEB*	β	R^2
Relationship satisfaction				.19***				.06*
Ten-Item Personality similarity	2.68	.75	.23***		.61	.92	.04	
CPAI-IRF similarity	1.03	.86	.08		-.25	1.07	-.02	
Short Schwartz's Value similarity	1.13	.84	.08		1.26	.96	.09	
Asian Value similarity	3.14	.83	.22***		3.20	1.23	.18**	
Relationship commitment				.20***				.14***
Ten-Item Personality similarity	3.38	1.17	.18**		-2.40	1.13	-.13*	
CPAI-IRF similarity	2.28	1.34	.11		.99	1.32	.05	
Short Schwartz's Value similarity	1.97	1.31	.09		2.19	1.18	.12	
Asian Value Scale similarity	5.30	1.29	.24***		7.01	1.52	.30***	

Note. Americans = 268. Taiwanese = 237. CPAI-IRF similarity = Perceived similarity on the Interpersonal Relatedness Factor
Scale of the Chinese Personality Assessment Inventory.

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

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Table 4

Three-Way Interaction among Perceived Similarity on Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI), Culture, and Secondary Control in Predicting Relationship Quality

Variable	B	$SE\ B$	β	R^2	Adjusted R^2	ΔR^2	F change in R^2
Relationship satisfaction							
Step 1				.13	.13	.13	25.63***
TIPI similarity	0.97	.22	.20***				
Culture	-2.09	.44	-.21***				
Secondary control	0.75	.21	.15***				
Step 2				.15	.14	.02	2.85*
TIPI similarity × Culture	-1.06	.46	-.14*				
TIPI similarity × Secondary control	-0.18	.19	-.04				
Culture × Secondary control	0.50	.44	.06				
Step 3				.16	.15	.01	6.72**
TIPI similarity × Culture × Secondary control	1.09	.42	.14**				
Relationship commitment							
Step 1				.04	.03	.04	6.82***
TIPI similarity	0.99	.32	.14**				
Culture	-0.04	.64	.00				
Secondary control	0.80	.31	.12**				
Step 2				.08	.07	.04	6.70***
TIPI similarity × Culture	-2.62	.66	-.24***				
TIPI similarity × Secondary control	-0.33	.28	-.06				
Culture × Secondary control	0.30	.64	.03				
Step 3				.08	.07	.00	1.90
TIPI similarity × Culture × Secondary control	0.84	.61	.08				

Note. Americans = 268. Taiwanese = 237. Culture: American was coded as "0" and Taiwanese was coded as "1". TIPI similarity = Perceived similarity on Ten-Item Personality Inventory.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 5

Three-Way Interaction among Perceived Similarity on the Interpersonal Relatedness Factor Scale of the Chinese Personality Assessment Inventory (IRF-CPAI), Culture, and Secondary Control in Predicting Relationship Quality

Variable	*B*	*SE B*	β	R^2	Adjusted R^2	ΔR^2	*F* change in R^2
Relationship satisfaction							
Step 1				.12	.11	.12	22.21***
CPAI-IRF similarity	0.66	.21	.13**				
Culture	-2.68	.42	-.27***				
Secondary control	0.85	.21	.17***				
Step 2				.13	.12	.01	2.20
CPAI-IRF similarity × Culture	-1.05	.43	-.14*				
CPAI-IRF similarity × Secondary control	0.08	.21	.02				
Culture × Secondary control	0.46	.43	.06				
Step 3				.14	.12	.01	3.53
CPAI-IRF similarity × Culture × Secondary control	0.83	.44	.10				
Relationship commitment							
Step 1				.06	.05	.06	10.61***
CPAI-IRF similarity	1.36	.30	.20***				
Culture	-0.56	.60	-.04				
Secondary control	0.83	.30	.12**				
Step 2				.07	.06	.01	1.37
CPAI-IRF similarity × Culture	-1.22	.62	-.11*				
CPAI-IRF similarity × Secondary control	-0.03	.29	-.01				
Culture × Secondary control	0.09	.62	.01				
Step 3				.07	.06	.00	1.74
CPAI-IRF similarity × Culture × Secondary control	0.83	.63	.07				

Note. Americans = 268. Taiwanese = 237. Culture: American was coded as "0" and Taiwanese was coded as "1". CPAI-IRF similarity = Perceived similarity on the Interpersonal Relatedness Factor Scale of the Chinese Personality Assessment Inventory.

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

Table 6

Three-Way Interaction among Perceived Similarity on Short Schwartz's Value Scale (SSVS), Culture, and Secondary Control in Predicting Relationship Quality

Variable	B	SE B	β	R^2	Adjusted R^2	ΔR^2	F change in R^2
Relationship satisfaction							
Step 1				.13	.13	.13	25.39***
SSVS similarity	0.89	.21	.18***				
Culture	-2.61	.42	-.26***				
Secondary control	0.84	.21	.17***				
Step 2				.14	.13	.00	.76
SSVS similarity × Culture	-0.35	.42	-.05				
SSVS similarity × Secondary control	-0.16	.21	-.03				
Culture × Secondary control	0.41	.43	.05				
Step 3				.15	.14	.02	10.57***
SSVS similarity × Culture × Secondary control	1.36	.42	.18***				
Relationship commitment							
Step 1				.07	.07	.07	13.08***
SSVS similarity	1.57	.30	.23***				
Culture	-0.45	.60	-.03				
Secondary control	0.84	.30	.12**				
Step 2				.08	.07	.01	1.31
SSVS similarity × Culture	-0.41	.60	-.04				
SSVS similarity × Secondary control	-0.53	.30	-.08				
Culture × Secondary control	0.06	.61	.01				
Step 3				.09	.07	.01	3.48
SSVS similarity × Culture × Secondary control	1.11	.60	.11				

Note. Americans = 268. Taiwanese = 237. Culture: American was coded as "0" and Taiwanese was coded as "1". SSVS similarity = Perceived similarity on Short Schwartz's Value Survey.

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

Table 7

Three-Way Interaction among Perceived Similarity on Asian Value Scale (AVS), Culture, and Secondary Control in Predicting Relationship Quality

Variable	B	$SE\ B$	β	R^2	Adjusted R^2	ΔR^2	F change in R^2
Relationship satisfaction							
Step 1				.16	.15	.16	30.74***
AVS similarity	1.21	.21	.24***				
Culture	-3.24	.42	-.33***				
Secondary control	0.71	.21	.14***				
Step 2				.16	.15	.00	.37
AVS similarity × Culture	-0.29	.44	-.04				
AVS similarity × Secondary control	-0.05	.20	-.01				
Culture × Secondary control	0.40	.44	.05				
Step 3				.16	.15	.00	.50
AVS similarity × Culture × Secondary control	0.30	.42	.04				
Relationship commitment							
Step 1				.12	.12	.12	23.17***
AVS similarity	2.26	.30	.33***				
Culture	-1.61	.59	-.12**				
Secondary control	0.59	.29	.09*				
Step 2				.12	.11	.00	.13
AVS similarity × Culture	0.08	.62	.01				
AVS similarity × Secondary control	-0.17	.28	-.03				
Culture × Secondary control	0.02	.62	.00				
Step 3				.12	.11	.00	.20
AVS similarity × Culture × Secondary control	-0.27	.59	-.02				

Note. Americans = 268. Taiwanese = 237. Culture: American was coded as "0" and Taiwanese was coded as "1". AVS similarity = Perceived similarity on Asian Value Scale.

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

Table 8
Three-Way Interaction among Parental Approval, Culture, and Motivation to Comply in Predicting Relationship Quality

Variable	B	$SE\ B$	β	R^2	Adjusted R^2	ΔR^2	F change in R^2
Relationship satisfaction							
Step 1				.04	.03	.04	3.97**
Money from parents	-.24	.11	-.10*				
Parent see	-.09	.16	-.03				
Parent call	.05	.19	.01				
Parent met the partner	.58	.62	.05				
Parent knew the partner	1.78	.75	.12*				
Step 2				.23	.22	.19	40.92***
Parental approval	2.22	.23	.45***				
Culture	-1.10	.50	-.11*				
Comply	-0.38	.21	-.08				
Step 3				.25	.23	.02	3.32*
Parental approval × Culture	-1.36	.47	-.20***				
Parental approval × Comply	.40	.23	.08				
Culture × Comply	-.16	.45	-.02				
Step 4				.25	.23	.00	2.77
Parental approval × Culture × Comply	-.78	.47	-.12				
Relationship commitment							
Step 1				.02	.01	.02	2.06
Money from parents	-.24	0.15	-.07				
Parent see	.13	0.22	.03				
Parent call	-.11	0.26	-.02				
Parent met the partner	-.01	0.86	.00				
Parent knew the partner	2.13	1.05	.11*				
Step 2				.18	.17	.16	32.83***
Parental approval	3.21	0.33	.47***				
Culture	2.22	0.71	.16**				
Comply	-0.27	0.29	-.04				
Step 3				.21	.20	.03	6.28***
Parental approval × Culture	-2.77	0.67	-.30***				
Parental approval × Comply	.41	0.33	.06				
Culture × Comply	1.02	0.64	.09				
Step 4				.22	.20	.00	2.71
Parental approval × Culture × Comply	-1.09	0.66	-.12				

Note. Americans = 268. Taiwanese = 237. Culture: American was coded as "0" and Taiwanese was coded as "1".
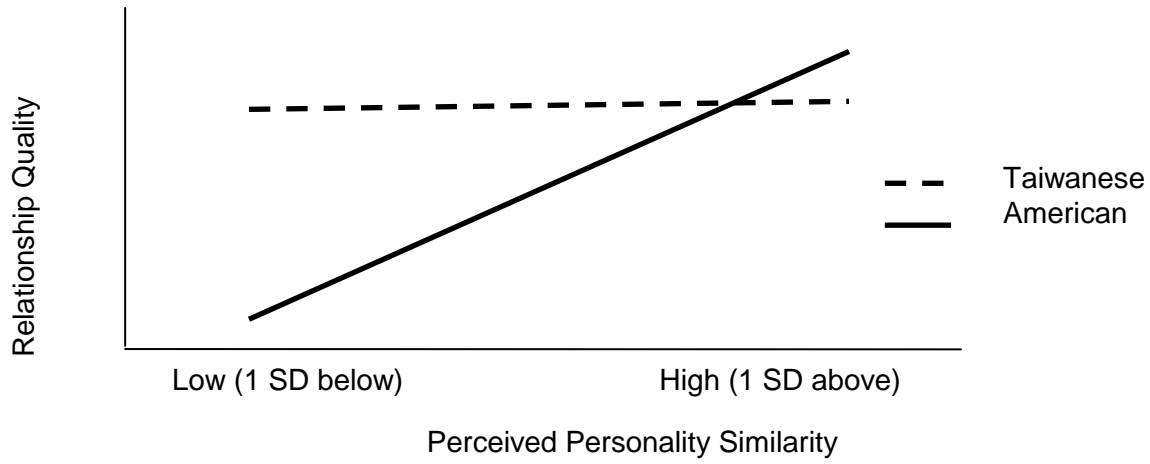
Figure 1. The hypothesized two-way interaction of culture and perceived personality similarity on relationship quality.
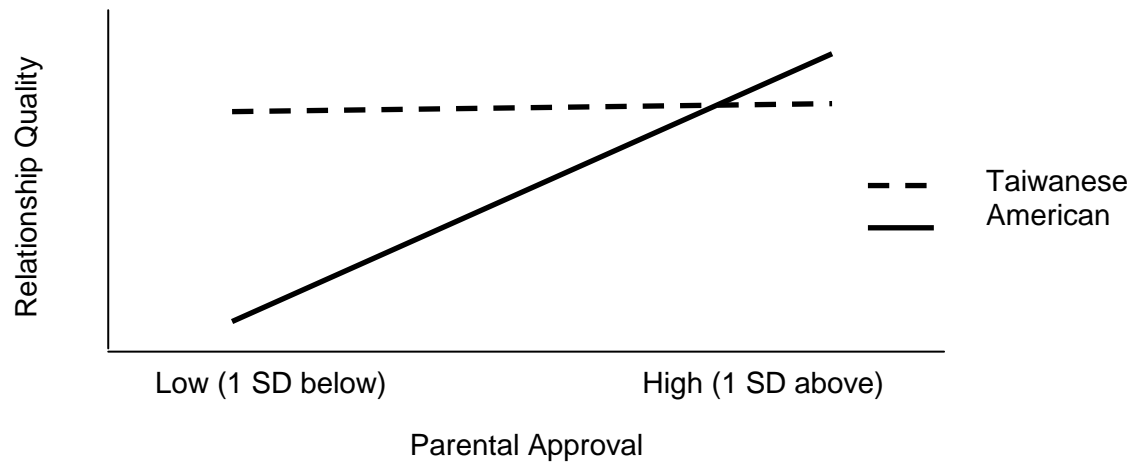
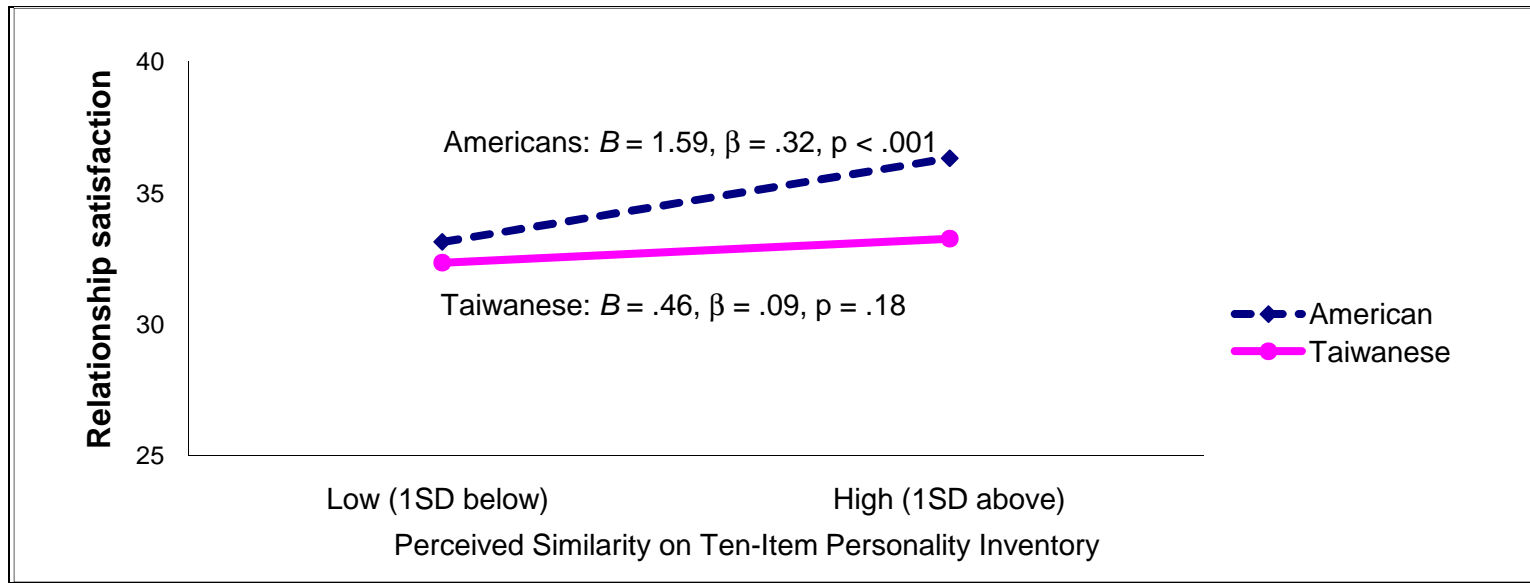*Figure 2*. The hypothesized two-way interaction of culture and parental approval on relationship quality.

Figure 3. The two-way interaction of culture and perceived similarity on Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI) in predicting relationship satisfaction.
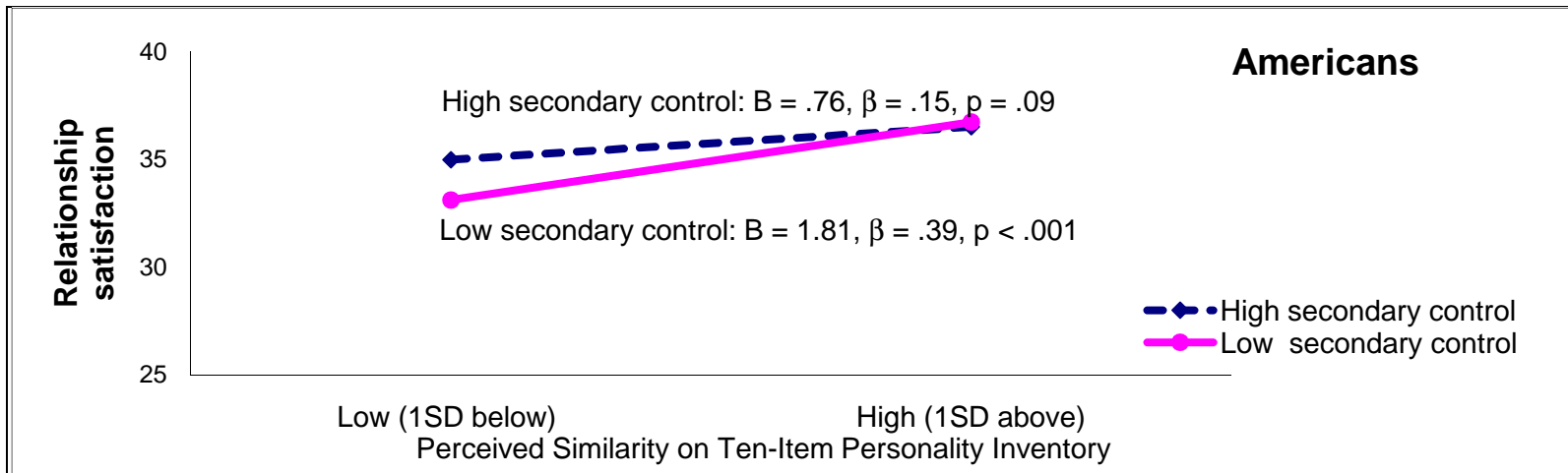
Figure 4A. Three-way interaction of culture, perceived similarity on Ten-Item Personality Inventory, and secondary control in predicting relationship satisfaction for Americans.
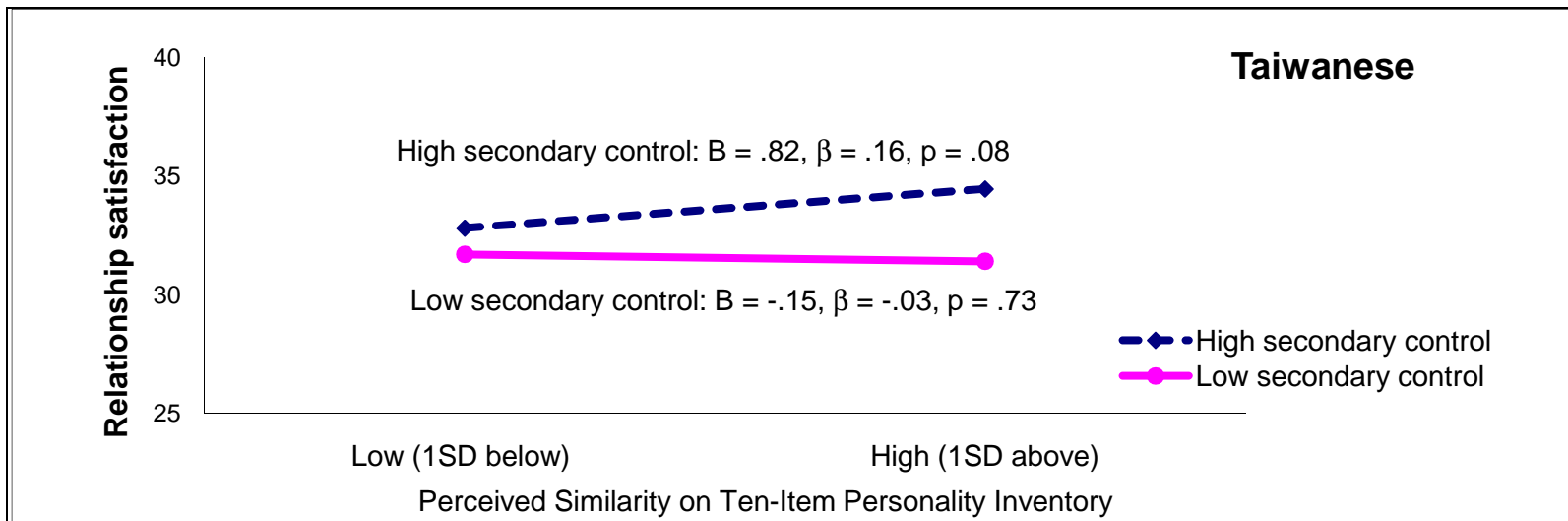
Figure 4B. Three-way interaction of culture, perceived similarity on Ten-Item Personality Inventory, and secondary control in predicting relationship satisfaction for Taiwanese.
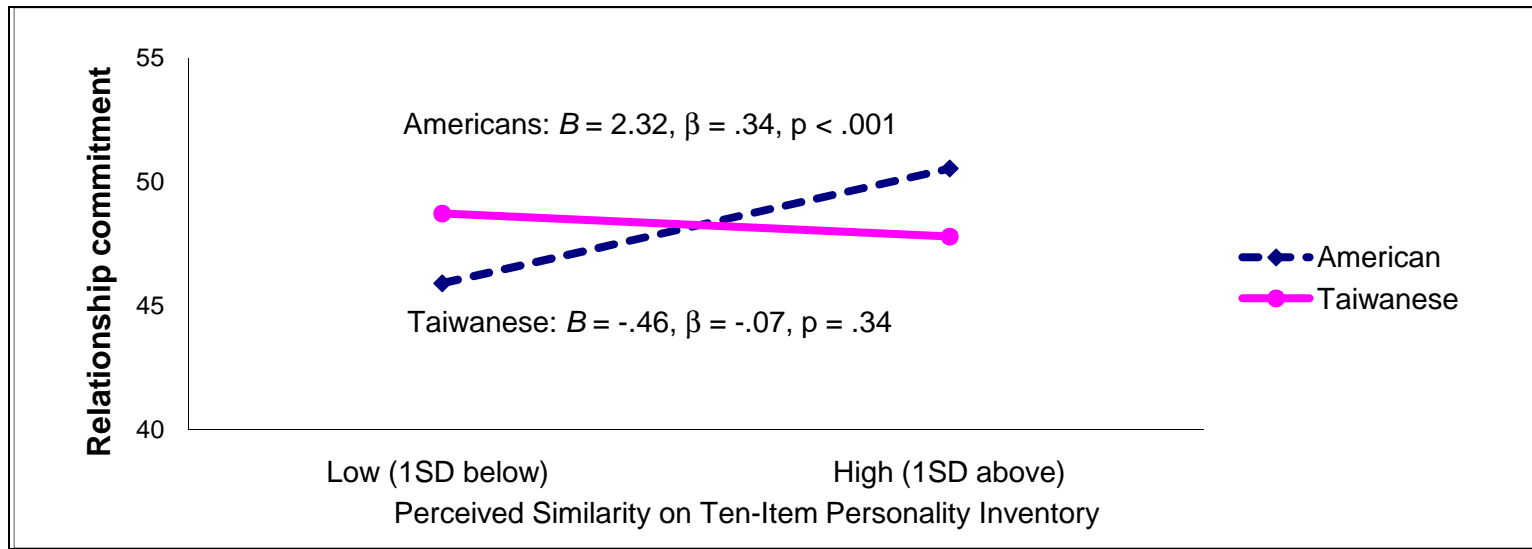
Figure 5. The two-way interaction of culture and perceived similarity on Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI) in predicting relationship commitment.
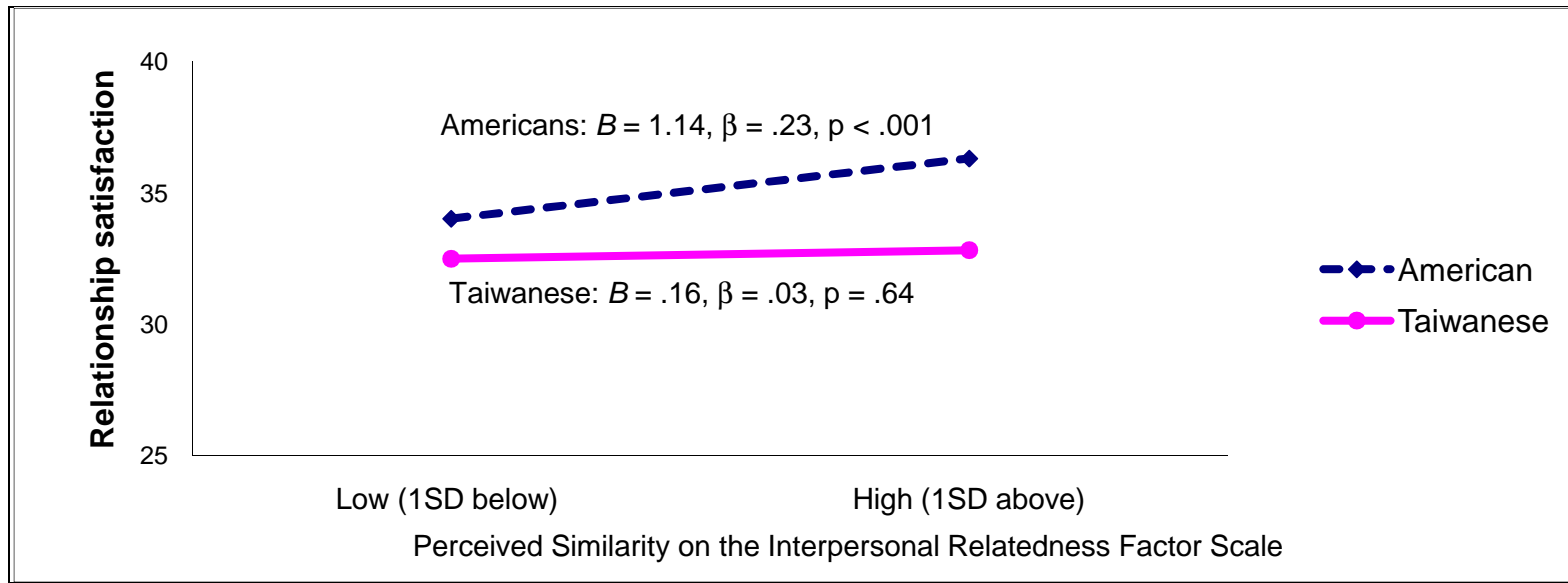
Figure 6. The two-way interaction of culture and perceived similarity on the Interpersonal Relatedness Factor Scale of the Chinese Personality Assessment Inventory (IRF-CPAI) in predicting relationship satisfaction.
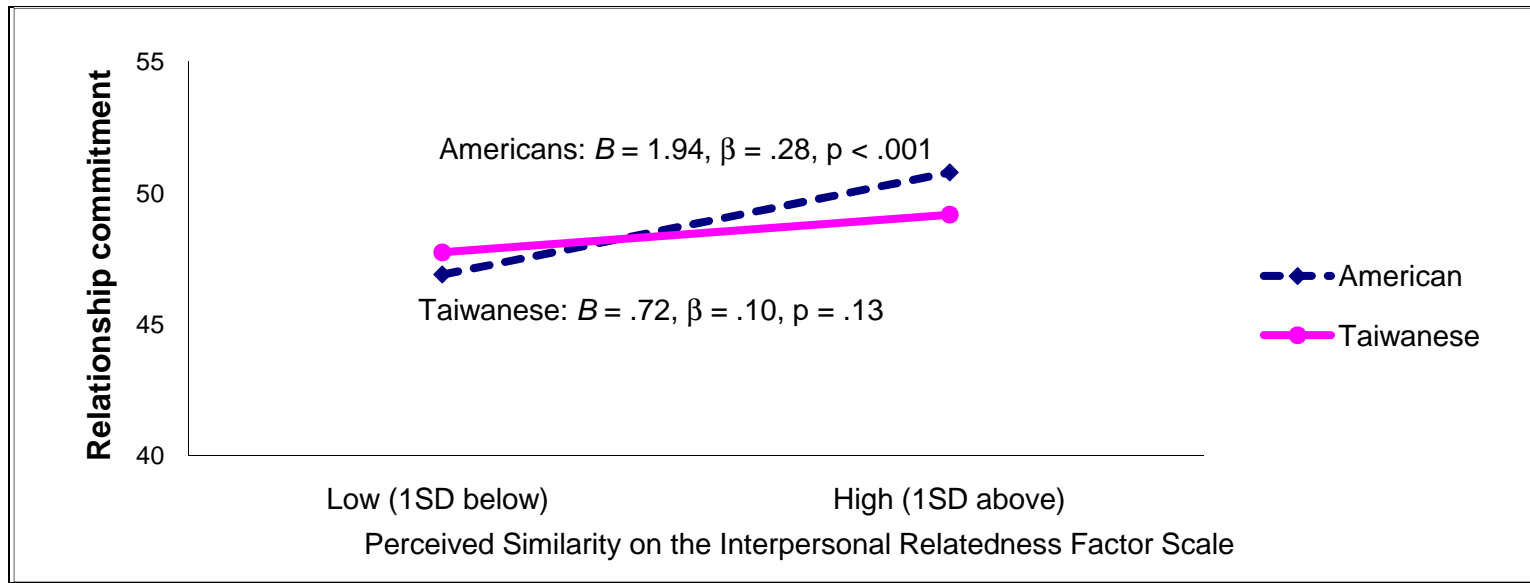
Americans: $B = 1.94$, $\beta = .28$, p < .001

Taiwanese: $B = .72$, $\beta = .10$, p = .13

Figure 7. The two-way interaction of culture and perceived similarity on the Interpersonal Relatedness Factor Scale of the Chinese Personality Assessment Inventory (IRF-CPAI) in predicting relationship commitment.
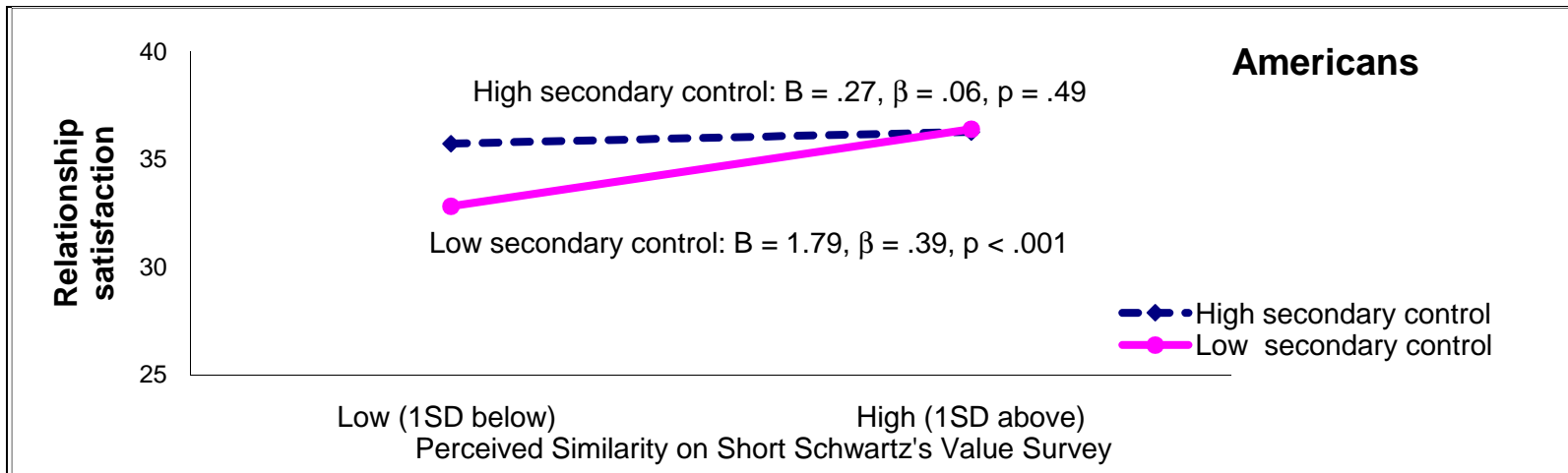
Figure 8A. Three-way interaction of culture, perceived similarity on Short Schwartz's Value Survey, and secondary control in predicting relationship satisfaction for Americans.
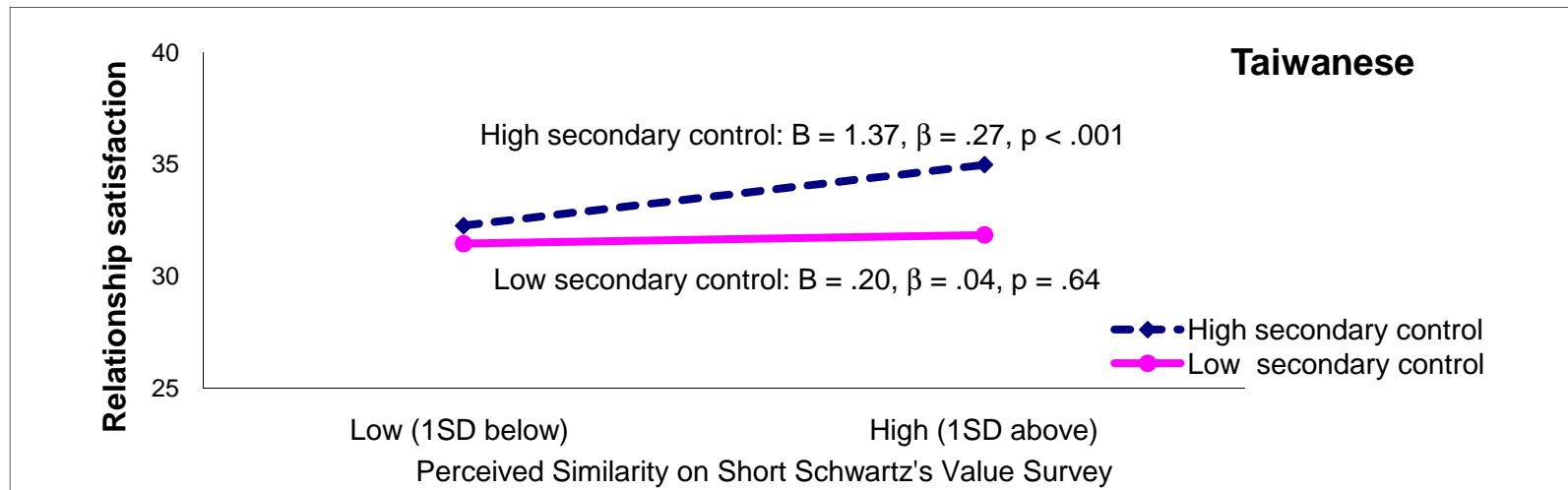

Figure 8B. Three-way interaction of culture, perceived similarity on Short Schwartz's Value Survey, and secondary control in predicting relationship satisfaction for Taiwanese.

American: B = 2.83, β = .57, p < .001

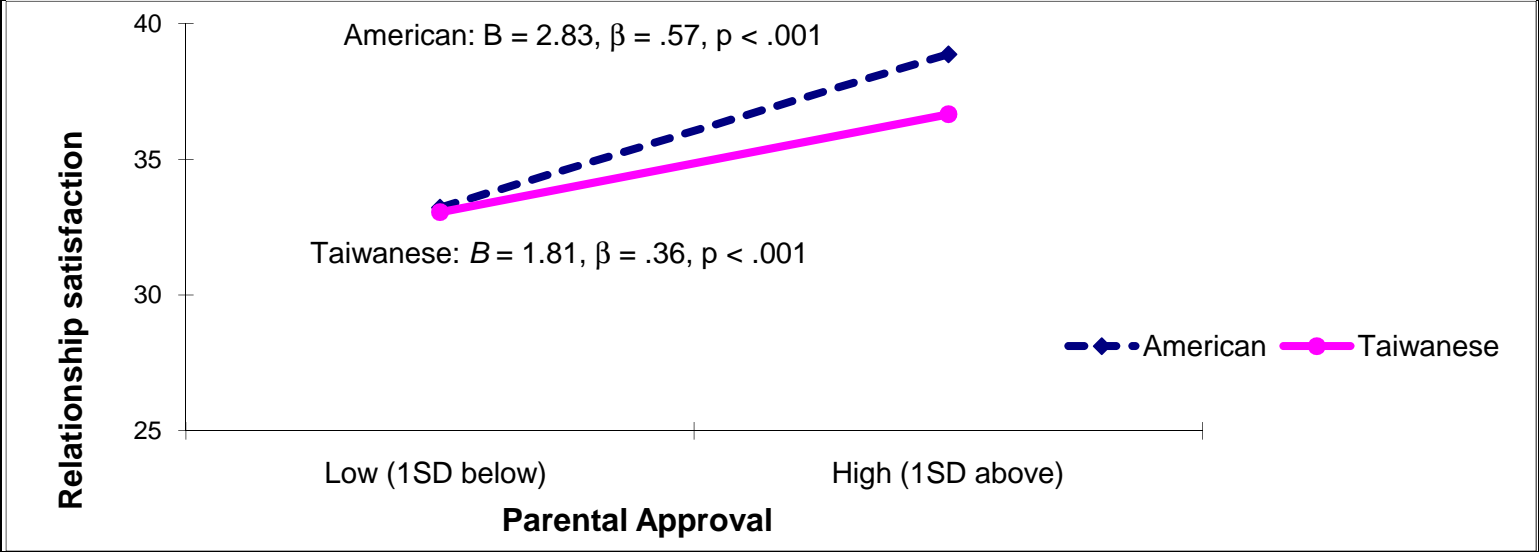Taiwanese: B = 1.81, β = .36, p < .001

Figure 9. The two-way interaction of culture and parental approval in predicting relationship satisfaction.
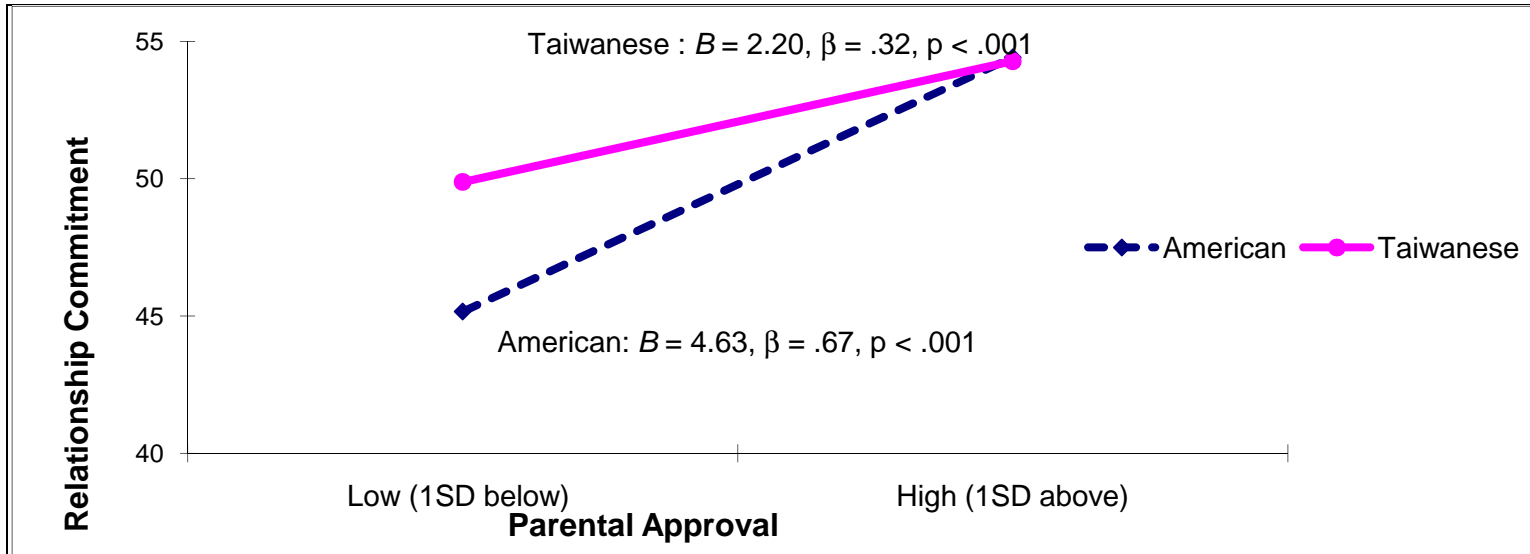
Figure 10. The two-way interaction of culture and parental approval in predicting relationship commitment.

APPENDIX: SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Demographic variables

1. Sex
   1. Male
   2. Female

2. Your birthday: mm/dd/year

3. Your education level
   1. Freshman
   2. Sophomore
   3. Junior
   4. Senior
   5. Graduate student
   6. Other

4. Your ethnic identity:
   1. Caucasian American
   2. African American
   3. Asian American
   4. Hispanic American
   5. Taiwanese
   6. Other

5. Are your parents still alive?
   1My father and my mother are still alive
   2My father is alive but my mother is dead
   3My father is dead but my mother is alive
   4Both of my parents are dead

6. How often do you typically see your parents (choose the parent you are closest to)?
   1.Everyday
   2.More than once a week
   3.About once a week
   4.Several times a week
   5.About once a month
   6.Once every few months
   7.About once a year
   8.Less than once a year

7.How often do your parents (choose the parent you are closest to) and you typically call each other (include when you call your parents and when your parents call you)?
   1.Everyday
   2.More than once a week
   3.About once a week
   4.Several times a week

5.About once a month
6.Once every few months
7.About once a year
8.Less than once a year

8.Please indicate the extent to which your parents (either one or both of your parents) currently provide or help with your financial expenses?

1. My parents currently do not provide any of my financial needs.
2....
3....
4....
5....
6....
7....
8.My parents currently provide all my financial needs.

9. Your sexual identity:
1. Heterosexual
2. Gay or Lesbian
3. Bisexual
4. Transgender
5. Other

10. Your current relationship status
1. Single, not dating anyone seriously
2. In a serious dating relationship (but not engaged or married)
3. Engaged, cohabiting, or in a very committed relationship
4. Married
5. Divorced or separated
6. Widowed
7. Other

11. The number of dating relationships that you have had except for your current dating partner:
1. I never dated anyone else before my current dating partner.
2. I only dated one other person before my current dating partner.
3. I dated two persons before my current dating partner.
4. I dated three persons before my current dating partner.
5. I dated more than four persons before my current dating partner.

12. Your current dating partner's ethnic identity:
1. Caucasian American
2. African American
3. Asian American

4. Hispanic American
5. Taiwanese
6. Other

13.How long have you known your current dating partner?

1	2	3	4	5	6
1-3 months	3-6 months	6-9 months	9-12 months	1 to 2 years	More than 2 years

14.How long have you been romantically involved with (actually dating) your current dating partner?

1	2	3	4	5	6
1-3 months	3-6 months	6-9 months	9-12 months	1 to 2 years	More than 2 years

15. How often do you typically see your partner?
   1.Everyday
   2.More than once a week
   3.About once a week
   4.Several times a week
   5.About once a month
   6.Once every few months
   7.About once a year
   8.Less than once a year

16.How often do your dating or marriage partner and you typically call each other (include you call your current partner and your partner calls you)?

   1.Everyday
   2.More than once a week
   3.About once a week
   4.Several times a week
   5.About once a month
   6.Once every few months
   7.About once a year
   8.Less than once a year

Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI)

Instructions. Here are a number of personality traits that may or may not apply to you. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with that statement. You should rate the extent to which the pair of traits applies to you, even if one characteristic applies more strongly than the other.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neutral	Agree somewhat	Agree	Strongly agree

I see Myself as someone who…….

1. Extraverted, enthusiastic.
2. Critical, quarrelsome
3. Dependable, self-disciplined
4. Anxious, easily upset
5. Open to new experiences, complex.

6. Reserved, quiet
7. Sympathetic, warm
8. Disorganized, careless
9. Calm, emotionally stable
10. Conventional, uncreative

The Interpersonal Relatedness Factor scale of the Chinese Personality Assessment Inventory (CPAI-IRF)

Instructions: The following statements describe a personal characteristic or typical behaviors. Please use the scale of 1 (Strongly disagree) to 6 (Strongly agree) to indicate the extent to which you disagree or agree with each statement.

1.I always maintain a peaceful frame of mind.
2.Usually when I talk with people, I take great care not to offend them.
3.I strongly support the principle that "if a family lives in harmony all things will prosper."
4.When dealing with institutions, things can work out more smoothly through the connections of friends working inside.

5.I find it very hard to say "no" when others make requests or give me assignments.
6.Returning money is easier than returning favors, so the best thing to do is not become indebted to people's favors.
7.I pay a lot of attention to how others see me.
8.I am usually very particular about the way I dress because I do not want others to look down on me.

9.I feel a loss of face when others turn down my favor.
10.I hate things that are uncertain or unpredictable.
11.I believe I have a more strict sense of right and wrong than most people.

12.I always insist on making detailed plans and schedules of my work.

Short Schwartz's Value Survey (SSVS)

Instruction. Rate the importance of the following values as a life-guiding principle for you from 1 (opposed to my principles) to 8 (of supreme importance).

Personally, I believe the importance of ......

1.POWER (social power, authority, wealth)
2.ACHIEVEMENT (success, capability, ambition, influence on people and events)
3.HEDONISM (gratification of desires, enjoyment in life, self-indulgence)
4.STIMULATION (daring, a varied and challenging life, an exciting life)
5.SELF-DIRECTION (creativity, freedom, curiosity, independence, choosing one's own goals)

6.UNIVERSALISM (broad-mindedness, beauty of nature and arts, social justice, a world at peace, equality, wisdom, unity with nature, environmental protection)
7.BENEVOLENCE (helpfulness, honesty, forgiveness, loyalty, responsibility)
8.TRADITION (respect for tradition, humbleness, accepting one's portion in life, devotion, modesty)
9.CONFORMITY (obedience, honoring parents and elders, self-discipline, politeness)
10.SECURITY (national security, family security, social order, cleanliness, reciprocation of favors)

Asian Values Scale (AVS)

Instructions: Use the scale below to indicate the extent to which you disagree or agree with the value expressed in each statement.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neutral	Agree somewhat	Agree	Strongly agree

1.Educational failure does not bring shame to the family.
2.One should not deviate from family and social norms.
3.One should not be boastful or arrogant.
4.One should consider the needs of others before considering one's own needs.
5.The ability to control one's emotions is a sign of strength.

6.Modesty is an important quality for a person.
7.Parental love should be implicitly understood and not openly expressed.
8.One should think about one's group before oneself.
9.Following familial and social expectations are important.
10.Occupational failure does not bring shame to the family.

11.Children are not expected to take care of their parents when the parents become unable to take care of themselves.
12.One's family need not be the main source of trust and dependence.

Harmony Control Scale

Instructions. Use the scale below to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neutral	Agree somewhat	Agree	Strongly agree

1.I know that a higher power will arrange for my ultimate well-being.
2.I feel secure knowing my friends will take care of me, should I need it.
3.Getting along with others is easier when I try to anticipate what they want or need.
4.Sometimes when I am with others, I become fully absorbed in what they do.
5.Periods of good and bad luck even out in the end.

6.Some higher power ultimately decides the good and bad times in our lives.
7.With other people looking out for me, I know I will never "hit bottom."
8.Most of my own needs are met when I meet other people's needs.
9.Sometimes when I am with others, I seem to lose track of what I personally want.
10.I don't mind bad times because good times will ultimately follow.

The Perceived Normative Beliefs Scale.

Instructions: The following questions ask what and how your parent may feel or react to your current romantic/dating relationship. Please choose one parent (either your mother or father) who has the most influence on your dating decision as the target to answer the following questions.

1.Which parent's (your father's or your mother's) opinion has the most influence when you need to make a decision about the dating partner?

1)My father
2)My mother

2.Does the parent who has the most influence on your dating decision know that you are dating your current partner?

1)Yes
2)No

3.Have you brought your current dating partner home to meet your parent who has the most influence on your dating decision?

1)Yes
2)No

Please choose one parent (either your mother or father) who has the most influence on your dating decision as the target to answer the following questions.

4.My parent (who has the most influence on my dating decision) thinks I should not/should continue in my current romantic relationship.

Should Not   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Should

5.My parent thinks I do not have/have a current romantic relationship worth keeping.

Not Have   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Have

6.My parent thinks that this is not/is a good current romantic relationship for me.

Is Not   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Is

7.My parent is not supportive/is supportive of my current romantic relationship.

Not Supportive   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Supportive

The Motivation to Comply with Parental Opinions regarding Mate Selection scale

Instructions: Please choose the appropriate answer to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement. Please choose the parent (either your mother or father) who has the most influence on your dating decision as the target to answer the following questions.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Do not agree at all						Agree Completely

1.With respect to my romantic relationships, I want to do what my parent (who has the most influence on my dating decision) thinks I should do.
2.When making decisions about my romantic partners, I am likely to let my parent's opinion affect my actions.
3.When deciding who I date and spend time with, I want to do what my parent thinks I should do.
4.When making decisions about who is a potential dating partner, I am affected by what my parent thinks.
5.Generally speaking, I want to do what my parent thinks I should do for my dating relationship.

Relationship Satisfaction and Commitment Scale

Instructions. The following questions ask your relationship with your current dating partner. Please choose the appropriate answer which best describes your relationship with your current dating partner.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neutral	Agree somewhat	Agree	Strongly agree

1. I feel satisfied with our relationship.
2. My relationship is much better than others' relationships.
3. My relationship is close to ideal.
4. Our relationship makes me very happy.
5. Our relationship does a good job of fulfilling my needs for intimacy, companionships, etc.

6. I want our relationship to last for a very long time.
7. I am committed to maintaining my relationship with my partner.
8. I would not feel very upset if our relationship were to end in the near future.
9. It is likely that I will date someone other than my partner within the next year.
10. I feel very attracted to our relationship---very strongly linked to my partner.

11. I want our relationship to last forever.
12. I am oriented toward the long-term future of my relationship (for example, I imagine being with my partner several years from now)

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