

Speed Dating and Mate Selection

What Does the Opposite Sex Think?

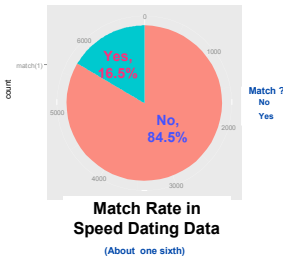


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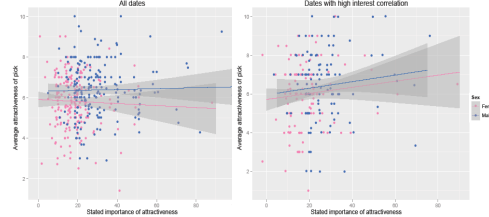
➤ Introduction

We analyzed differences in males and females mates' selection process using a speed dating data set collected at Columbia University (2005) which included 552 graduate students: 227 men and 275 women.

When choosing mates, women and men place different levels of importance on the partner's attractiveness. Also, males and females have an inaccurate perception of how important certain traits are to the opposite sex.



In general, stated preferences for attractiveness do not coincide with final decisions, see F2(A). We speculate that many other factors influence the decisions in a quick speed-dating environment. However, participants with many shared interests tend to be more consistent in choosing their desired level of attractiveness as seen in F2(B). In addition, as the importance of attractiveness increases, men and women tend towards more attractive dates at roughly the same rate.



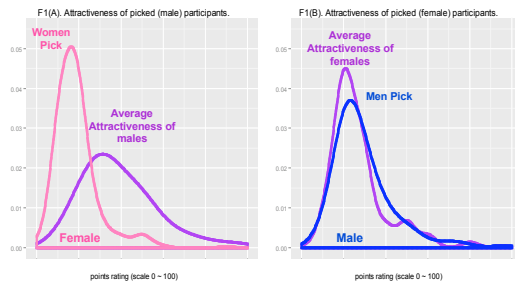
(Left) F2 (A) shows for all participants the average attractiveness of whom they picked vs. the stated importance of attractiveness. (Right) F2(B) shows for participants in the top quartile the average attractiveness of whom they picked vs. the stated importance of attractiveness.

➤ 1. Asymmetric behavior between genders

Do we choose dates as attractive as possible?

Figure F1 (A) shows that women tend to pick men that are on average less attractive. A plausible explanation is that women consider other attributes to be more important than attractiveness.

Figure F1(B) shows that men tend to pick women that are on average more attractive. It seems that men are more concerned with looks. Are men shallow?



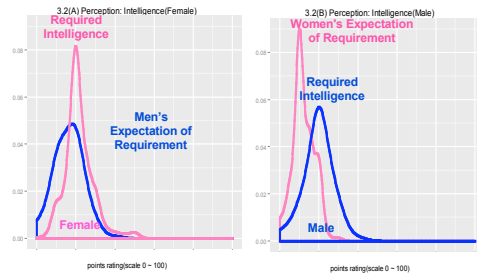
(Left) F1 (A) shows women's selection of possible dates and the attractiveness score of each man. (Right) F1(B) shows men's selection of possible dates and the attractiveness score of each woman.

➤ 2. Similar interests influence dating decisions

Figures F2(A) and F2(B) show that participants with many shared interests tend to be more consistent in choosing their desired level of attractiveness.

3.2. How important is intelligence to the opposite sex?

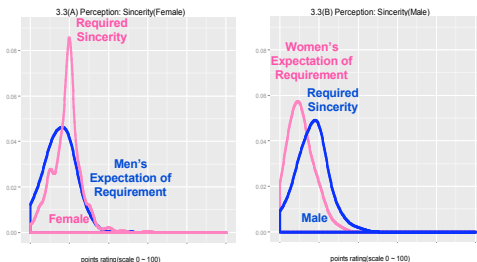
Figures F3.2(A) and F3.2(B) show that both males and females have higher standards of intelligence than their partners think they do.



(Left)F3.2(A) shows women's stated required level of intelligence and men's perception about it. (Right) F3.2(B) shows men's stated required level of intelligence and women's perception about it.

3.3. How important is sincerity to the opposite sex?

Figures F3.3(A) and F3.3(B) show that both males and females consider sincerity to be more important than their partners think they do.

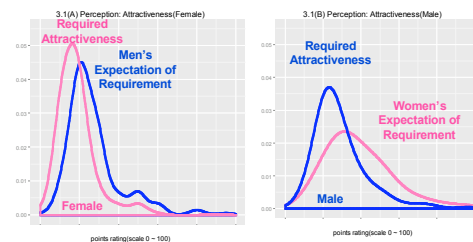


(Left)F3.3(A) shows women's stated required level of sincerity and men's perception about it. (Right) F3.3(B) shows men's stated required level of sincerity and women's perception about it.

➤ 3. Biased perceptions

3.1. How important is attractiveness to the opposite sex?

Figures F3.1(A) and F3.1(B) suggest that both males and females tend to over-estimate how important attractiveness is to the opposite sex. In general most participants believe that attractiveness plays a more important role in the selection process than it actually does.



(Left)F3.1(A) shows women's stated required level of attractiveness and men's perception about it. (Right) F3.1(B) shows men's stated required level of attractiveness and women's perception about it.

➤ Conclusion

The findings support the idea that there are gender differences in the mate selection process: women tend to choose less attractive mates while men tend to choose more attractive ones.

Having similar interests is a decisive variable in a selection process lasting only a few short minutes.

Males and females have an inaccurate perception of how important attractiveness, intelligence, and sincerity are to the opposite sex.