

# UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

## Compatibility and Interdependence Processes of Relationship Maintenance

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# Background

- **Compatibility Theory**
  - Individuals match on important characteristics
  - Promotes positive attitudes towards the relationship and deeper commitment
- **Interdependence Theory**
  - Mutual preference as beneficial
  - Addresses dissimilarity of preferences
  - How and why individuals transform



# Transformations & Relationship Dynamics

- Partners are motivated to make prosocial transformations
- Positively associated with commitment to and satisfaction with the relationship
- Data largely focused on willingness or tendency to transform



# Sample

- Random sample of coupled dating partners who had never married
  - $N = 464$  (232 couples)
  - Age 18-35 ( $M = 24$ )
  - Relationship length ( $M = 27.3$  months)
  - Approximately 30% live together
  - Ethnicity, education, and income representative of population from which sample was drawn



# Method

- Preferences data (1 = *dislike very much*, 7 = *like very much*)
  - How much do you as an individual like to...
    - *Leisure Activities (e.g., playing a sport; going to a movie)*
    - *Task Activities (e.g., washing dishes; managing money)*
    - *Relational Activities (e.g., holding hands; talking about the relationship)*
- Activity data
  - 9-day daily diary
- Relationship Outcomes
  - Friendship-Based and Passionate Love
  - Relationship Satisfaction and Commitment

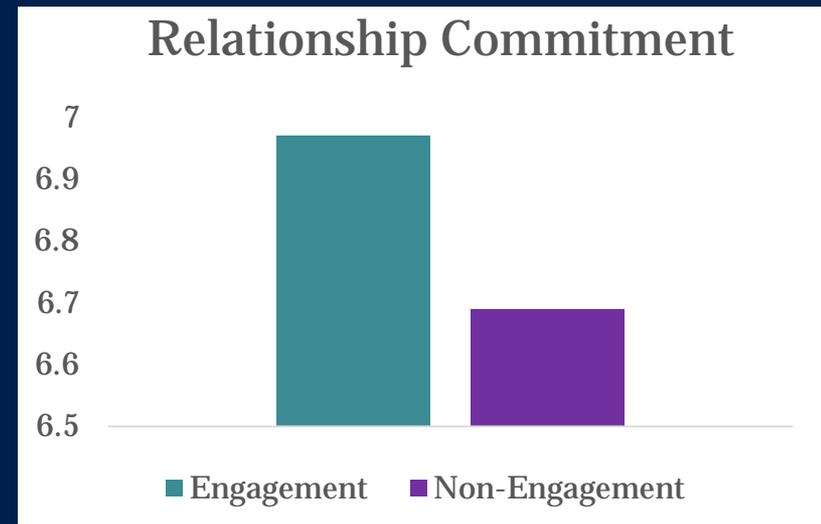
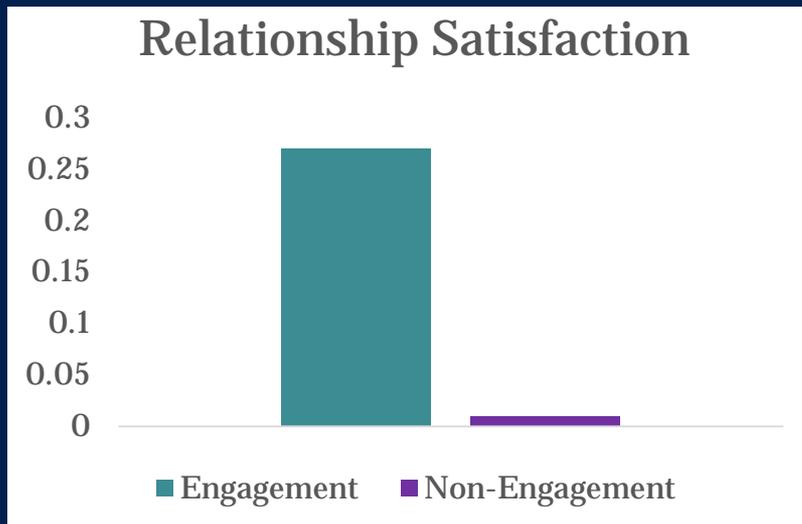
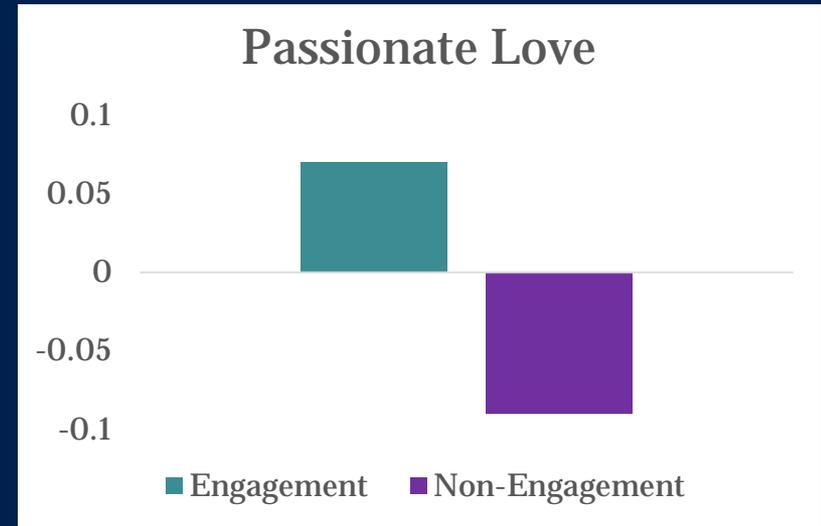
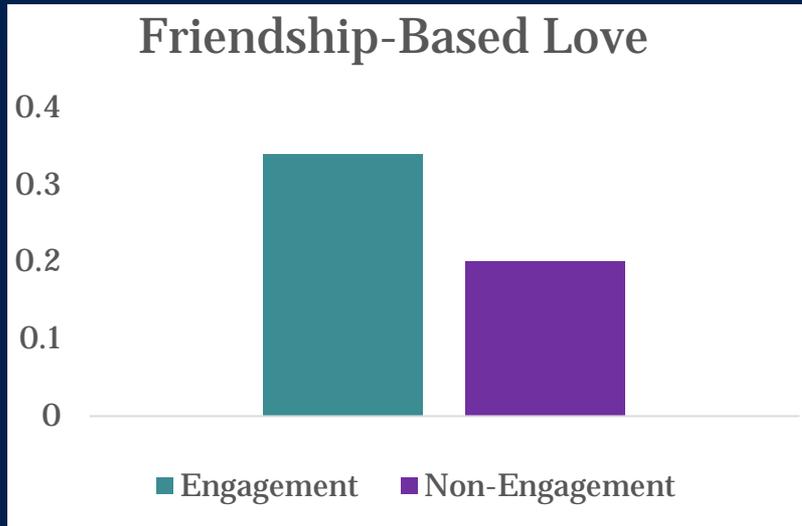


# Hypotheses

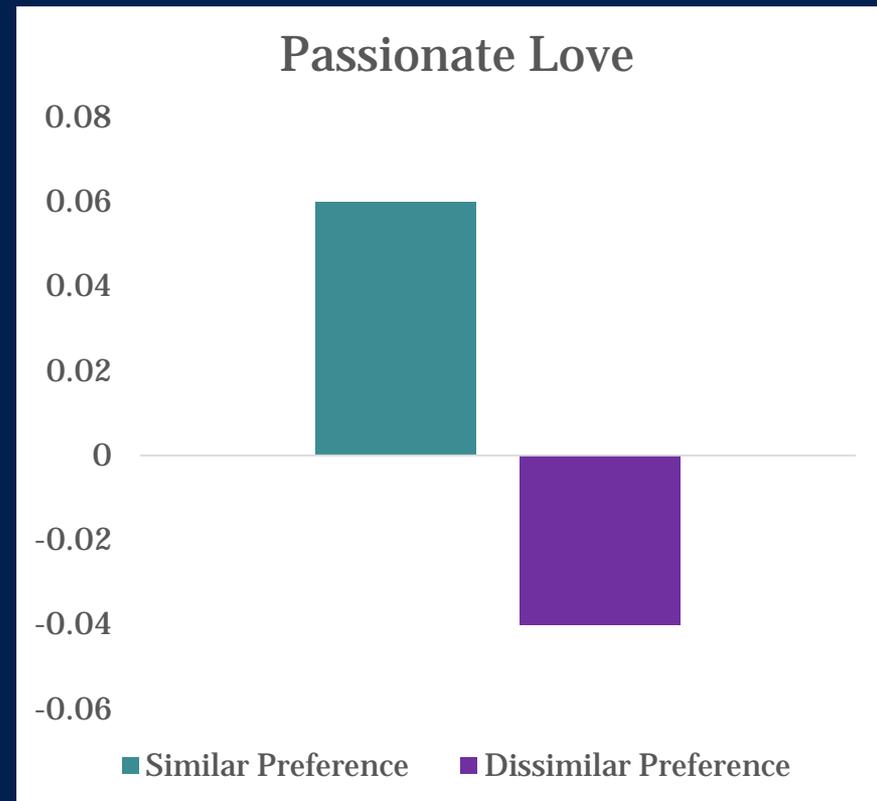
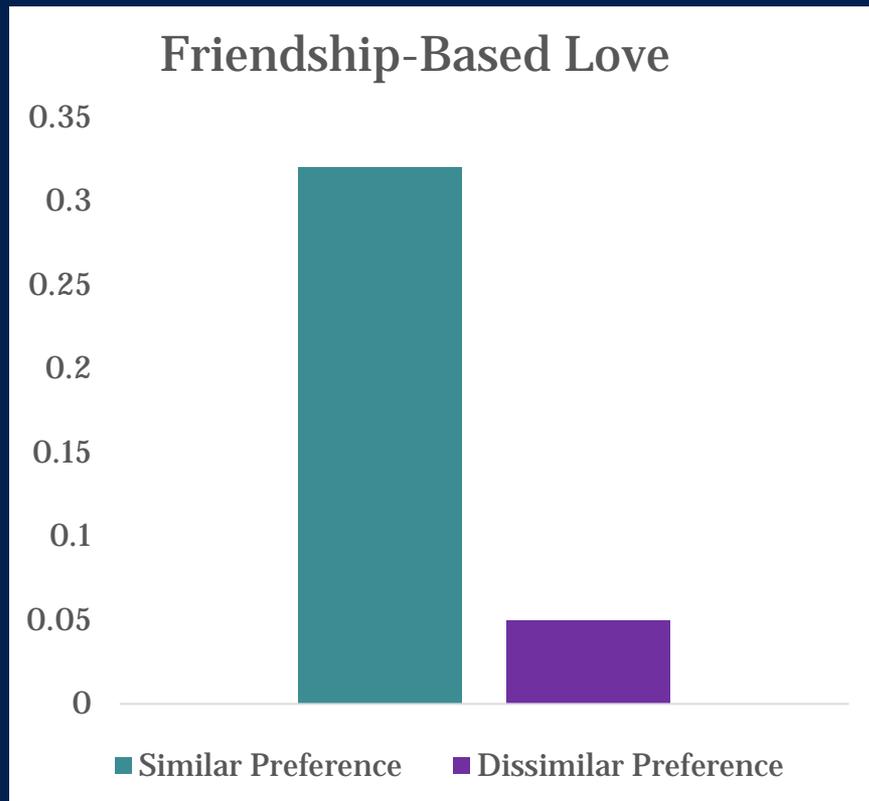
- **Compatibility Theory**
  - Partners who engage in mutual leisure will have better relationship outcomes than those who do not.
  - Partners who have similar activity preferences will have better relationship outcomes than those who do not.
  - Those who are compatible and engage in activities together will have better outcomes than those who are compatible but do not engage in activities together.
- **Interdependence Theory**
  - Individuals who transform by engaging in something they dislike will have better relationship outcomes than those who transform by giving up something they like.



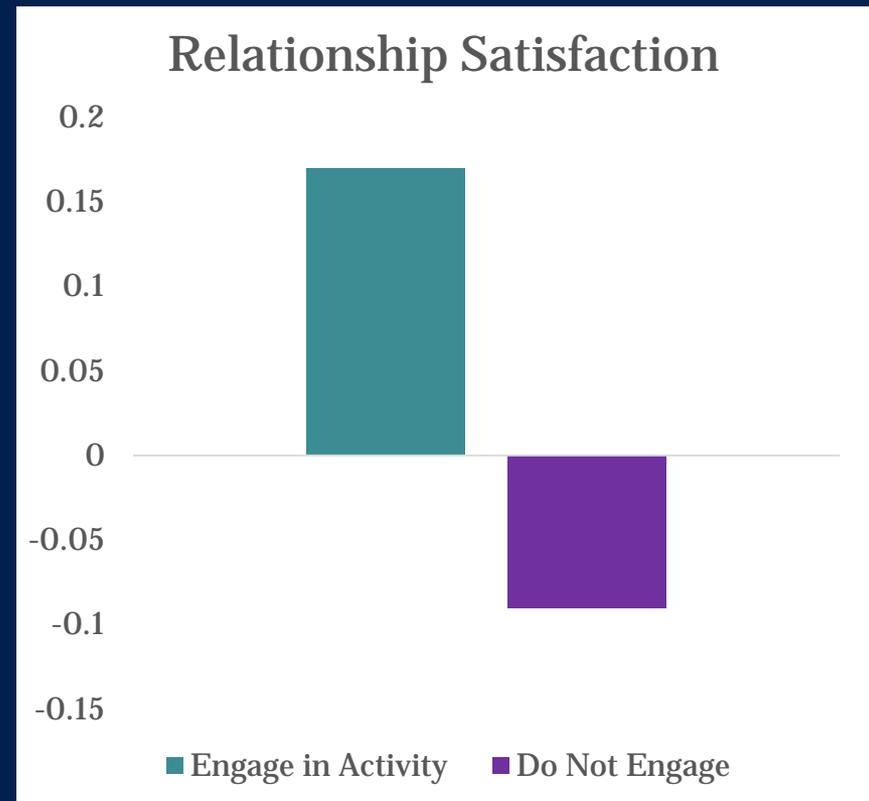
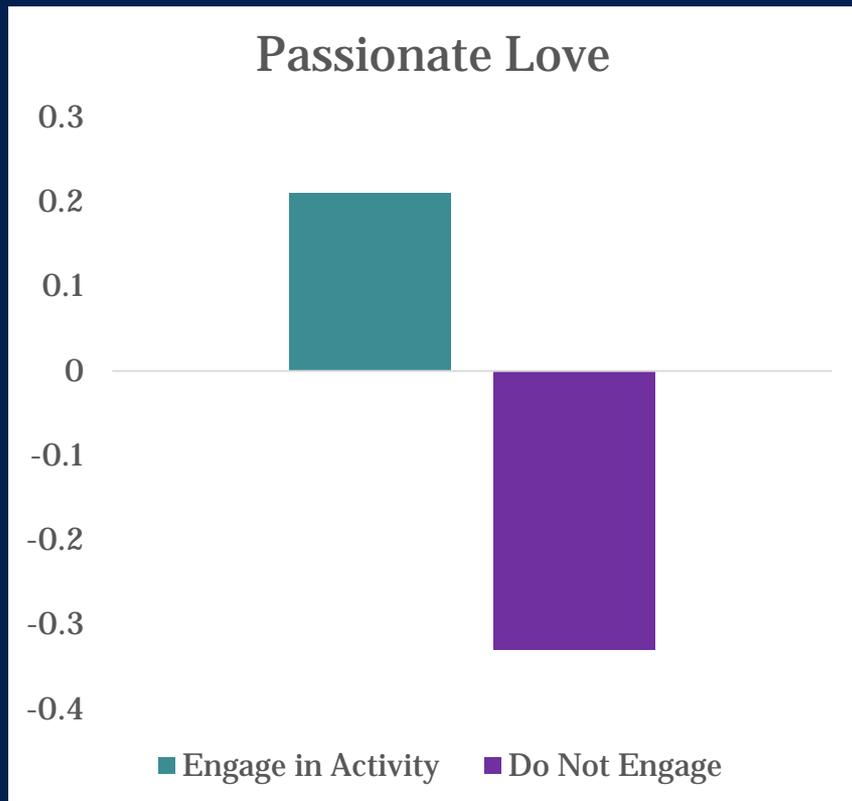
# H1: Partners who engage in leisure together will have better relationship outcomes



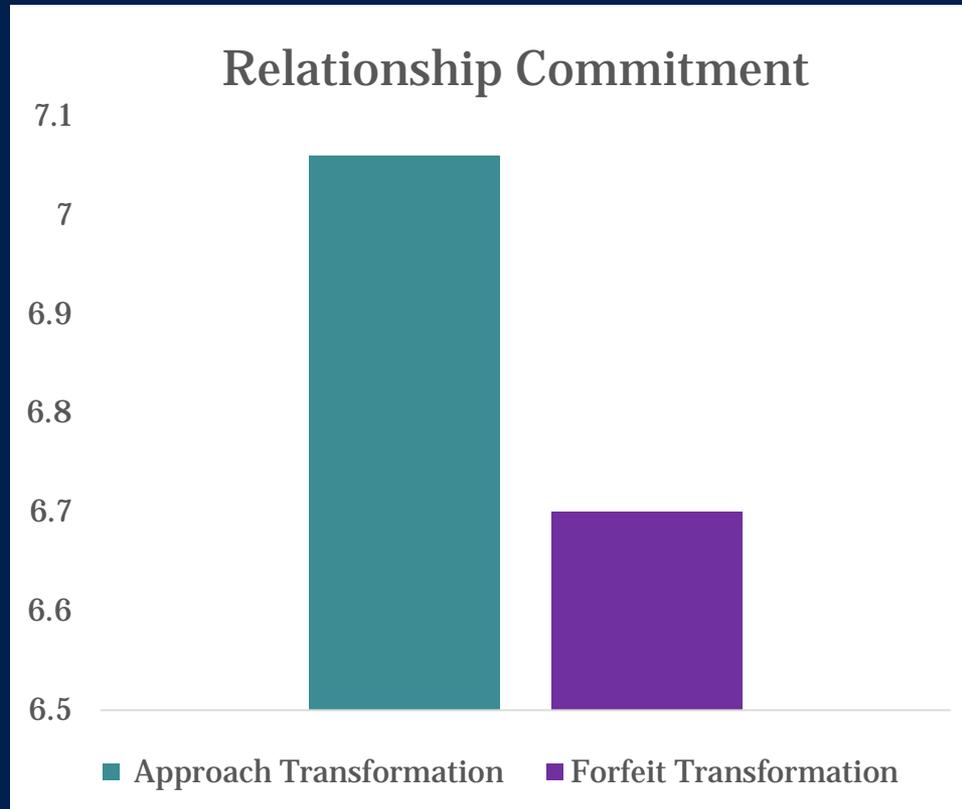
## H2: Partners with similar activity preferences will have better relationship outcomes than partners with dissimilar preferences



H3: Those who are compatible and engage in activities together will have better relationship outcomes than those who are compatible but do not.



# H4: Partners who transform by doing something they dislike with have better outcomes than those who transform by giving up something they like



# Conclusions

- Support for compatibility and interdependence theories
- Transformations as relationship maintenance
- Examining the transformation threshold



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