

Evolutionary psychology and the mathematics of choice: a critique of David Buss
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There are certain complex issues that require subtle explication. Before one can do so one needs to demonstrate a series of simple examples. Then one may address their implications for the evaluation of David Buss's article. (Note 1) Buss proposed in his article the primary importance of resource provision in human mate selections.

For any human female the variety of factors affecting choice of mate are extended and usually extremely private. A human female can generally only marry one male at a time. It is unsatisfactory to use categories that would produce a list of millions of acceptable mates. That is not human experience.

“STRONG INDIVIDUALITY”

Let us create a list of features $F_{1,2,3 \dots n}$. This list should be almost infinite as it needs to cover all possible features that might affect a human female. Any particular female will not necessarily have a very large list of features but they need not overlap with fellow females. Given any subset of features each human female will rate/rank them differently. Identical twins need not fall in love with the same or similar persons at this level of particularity.

“Researchers from the University of Queensland found that for traits including body size, personality, age, social attitudes, and religiosity, identical twins did not tend to have similar spouses, after accounting for the fact that spouse pairs (and twins pairs) themselves tend to be similar.

The results suggest that genes don't have much direct influence on mate choice for these traits.”
(Note 2)

If we then list for each person their ranking (0-10) of importance of features in the same order we would have: $R_{1,2,3 \dots n}$. A particular person's attractiveness would then be revealed in the product of R and F, i.e. FR.

For the purpose of this **first step argument** we will allow that F_1 equals the value for 'resource provision'. (There are some fundamental issues equating this with income earning which may reflect the world view of researchers. Ad hominem - academic researchers may feel that the beautiful girls/students in their experience go for the bankers and lawyers not their teachers. In broader human life and nature resources are the most important factor, such as trust funds, inheritance prospects and access to family or social networks. One speculates that these important factors may have been excluded because they do not relate to the genetic make up of the target male. Were this the case it would reveal bias and special pleading in make up of the testing samples etc by the researchers.)

We will for this case allow human females to have only two preferences one of which is F_1 . We thereby acknowledge that financial viability will always be a consideration. The value placed on it may vary significantly as where a heiress marries a poorer boy. However for this first step each female will value financial viability as 5. Since the list of features is indefinite we specify that each female has a unique feature that she values. However the value she places on this unique feature is 10. The net result is that if regression was made the only factor that was common and was highly related would be F_1 . However for no human female was financial viability the most important feature. Each human female could respond that financial viability was not the most important consideration in her mind while not denying that extremes (lack of or great excess of) might affect her consideration. So the apparent confirmatory regressions would in fact not reflect human experience. For each female there would be one or a few males that she would feel were 'the one' for her.

Since human societies that we are aware of have always been stratified and these stratifications have always had significant impact on subsequent generations any consideration of resource provision should take these features into account. It would be necessary to show that human females would prefer an otherwise undesirable male if he had access to wealth either inheritance, family or social network. It would of course be trivial to show that an average male was considered more attractive when it was known he had access to wealth. It would be interesting to note whether this preference would overcome otherwise negative 'genetic signals'.

Another aspect that is avoided is whether resource provision is a gate or a vector? As a 'gate' a potential male mate's score is simply a deal breaker not a deal maker. Once past the minimum quality required any further addition may have little or no further effect. This would be the case where male A and B were equally attractive but male B had marginally more money resource. If both had more than enough would that marginal increase in resources generally be a deciding factor for human females? This is not brought up as a suggestion but a potentially counter-factual query that the Buss approach will either have to commit to or otherwise amend their thesis.

The aim of Part1 is:

- i) to show that in respect of mate selection the categories generally used by Buss would generate a class of potential male mates in the millions and thus obscures rather than reveals the factors in mate selection;
- ii) to show that it is possible to have a situation where resource provision is a universally important factor (5) for ALL females but is nevertheless not the most important factor for ANY human female.

Coda:

Subsequent parts will address :

1. If the restraints/restrictive assumptions of 'strong' individuality' are relaxed in an orderly fashion what are the consequences for mirroring human behaviour?
2. Does the paper by Buss have any explanatory value? If any and every situation can be explained by these vectors are they not redundant?
3. What is the null hypothesis? What does it mean to call it a test when there is no clear alternative credible theory to be distinguished? Is Buss 'testing' the trivial and expected such that we have more blind confidence in the conclusion than the explanatory principles? There is a well-known situation where as GE Moore identified the premisses obtain their credibility from the conclusion rather than the other way round.
4. Is there not a simulation of proper scientific processing by using the term 'prediction' when there is no alternative theory with an alternative outcome in consideration. Is not any theory testing expected outcomes against a theory is merely testing it against itself? Scientific testing works extremely well when Theory A predicts $x_{1,2,3, \dots, n}$ and theory B predicts $Y_{1,2,3, \dots, n}$. But that is not the case here?
5. In so far as the 'intentions' of parties are unseen their inference based on the features of the theory itself introduces a subtle but complete circularity in the reasoning.

NOTES

1. "Sex differences in human mate preferences: Evolutionary hypotheses tested in 37 cultures" by David M Buss in "Behavioural and Brain Sciences" (1989) vol 12
2. University of Chicago Press Journals. "What can twins tell us about mate choice?." ScienceDaily. ScienceDaily, 27 April 2011.
<www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2011/04/110426111413.htm>