AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

___ Rena R. Cole ___ for the ___ Master of Science ___

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Title: Variables Affecting Mate Selection

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This study examines mate selection from an evolutionary
standpoint. Variables such as gender role orientation and
impostor characteristics are considered as well.
Participants completed questionnaires concerning their
preference for a mate. Gender role orientation was measured
using the Personal Attributes Questionnaire (Spence,
Helmreich, & Stapp, 1974). Impostor characteristics were
measured by the Clance (1985) Impostor Phenomenon Scale.
The results revealed that men do prefer women to be more
physically attractive than themselves and similar in age.
Women were found to prefer their mates to be older than
themselves and the same in terms of successfulness. No
differences were found between the different gender role
orientations or high and low impostors in terms of selecting
a mate. Possible explanations and implications of these
findings are discussed.

VARIABLES AFFECTING MATE SELECTION

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A Thesis

Presented to

the Division of Psychology and Special Education

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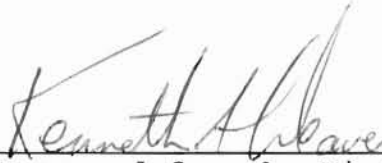
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Darwin's (1859) <u>On the Origin of Species by Means of</u> <u>Natural Selection</u> introduced the concept of natural selection which shocked the scientific community. Natural selection can be thought of as "survival of the fittest," where only the strongest individuals survive. Less-suited or weaker organisms unable to survive are not able to pass on their genetic endowments to offspring and as a result will eventually become extinct. According to Barash (1977), natural selection may be formally defined as the differential reproduction of individuals within a species from one generation to the next. The constant adaptation of the species is what constitutes evolution, resulting in competition among members of the same species for the same reproductive resources.

Researchers (e.g., Bower, 1991; Buss, 1985, 1988, 1993, 1994; Feingold, 1991) have begun to study many topics in psychology from an evoluntionary standpoint. Evolutionary psychology concerns itself with identifying the behavioral strategies and psychological mechanisms that have evolved into answers to the adaptive difficulties our species has faced (Bower, 1991). For instance, some psychologists believe Darwinian principles can be applied to other areas of psychology such as personality and social

psychology. Hence, evolutionary theories attempting to explain human mate selection have emerged.

Leading this movement, Buss (1994) surveyed the preferences for mates of over 100,000 individuals in 37 countries. Through this investigation, Buss concluded that contrary to previous belief, mating patterns tend to vary from culture to culture.

Researchers interested in the underlying mechanisms of mate selection have had only a vague understanding of the issues and factors involved in this process. Current researchers, most notably Buss (1985, 1988, 1993, 1994), have contributed greatly to our increased understanding of the process of mate selection.

Human mate selection is a phenomenon that affects nearly every individual. Since more than 90% of all people in all societies marry at some point in their lives (Buss, 1985), mate selection is a topic necessitating a thorough research base to provide an adequate understanding of the process.

The purpose of this research is to explore whether physical attractiveness, age, and success, as well as certain personality attributes such as gender role orientation and impostor characteristics affect mate selection. The intention of the study is to provide information to professionals (e.g., clinical psychologists,

sociologists, biologists) regarding mate selection strategies for both sexes.

Gender Differences in Mate Selection

Through evolution individuals pass down survival and reproductive information of importance to their species. In order for the species to survive, each sex is equipped with different information concerning reproduction. Such reproductive strategies are needed for the survival of each sex; therefore, sex differences in mate selection exist. According to Buss (1993), in order to maximize reproduction, men and women have developed different sexual strategies. From this idea, Buss has developed several hypotheses concerning mate selection:

1. Men are more likely to be involved in short-term mating than are women.

2. Identifying women who are sexually accessible will solve the problem of short-term mating for men.

3. Commitment and investment will be given minimal consideration by men seeking a short-term mate.

4. To solve the problem of short-term mating, men will attempt to identify fertile women.

5. When seeking a long-term mate, men will solve the problem by identifying reproductively valuable women.

6. When seeking a long-term mate, men will solve the problem of paternity confidence.

7. When seeking a short-term mate, women will prefer men willing to expend immediate resources such as money.

8. When seeking a short-term mate, women will be more selective than will men.

9. When seeking a long-term mate, women will prefer men who are able to provide resources for their offspring.

Research began focusing on these issues several decades ago; as early as the 1930s and 1940s sociologists began developing mate selection questionnaires (e.g., Baber, 1936; Strauss, 1946). Several patterns have emerged as a result of mate selection studies; sex differences in regard to mate selection clearly exist. Women tend to choose older, more successful men, whereas men tend to choose younger, more attractive women (Bower, 1991; Buss & Barnes, 1986; Howard, Blumstein, & Schwartz, 1987). Kendrick and Keefe (1990) demonstrated that men's preference for younger mates increases as men grow older.

Physical attractiveness appears to be more important for women than for men when attracting a mate. Buss (1994) contends that a woman's physical appearance is the most powerful predictor of the occupational status of the man she will marry. Intelligence, level of education, and original family of origin socioeconomic status are not nearly as

powerful factors as physical appearance in determining the type of mate she attracts.

Explanations of sex differences in mate selection vary widely. Some researchers take a biological position, whereas others accept a more sociological perspective. Feingold (1990), however, combined these two perspectives to form the sociobiological explanation.

To help explain the sex differences in mate selection, Feingold (1990) appealed to the biological differences between men and women. Healthy men can father unlimited children for many years. In order to maximize reproductive success, men need to be sexually responsive to numerous women who are young and attractive (i.e., displaying signals of fertility). Women, on the other hand, can bear only a limited number of children over a shorter time period than men. Hence, women need to be responsive to those signals that are associated with men that will father the best offspring.

According to Howard et al. (1987), women are typically excluded from positions of power such as high paying jobs or a higher education. To gain access to power, women seek out mates who are considered successful and powerful. Women, on the other hand, are typically sought out based on characteristics such as physical attractiveness, youth, and domestic abilities.

Buss (1988) conducted a series of studies examining the tactics and acts men and women use in intrasexual mate competition. From these studies he drew several conclusions. First, he found that by using the evolutionary perspective, general and specific predictions about the nature of intrasexual mate competition were fairly easily realized. Second, support was found across all studies for the greater use and perceived effectiveness of resource display. Finally, greater use and perceived effectiveness of enhancing physical appearance was found across all studies.

In order to better understand the process of mate selection, impostor characteristics and gender role orientation were examined in this study. How an individual rates on these two personality variables could be related to how men and women select mates.

Impostor Phenomenon

The impostor phenomenon is a psychological experience that occurs when individuals attribute their success and accomplishments to hard work or luck rather than to ability (Clance & Imes, 1978). By attributing their accomplishments to external forces, individuals tend to feel like "fakes" or "frauds." Victims of the impostor phenomenon live in constant fear they will be exposed as less competent or capable. Such impostors possess three characteristics originally described by Harvey and Katz (1985). First,

individuals must have the sense of having fooled people into overestimating their ability. Second, the individual must attribute success to some variable other than ability. Third, an individual must fear being exposed as a fraud.

In order to measure the extent of impostor feelings, two scales have been developed, one by Harvey (1981) and another by Clance (1985). Both scales target issues such as fear of failure, attribution of success to external forces, the desire to stand out, and the feeling of having falsely impressed others. Clance (1985) extended the scale to include these items, as well as fear of evaluation, fear of successes that cannot be repeated, and the feeling that individuals are less capable than their peers (Langford & Clance, 1993). Of the two scales, research has suggested that the Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale is slightly more reliable than the Harvey Impostor Phenomenon Scale (Holmes, Kertay, Adamson, Holland, & Clance, 1993).

Initially, women were thought to be the sole sufferers of the impostor phenomenon; however, such feelings seem to be present in men. In a study to determine the prevalence of the impostor phenomenon in university faculty, Topping and Kimmel (1985) discovered that although scores for both men and women were low (implying that the participants had few impostor characteristics), male faculty members scored significantly higher than their female counterparts on the impostor phenomenon scale.

Early research also focused on impostor feelings in the personal realm. Although the impostor phenomenon was initially discovered in the workplace (Topping, 1983; Topping & Kimmel, 1985), Harvey and Katz (1985) reported people could feel like fakes in their personal lives as well. Individuals experiencing the impostor phenomenon in their personal lives begin to doubt how sincerely they are fulfilling an expected role and feel they are behaving in a way that is not congruent with the true self (Harvey & Katz, 1985).

Not surprisingly, many studies have examined the relationship between the impostor phenomenon and self-esteem. Cozzarelli and Major (1990) found that impostors suffered a greater loss of self-esteem than nonimpostors after subjective failure on an exam but did not differ after subjective success. Harvey and Katz (1985) argue that the impostor phenomenon and low self-esteem are not identical. Low self-esteem is generally an all-or-nothing situation that permeates all areas of one's existence, whereas victims of the impostor phenomenon feel like frauds only in one area of their lives. Impostors may feel fine about themselves outside of the one crucial area.

The relationship between the impostor phenomenon and anxiety has also been researched (Topping, 1983). Fear of being exposed as a fraud usually occurs simultaneously with the impostor phenomenon. For an individual with the

impostor phenomenon, the ultimate fear of failing becomes highly anxiety provoking.

Steinberg (1986) focused on treating individuals suffering from the impostor phenomenon by emphasizing the development of more rational styles of thinking. Such development entails questioning definitions (e.g., stupid) impostors have of themselves. Steinberg explains to clients that stupidity comes from a lack of experience, not from a lack of ability to learn, which in turn reduces the level of impostor feelings in the individual.

Group therapy also is suggested for impostors (Matthews & Clance, 1985; Steinberg, 1986). Through group therapy, clients realize that they as well as other intelligent, capable individuals suffer from the impostor phenomenon. Steinberg encourages clients in group therapy to explore the concept of "making a mistake." Once impostors explore the concept of "making a mistake," they realize that a mistake is not the catastrophe it is perceived to be:

Determining the source of the impostor phenomenon by focusing on family dynamics is also essential to the elimination of feelings of phoniness (Matthews & Clance, 1985). By focusing on these family dynamics, therapists can address the early experiences that caused clients to overemphasize proving to others that they are smart. Matthews and Clance believe the focus of treatment

should be on lessening the client's dependence on others' positive evaluations of them for their self-esteem.

Research on the impostor phenomenon has focused on issues leading to the development of feelings of phoniness within the individual. Additionally, therapeutic strategies designed to assist these individuals also have been addressed. Current research primarily focuses on identifying the various populations that suffer from these impostor feelings. Future research will continue the trend of identifying those who possess the impostor phenomenon and developing different therapeutic strategies for helping them.

Impostors have been described as individuals who seem to lack an "internal sense of success" (Clance & Imes, 1978, p. 241). According to Howard et al. (1987), women have historically been denied positions considered powerful or successful. One could argue that women who are impostors would also be likely to have a feminine gender role orientation because feminine women appear to be less concerned with achievement issues. These women would be likely to choose mates who are more successful than themselves in order to gain access to success.

Gender Role Orientation

Gender role orientation refers to whether one typically displays male or female characteristics. Those individuals who report having traditionally male characteristics are

considered masculine in their orientation, whereas those who report having traditionally female characteristics are considered feminine in their orientation (Bem, 1974). Androgynous individuals are those individuals who report having both male and female characteristics. Finally, the undifferentiated orientation refers to individuals who report having very few characteristics traditionally associated with either male or female behavior (Spence & Helmreich, 1978). To measure gender role orientation, Spence, Helmreich, and Stapp (1974) developed the Personal Attributes Questionnaire, which determines an individual's masculinity, femininity, or androgyny.

Numerous studies have examined the relationship between gender role orientation and self-esteem. Participants classified as androgynous typically score highest on measures of adjustment, mental health, and self-esteem. Some researchers (e.g., Antill & Cunningham, 1979; Kelly & Worett, 1977; Willemsen, 1987) argue that the masculinity component is actually what determines whether an individual is high in self-esteem. Androgynous individuals appear to be high in self-esteem because they possess both masculine and feminine qualitites.

To determine the extent to which masculinity affects self-esteem, Antill and Cunningham (1979) completed a study with 237 undergraduates, using three gender role instruments (Bem Sex-Role Inventory, the ANDRO and Desirability scales

of the Personality Research Form, and the Personal
Attributes Questionnaire) and two measures of self-esteem
(the Self-Acceptance Scale and the Janis-Field Feelings of
Inadequacy Scale). For every scale masculinity showed
significant positive correlations with self-esteem in both
sexes, whereas the correlations with femininity were
generally nonexistent.

The relationship between gender role orientation and
achievement motivation has been examined as well. It
appears the gender role groups differ in performance,
cognitions, and affect in competitive situations. For
example, research has indicated masculine and androgynous
individuals have higher achievement motivation and greater
interest in competitive interactions than do feminine and
undifferentiated individuals (Baxter & Shepherd,
1978).

The Personal Attributes Questionnaire (PAQ) also has
been used to measure attitudes pertaining to the success of
women. For example, Coutts (1987) used the PAQ to classify
individuals according to their gender role orientation.
Participants were then led to believe they had outperformed
others on a particular task. Results of the study showed
feminine women felt more unsure about themselves performing
successfully than did women of either masculine or
androgynous orientation. Feminine women might be more
likely to have the impostor phenomenon than masculine or

androgynous women because they are not as confident about their abilities.

A woman with a feminine gender role orientation is more likely to be passive and less assertive, and should be more likely to choose an older and highly successful mate than a masculine or androgynous woman. On the other hand, feminine or androgynous men should be less likely to choose a stereotypical mate than a masculine-oriented male.

Summary

Research has clearly indicated that sex differences in mate selection exist (Bower, 1991; Buss, 1988, 1993, 1994; Buss & Barnes, 1986; Howard et al., 1987). Men appear to be attracted to younger, physically attractive women. Women, on the other hand, appear to be attracted to older, highly successful men. Evolutionary theories have abounded in an attempt to explain these differences.

Gender role orientation and the impostor phenomenon may be linked (Coutts, 1987). Feminine women are more likely to feel unsure about themselves in achievement situations than are women of masculine or androgynous orientation. Women with feminine gender role orientation should be more likely to suffer from the impostor phenomenon than masculine or androgynous women.

Clance and Imes (1978) proposed the impostor phenomenon to describe a multitude of highly successful women who seemed to lack an "internal sense of success" (p. 241).

Howard et al. (1987) explained gender differences in mate selection coming from a social perspective. This perspective suggests that women have historically been denied positions considered powerful or successful. Women with a feminine gender role orientation and who would be likely candidates for the impostor phenomenon would choose mates who are highly successful in order to gain access to success.

The purpose of this study was to examine variables that affect mate selection. Specifically, the relationship of sex, physical appearance, success, gender role orientation and the impostor phenomenon were studied to ascertain their influence on choice of a mate.

Several hypotheses were developed to guide the present research. First, men would choose younger, physically attractive women as mates, whereas women would choose older, more successful men. Second, individuals with high relative to low impostor characteristics would be more likely to choose the stereotypical mate. Third, women who are feminine in gender role orientation would be more likely to choose a mate who is older and highly successful than masculine or androgynous women. Additionally, men who are feminine or androgynous would be less likely to choose a younger, physically attractive mate than masculine oriented males.

CHAPTER 2

METHOD

Participants

Two hundred and ninety-two undergraduate college students (102 men, 189 women, one participant did not differentiate his or her sex) volunteered to participate in this study. Students were recruited from Introductory Psychology courses at a medium-sized state university located in the midwest. The women ranged in age from 17 to 47 years (M = 20.18, SD = 4.78); whereas the men ranged in age from 18 to 27 years (M = 19.55, SD = 1.98). The majority of the 292 participants consisted of single, caucasian, freshman undergraduates. All 292 participants completed a demographics sheet and questions related to desirable characteristics of a mate. A subset of the total sample (109 participants; 45 men, 64 women) completed these sheets and two personality questionnaires (described below). These 45 men ranged in age from 18 to 27 years (M = 19.64, SD = 2.70), whereas the 64 women ranged in age from 18 to 47 years (M = 20.70, SD = 2.75).

Testing Instruments

Personal Attributes Questionnaire (PAQ). Spence, Helmreich, and Stapp (1974) designed the PAQ to assess gender role orientation. The 24 items comprising the PAQ

are responded to on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = not at all like me; 5 = very much like me). Three scales (femininity, masculinity, masculinity-femininity) consisting of eight items each were scored producing for each scale a minimum score of 8 and a maximum score of 40.

The Masculinity Scale measures positive, self-assertive instrumental attributes such as independence, assertiveness, and self-confidence. The Femininity Scale measures positive interpersonally oriented expressive traits, such as kindness, tactfulness, and awareness of other's feelings. The Masculinity-Femininity scale contains measurements of both masculine and feminine traits and can be considered a measurement of androgyny.

Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale. Clance (1985) designed the Impostor Phenomenon Scale to measure the existence of impostor characteristics. The scale, based on a 5-point Likert-type format (1 = not at all true, 5 = very true), consists of 20 items. Scores for all items are added to produce a composite score ranging from 20 to 100. Few impostor characteristics are indicated by scores of 40 and below, whereas scores of 80 and above indicate numerous impostor characteristics.

Demographics Sheet. A 15-item demographic sheet was also utilized. This sheet requested information about age,

sex, sexual orientation, marital status, ethnicity, religion, grade point average, academic classification, likelihood of marriage, current love status, specifics relevant to one's spouse, and desire for children.

Procedure

Prior to completing the surveys, participants completed and returned a document (Appendix A) to assure informed consent and anonymity. The experimenter, a 24 year old caucasian woman, gave a self-administering questionnaire booklet that included the demographics sheet and the mate selection questions. A subsample also completed the Personal Attributes Questionnaire and the Impostor Phenomenon Scale. All testing took place during a regular class session. Although no time limit was imposed, all participants were through within 20 minutes.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

The results are reported in terms of the hypotheses that formed the basis for the present study. A total of 292 participants completed the mate selection portions of the questionnaire booklet. The data from these participants were analyzed to address Hypotheses 1 and 2.

The data subset of 109 participants who also completed the Impostor Test and Personal Attributes Questionnaire (PAQ) were analyzed to address Hypotheses 3, 4, and 5. Prior to analysis, the 40 participants (16 men, 24 women) with the highest Impostor Test scores were classified as high in impostor characteristics, whereas 41 participants (17 men, 22 women) with the lowest Impostor Test scores were classified as low in impostor characteristics.

The median-split technique was employed to assign participants to high or low status with the masculine, feminine, and masculine-femininine categories of the PAQ. Thus, individuals with scores of 29 and higher on the Masculinity scale were assigned to the high masculine category, whereas individuals with scores of 31 and higher on the Femininity Scale were assigned to the high feminine category. Likewise, individuals with scores of 25 and higher on the Masculinity-Femininity Scale were assigned to the high androgynous category. These median splits appear to be consistent with other studies utilizing the PAQ

(Orlosky & Stake, 1981; Willemsen, 1987). The number of participants in each of the PAQ categories is shown in Table 1. Low scores on the PAQ are meaningless. For instance, because an individual has a low score on the Masculinity Scale, it does not mean this individual meets the criteria to be considered Feminine. The individual must have a high score on the Femininity scale to be considered feminine.

The results for each hypothesis are presented individually. In all instances a significance level of .05 was adopted for statistical tests.

Hypothesis 1

The respective percentages of men who preferred mates two or more years younger, the same age, or two or more years older are shown in Table 2. A Chi Square analysis of these percentages, assuming equal probabilities for the expected values, yielded significance, $\chi^2(2) = 22.43$, $\underline{p} <$ .001. A series of two-category Chi Square analyses probed this significant effect and yielded significance for the comparison of the expected and observed frequencies for the Two or More Years Younger and Same Age categories, $\chi^2(1) =$ 9.18, $\underline{p} < .02$, and the comparison of the Two or More Years Older and Same Age categories, $\chi^2(1) = 19.19$, $\underline{p} < .001$. The comparison of the expected and observed frequencies for the Two or More Years Younger and Two or More Years Older categories was not significant, $\chi^2(1) = 2.12$, $\underline{p} < .10$. These

Table 1

Number of Participants in the Masculine, Feminine, and
Androgynous PAQ Categories Listed by Sex of Participant

	Masculine	Feminine	Androgynous
Men	16	7	15
Women	3	12	42
Total	19	19	57

Table 2

Percentages of Men Who Preferred Mates Who Were Two Years
Younger, the Same Age, or Two Years Older

Two or More Years Younger	Same Age	Two or More Years Older
27.40	54.90	17.60

effects are attributable to the large percentage in the same age category.

The respective percentages of men who preferred mates more physically attractive, the same in terms of physical attractiveness, or less physically attractive are shown in Table 3. As no men desired a mate who was less physically attractive, this category was not included in the subsequent analysis. The Chi Square analysis of the expected and observed frequencies for the More Physically Attractive and As Physically Attractive categories yielded significance, χ^2 (1) = 52.00, $\underline{p}$ < .01.

Hypothesis 2

The respective percentages of women who prefer mates two or more years younger, the same age, or two or more years older are shown in Table 4. A Chi Square analysis of these percentages assuming equal percentages for the expected values yielded significance, χ^2(2) = 40.46, $\underline{p}$ < .01. A series of two-category Chi Square analyses probed this significant effect and yielded significance for the comparison of the expected and observed frequencies for the Two or More Years Younger and Same Age categories, χ^2(1) = 12.98, $\underline{p}$ < .05, and the Same Age and Two or More Years Older categories, χ^2(1) = 9.26, $\underline{p}$ < .05.

The respective percentages of women who prefer mates to be more successful, as successful, or less successful than themselves are shown in Table 5. A Chi Square analysis of

Table 3

Percentages of Men Who Preferred Mates Who Were More
Physically Attractive, the Same in Terms of Physical
Attractiveness, or Less Physically Attractive

More Physically Attractive	As Physically Attractive	Less Physically Attractive
40.0	60.0	0.0

Table 4

Percentages of Women Who Preferred Mates Two Years Younger,
the Same Age, or Two Years Older

Two or More Years Younger	Same Age	Two or More Years Older
8.50	31.20	60.30

Table 5

Percentages of Women Who Preferred Mates Who Were More Successful, As Successful, or Less Successful Than Themselves

More Successful	As Successful	Less Successful
36.7	62.8	.5

these percentages assuming equal probabilities for the expected values yielded significance, $\chi^2(2) = 54.74$, $\underline{p} < .01$. A series of two-category Chi Square analyses probed this significant effect and yielded significance for the comparison of the expected and observed frequencies for the More Successful and As Successful categories, $\chi^2(1) = 6.84$, $\underline{p} < .05$, and the comparison of the As Successful and Less Successful categories, $\chi^2(1) = 61.32$, $\underline{p} < .01$. The comparison of the expected and observed frequencies also yielded significance for the More Successful and Less Successful categories, $\chi^2(1) = 35.22$, $\underline{p} < .01$.

<u>Hypothesis 3</u>

A oneway Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was performed on the age data for the two impostor groups. This analysis failed to yield significant between-group results, $\underline{F}(1, 79) = .31$, $\underline{p} = .58$.

A similar analysis of the physical attractiveness data also failed to yield a significant difference between the high and low impostor group, $\underline{F}(1, 79) = .84$, $\underline{p} = .77$. Likewise, no significant differences were found in the distribution of preference for success scores between low and high impostors, $\chi^2(1) = .36$, $\underline{p} = .55$.

<u>Hypothesis 4</u>

Of the subset of women who completed the PAQ, 3 were considered masculine, whereas 12 were considered feminine, and 42 were considered androgynous. Due to low sample size,

the data from the 3 masculine individuals were not included in the following analysis of variance. Women with a feminine gender orientation did not differ from androgynous women in terms of age preference, $F(1, 52) = 1.08$, $p > .05$, or successfulness, $F(1, 52) = .93$, $p > .05$.

<div align="center">Hypothesis 5</div>

Of the subset of men who completed the PAQ, 16 were considered masculine, 7 were considered feminine, and 15 were considered androgynous. The three gender orientations did not differ in terms of age preference, $F(2, 36) = 1.16$, $p > .05$, or physical attractiveness, $F(2, 36) = 1.38$, $p > .05$, in a desired mate.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the preferences of men and women in terms of selecting a mate. Variables such as physical attractiveness, age, and successfulness were examined. Gender role orientation and high or low impostor charactertics also were considered.

Hypothesis 1 proposed that men tend to prefer younger, physically attractive mates. This hypothesis was partially supported. Contrary to the initial prediction, this sample of men generally preferred mates the same age as themselves. A possible explanation of this finding could be the nature of the participants sampled. Because the male participants were college students, they could be more liberal and less likely to choose the stereotypical mate than men who are not college students. Also, if these participants were to choose mates much younger than themselves, they would be considering high schoolers as potential mates.

As predicted, the present sample of men preferred their mates to be more physically attractive than themselves. This finding is congruent with other mate selection studies (Bower, 1991; Buss, 1994; Buss & Barnes, 1986; Howard, et al. 1987). An evolutionary standpoint would suggest that men prefer physically attractive women because they are probably healthy and therefore fertile. Fertile women would

be prime candidates to reproduce which in turn facilitates keeping the species alive.

Hypothesis 2 proposed that women tend to choose older and more successful mates than themselves. This hypothesis was partially supported. A clear majority of the women sampled preferred their mate to be two or more years older than themselves. These findings support the evolutionary explanation of mate selection.

However, women tended to prefer mates who were similar in successfulness. Again, these findings could be attributable to the nature of the participants. Because college women are likely to be successful, they would have similar expectations for their mates.

Hypothesis 3 proposed that individuals with high impostor characteristics would be more likely to prefer the stereotypical mate (men will prefer younger, physically attractive women, and women will prefer older, more successful men) than would an individual with low impostor characteristics. This hypothesis was not supported. No differences were obtained between high and low impostors in terms of mate preference. The impostor phenomenon seems specifically linked to how individuals perceive their own success and does not affect other areas of life.

Hypothesis 4 proposed that women who have a feminine gender role orientation are more likely to choose a mate who is older and highly successful than women with masculine or

androgynous gender role orientation. This hypothesis was not supported. A woman's gender role orientation had no effect on the type of mate she preferred. However, the low number of masculine and androgynous participants may have precluded an accurate view of such differences. Hence, increased sample size for such participants should be a goal for future research in this area.

Hypothesis 5 proposed that men who have a feminine or androgynous gender role orientation are less likely to choose a younger, physically attractive mate than a man with a masculine gender role orientation. The current study provided no support for this hypothesis. A man's gender role orientation has no effect on the type of mate he prefers.

Future studies should seek to utilize participants other than college students. It could be that college students are more educated and liberal and, therefore, less likely to choose the stereotypical mate than someone less liberal. Utilizing older participants would also be beneficial as generational differences may exist. Older individuals may be more likely to choose the stereotypical mate.

Clearly, the most intriguing findings of the present study are those that do not conform to evolutionary theory. These findings suggest that, at least for college-age participants, the view of the ideal mate may be changing.

Additional research employing participants from different age cohorts is needed to place these data in better perspective.

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Appendix A

Informed Consent Document

The Department of Psychology/Special Education at
Emporia State University supports the practice of protection
for human subjects participating in research and related
activities. The following information is provided so that
you can decide whether you wish to participate in the
present study. You should be aware that even if you agree
to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time, and
that if you do withdraw from the study, you will not be
subjected to reprimand or any other form of reproach.

In order to enhance information for treatment you are
being asked to complete three questionnaires. These
questionnaires will be completed confidentially. Minimal
discomfort sometimes occurs when people fill out
questionnaires.

"I have read the above statement and have been fully
advised of the procedures to be used in this project. I
have been given sufficient opportunity to ask any questions
I had concerning the procedures and possible risks involved
and I assume them voluntarily. I likewise understand that I
can withdraw from the study at any time without being
subjected to reproach."

_____   _____

Signature of Participant   Date

TO: All Graduate Students Who Submit a Thesis or
Research Problem/Project as Partial Fulfillment
of The Requirements for an Advanced Degree

FROM: Emporia State University Graduate School

I, Rena R. Cole, hereby submit this thesis/report to Emporia
State University as partial fulfillment of the requirements
for an advanced degree. I agree that the Library of the
University may make it available for use in accordance with
its regulations governing materials of this type. I further
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Rena R. Cole
Signature of Author

11-5-95
Date

Variables Affecting Mate Selection
Title of Thesis/Research
Project

Doug Cooper
Signature of Graduate
Office Staff Member

11-9-95
Date Received

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