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Attraction Process Among Identified Sport Fans

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ATTRACTION PROCESS AMONG IDENTIFIED SPORT FANS

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Since automatic attention is given to beauty, and appearance is the first thing noticed upon meeting a person, one would assume attractiveness is the more important selection factor for a relationship partner. Theories such as the matching hypothesis and mortality salience dispute this idea. The matching hypothesis proposes selection occurs between individuals similar in attractiveness, not necessarily selecting the most attractive individual available. Mortality salience suggests attractiveness is used in selecting a partner for short-term relationships, but discounts physical attractiveness for long-term relationships. This theory proposes an ideal partner for a long-term relationship is selected based on similarity of beliefs.

Mortality salience is centered on beliefs of religious groups, with which individuals can become highly identified. Individuals can also become highly identified with a sport team. This connection can be even stronger than the connection with a religious group. Since this connection is so strong, and identification with a religious group can influence selecting a partner, identification with a sport team might have a similar influence.

This study attempts to bridge the gap from attraction and dating to sport fan identification. The first hypothesis is sport fans highly identified with the University of Kentucky men's basketball team will rate a model fan for that team as more attractive than a model fan from a rival team. The second hypothesis is those fans will rate the

model fan for the University of Kentucky's basketball team as more attractive when prompted with a long-term relationship condition as opposed to a short term condition.

Participants in this study completed demographics before being randomly assigned an opposite sex dating profile page. They were informed the website they were evaluating was either for people looking for long-term or short-term relationships. They completed a questionnaire about their opinion of the person in the profile, and the Sport Spectator Identification Scale for both the University of Kentucky and the University of Louisville men's basketball teams.

The hypotheses and previous research were not supported. This study did produce other interesting findings. The additional findings lend some support to the sociometer theory proposing self-esteem as an important relationship factor.

Introduction

Attraction and sport fandom have been examined separately in many different studies, but the relationship between attraction and sport fans has yet to be explored. To begin this examination it is important to understand the data on attraction in general, as well as how mates are selected for relationships, as the selection of a mate may be influenced by the groups with which the selector is affiliated (Kosloff, Greenberg, Sullivan, & Weise, 2010). An important group to which individuals can belong is a sport fan group, and sport fans have been shown to feel more connected to the sport fan group than other social institutions (Smith, Grieve, Zapalac, Derryberry, & Pope, 2012). Since attraction and partner selection can be influenced by these other social institutions, it is logical to deduce most sport fan groups may also influence attraction. Group affiliation and sport fandom will be discussed in detail. Finally, a description of the current study and how it incorporates the previous research will be presented.

Physical Attractiveness

The influence of physical attractiveness has been noted by the "what is beautiful is good" stereotype. The stereotype states that people with more attractive features are held in higher esteem than those with less appeal (Lewandowski, Aron, & Gee, 2007; van Leeuwen, Veling, van Baaren, & Dijksterhuis, 2009). The way a person looks leads to beliefs about that individual's personality and characteristics; whether the beliefs are factual or not. Attraction is a situation centering first on physical attractiveness. It is, after all, the first noticeable aspect of a person upon meeting (Lewandowski et al., 2007).

Beauty is automatically attended to in the brain. Even when unintentional, attention is given to an attractive face, taking away attention that should be allocated for other intended tasks. This has been demonstrated by attractiveness detracting attention

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from tasks and causing longer response times in laboratory studies (Sui & Liu, 2009).

Sui and Liu (2009) used a visual cue task to determine if facial beauty competes for attention with a task. Participants were instructed to pay attention to the center of their visual field because that is where the target image would appear. They were also instructed to ignore the face in their peripheral vision because it was not important to the task. Sui and Liu showed that participants had longer reaction times when an attractive face was presented in their peripheral visual field than when an unattractive face was presented, $t(39) = 4.21$, $p < .001$, and when a face was not presented, $t(39) = 2.75$, $p < .01$. This demonstrates unintentional, automatic attention for attractive faces.

Given the findings by Sui and Lui (2009) and the "what is beautiful is good" stereotype, it can be concluded that attractive people are noticed and given positive associations. Intuitively, one might make the assumption that, when given the choice between being around an attractive person or an unattractive person, preference would lean toward the attractive person, especially when it comes to being involved in a relationship. However, there is conflicting evidence on whether physical beauty is a key component of partner selection for a relationship. Some studies show reports of partner preference for high physical attractiveness (Luo & Zhang, 2009; Peretti & Abplanalp, 2004) while others show factors like personality, social status, and similarity are of more importance (Ha, Overbeek, & Engels, 2010; Lee, Loewenstein, Ariely, Hong, & Young, 2008; Sheldon, 2007; Taylor, Fiore, Mendelsohn, & Cheshire, 2011). This conflicting evidence has been explained by the difference between short-term and long-term relationship intentions (Kosloff et al., 2010). It has also been suggested that there is a difference between initial attraction and actually selecting a romantic partner (Luo &

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Zhang, 2009). Also contributing to the conflicting literature on attraction is research surrounding the matching hypothesis.

The matching hypothesis in regards to attraction and dating is the theory that people tend to enter into romantic relationships with people similar to themselves in attractiveness. It has been difficult to achieve results supporting the matching hypothesis and Taylor et al. (2011) suggest that this may be because the experiments were not testing whether or not the target partner would actually be selected as a mate; rather, they were testing whether the participants would prefer to have the target as a mate. The obvious answer is everyone would prefer to have the partner who is perfect in every category. The matching hypothesis suggests, even though this may be the case, the partners actually selected tend to be similar to the perceptions the selectors have of themselves.

Peretti and Abplanalp (2004) surveyed college freshmen and sophomores to gain insight into college dating habits. They specifically sought to determine the most important factors college students consider when choosing a dating partner. To assess these factors, participants were given two questionnaires to complete containing questions about chemistry and dating. The results indicate that, when college students choose a dating partner, physical attractiveness was ranked as the most important reason for wanting to start a relationship with someone. Similarity was ranked second. These results were the same for both men and women.

Much research in dating and attraction is conducted in a laboratory setting, leaving some to question the real-world application of the results (Taylor et al., 2011). Luo and Zhang (2009) conducted their research in the context of speed dating using young adults (mean age 19.5 years old), instead of solely using a laboratory setting. Over

a three-week period, participants took part in three different sessions, each one week apart. During the first week, the task was to complete a packet with background information and assessments of the measures involved in the study (political attitudes, personal values, interests, personality, affectivity, attachment, and self-esteem). During the second week the participants were involved in a speed dating event with 10, five-minute dates each. During the final week, participants were questioned on their desire to see each of their ten dates again. Luo and Zhang (2009) showed that beauty was related to reported attraction where similarity was not. These results could potentially be due to the method of the study. Speed dating is a quick method of meeting others. It is tough to learn about a person's values and to determine similarity in five minutes, but it is really easy to determine if a person is good-looking in that time. This study supports the "what is beautiful is good" stereotype, showing the preference for beauty above all else when selecting dates.

Where Peretti and Abplanalp (2004) and Luo and Zhang (2009) focused on college students, Ha et al. (2010) focused on adolescents. They found adolescents are less focused on physical attractiveness of potential dates than their personality characteristics. In secondary schools in the Netherlands, 1913 adolescents between the ages of 13 and 18 completed a questionnaire consisting of vignettes and questions about important characteristics of a potential romantic partner. The vignette was randomly manipulated to describe a person of either high or low attractiveness and either high or low social status, creating four conditions for each sex. Both male and female participants rated reliability, honesty, and kindness as the top three more important characteristics in finding a romantic partner. Attractiveness was ranked fourth for boys

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and tenth for girls. Though social status was not ranked high in importance, boy's responses demonstrated changes in dating desire given a higher social status target. In general, girls tended to have higher dating desire for the target partner having the combination of high attractiveness and high social status rather than social status alone (Ha et al., 2010).

These findings demonstrate the discrepancies in the attraction and dating literature. Both Peretti and Abplanalp (2004) and Ha et al. (2010) used laboratory settings and found attraction ranking in vastly different places. While there was an age difference between the participants in the two studies, it is difficult to imagine an attractiveness preference becoming that much more prevalent between secondary school and early college. The studies were conducted in different cultural areas (the Netherlands and the United States), which could explain some of the difference; however, there may also be other factors must be contributing to this difference. The use of the vignettes in the Ha et al. (2010) study gives more ecological validity to the prospective partners in question when participants were completing the questionnaires. When given vignettes describing personal factors, physical attractiveness fell in the rankings. Personal characteristics, then, may be involved in this difference.

Lewandowski et al. (2007) found that personality makes a difference in the perception of attractiveness. Their participants were first given pictures to rate on a scale of 1 (*extremely unattractive*) to 10 (*extremely attractive*). A distraction math task was then presented in an attempt to have the participants not remember their initial ratings of the 36 pictures. After the math task, participants were shown groups of words and were asked to rate each word group on a scale of 1 (*extremely unattractive*) to 10 (*extremely*

attractive). After the words were presented, a picture of a person was presented with groups of words, making a pair with a picture and a word set. Participants were then asked to rate the picture with the traits. Along with this rating they were asked "How much would you like to date this person?" and "How much would you like to be friends with this person?" These ratings used a scale from 1 (*not at all*) to 10 (*very much*). A main effect was found for information. When positive information was introduced, the attractiveness rating went up (*M* = 0.57). When no information was introduced, the attractiveness rating remained similar (*M* = 0.09). When negative information was introduced, the attractiveness rating went down (*M* = -.92), $F(2, 154) = 73.44$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .49$.

To test the matching hypothesis in a real life setting, Taylor et al. (2011) conducted a series of four studies, producing varying results. During Study 1, participants rated themselves on questions linked to their own self-worth. They then completed a personality measure to determine where each participant ranked on the Big Five dimensions of personality (Costa & McCrae, 1992). This was included in the creation of a pretend online dating profile by the participants. After making this profile, participants were asked to view and rate the profiles of others on a seven-point scale on two questions: how likely they would be to contact the person in the profile and the likelihood of the person in the profile responding "favorably" to any potential contact.

Consistent with the matching hypothesis, participants who rated themselves highly were more likely to want to contact the high attractiveness targets than those who rated themselves low in attractiveness. Participants rating themselves with low self-worth were more likely than those with high self-worth to want to contact the low

attractiveness target. Participants with low self-ratings did not prefer low attractiveness

targets to high attractiveness targets; they were just more willing than participants with

high self-ratings to give them a chance.

During Study 2, 120 online dating profiles were tracked to determine who the

participants contacted, who responded and who did not. Pictures from the profiles of all

parties were chosen and rated on attractiveness by outside sources. Evidence supporting

the matching hypothesis based on attractiveness was not found for the initial contacting

of users. Participants tended to contact other users with higher attractiveness ratings.

The users who responded to the initial contact, however, had similar attractiveness to the

contactor.

During Study 3, participants were recruited using an advertisement on a dating

website to ensure all participants were users of the website. When participants responded

to the advertisement, they were given a questionnaire assessing their self-worth. Several

days later they were asked to complete a survey to indicate their behavior on the site,

whether they were talking to anyone through the dating website and their intentions with

that person. Each participant's profile was examined to compute his or her popularity.

Popularity was determined by the number of unsolicited views of each participant's

profile. Taylor et al. (2011) indicated that the matching hypothesis exists in real-world

scenarios. Though men were more likely to do the approaching, $t(3072) = 20.85$, $p <$

.001, when women did the approaching, those with higher ratings of self-worth on the

first questionnaire were less likely to contact men ranked as unpopular.

The participants of Study 4 were active users of the dating website during the time

of the study. Popularity was calculated for the users of the dating website the same way

it was in Study 3. The popularity of the user was compared to the popularity of the users the participant had contact with, both initiated and reciprocated users. In general, the users tended to contact other users with similar popularity, showing support for the matching hypothesis. Popularity, however, was not associated with the success rate of contacting users.

Taylor et al. (2011) demonstrate that desire versus actual selection can be a reason for the discrepancies in attraction and dating literature. In other words, the individuals a selector actually enters into a romantic relationship with may be less attractive than the people to whom the selector actually has the strongest physical attraction. Length of the relationship has also been suggested to account for these discrepancies. Kosloff et al. (2010) found these differences in a study of the role of mortality salience in romantic relationships. Mortality salience occurs when individuals are drawn toward those who are similar and share similar views and beliefs, and avoid those who threaten those views and beliefs. The purpose of the study was to determine if people would prefer a more attractive person who does not have the same religious beliefs or a less attractive person who has the same religious beliefs. The researchers also wanted to determine if there was a difference depending on whether the relationship was anticipated to be a short-term one or long-term one.

To answer these questions, the researchers asked participants to complete questionnaires with embedded mortality salience items. They then were given two different dating profiles and were asked to answer questions aimed at determining whether or not they would be willing to date the target people on either a short-term or long-term basis, depending on the condition to which they were randomly assigned.

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Each participant received a dating profile that shared his or her own religious beliefs but was less attractive, and one that had different beliefs but was more attractive. Participants used a 1 (*strongly agree*) to 9 (*strongly disagree*) scale to complete the questions. Participants in the short-term condition reported that they wanted to date the more attractive target more than the same religion target, $F(1, 106) = 17.89$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.18$. Participants in the long-term condition reported that they wanted to date the same religion target more than the more attractive target, $F(1, 106) = 7.11$, $p < .05$, $d = 1.07$.

Kosloff et al. (2010) show the difference between selection for short-term and long-term relationships. For short-term relationships, people are more willing to forego the similarity in beliefs and values for the status symbol of being associated with the more attractive partner. In contrast, in long-term relationships people tend to want more than just a status symbol in a partner. When people think about a lasting relationship, they think about sharing similar world views, perhaps because they feel those similarities will outlast the desire to be with a more attractive partner.

During a short-term relationship, a couple may not have the time or desire to express their views and beliefs. If the relationship is not intended to last over a long-term period, views and beliefs are less important. What is more important is the self-esteem boost one gains from being associated with an attractive partner. A long-term relationship, in contrast, must be less superficial because there is more time and desire to consider the views and beliefs that are important to each person in the relationship. The important aspect of this relationship is the reaffirmation of beliefs (Kosloff et al., 2010).

Group Affiliation

The mortality salience phenomenon was also shown with religious beliefs (Kosloff et al., 2010). Groups are formed around beliefs and affiliation with these groups allows members to reaffirm their own beliefs and boost their self-esteem. Sport teams are another group with which people can be affiliated. Affiliation with a sport team, has been shown to be important to self-esteem and self-worth (Wann, 2006). Being part of a group with similar beliefs reaffirms the individual's beliefs, similar to the reaffirmation of beliefs one experiences in a relationship with someone with similar beliefs.

Any group with which an individual can become affiliated can encounter other groups that are different. The different group is considered the out-group, as opposed to the in-group, which is the group to which the individual belongs (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Attitudes toward out-groups have been shown to be more negative the more connected to the in-group the individual feels (Mertan, 2011; Wann & Grieve, 2005; Wann et al., 2012). Mertan (2011) demonstrated that out-group negativity is seen in individuals as young as six years old. He found school-aged children living in Cyprus, a country with a great amount of unrest between the Turkish and Greek groups living in it, exhibit out-group negativity. The Turkish-Cypriot children, when asked to give positive and negative attributes to different groups, gave more negative attributes to the Greek-Cypriot group (the out-group) than the Turkish-Cypriot (the in-group) and two neutral groups.

Sport Fandom

The extent to which an individual group member feels psychological attachment to a group is an individual's identification with that group. Higher identification indicates greater psychological attachment than lower identification (Wann, Melnick, Russell, & Pease, 2001). High identification with a local sport team has been linked to a

whole host of positive social psychological health benefits, including better self-esteem, and social well-being (Wann, 2006). When attending a sporting event for the team they follow, highly identified sport team fans experience lower stress levels (Lee, 2011) and lower levels of loneliness and higher satisfaction (Wann, Martin, Grieve, & Gardner, 2008) than when watching the sporting event from home than do fans with low levels of identification.

This identification with a sport team is similar to, and sometimes even stronger than, the identification individuals may have with other social institutions (Smith et al., 2012). Smith et al. (2012) demonstrated this phenomenon in a study having participants complete items measuring stress, self-concept, need for affiliation, and identification with each of the following social institutions: (a) sport team, (b) religious group, (c) school activity, (d) social/community activity, (e) occupation, and (d) community involvement. Results from this study show that participants' level of identification with a sport team can be higher than identification with religious groups, school activities, and community involvement. The level of identification with a sport team was comparable to that with an occupation and social activities. Smith and colleagues (2012) show the comparison between identification with a sport team and other social institutions. Being part of a sport fan group is similar to other social institutions, and fans tend to be more identified with a sport team than with a religious group.

Wann et al. (2012) show highly identified sport fans trust others in their in-group, the fans of their favored team, compared to those in the out-group, the fans of the rival team. To demonstrate this, sport fans completed questionnaire packets that included the Sport Spectator Identification Scale (SSIS, Wann & Branscombe, 1993) and items

assessing trustworthiness. Participants reported greater trust in in-group fans ($M = 28.31$, $SD = 5.36$) than they put in out-group fans ($M = 24.16$, $SD = 6.63$). This trust difference was influenced by level of identification. The higher the identification, the more the fans trust the in-group and the less they trust the out-group (Wann et al., 2012).

Feelings of threat, like distrust, are also influenced by identification with an in-group. Wann and Grieve (2005) examined this threat level felt by sport fans in situations where the sport team is playing poorly and/or losing at home. They also examined whether this threat is intensified by level of identification with the sport team. Upon the conclusion of four different basketball games, researchers asked 148 spectators to complete a questionnaire targeted toward the team they were supporting during that particular contest. The questionnaire included the SSIS and questions designed to assess the participant's feelings toward the other fans of the team they supported and the fans of the opposing team. Fans rated their fellow fans more positively ($M = 6.81$, $SD = 1.30$) than they rated the rival fans ($M = 5.81$, $SD = 1.84$), $t(147) = 6.91$, $p < .001$. A greater amount of in-group favoritism was reported after a win ($M = 1.05$, $SD = 2.03$) than after a loss ($M = .95$, $SD = 1.36$), $F(1, 140) = 4.02$, $p < .05$. The in-group favoritism was also shown more during home games ($M = 1.09$, $SD = 1.99$) than at away games ($M = .87$, $SD = 1.30$), $F(1, 140) = 4.82$, $p < .05$.

Limitations of the Past Research

Affiliation has been linked to attraction. People, possibly without knowing it, imitate attractive people more than unattractive people. This imitation has been suggested to be due to a drive for affiliation with attractive individuals. The desire to be affiliated with a certain individual or group can lead to imitation of that individual or

group, perhaps in hopes of this imitation leading to integration into the in-group (Funk & James, 2001; van Leeuwen et al., 2009).

The attraction and dating literature has covered similarity in personality, beliefs, and physical appearance, but sport fandom group affiliation has yet to be studied in that context. Sport fans can be even more passionate about their affiliation with a sport team than some can be about their spiritual or other social affiliation (Smith et al., 2012). Affiliation with each of these groups has been the cause for extreme emotional outbursts, both positive and negative (Wann, Schrader, & Adamson, 1998) and anything people are that passionate about can possibly be consideration for a reason for attraction and dating decision.

Present Study

The present study combines the attraction and dating literature with the sport fandom literature in an attempt to find a connection between the two. Based on the work of Kosloff et al. (2010) and Smith et al. (2012), this study examines the relationship between attraction and sport fans. If individuals are more willing to participate in a long-term relationship in which the partner shares his or her beliefs, such as religious views (Kosloff et al., 2010), and sport fan identification is stronger than the identification with a religious group (Smith et al., 2012), then sport fan identification may have implications for romantic relationships in which sport fans are involved. Highly identified sport fans may hold the sport team affiliation of a potential mate in higher regard than that potential mate's physical attractiveness. That being said, Hypothesis 1 for this study is that highly identified fans will rate the University of Kentucky (UK) model as more attractive than the University of Louisville (U of L) model. There will be no differences in liking for

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fans with low identification. Hypothesis 2 for this study is that highly identified fans will

be more attracted to the University of Kentucky model in the long-term relationship

condition than fans with low identification.

Method

Participants and Design

Participants were recruited through the Western Kentucky University Department of Psychology Study Board. A total of 235 participants completed the study. However, 38 participants were excluded for failing the manipulation checks and three were excluded for knowing the models, leaving 194 participants for data analysis. The ages ranged from 18 to 35 ($M = 19.93$) with 72.7% female participants. Participants were 76% Caucasian, 16% African American, and 8% listed as other. The majority of participants had never been married, with 4.1% indicating married/divorced, 42.3 % in a relationship, 33% single, not looking, and 20.1 % single, looking for a relationship. Participants were recruited from Introduction to Psychology classes and may have received course credit or extra credit in other courses for participation at the discretion of their instructors.

Materials

Pictures. The stimuli for the study included six profile photographs. The profile photographs consisted of a male student wearing a University of Kentucky shirt, a picture of the same male student wearing a rival team's (University of Louisville) shirt, and a picture of the same male student wearing a blank gray shirt. Those same pictures were replicated with a female student. The models were selected to be of average attractiveness. (Insert attraction score here). The pictures were imbedded in an imitation web page for a dating site and were displayed on a laminated printout sheet for the participants.

Measures

  Demographics. The participants in this study were asked to provide demographic information. They indicated their age, race or ethnicity, gender, education level, and relationship status. Age was a blank to complete, but the other items had options to circle. See Appendix A.

  Sports Spectator Identification Scale. This measure (SSIS, Wann & Branscombe, 1993) was used to determine the level of identification the participants held for two teams. The target teams were the University of Kentucky men's basketball team and the University of Louisville men's basketball team. The SSIS consists of seven statements referring to the extent to which the participant is a fan and the participant responds to each statement from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 8 (*strongly agree*). For example, one item on the SSIS is "How important to you is it that the University of Kentucky/University of Louisville men's basketball team wins?" The SSIS is scored by summing the response for each question. Participants are considered more highly identified with a larger total score and less identified with a smaller score. Low identification does not indicate hostility toward a team. The SSIS was chosen because of its Cronbach's standardized reliability coefficient, r (49) = .60, and internal consistency (seven items; α = .91). See Appendix B.

  Attractiveness and dating. The rest of the questionnaire consisted of 10 questions and was used to measure the participants' perception of the person in the picture. The participants ranked the questions from 1 (*not very*) to 8 (*very*). For example, for the question, "How likely would you be to date this person," the participant selected an answer between 1 (*not very likely*) and 8 (*very likely*). See Appendix C.

Procedure

Prior to conducting the main study, a small pilot study was conducted to determine the team current University of Kentucky basketball fans felt was the biggest rival. Participants were given the SSIS for the University of Kentucky men's basketball team and then asked to list the biggest rivals of the University of Kentucky men's basketball team. There were 21 participants with high identification in this pilot study. The University of Louisville men's basketball team was selected as the biggest rival by 17 of these participants, so this team was used as the rival condition for the main study.

This study was proposed to participants as an attraction and dating study. Participants were recruited through the Department of Psychology Study Board and selected a timeslot to participate. Upon arrival to the testing site, they were given an informed consent form (see Appendix D) to read that indicated, by accepting the questionnaire packet, participants consented to participate. First, participants completed a brief demographic page. They were then randomly assigned two view one of the three pictures of the opposite sex and a description with the rationale of evaluating a dating site. Participants were randomly assigned to a condition for the explanation of the dating site. They were either told that the dating site was either for people looking for casual dating or for people looking for long-term relationships. Finally, participants completed a questionnaire about their feelings on the person in the picture under the pretense they are not currently involved in a relationship. Upon completion of the questionnaire, participants completed the SSIS for the University of Kentucky men's basketball team and then for the University of Louisville men's basketball team. They were then debriefed. The study had a duration of approximately 30 minutes.

Preliminary Analyses

To determine high and low fandom of the University of Kentucky (UK) basketball team, identification was calculated by the summation of the seven items on the SSIS. The identification scores were then separated into high and low identification, with high scores meaning high identification and low scores meaning low identification, by using a median split at the median of 18.5. An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare high UK identification with low UK identification. There was a significant difference between the SSIS scores for high ($M = 41.60$, $SD = 10.11$) and low identification ($M = 11.18$, $SD = 4.61$), $t(122) = -21.44$, $p < .001$. The SSIS consisted of seven items and was a reliable measure ($\alpha = .97$).

To determine high and low fandom of the University of Louisville (U of L) basketball team, identification was calculated by the summation of the seven items on the SSIS. The identification scores were then separated into high and low identification, with high scores meaning high identification and low scores meaning low identification, by using a median split at the median of 8.5. An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare high U of L identification with low U of L identification. There was a significant difference between the SSIS scores for high ($M = 23.59$, $SD = 15.12$) and low identification ($M = 7.20$, $SD = 0.40$), $t(192) = -10.62$, $p < .001$. The SSIS consisted of seven items and was a reliable measure ($\alpha = .96$).

Item 7 of the Attraction and Dating scale asks how attractive the participant finds the person in the profile on a scale of 1 (not very attractive) to 8 (very attractive). This item was used alone to determine the overall attractiveness of each model. The scores for

both the male and female model ranged from 1 to 8. Both the male model (M = 4.70, SD = 1.71) and the female model (M = 6.09, SD = 1.52) were ranked overall at about average attractiveness.

The Attraction and Dating scale consisted of 12 items and was a reliable measure (α = .84). Using a factor analysis, the Attraction and Dating scale was separated into three subscales: Attraction (α = .85), Personal (α = .79), and Self (α = .69). Attraction includes four questions concerning how much the participant likes the person in the dating profile. For example, one item on the Attraction subscale is "How attractive is this person?" Personal includes four questions concerning how the participant perceives the personal characteristics of the person in the dating profile. For example, one item on the Personal subscale is "How likely is this person to be a good person?" Self includes four questions concerning how the person in the dating profile might perceive the participant. For example, one item on the Self subscale is "How attractive would this person find you?"

Evaluating Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1 for this study stated that highly identified UK fans will rate the University of Kentucky model as more attractive than the University of Louisville model and there will be no differences in liking for fans with low identification. To test Hypothesis 1, a 2 (Time: long term vs short term) x 2 (UK Identification: High vs Low) x 3 (Profile: UK vs U of L vs Black) MANOVA was computed. The interaction between identification and profile was not significant, p = .12, partial η^2 = .028.

To determine whether or not there was a difference in liking for fans with low identifications, an independent samples t-test was performed with only the scores from

those who ranked low in identification. There was no significant difference between the scores on the Attraction subscale for the UK profile ($M = 14.78$, $SD = 5.28$) and U of L profile ($M = 15.07$, $SD = 5.13$), t (69) = -.229, p = .82. There was no significant difference between the scores on the Personal subscale for the UK profile ($M = 23.5$, $SD = 4.32$) and U of L profile ($M = 23.16$, $SD = 3.72$), t (71) = .350, p = .73. There was no significant difference between the scores on the Self subscale for the UK profile ($M = 15.76$, $SD = 5.13$) and U of L profile ($M = 17.33$, $SD = 4.20$), t (70) = -1.38, p = .17.

Evaluating Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 for this study stated that highly identified fans will be more attracted to the University of Kentucky model in the long-term relationship condition than fans with low identification. The same MANOVA was used to test Hypothesis 2. The interaction between Identification, Profile, and Time was not significant, p = .12, partial η^2 = .028.

Other Interesting Findings

As shown in Table 1, for the same MANOVA using UK SSIS, there was a significant main effect of Profile, $F(6, 305) = 2.19$, p = .04, partial η^2 =.036. There was also a significant main effect of Identification, $F(3, 175) = 3.62$, p = .01, partial η^2 =.058. Main effects for Identification were found on all three subsets: Attraction, $F(1, 177) = 5.35$, p = .02, partial η^2 =.029, Self, $F(1, 177) = 5.27$, p = .02, partial η^2 = .29, and Personal, $F(7, 177) = 7.11$, $p < .01$, partial η^2 =.29.

Table 1
Means for Main Effect of Identification using UK SSIS

Identification	Attraction and Dating Score		
	Attraction	Self	Personal
High	17.11 (0.65)	17.57 (0.52)	24.36 (0.41)
Low	15.01 (0.64)	15.89 (0.51)	22.81 (0.41)

A significant interaction between Profile and Time was found for the Self subset, $F(2, 177) = 4.49$, $p = .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .048$ (see Table 2).

Table 2
Means for Profile x Time Interaction using UK SSIS

Time	Score On Self Subset		
	UK Profile	U of L Profile	Control Profile
Long	14.13 (0.78)	17.76 (0.81)	16.29 (1.11)
Short	17.81 (0.77)	16.56 (0.89)	17.83 (0.97)

A significant 3-way interaction was found between Profile, Time, and Identification for the Personal subset, $F(2, 177) = 3.57$, $p = .03$, partial $\eta^2 = .039$ (see Table 3).

Table 3
Means for Profile x Time x Identification Interaction using UK SSIS

	High UK Identification			Low UK Identification		
Time	UK Profile	U of L Profile	Control Profile	UK Profile	U of L Profile	Control Profile
Long	24.48	24.95	22.29	22.68	24.06	23.21
	(.87)	(.89)	(1.43)	(.87)	(.92)	(1.01)
Short	23.53	25.83	25.06	23.91	21.50	21.50
	(.92)	(.89)	(.95)	(.81)	(1.09)	(1.20)

Since data was collected using the SSIS for the University of Louisville's basketball team, an exploratory 2 (Time: long term vs short term) x 2 (U of L Identification: High vs Low) x 3 (Profile: UK vs U of L vs Black) MANOVA was computed. There was a significant overall main effect for Time, $F(3, 175) = 2.95$, $p = .03$, partial $\eta^2 = .048$. A significant main effect for Time was found on the Self subset of the Attraction and Dating Scale, $F(1, 188) = 6.39$, $p = .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .035$, Long Term ($M = 15.82$, $SD = .53$), Short Term ($M = 17.67$, $SD = .51$).

A significant main effect of Identification was found on the Attraction subset of the Attraction and Dating Scale, $F(1, 188) = 4.64$, $p = .03$, partial $\eta^2 = .026$, High Identification ($M = 16.95$, $SD = .63$), Low Identification ($M = 15.01$, $SD = .64$).

A significant interaction between Profile and Time was found for the Self subset, $F(2, 177) = 3.91$, $p = .02$, partial $\eta^2 = .042$ (see Table 4).

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Table 4
Means for Profile x Time Interaction using UofL SSIS

	Score On Self Subset		
Time	UK Profile	U of L Profile	Control Profile
Long	14.10 (.79)	17.58 (.83)	15.78 (1.08)
Short	17.77 (.78)	16.75 (.89)	18.48 (.96)

A significant interaction between Time and Identification was found for the Self subset, $F(1, 177) = 4.40$, $p = .04$, partial $\eta^2 = .024$ (see Table 5).

Table 5
Means for Time x Identification Interaction using UofL SSIS

	Score On Self Subset	
Time	High Identification	Low Identification
Long	17.02 (.70)	14.62 (.79)
Short	17.34 (.75)	18.00 (.69)

To further explore the results, Identification was broken down into four subgroups: high identification with both UK and U of L (HiHi: $N = 39$), high identification with UK/low identification with U of L (HiUK: $N = 56$), low identification with UK/high identification with U of L (LoUK: $N = 57$), and low identification with both UK and U of L (LoLo: $N = 57$). Using this new variable an exploratory 2 (Time: long term vs short term) x 3 (Profile: UK vs U of L vs Black) x 4 (Identification: HiHi vs HiUK vs LoUK vs LoLo) MANOVA was computed. A significant main effect of Time for Self was found $F(1, 165) = 6.35$, $p = .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .037$, Long Term ($M = 15.79$, $SD = .56$), Short Term ($M = 17.72$, $SD = .53$).

A significant main effect of Identification for the subset Attraction was found F(3, 165) = 3.57, p = .02, partial η^2 =.061, HiHi (M = 18.79, SD = .97), HiUK (M = 15.61, SD = .97), LoUK (M = 15.53, SD = .81), LoLo (M = 14.53, SD = 1.05).

A significant interaction between Profile and Time was found for the Self subset, F(3, 165) = 4.81, p < .01, partial η^2 =.055 (see Table 6).

Table 6
Means for Profile x Time Interaction for Split Identification Subgroups

	Score On Self Subset		
Time	UK Profile	U of L Profile	Control Profile
Long Term	13.80 (.80)	17.64 (.85)	15.91 (1.19)
Short Term	17.90 (.79)	16.61 (.91)	18.66 (1.05)

A significant interaction between Time and Identification was found for the Self subset, F(3, 165) = 3.25, p = .02, partial η^2 =.056 (see Table 7).

Table 7
Means for Time x Identification Interaction for Split Identification Subgroups

	Score On Self Subset			
Time	HiHi	HiUK	LoUK	LoLo
Long	16.79 (1.07)	15.26 (1.33)	17.17 (.89)	13.92 (1.11)
Short	20.06 (1.14)	18.27 (.83)	15.35 (.97)	17.21 (1.27)

A significant 3-way interaction was found between Profile, Time, and Identification for the Personal subset, F(6, 165) = 2.17, p = .05, partial η^2 =.073 (see Table 8).

Table 8
Means for Profile x Time x Identification Interaction for Split Identification Subgroups

Identification	Long Term			Short Term		
	UK Profile	U of L Profile	Control Profile	UK Profile	U of L Profile	Control Profile
HiHi	25.13	24.50	23.00	22.17	27.57	25.00
	(1.36)	(1.36)	(1.72)	(1.57)	(1.45)	(1.72)
HiUK	24.00	25.30	20.50	24.27	24.73	25.09
	(1.16)	(1.21)	(2.71)	(1.16)	(1.16)	(1.16)
LoUK	22.75	23.75	24.00	23.17	22.14	20.86
	(1.11)	(1.11)	(1.45)	(1.11)	(1.45)	(1.45)
LoLo	24.80	24.80	22.43	24.80	20.60	23.00
	(0.72)	(1.72)	(1.45)	(1.12)	(1.72)	(2.22)

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to view attraction and dating from a sport fan perspective. Based on previous literature in sport fan identification and literature in attraction and dating, a similar factor was identified in strength of identification. People are more willing to enter into long term relationships with a partner having similar religious beliefs, and being identified with a sport team can be stronger than being identified with a religion. This shared factor of strength of identification lead to the hypotheses that highly identified sport fans would use sport team affiliation as more important than physical attractiveness when judging the dating potential of an unknown person

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1 for this study stated that highly identified University of Kentucky fans will rate the University of Kentucky model as more attractive than the University of Louisville model and there will be no differences in liking for fans with low identification. The interaction between identification and profile was not significant; therefore, this hypothesis was not supported.

Hypothesis 2 for this study stated that highly identified University of Kentucky fans will be more attracted to the University of Kentucky model in the long-term relationship condition than fans with low identification. The interaction between Identification, Profile, and Time was not significant; therefore, this hypothesis was not supported. These findings do not support the mortality salience theory (Kosloff et al., 2010).

Both hypotheses involve the mortality salience theory. This idea of mortality salience is found when there is a threat to one's beliefs. Since rivalry in sports is "a fluctuating adversarial relationship existing between two teams, players, or groups of fans, gaining significance through on-field competition, on-field or off-field incidences, proximity, demographic makeup, and/or historical occurrence(s)," (Havard, Gray, Gould, Sharp, & Shaffer, 2013), the adversarial relationship should present a threat to the belief of a fan that his or her favorite sport team is the best. The rivalry element is concerning, as 19% of participants were high in identification with both UK and U of L. Individuals who are highly identified with one of the rival teams should not also be highly identified with the competition. The results of this study seem to indicate the fans of the selected teams (UK and U of L) do not perceive this relationship between the two teams as a rivalry at this time. Perhaps the University of Kentucky fans did not find the University of Louisville fans as threatening as proposed. A rivalry in which the University of Kentucky fans feel more threatened by could yield different results. This could include a rivalry in which the University of Kentucky basketball team is on the losing end, a longer standing rivalry, or even making the model's passion for the rival team more apparent. Duke, another long-time rival of UK, could possibly yield different results.

Other Interesting Findings

Though the data did not support the hypotheses, exploratory analyses resulted in some unanticipated interesting findings. The first is that those with high UK Identification rated the models more positively in all three subsets of the ADS than those with low UK Identification.

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Another interesting finding is that those in the Long Term condition had lower ratings of themselves through the attraction and dating scale than those in the Short Term condition. When taking identification into account, however, these results are different. Those with high identification for U of L had a similar score on the Self subset, but those with low identification scored much lower in the Long Term condition than in the Short Term condition. Identification with the University of Kentucky did not yield the same results.

Evolutionary psychology might be able to begin to explain the results using the sociometer theory. The sociometer theory says that self-esteem is an assessment of both current and prospective relationships (Bale, 2013). The majority of the college students who participated in this study were not involved in long-term relationships. Not having a framework for assessment of these types of relationships might have influenced perceptions of the ability to be a prospective participant in long term relationships. Bale (2013) found self-perception of attractiveness qualities predicted self-esteem. High identification is associated with higher self-esteem (Wann, 2006). Participants in the current study who had higher levels of identification, and presumably self-esteem, were not affected by the Time manipulation. Those participants having low levels of identification, however, could possibly have lower self-esteem, explaining the relationship between low identification and the lower score on the Self subset in the long-term relationship condition. Sciangula and Morry (2009) echo this idea, finding that, regarding traits important to successful relationships, those with higher self-esteem participate in self-enhancement and the opposite occurs with those with lower self-esteem. Self-enhancement and high self-esteem lead to relationship satisfaction. These

are important factors to consider when examining current relationships, but they can also be used to examine relationship initiation if those with low self-esteem start out feeling less than adequate, as displayed in the results of this study. Self-esteem was not measured in the present study, so this needs to be explored further.

Implications

While these findings do not support the hypotheses attempting to show a direct relationship between sport fandom and attraction, they do begin to display an indirect relationship between the two with self-esteem at the center. The implications of these findings might support the importance of self-esteem. Further research needs to be conducted, but the relationship between relationships and sports fan identification seems to be more self-esteem related rather than surface-related with attraction. If this is the case, identification with a sport team might be useful in improving relationships by improving self-esteem since those with higher self-esteem are more likely to be satisfied in a relationship (Morry, 2009).

Limitations

A great limitation of this study was the mindset of the participants. Having a printout of a dating website page is not very realistic to the participants. Since the control profile was rated as the most attractive for all fans, the basketball shirt might have been distracting. Future studies could create a more realistic environment so that the participants are more focused on the judgments they would make if they were actually going to reach out to someone on the website.

Another limitation was time of year. Some data was collected during the spring semester, the same time as a basketball season, but the other data was collected during

the fall semester. The teams and rivalries could be more relevant during the spring

semester and basketball season, rather than the fall semester during football season.

A final limitation concerns the identification of the participants. There were very

few participants who reported high levels of identification with only one team. A greater

participant number might allow for examining those groups without the data from

participants who scored high in identification for both teams.

Future Research

This study only gave participants one profile to view and evaluate, and given the

scores on the question regarding the physical attractiveness of the person in the profile,

the pictures may have been too attractive for the participants to care about the team being

supported in the profile. Future research could explore this avenue, displaying a less

positive image, like a person of lower attractiveness or even several profiles to choose

from. Future research could also incorporate negative traits of the person with the team

selection, such as portraying the pictures as an arrest photo instead of a dating website.

Attitudes for selecting a partner for a long-term relationship might also differ

based on the extreme to which the participants are considering the relationship. If

participants are thinking about a long-term relationship only as far as introducing a

partner to his or her family, the sport fan identification might be important. To a further

extreme, if the participant is considering long-term relationship as far as having children,

sport fan identification might matter less than religious choice. To address this, future

research could include both religious group identification and sport fan identification to

directly measure the two against each other. Using a scenario tool, such as vignettes, to

firmly describe the type of relationship the participant is to consider could make the long-term versus short-term relationship manipulation more meaningful.

Conclusions

This study, while not supporting the original hypotheses, managed to display an indirect relationship between dating and sport fan identification. The original intent was to use attraction to show this relationship, but instead, it appears as if the relationship is stemming from the participant's view of him or herself, as opposed to his or her view of a model in an online dating profile. While not finding support for either mortality salience or the matching hypothesis, the findings do show support for the sociometer theory.

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APPENDIX A: DEMOGRAPHICS

Please complete the following information.

Age: _____

Race/Ethnicity: Caucasian   African American   Hispanic   Asian   Other

Gender: male   female

Education Level: Freshman   Sophomore   Junior   Senior   Graduate student

Marital Status: Married   Divorced   Widowed   In a relationship

Single, not looking   Single, looking for a relationship

APPENDIX B: SPORT SPECTATOR IDENTIFICATION SCALE FOR THE

UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY BASKETBALL TEAM

Please answer the following questions based on your feelings for the University of Kentucky's basketball team. There are no "right" or "wrong: answers, simply be honest in your responses. (circle your answer)

1. How important to YOU is it that the University of Kentucky's basketball team wins?

Not important 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8 Very important

2. How strongly to YOU see YOURSELF as a fan of the University of Kentucky's basketball team?

Not at all a fan 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   Very much a fan

3. How strongly to your FRIENDS see YOU as a fan of the University of Kentucky's basketball team?

Not important 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8 Very important

4. During the season, how closely do you follow the University of Kentucky's basketball team via ANY of the following: a) in person or on television, b) on the radio, c) television news or newspaper, and/or d) the internet?

Not important 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8 Very important

5. How important is being a fan of the University of Kentucky's basketball team to YOU?

Not important 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8 Very important

6. How much do YOU dislike the University of Kentucky's basketball team's greatest rivals?

Not important 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8 Very important

7. How often do YOU display the University of Kentucky's basketball team's name or insignia at your place of work, where you live, or on your clothing?

Not important 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8 Very important

APPENDIX C: ATTRACTIVENESS AND DATING SCALE

Directions: Read the questions and answer each one with how you feel about the person in the picture provided. There are no "right" or "wrong: answers, simply be honest in your responses. (circle your answer)

1. How intelligent is this person?
Not Very Intelligent   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   Very Intelligent

2. How likely would you be to date this person?
Not Very Likely   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   Very Likely

3. How likely is this person to date you?
Not Very Likely   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   Very Likely

4. How satisfied is this person with their life?
Not Very Satisfied   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   Very Satisfied

5. How likely is this person to be a good person?
Not Very Likely   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   Very Likely

6. How likely is this person to be a bad person?
Not Very Likely   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   Very Likely

7. How attractive is this person?
Not Very Attractive   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   Very Attractive

8. How attractive would this person find you?
Not Very Attractive   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   Very Attractive

9. How much do you like this person?
Not Very Much   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   Very Much

10. How much would this person like you?
Not Very Much   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   Very Much

11. How likely would you be to marry this person?
Not Very Likely   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   Very Likely

12. How likely is this person to marry you?
Not Very Likely   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   Very Likely

13. Have you seen this person before?   YES   NO

14. Do you know this person?   YES   NO

APPENDIX D: INFORMED CONSENT

Cover Letter- Informed Consent

You are being asked to participate in a survey research project. As such, we would like you to have an understanding of the following:

1. The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of attraction and dating.
2. You will respond to statements about your attraction to a particular person. Completing all materials should take approximately 30 minutes.
3. There are no foreseeable risks associated with your participation in this research. However, you are free to discontinue participation in the study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits. You may also freely decline to answer any of the questions asked of you.
4. Your participation in this study does not guarantee any beneficial results. You may receive Study Board credit as a result of your participation.
5. The responses that you provide today will be kept completely anonymous. At no time will your name or any other identifying information be associated with any of the data that you generate today. In addition, the researcher will never identify you personally in any report of this research. Within these restrictions, results of the study will be made available to you upon request. Although your individual responses will not be made public (i.e., they will remain anonymous), your data will be combined with the data of others and submitted for presentation at conventions and/or publication in scholarly journals.
6. If you have questions about the research project, please direct them to Dr. Rick Grieve in GRH 3028. You can contact him by phone Monday through Friday from 8:30 am until 4:30 pm at 270-745-4417 or via e-mail at rick.grieve@wku.edu

THIS PROJECT HAS BEEN REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY THE WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS. ANY QUESTIONS PERTAINING TO YOUR RIGHTS AS A PARTICIPANT, OR ACTIVITY-RELATED INJURY SHOULD BE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE IRB ADMINISTRATOR AT (270) 745-2129.

APPENDIX E: SPORT SPECTATOR IDENTIFICATION SCALE FOR THE

UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE BASKETBALL TEAM

Please answer the following questions based on your feelings for the University of Louisville's basketball team. There are no "right" or "wrong: answers, simply be honest in your responses. (circle your answer)

1. How important to YOU is it that the University of Louisville's basketball team wins?

Not important 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8 Very important

2. How strongly to YOU see YOURSELF as a fan of the University of Louisville's basketball team?

Not at all a fan 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   Very much a fan

3. How strongly to your FRIENDS see YOU as a fan of the University of Louisville's basketball team?

Not important 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8 Very important

4. During the season, how closely do you follow the University of Louisville's basketball team via ANY of the following: a) in person or on television, b) on the radio, c) television news or newspaper, and/or d) the internet?

Not important 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8 Very important

5. How important is being a fan of the University of Louisville's basketball team to YOU?

Not important 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8 Very important

6. How much do YOU dislike the University of Louisville's basketball team's greatest rivals?

Not important 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8 Very important

7. How often do YOU display the University of Louisville's basketball team's name or insignia at your place of work, where you live, or on your clothing?

Not important 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8 Very important

APPENDIX F: SPORT OPINION QUESTIONS

1. What percentage of **men** are sport fans?   _____

2. What percentage of **women** are sport fans?   _____

3. What is the University of Kentucky basketball team's biggest rival?

_____

4. What is the University of Louisville basketball team's biggest rival?

_____