

Mate selection essay sample



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Mate selection in humans tends to follow a naturally established trend that is unconsciously adhered to by both males and females in their search for their 'perfect' match. Researchers came up, a long time ago, with a general criterion that both genders look for in a potential partner. The psychology 110 2nd semester 2003 class individually conducted a survey aimed at finding out whether or not these established criteria also apply to males and females of their own age group in this time period.

Through the means of a Likert type scale, subjects rated from 1 (completely undesirable) to 7 (most important/desirable) each of 57 dimensions that are assumed to be the factors affecting mate selection. A data analysis sheet was eventually compiled using the evaluations collected from willing subjects, and it provided the author of this survey with evidence enough to come to a conclusion about mate selection in the given age group. It was further recognised that if a further survey, with the relevant strategies and a bigger sample group, should be made so as to safely reach a conclusion about the survey topic.

Literature review:

In the human race, mate selection tends to take a 'survival of the fittest' fashion. So as to successfully attain a mate for oneself, one has to be the best at what one is, and it should further be what the opposite sex considers 'the in thing'. It has been argued by Rose and Rose that ability to earn, wealth, power, and social status are a few of those traits that have great impact on how prospective mates; both male and female, are appraised. It is further worth noting however that traits such as faithfulness and sincerity

are also prime in order to be determined as one of the 'fittest', especially by the feminine side. Mate selection has been characterised by the culture of choosing the 'best' by those who are able to do so, and this has resulted in a society predominated by above average mates, due to the 'tough competition' that exists.

Although males and females are likely to have different approaches to mate selection, they do so while acknowledging the vitality for the development of "strong mutual affection" in order for a more secure relationship (Wright 57). Because it is mostly males who have to go through these 'selection tests', it might be safe to conclude that in recognition of the feminine method of mate selection, they might naturally try to conform to those social standards by means of aggressive and competitive behaviour to earn dominance and wealth, which may lead to them being admired for their achievements. The feminine side is however also concerned about the value of a relationship.

Method of Data collection:

A total of twenty individuals, 10 Males and 10 Females, were requested to fill in a grid that showed the 57 dimensions that they had to evaluate through the means of the scale of 1 to 7, as mentioned earlier. The data was eventually transferred to a spreadsheet so as to easily add up each subject's scores and for easy comparison of both genders' preferences. Minor problems experienced included some of the subjects' failure to determine connotative meanings of some of the dimensions, which might have slightly misled the survey. Another problem was the author's unsuccessful attempt

to get a variety of subjects, in terms of religion and culture. The chosen age group was chosen due to the recognition of their activeness in the search of their own identities, including mate selection, since most subjects of this age are at one of those “critical stages” of their development. From the sheet, 15 traits (divided into 3 subcategories) that were considered to be the ‘most interesting’ by the author were analysed so as to come to a conclusion about mate selection. The sheet containing the subjects’ evaluations appears as appendix A of the report.

Results and Discussion:

A final conclusion of this survey was made from the most interesting traits rated by both male and female subjects.

For the first subcategory, the graphical representation of the data in appendix A reveals mild differences between both genders, meaning that for both genders there is, to a certain extent, consensus on how a potential partner should ‘possess’. The traits represented here were adapted from the upper level of the scale, most of which represent that ‘strong mutual affection’ that Wright argues has to be there in order for each of these genders to choose their mate.

Similarities in the trait choices are revealed by the second category, also in appendix A, whereby it can be argued that both males and females weigh those traits in the same manner as they choose who & who not to go out with. Since there is very little or no difference at all in what both genders are ‘turned on’ by, in this subcategory, Darwin’s theory of sexual selection can

be safely contested since it is not of the idea that males and females can be interested in the same traits.

Finally, the sharp contrasts between males and females shown by category 3 of appendix A provide enough evidence to argue that Darwin was never really wrong about nature's tendency of adopting a 'survival of the fittest' fashion in whichever aspect of life. There seems to be a need to gain competitive advantage towards beings of the same gender in order for success in getting a partner. It can therefore be said that this very fashion can be adopted between members of the same gender in trying to attract mates for themselves. It may be also tempting to believe that each one of these subcategory traits are seen as important by different people at different stages of their development, times when they find them convenient for them. This also brings up the challenge for mate seekers to be intelligent enough to know the right potential mate who is interested in a certain subcategory at a certain time period.

Conclusion:

The data provided by those willing subjects in this survey has helped in reaching a few conclusions about the defining factors that are actively involved in human mate selection. In as far as competitive advantage is concerned, there is merely no way in which it can be prevented since in order for one to be the best, one has to be compared with the rest. The traits used in the survey do also reveal substantial elements for aspiring mates to be fit in order to survive the 'selection procedure' unconsciously carried out by each of the gender groups. Also, there is also a need for intellect, and

understanding of the different development stages of both genders so as to successfully 'guess' who to approach and how.