

Bachelor's Thesis Opponent Review

Thesis title: Individual differences in necessities and luxuries in mate choice

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Recommended grade (pending defence performance): 1-2

This thesis analyzed pre-existing survey data to better understand the characteristics people seek out and avoid in a potential partner (dealbreakers and dealmakers) in a Hungarian sample. The specific aims were to 1) determine which dealmakers and dealbreakers are necessities vs. luxuries, 2) determine whether the assessment of dealmakers and dealbreakers is moderated by the individual's own self-perceived mate-value in addition to certain demographic variables, and 3) to compare the effectiveness of different methods used to assess mate preferences (simple rating vs. limited budget allocation). The student does a very thorough exploration of this topic and considers a broad range of factors that could influence mate preferences. Overall, the thesis was very well organized, logical, focused and concepts are clearly explained. The student could be more concise in some sections. Also, the table of contents and page numbers do not line up.

Introduction

Key concepts are clearly and accurately defined, and the research objectives are clearly laid out. The student demonstrates a strong understanding of research on mate choice, integrates research from various sources and discusses different theories. In terms of background, the student does an excellent job focusing on relevant information which shows academic maturity and makes the thesis easy to follow. There were a few areas however where he could have perhaps elaborated more. For instance, when discussing the social-cognitive approach to understanding relationship ideals, it would be interesting to know more about the origin of social-cognitive ideals. While the literature review is adequate. The student could have also spent more time comparing the strengths and limitations of the different models. These suggestions however are minor. Overall, the student provides sufficient rationale for his hypotheses. A minor issue was found in the research questions section. Research questions and hypothesizes, rationales for hypotheses, corresponding results should be presented in the same order (for instance Hypothesis 9 is the last hypothesis but the corresponding research question is mentioned at the beginning).

Methods

The methods are clearly explained, and methodological decisions are justified. It would be nice to begin the method section with a brief overview of the study design (i.e., "To test our hypothesizes we analyzed pre-collected self-report data from an online survey of Hungarian adults..."). Although a description of the sample has already been published, the participants section should provide more information on how participants were recruited, inclusion/exclusion criteria, as well as information about attrition, compensation, consent, and ethical approval.

Results

The results are clearly presented and includes necessary information. The correspondence between the results and research aims is also clear. The student performs a very comprehensive analysis (there were 9 hypotheses). It would be good to show a table presenting descriptive

statistics to get a better sense of the variability (range) and central tendency of the demographic variables assessed. Restricted range in certain traits (e.g., education) may have contributed to certain findings.

Discussion

The student's conclusions are consistent with the results and each research objective is addressed. Findings are put into context of other research and theory, and the student offers potential explanations for findings. I did however find the discussion section a rather sparse (4 pages) and there are sections that would have benefited from a more detailed discussion. For example, the hypothesis regarding education was not confirmed. You suspected this could be due to a third unmeasured variable. Could you be more specific? Additionally, the sections on limitations and suggestions directions for future research could be longer. It should be noted however that the student tested a broad range of hypotheses.

Potential questions for student

1. Why do you think mate value correlates with preferences for certain traits and not with others, and why were more correlations significant in men than in women?
2. While you mentioned this briefly in the introduction, could you please elaborate on the selection of traits assessed as dealmakers and dealbreakers (e.g., warmth, dominance, abusiveness, etc.). Are there are traits that you did not assess but should be included?
3. In the limitations section, you mentioned that the study used a sample from a WEIRD population. How do you think your results might differ it sampled a different population? In other words, how might culture affect your findings?
4. Giving what you've learned from this study, what would be your next study? What additional research would you conduct to better understand what you found in this investigation.