

## **Bachelor's thesis review – Opponent's evaluation**

Title: *The Effect of Mate Value on Mate Preferences*

Author: Bohdana Klimentová

Supervisor: Zsófia Csajbók, MA, PhD.

Opponent: RNDr James G. Pfaus, PhD, IF.

Bohdana Klimentová's thesis was a monumental undertaking that examined both self-perceived and ideal mate preferences using several modes of mate choice expression, including the Euclidian model of distance between self-perceived and ideal mate preference characteristics and the impact of favorable (dealmaker) and unfavorable (dealbreaker) partner characteristics. Bohdana designed a study questionnaire based on her supervisor's previous work in a general Hungarian population, and amended it for a general Czech population. Her sample included 1,885 heterosexual individuals in a relationship, 42% of whom were male. She tested 4 specific hypotheses: 1) were men or women more successful in fulfilling their partner preferences; 2) how does Euclidean mate value compare to self-evaluated mate value; 3) do high mate value people experience greater mate choice power; and 4) do people choose partners who are similar to themselves. Through the use of multiple t-tests and correlations, the data showed that women put an emphasis on status (earning capacity) and dominance in a male partner, whereas men put an emphasis on the attractiveness of a female partner, which is consistent with previous research. Self-perceived mate value was a significant factor in women's preference satisfaction (and relationship satisfaction), whereas the Euclidian mate value predicted significantly men's preference satisfaction. And both females and males chose partners who were similar to themselves in value, also something previously reported in the literature. The data show then that a large sampling of the Czech population displays similar mate choice and preference characteristics to other Western cultures. The thesis also adds new knowledge regarding the impact of unfavorable partner characteristics and how they modulate mate choice differently in females and males. Finally, the strong correlation between self-perceived mate value and positive Euclidean mate value in both females and males showed that both emphasize their positive characteristics over their negative characteristics. This may occur more during the early phases of a potential relationship, making it more difficult to see the negative aspects until people have been in a relationship for more time. This, too, is consistent with some clinical observations in longer-term couples that grow more distant with time and are more likely to emphasize their partner's negative characteristics leading to a break-up.

The thesis had two parts, one theoretical that gave a comprehensive overview of current evolutionary psychological thinking about mate choice, and one empirical that described the experimental design, methods, results, and conclusions. I am not a big fan of evolutionary

psychology (relative to evolutionary biology) as it pertains to mate choice, but I must commend Bohdana for being uniformly critical and keeping an open mind to alternative hypotheses, especially in the sections regarding relationship satisfaction and mate value, where both “ultimate” and “proximate” causalities were discussed along with their interaction.

The empirical part was masterful. Clear attention was paid to a logical set of statistical analyses (multiple t-tests and correlational analyses) and reporting of the data organized step-wise by hypotheses. Reading this, I was struck by how this could easily have been a Masters thesis. Bohdana has a clear idea of experimental design and how to apply statistical analyses appropriately. The tables were very useful to convey the findings. If I had to criticize anything it would be the discussion. It was overlong, and in some parts redundant. But, that said, it was also comprehensive from the standpoint of evolutionary evaluations of mate choice. Again, it resembled the quality I would expect of a Master’s thesis.

I hope these data will be published in a suitable peer-reviewed journal. They are very important from a sexological, clinical, and experimental framework.

I would rate Bohdana’s thesis as Excellent.

In Prague, 30 August 2023

James G. Pfaus, PhD IF