

Research Report Writing—L2 Psychology

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Report Writing Assessment Criteria

- Students will be assessed along three main areas:
 - 1) Quality of the **research** carried out. For a research report, this includes both:
 - Literature Search and Literature Review
 - Practical Research Skills
 - 2) Level of **knowledge, comprehension and evaluation** of the topic
 - 3) Quality of the **academic communication**

Further details can be found in the Level 2 Report Writing Guide on Moodle [Level 2 Course Information](#)-Section on [Practical Labs & research reports](#)

Structure (from Course Guide)

- **Title:** informative and specific
- **Abstract:** Up to 150-200 words that summarise the entire report
- **Introduction:** Including a literature review that works towards explaining the hypothesis
- **Methods:** Subsections: *Design, Participants, Apparatus/Stimuli/Materials, Procedure*
- **Results:** Descriptive Statistics, Inferential Statistics
- **Discussion:** Relating your results to the introduction and discussing what your study means in psychological terms.
- **References:** pointing the reader to the sources of information in your report

The Abstract

□ Introduction

- Set the scene
- What practical/scientific/theoretical gap are you filling?

□ Method

- What do you actually do to get your results

□ Results

- AS a result of completing the above procedure, what did you learn/invent/create?

□ Discussion

- What are the larger implications of your findings, especially for the problem/gap identified in 1

Example : Socio-biology & mating strategies

- Socio-Bio theory:
 - Males seek youth & Attractiveness
 - Females seek older men & resource holding potential (RHP)
- Analysis of traits advertised & sought in uk personal ads
 - 2*2 ANOVA
 - Chi Square
- Do the findings support SB theory?

The present study was conducted to demonstrate mating behaviours within sociobiological theory and expand upon work looking into mating preferences and strategies employed in personal advertisements.

A 2*2 mixed ANOVA was conducted to explore mating strategies and the interactions of gender, age and personal attributes.

The results showed a significant interaction between gender and age preference however, our hypothesis for females seeking resource holding potential did not produce significant results - casting some doubt on the strength of sociobiological interpretations of mating behaviour.

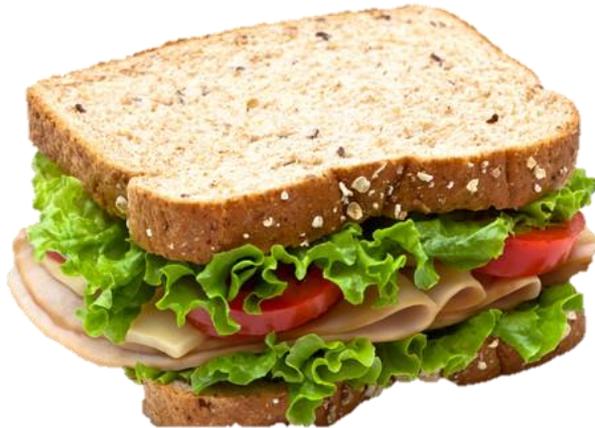
Findings are discussed in relation to previous and recent work in the area taking into account study limitations and areas for further research.

Heterosexual human beings have always desired certain attributes when looking for a partner. So far the attributes desired have fallen into stereotypical categories for each sex. With women looking for a financially strong and stable alpha male and men looking for an attractive woman who can reproduce with them and take care of their children. This study is on whether men and women prefer certain ages in partner sought and whether physical attractiveness plays a huge part in the looking of a partner. We studied 50 men ranging from 35-55 and 50 women ranging from 25-55 who had all advertised themselves in the Lonely Heart columns of three major newspapers. The results show men prefer younger women and women prefer older men. It also shows that females will advertise more physical characteristics and men seek more physical characteristics in partner sought. The results are discussed in the limitations of the study and how choosing a mate has evolved throughout the centuries to modern day.

From a sociobiological and evolutionary perspective, it was hypothesised that certain mating strategies of men and women, which ensure the survival and continuation of vital genetic qualities, would still be relevant in the 21st century. In order to test the robustness of the evolutionary theory of mating strategies, the present study was conducted which analysed the information given in lonely hearts ad's that were printed in two major broadsheet newspapers. A total of 100 advertisements (50 placed by men and 50 placed by women) were randomly selected. This study focussed on the effects of age and the effects of attractiveness related to gender. The advertisements were coded using the content analysis method and analysis was conducted in two parts, using a 2x2 mixed ANOVA, and Tukey HSD tests for multiple comparisons for the first part, and a chi-square test for the second part. It was found that there is still a significant effect of evolutionary theory at work within the mating strategies of modern Britain. Implications of this study are discussed.

Structure of a report

Abstract



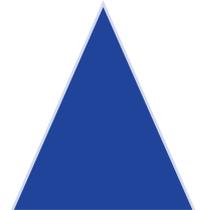
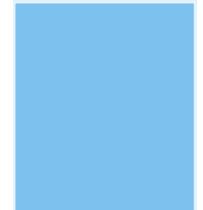
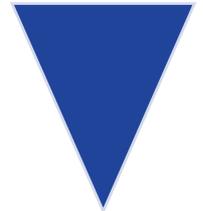
Introduction

Main Part

- Methods
- Results

Discussion
(Conclusion)

References



Synthesising Literature

The Literature Review: Provide a Rational

Article	Theme A	Theme B	Theme C	Theme D
1	x	x		
2	x	x	x	
3	x	x	x	x
4	x		x	
5	x	x		

The majority of research (e.g.: XYZ, 2012, ABC, 2015 & EDF, 2011) agrees that ...

The author (XYZ, 2012) argues that ...

Rationale

Synthesising Literature

Identify Key Arguments

- For a topic
- Across disciplines

Identify Gaps in Knowledge

Identify Research Approaches

- Research design
- Methods

Leads to your hypothesis & research design

- How so?

Structuring a Paragraph

Opening Sentence

Main Part

Closing
Linking
Sentence

It is clear that personal advertisements illustrate different mating strategies among men and women. However, much research on personal advertisements outside the United States has determined whether sociobiological mating strategies in personal advertisements in newspapers, when looking for a mate, apply to the UK.

- Literature suggests that ...
- The majority of research indicates ..

much research on personal advertisements outside the United States

What about age?
What about countries?
Cultural difference?

Where is the evidence?

determine

Another piece of evidence? mate selection is the importance set upon attractiveness between genders.

Strassberg and English (2014) discovered that adverts in which women were advertised as attractive were more popular than male ads. Buunk, Dijkstra, Fetchenhauer and Dijksterhuis (2002) studied Dutch participants of ages ranging from 18 to 60 and found that males more than females had a preference for partners who exceeded their own attractiveness. Research by Jonason, Raulston and Rotolo (2012) also found that physical attractiveness was valued more strongly by men when choosing a partner. 800 printed and online adverts were analysed by Russock (2011) in order to determine, among other variables, the effect of gender on selection preferences.

This study established that heterosexual males prefer younger partners, unlike heterosexual females.

Evidence?

1) Recent + relevant research

2) Evaluation of research evidence.

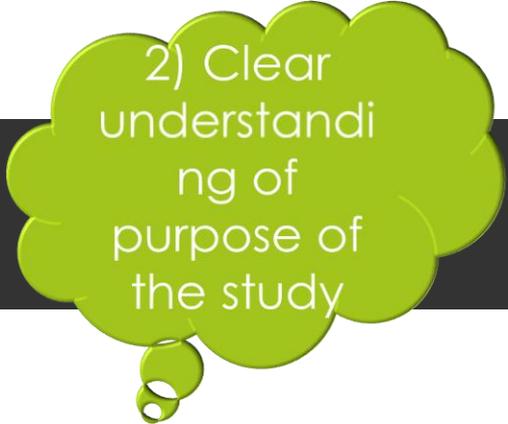
Of the various mating strategies, utilizing attractiveness in advertisements seems to be predominant. Not only were women whose advertisements stated their attractiveness more popular, but men also seem to prefer more attractive female partners, than themselves (Kenrick, 2002). The first pattern, was found in studies across various different European countries (e.g.: xyz, 2012, abc, 2015), while the preference for more attractive female partners, only occurred in the Dutch study. The majority of publications (examples) that attractiveness is one of the key mating strategies in paper advertisements.

You could spend a sentence or two venturing into the reason for this.

2) Clear understanding of the purpose of the study

3) Clearly written, well structured

Rationale



2) Clear understanding of purpose of the study

However, recent research, especially within the UK, is scarce, with some studies out-dated by 20 years (Greenlees & McGrew, 1994). Therefore, it should be investigated if these predictions are still supported, even with cultural differences and social change.

Vague language-cite evidence

Therefore, the aim of this current study is to expand and update previous research, and to investigate if principles regarding the age and RHP of partners sought are still prominent within British heterosexual singles. The hypotheses for the first section of this study is there will be a difference in the age of the opposite-sex partner sought compared to the age of the advert placer between genders; men will seek younger women, and women will seek older men. For the second section, the hypotheses are there will be a difference of how often RHP is sought and advertised between genders; men will advertise their RHP more frequently than women, and women will seek RHP in partners more frequently than men.

Methods



2) Clear understanding of research design

Design

This observational study comprised of two designs. Part 1 was a 2*2 **mixed design**. The **independent variable (IV)** for the between-subjects aspect was gender, male and female being the respective levels. The within-subjects IV was labelled as the age stated in personal ads. Level one focussed on age information provided about the ad placer, and level two was age information provided about the individual they sought. The dependent variable was **age**. Part 2 of the study used 2 **between-subjects** observational designs. The independent variables in these cases were gender, with levels of male and female. The **dependent variables** were (i) attractiveness advertised and (ii) attractiveness sought.

Age of participant?

Results

The mean ages (years) of the ad placers and the partners they seek are displayed in Figure 1. Female ad placers had a lower mean age of 39.82 years (SD=7.247) than male ad placers, who had a mean of 41.68 years (SD=6.268). Females sought a higher mean age in a partner (43.40 years, SD=6.691) than males did (35.98 years (SD=6.413)). As portrayed in Figure 1, there is a mean difference of 3.58 years between the age of the ad placer and partner sought in females and a mean difference of 6.29 years in males. Figure 2 displays a clear indication of an interaction between gender and age shown by the aforementioned descriptive statistics.

1) Clear understanding of results

Interaction would be shown by inferential not descriptive stats

Link your own research back to literature

The 'So What?'
Chapter...



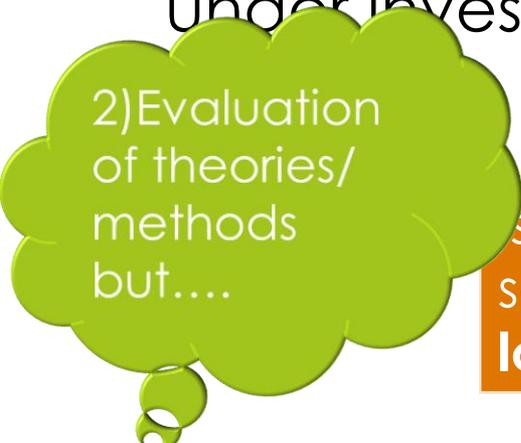
Overall, these findings support sociobiological theory (Wilson, 1975; Parker, 1974) and previous research (Burrows, 2012; Neto, 2005; Koziel & Pawłowski, 2003; Oda, 2001; Waynforth & Dunbar, 1995; Greenlees & McGrew, 1994) in predictions that men seek younger women, women seek older men, and men advertise RHP more than women. Therefore, the theory still has high external validity, and this research updates findings using UK personal adverts. The interaction between age and gender returned a medium effect-size (partial-eta=0.676), suggesting high reliability.



2) Clear understanding of implications but...

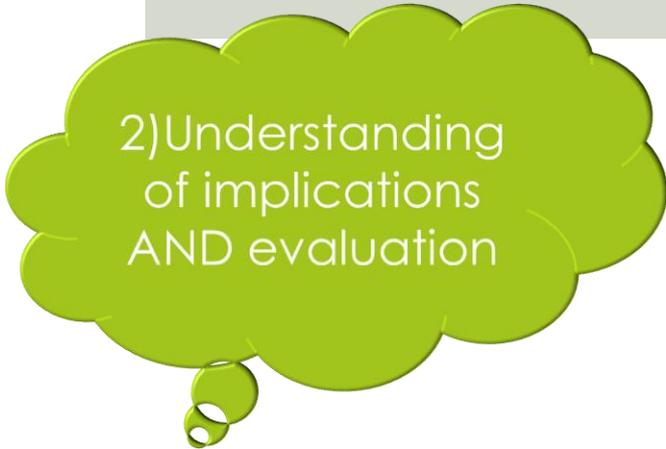
High external validity after one small project?
Claim would be stronger if it was made on findings from everyone who used this topic.

Likewise, it could be said that this study was not representative of today's society as all participants were of heterosexual orientation. The number of people who identify as members of the LGBTQ+ community has significantly increased in the past years and so make up a significant proportion of the population (Burrow 2012). As the objective of our study was to explore if this theory has prevalence in the UK today, to exclude all non-heterosexual individuals is not representative of the population under investigation.



2) Evaluation of theories/ methods but....

Is the number who officially identifies as LGBTQ the same as the the number of actual LGBTQ? **Flaw in logic.**



2) Understanding of implications AND evaluation

These findings, however, are not undisputed. **Women do tend to select males who are older than themselves, but this age gap has been declining in recent years (Rolf & Ferrie, 2008).** They found that males in the United States in 1900 were on average around 5 years their partners' senior but this dropped to 2 years by 2000. **Strassberg and Holty (2003)** investigated opposite-sex interest in personal adverts and found that males were more interested in a female advert which described a woman independent in her finances, successful and ambitious rather than a description indicating physical attractiveness. **These findings may be due to** social changes in the past century as more women are becoming the primary earners for families and more fathers are increasing their caregiving input to children (Doucet, 2015).

What you say and How you say it:

- Flaws in logic
- Over-exaggeration
- Link data to literature
 - But don't skew what literature actually says
- Vague language

Feedback Reflection

- 1) **How** you have acted upon feedback provided in your Level 1B report when writing your level 2A report i.e. which areas of the report have you worked harder on this year?
 - 2) **Which** areas of your report you feel is most important for us to give you feedback on?
- Answer these questions on the **Title page of the report** BEFORE submission



Assessment Criteria	1) <i>I have worked harder on...</i>		2) <i>I would like feedback on..</i>	
	Tick	Provide details	Tick	Provide details
Quality of the research carried out.	✓	<i>I have included more recent references, less from textbook/lectures</i>		
Level of knowledge, comprehension and evaluation			✓	<i>Not sure if I have got the discussion of implications right?</i>
Quality of academic communication			✓	<i>Have I made myself clear in the introduction?</i>

Feedback procedures

Getting it to you faster..

- ▣ *Feedback sheet & written feedback emailed to students*
- ▣ *Generic feedback*
- ▣ *No written comments on the scripts*

Written feedback will include...

- ▣ *What was done well*
- ▣ *You aimed to improve on..*
- ▣ *You asked for feedback on...*
- ▣ *What needs improvement/what you should do for the next report.*

Questions?

