

Impact of College Students' Romantic Relationship Changes on Reorientation of Mate Selection Criteria

Qisheng Zhan¹, Wenjie Chi¹, Kevin Guzman Iglesias², Xiaoran Yang¹, Yanling Xue¹, Han Wang¹, Jing Zhang¹, Chuanyun Lu¹ & Miao Li¹

¹ Institute of Psychology, Tianjin University, Tianjin, China

² Department of Psychology, City University of New York, New York, USA

Correspondence: Qisheng Zhan, Institute of Psychology, Tianjin University, Tianjin, China. Tel: 86-139-2048-0242. E-mail: zqs@tju.edu.cn

Received: September 8, 2016

Accepted: October 10, 2016

Online Published: October 29, 2016

doi:10.5539/ass.v12n12p143

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/ass.v12n12p143>

Abstract

Students may experience two kinds of important romantic relationship changes during their transition from high school to higher education. One is a break-up between previously dating partners, and the other is the establishment of a romantic relationship between students who were single before. These two kinds of experiences also affect orientation of their mate selection criteria. This study takes samples from freshmen with different romantic relationship experiences. The freshmen's dynamic assessment data towards mate selection criteria are obtained by means of investigative questionnaires related to mate selection criteria. Especially, reorientation to mate selection criteria is investigated after their romantic relationship changes. The results show that romantic relationship changes have a significant influence on assessment to the importance of mate selection criteria such as physiological requirements, morality, personality traits, inclusiveness, complementation, affection. Romantic relationship changes don't have significant influence on assessment to the importance of physical and social conditions.

Keywords: freshmen, romantic relationship changes, mate selection criteria, reorientation

1. Introduction

In recent years, the divorce rate of Chinese high school students' parents increased abruptly after the college entrance examination (Liu, Zhang, & Zhu, 2015). At the same time, freshmen with failures in love are found to break up with a higher rate at the beginning of entering the university. This study is just based on this finding and a further research will be carried out in this paper.

Studies show that the puppy love phenomenon appears for younger students in high school or middle school (Tu, 1998). Puppy love is a wide-spread phenomenon in middle school students (Liu, 2010). With this being a huge shift from middle school students to college students, what will be these freshmen's experience for their affection during this special period? On the basis of this problem, 3484 freshmen had been investigated in Tianjin University and it's found that 797 freshmen, accounting for 22.88%, had already fallen in love before entering the university, and the rest of 2687 freshmen, accounting for 77.12%, were still single. As for those students who were already in a relationship, at the end of national college entrance examination, they were facing the pressure of keeping their romantic relationship because of going to different universities located in different or even remote places. The follow-up survey shows that 322 college students, accounting for 40.40%, who have already been in a relationship, chose to break up within three months after entering college. Meanwhile 126 people, accounting for 4.69% of the number of freshmen being single, have established romantic relationships within three months after entering college. For these two groups experiencing the changes of relationship status, with one being the break-up of the relationship, and the other is the establishing a romantic relationship. At this time, what are the changes for their mate selection criteria? The domestic researches on this issue still lack data, this paper will explore the reorientation of their mate selection criteria after the changes of their emotional status.

According to the theory of Erikson (1971), it can be inferred that college students begin to enter a critical period of falling in love. The more relaxed atmosphere in college, the developmental task of early adulthood and the psychological and physiological needs drive students more likely to seek to establish romantic relationship in

college. In the course of romantic relationship establishments or changes, mate selection criteria are the most important subject. Mate selection criteria are the requirements of males and females choosing his/her mate to begin a relationship. Mate selection criteria are diverse in different societies and times. Study on mate selection standards can be traced back to the last century in 1960s. Researchers found that individuals show preferences for age, IQ, height, weight, education level and occupation, etc. (Buss & Barnes, 1986) Body shape or personality related to mate selection has also been studied (Courtiol, Picq, & Godelle, 2010; Botwln, Buss, & Shackelford, 1997). Most studies only focus on sex difference of mate selection (Jaffe & Chacon-Puignau, 1995; Schwarz & Hassebrauck, 2012; Greitemeyer, 2007; Gustavsson & Johnsson, 2008). Also some studies focus on the theoretical ways to explain the preferences, and others focus on different contexts, e.g., short-term versus long-term, (Margery, Elissa, Samantha, & Robyn, 2011) Some people compare the process of mate selection to market running, so each one bargains in the marriage market according to his/her own values (Qian, 2003). The Ideal standards model (ISM) about mate selection were then put forward (Campbell & Fletcher, 2015). In this study, the operational definition of mate selection criteria are the conditions that the individual expresses with descriptive language. Namely, the conditions are also the requisites to his/her partner (Gong, 2014).

Previous studies scarcely involve the influence of experiencing falling in love on mate selection criteria. However, the influence of the change in their romantic relationship on the mate selection criteria is explored by investigating these two kinds of college freshmen in this study. Combined with the results of the preliminary investigation towards 3484 freshmen, out of which 322 students who have experience the break-up, and 126 students who have come to fall in love are chosen as subjects (whole sample is 448 freshmen), so the goal is to empirically explore the changes of college student's mate selection criteria.

2. Research Method and Research Hypotheses

This study is focused on quantitative research. On the basis of previous survey, 448 freshmen with romantic relationship changes during the entire university have been taken as investigative subjects. 333 freshmen out of them have been administered to questionnaires. Rate of freshmen's being tested is 74.33%. Among 333 subjects, 280 subjects, accounting for 86.96%, are the sample with the experience from dating to break-up, and 53 subjects, accounting for 42.06%, are the sample with the experience from being single to falling in love. As for sex, 218 participants are male, and 115 participants are female. They are all 17-21 years old. As far as major is concerned, 302 subjects belong to science and technology, and 21 subjects belong to art, history and philosophy, and only 8 subjects belong to sports. For other demographical categories, 226 freshmen originate from one-child families, and 107 freshmen from multiple-child families. 202 freshmen are from urban environment, and 129 freshmen from rural environment. Statistically speaking, such samples are rational and the distribution of the sample is relatively scientific. All the data have been analyzed with SPSS 22.0. And paired-sample t-test and independent sample t-test have been mainly used in this study. A further in-depth interview has also been used to analyze influence of freshmen's romantic relationship changes on reorientation of their mate selection criteria.

This study has three hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1, Mate selection criteria will be changed for freshmen who have broken up with their mates. These changes mainly stress on the importance of partners' personality traits and characters.

Hypothesis 2, Interpersonal interaction and communication will be emphasized much more after the freshmen who have just come to fall in love than before.

Hypothesis 3, Mate selection criteria are significantly different between freshmen with two different kinds of romantic relationship changes that are break-up or falling-in-love.

3. Results and Discussion

In this study, the subjects of freshmen who went from a romantic relationship status to a single status are put in a break-up group or separate group, and the subjects who went from single status to romantic relationship status are put in a love group. The importance of this kind of criteria on mate selection has been analyzed in these two groups. All the subjects have been asked to recall the importance of the criteria on mate selection before and after the event. And the importance has been rated as scores, which have been compared as follows:

3.1 Impact of Romantic Relationship Change on reorientation of Freshmen's Mate Selection Criteria

Being in the dating stage, everyone has his/her own ideal criteria of choosing a spouse, these criteria come from the conditions of good couples they have observed in daily life or the roles in the movies and television series. They are looking forward to their partners' taking care or complementing their personal defects. However, these criteria of choosing spouse are only composed of individual subjective imagination and design, so it is unrealistic. The criteria of choosing a spouse for these individuals who have never experienced the dating state are usually

impractical. Only after experiencing the dating state can they adjust the criteria with self-experience, and can find the mate selection criteria suitable for themselves.

In this study, 53 freshmen subjects have been found to experience the changes from single status to romantic relationship status. They are required to rate each criterion of mate selection according to their own experience before and after falling in love. SPSS22.0 has been used for paired-sample t-test, and it is found that the scores of 11 standards have changed significantly which are height, being informed, supporting, encouraging to each other, looks and appearance, common topics, specialty, exclusiveness. 280 subjects of freshmen have been found to experience the changes from romantic relationship status to single status, paired-sample t-test is used, and it is found that the scores of 31 criteria have changed significantly which are hobbies, integrity, politeness, independence, behavioral habits, competitiveness, informativeness, thrift, tolerance, no male/female chauvinism, ability, supporting and encouraging each other, morality, diligence, identical lifestyle, outlook of life, world and value, kindness, figure and fitness, softness, and thoughtfulness, cultural quality, understanding each other, looks and appearance, filial piety, personality traits, common topics, similar aspiration and plan, the sense of humor, responsibility, intelligence quotient (IQ), exclusiveness. All these indexes are shown in Table 1.

Table1. Differences of standards of choosing spouse before and after love state changes (M±SD)

mate selection criteria	love group			break-up group			
	before love	after love	t	before break-up	after break-up	t	
common topics	4.02±0.866	4.23±0.800	-2.394*	4.05±0.862	4.25±0.818	-5.129***	
similar aspiration and plan				3.34±1.017	3.46±1.060	-2.557*	
supporting and encouraging each other	4.21±0.885	4.45±0.695	-2.535*	4.12±0.882	4.37±0.810	-5.351***	
Complementation	behavioral habits			3.96±0.867	4.11±0.823	-3.301**	
	hobbies			3.43±1.010	3.66±0.992	-4.261***	
	identical lifestyle	4.09±0.791	4.34±0.758	-2.442*	3.93±0.899	4.18±0.795	-5.734***
	understanding each other	4.53±0.823	4.77±0.466	-2.442*	4.58±0.678	4.69±0.603	-3.52**
	outlook of life, world and value			4.01±0.924	4.14±0.872	-3.67***	
	integrity			4.41±0.816	4.56±0.706	-3.85***	
	politeness			4.19±0.847	4.28±0.808	-2.316*	
	independence			3.5±1.027	3.61±1.088	-2.113*	
	competitiveness			3.57±1.024	3.78±1.047	-4.8***	
	thrift			3.21±0.866	3.35±0.926	-3.342**	
Personality	tolerance			3.8±0.902	4.14±0.772	-7.695***	
	no male/female chauvinism			3.23±1.241	3.35±1.206	-3.025**	
	morality			4.32±0.750	4.47±0.671	-5.172***	
	kindness			4.19±0.817	4.33±0.703	-4.904***	
	softness and thoughtfulness	3.74±0.858	4.04±0.706	-3.292**	3.78±0.846	3.88±0.852	-2.263*
	Filial piety			4.29±0.820	4.43±0.754	-4.696***	
	personality traits			4±0.855	4.15±0.803	-4.199***	

	sense of humor				3.26±1.012	3.36±1.051	-2.478*
	responsibility				4±0.890	4.22±0.871	-5.487***
	diligence				3.43±0.901	3.53±0.931	-2.459*
	informativeness	3.08±1.016	3.23±1.031	-2.06*	3.13±1.004	3.23±1.031	-2.243*
	ability				3.53±0.998	3.62±0.976	-2.308*
Ability and charm	specialty	2.79±0.906	2.57±0.866	3.04**			
	IQ				3.1±0.997	3.16±1.051	-1.974*
	cultural quality				3.72±0.951	3.87±0.884	-3.898***
	figure and fitness	3.42±1.027	3.11±1.031	2.599*	3.69±0.899	3.61±0.937	2.135*
Physiological conditions	height	3.04±1.073	2.7±1.067	2.632*			
	Looks and appearance	3.32±0.936	3.13±0.962	2.106*	3.68±0.893	3.54±0.934	3.398**
Affection	exclusiveness	4.4±0.793	4.62±0.627	-3.261**	4.55±0.741	4.62±0.693	-2.376*
	total				161.54±20.18	165.73±19.18	-7.174***

annotation: *represents $p < 0.05$, **represents $p < 0.01$, ***represents $p < 0.001$ (the following is the same).

3.1.1 Promotion of Inclusiveness and Complementation between the Dating People after Falling in Love

According to Levinger's five-stage theory of intimate relationships, before falling in love, both are attracted by each other's physiological conditions, personality traits, abilities and other aspects. Then they will further communicate and try to establish intimate relationships. In this stage, both will prepare for getting married after a long period of adaptation. In this study, the differences of evaluation of the love standard between the love group and the break-up group is significant. Specifically, as for the group of freshmen who are falling in love, the scores of the importance of love standard such as identical lifestyle, common topics, mutual understanding, mutual support and encouragement all have significant changes after the love group has fallen in love ($p < 0.05$). At the stage of establishing a close relationship for the love group, the partner's attractiveness, inclusiveness and complementation which they can experience are important as they communicate with each other. As for "similarity matching principle", they can get used to identical lifestyle. The bad coordination that one is strongly dependent but the other is independent should be avoided. They can have the common topics of communication and understand each other lest disharmonious phenomenon such as "apples and oranges" would have occurred. In the aspect of affection, they can support and encourage each other. After falling in love, the importance of compatibility and complementation has been promoted. The first-year college students in love take more care of all topics that they communicate rather than their partners' appeal of appearance or other contents to be exchanged. For the break-up group, the scores of importance of common topics, mutual support and encouragement, hobby, identical lifestyle, attitude towards life, world, and value are significantly higher after break-up than before ($p < 0.001$). Furthermore, the break-up group's scores of importance of mutual understanding and behavioral habit are extremely significantly higher ($p < 0.01$). The scores of importance of the same aspiration are significantly higher after break-up than before ($p < 0.05$). All of these results show that college students who experienced an unsuccessful romantic relationship will pay more attention to the emotional coordination and mental compatibility. Research data also prove that the freshmen who experienced the romantic relationship have deeper and further understanding towards love (Hu, 2002).

3.1.2 Promotion of Morality and Personality Traits

After falling in love, college students' scores of importance of morality, personality traits and consideration for each other have much remarkable promotion ($p < 0.01$). This could be due to the love group focused on being in love, considering each other has played a role of coordination for their affective communication and interaction. When the break-up group chooses a mate once more, they will make some new adjustments in respect of morality and personality traits. Specifically, the scores of importance of honesty, tolerance, responsibility, kindness, filial piety, eagerness to learn and competitiveness, personality traits and morality have an extremely remarkable promotion compared with group who are still single ($p < 0.001$). Furthermore, the break-up group has very significantly higher scores of importance for male/female chauvinism and frugality after break-up than ever

($p < 0.01$). Then the scores of importance for politeness, independence, humor, consideration and hard work are significantly higher after break-up than before ($p < 0.05$). This shows that the requirements for his/her mates, morality and personality traits will be emphasized after college students have had the experience of love. And the qualities such as being easy-going and inclusiveness have also been stressed. If the students have had the experience of break-up, they will realize the principle of "Loving one is easy, but getting along with him/her is hard", so they will value each other's personality traits and morality more while choosing a mate again.

3.1.3 Implicit Charisma Become More and More Important

The current study shows that as for love group, the scores of importance of being well-informed and specialty have been changed significantly after falling in love. Specifically, after falling in love, the scores of importance of being well-informed is significantly higher than before ($p < 0.05$), because being well-informed can not only increase charisma, but also make them be able to talk about any topic with each other. Meanwhile, wide experience and knowledge can add the sense of security to the partner. However, partners with specialty get a lower mark after falling in love ($p < 0.01$). It is because specialty can increase charisma before falling in love. But if they spend more time on specialty, it may influence their communication, so the importance of specialty decreases. The break-up group gives the importance of cultural quality an extremely significantly higher score after break-up than before ($p < 0.001$), and also give the importance of being well-informed, personal ability and intelligence a significantly higher score ($p < 0.05$). Cultural quality refers to not only the knowledge of science and technology which you got in school, but also the knowledge of humanities and social science you got through daily life, which emphasizes the overall quality reflected from individuals' every act and every nonverbal behavior. The overall quality is similar to implicit personality trait. The break-up group give those indexes an extremely significantly higher score after breaking up than before, which means the role that temperament and cultural quality play can't be ignored. What's more, the break-up group values those qualities as their criteria for mate selection, so they hope their future mates are competent and attractive persons.

3.1.4 Physiological Conditions Become Less Attractive

The table indicates that both groups reduce their requirements for physiological conditions. To be specific, the love group gives the importance of height, figure and appearance all lower scores after their falling in love ($p < 0.05$). When they are single, they will be attracted by each other's physiological conditions, but once they are in love, appearance is unattractive. As the stimulation theory says, the duration effect of the same stimulus may cause sensory adaptation. As time goes on, the attraction of appearance become weaker and weaker. In terms of height, people get rid of the traditional thought of males being taller than females. We often see couples for whom males and females have similar height or females are quite taller than males in university campuses. In current society, people pay more and more attention to exercise and fitness, so college students can shape the imaginative and ideal body size and figure through individual efforts. Compared with ones' implicit charm, appearance may change and get worse over time, but the implicit charm can become more and more attractive.

3.1.5 Loyalty to Love Is Very Important

As can be seen from Table 1, two groups of freshmen all attach great importance to the standard of exclusive affection before they start love relationships. After falling in love or after breaking up, freshmen have a stricter standard about exclusive affection and the important score of the standard has significantly increased ($p_{\text{love}} < 0.01$, $p_{\text{break-up}} < 0.05$). Love is selfish and exclusive, and lovers all believe that my lover belongs to me and he/she must be loyal and faithful to me. Just like the golden rule of interpersonal interaction, when one person puts his/her heart and soul in the romantic relationship, he/she may demand his/her mate to do the same thing just like what they do. Moreover, lovers may have a stricter standard of exclusive affection. For the group of break-up, one of the reasons of separation is spouse's betraying, so they have higher requirements on the exclusive affection for their lovers.

3.1.6 Standard of Mate Selection Gets Higher

As for the break-up group, the scores of the 44 criteria of mate selection before falling in love or after break-up respectively have been added and a total score of their criteria of mate selection has been got. Results of paired-sample t-test are listed in Table 1. The score of the love standard is significantly higher after break-up than before love ($p < 0.001$). It means that freshmen who have the experience of break-up may have a stricter requirement for choosing mates than before. Requirements for compatibility and complementation, personality traits and morality have been improved, and affective factors maintain at a high level. The intrinsic charm of the individual becomes more important. Requirements for physiological conditions have declined, and the requirements for material and social conditions still maintain at a relatively low level.

According to Maslow's theory of hierarchy of needs, people's needs can be divided into physiological needs, safety, love and belonging, respect, and self-actualization needs. With the rapid development of modern society, living standards have generally been improved. Meanwhile, students will have a stable income which can meet the physiological needs and safety needs after graduation. Then their requirements of love, a sense of belonging, respect and other psychological demands will be enhanced (Wang, 2012).

3.2 The Study of the Difference of Changes of Mate Selection Criteria before and after Falling in Love between the Love Group and the Break-Up Group

The difference of the scores of mate selection criteria before and after falling in love have been used to represent the changes of mate selection standard (D_{love}) and the score of mate selection standard before and after break-up has been used to represent the changes of mate selection standard ($D_{break-up}$).

The results of independent-sample t-test for the love group and the break-up group are in Table 2, and there is a significant difference between the scores of height, hobbies, integrity, politeness, tolerance, morality, gentleness and consideration, personality traits, specialty, exclusiveness.

Table 2. Differences of the changes of mate selection criteria between the love group and the break-up group (M±SD)

	Mate selection criteria	$D_{break-up}$	$D_{in\ love}$	t
Complementation	Hobby	-0.23±0.912	0.06±0.925	-2.091*
	Honesty	-0.15±0.636	-0.04±0.275	-2.029*
	Politeness	-0.09±0.671	0.04±0.338	-2.131*
Personality	Tolerance	-0.34±0.746	-0.09±0.658	-2.466*
	morality	-0.15±0.485	0.08±0.385	-3.74***
	Gentle and thoughtful	-0.09±0.687	-0.3±0.668	2.041*
	Personality traits	-0.15±0.598	0.04±0.631	-2.061*
Ability and charm	specialty	-0.01±0.728	0.23±0.542	-2.22*
Physiological conditions	height	0.06±0.954	0.35±0.955	-2.011*
Affection	undivided	-0.07±0.478	-0.23±0.505	2.112*

3.2.1 Different Starting Points, Different Preferences in Hobbies

In this regard, there is a great difference in hobbies between the love group and the group of breaking up. The scores of importance of hobby have increased in the break-up group and are significantly higher than the love group before and after falling in love ($p < 0.05$). College students need to get along with each other during keeping their relationships. In addition to the study, to participate in the activities is a great way of killing time. It's difficult for them to have enough time to communicate if their hobbies are different, and it will inevitably cause estrangement and break-up. So college students pay more attention to hobbies to find out whether their hobbies can fit.

3.2.2 Significant Difference in Personality Traits and Morality

There are significant differences in honesty, politeness, tolerance, morality, gentleness and thoughtfulness and personality traits between the love group and the break-up group. Except for the items of gentleness and thoughtfulness, the increased evaluation of other five items on the break-up group is significantly higher than the love group before and after falling in love ($p < 0.05$), and it is much higher than the love group especially in the aspect of morality ($p < 0.001$). After experiencing the break-up, they have to not only soothe the pain, more importantly learn from the experience, adjust their standards through the reflection and summary, and then do something for the next beautiful relationship. Therefore, the change of scores of importance in break-up group is significantly higher than the love group in honesty, politeness, tolerance, morality and personality. At the same time, to be integrated with the Table 1, the evaluation on the items of gentleness and thoughtfulness has significantly changed for the break-up group, but the degree of change is inferior to that of the love group. This may be because the love group is being in love, and gentleness in both sides will have the effect of adjustment in

the affective communication. So the evaluation result of gentleness and thoughtfulness for love group is significantly higher than for the break-up group.

3.2.3 Differing in the Requirements for Charm of Specialty and Abilities

As for abilities and charm, specialty is the only variable which means scores had significant difference between the falling-in-love group and break-up group. The score of love group is much higher than the group who had broken up ($p < 0.05$). To investigate its reason, probably the standard of mate selection of the break-up group aims at the future partner, who has been expected to be good at something that makes him/her more attractive. Therefore, there is a slight change in the variable for the break-up group. For students in the love group are in the status of falling in love, they are more eager to spend more time with partners, and the charm of specialty may have become less important.

3.2.4 Decreasing the Standard of Physiological Conditions in Two Groups

As shown in Table 2, the scores of partners' requirements for height in two groups decrease, and the scores of the love group are more significant higher than that of the break-up group. Affected with some of the traditional ideas and the effect of interpersonal attraction, students in the break-up group emphasize partners' height more than those in the love group, which means they will decrease the requirement for height to their future mates to some extent when they make a mate choice again. This result is from a paired-sample t-test which for statistical significance on basis of Table 1 and Table 2. As for students in the love group who are in a committed relationship, it seems to be more important to get along well with each other because of no change of their height.

3.2.5 Affective Factor

Table 1 and Table 2 have been analyzed completely and can be found that the scores of importance of exclusiveness are significantly higher after relationship status change than that before experiencing this change. Descriptive statistical analysis shows that two groups have the same scores on the importance of exclusiveness. Before experiencing the relationship status change, the score of the variable is generally lower for the falling-in-love group ($M=4.40$) than for the break-up group ($M=4.55$). Consequently, the falling-in-love group's variation value of loyalty is significantly higher than that of the break-up group. In a word, both groups all have quite high requirements for loyalty, which proves that the importance of exclusiveness in the world of lovers. Meanwhile, if one has a loyal partner, correspondingly, he/she will minimize the envious emotion, which is beneficial to both lasting and happy relationships.

4. Conclusion

Compared with the previous studies, college students have added the criteria of affective factors and emphasized the compatibility and complementation with each other. This means college students may have openly expressed their affection and don't lack romantic temperament. They are looking forward to romantic love, which may give way to a solution to the problem "Are Chinese too shy to openly express their affection or are Chinese in less romantic temperament than the people in other cultures (especially western culture)?" (Li, 1989). Based on Berry's study (1986), our research found that contemporary college students don't simply view marriage as "making a friend", but as looking for "soul mate" in their lives. That is to say, the couple's complementing, supporting and assisting each other would be focused on spiritual needs rather than on physical needs (Peres & Meivar, 1986). This study shows that college students' criteria for choosing a mate are diversified and comprehensive. In general, these criteria can be divided into two aspects, which are the attraction to each other and the interaction with each other. Attraction to each other consists of extrinsic appeal and intrinsic appeal. Specifically, extrinsic attraction refers to physiological conditions and social material conditions and intrinsic attraction refers to his/her partner's charm for morality, personality trait and ability. Intrinsic attraction has been emphasized more for college students than the extrinsic attraction during the period of them getting along. The interaction between the couple includes two aspects, which are affective factors, the compatibility and complementation with each other.

Results of this study show that those college students with the experience of falling in love have a deeper understanding of being easy to love each other but being difficult to get along well with each other. And it is confirmed by means of the changes of the importance about mate selection standard before and after falling in love or break-up. They also pay more attention to compatibility and complementation with each other and the characters, which is beneficial for them to get along, while the importance of extrinsic attraction to each other declined. According to social exchange theory, mate selection is also a kind of exchange behavior. Both use their own resources to combine with each other to gain the maximum benefits. If both have high compatibility,

complementation and the personality traits which are beneficial for their getting along, the interaction will be more coordinative. Accordingly, the cost to maintain the relationship will be reduced. At the same time, couples with loyalty and exclusiveness tend to think that their close relationships are better and happier than others. Furthermore, they will be more likely to keep and maintain their relationships (Rusbult, Van Lange, & Wildschut, 2000).

For college students who have had the experience of breaking up, the failure of the love gives them a practical experience for their ideal mate selection standard. They can also adjust their own criteria of choosing a spouse due to the failure of love experience. So their mate selection standards are now more realistic. The new mate selection standards are extremely different while selecting a mate again, comparing to previous love experience, especially in the aspects of characters, compatibility and complementation. It also indirectly shows that they suffer from the failure in love mainly because of both unsuitable characters or inconsistent values during their communication and relationship. More so, this attitude implies that they ignore the influences of the environment and cultural background (Miller, 2011). On the contrary, students emphasize the internal factors too much. After all, the failure of love makes them understand themselves better, continuously adjusting their expectations towards the ideal partner to keep it more suitable to themselves, while preparing for a new future partner.

Acknowledgement

This paper is supported by the Research Program of the Chinese Psychological Society (XHTNF01).

References

- Botwin, M. D., Buss, D., & Shackelford, T. (1997). Personality and Mate Preferences: Five Factors in Mate Selection and Marital Satisfaction. *Journal of Personality, 65*(1). <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6494.1997.tb00531.x>
- Buss, D. M., & Barnes, M. (1986). Preferences in human mate selection. *Journal of personality and social psychology, 50*, 559-570. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.50.3.559>
- Campbell, L., & Fletcher, G. (2015). Romantic relationships, ideal standards, and mate selection. *Current Opinion in Psychology, 1*, 97-100. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2015.01.007>
- Courtiol, A., Picq, S., & Godelle, B. (2010). From Preferred to Actual Mate Characteristics: The Case of Human Body Shape. *PLoS ONE, 5*(9), 13010. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.001301>
- Erikson, E. (1971). *Erikson's psychosocial theory*. New York: Doubleday Anchor.
- Gong, Y. (2014). *Study of the relationships among self-esteem, values, and mate preference for unmarried males* (Master's thesis, Nanjing Normal University, Nanjing, China). Retrieved from <http://cdmd.cnki.com.cn/Article/CDMD-10319-1014345142.htm>
- Greitemeyer, T. (2007). What do men and women want in a partner? Are educated partners always more desirable? *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 43*, 180-194. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2006.02.006>
- Gustavsson, L., & Johnsson, J. (2008). Mixed Support for Sexual Selection Theories of Mate Preferences in the Swedish Population. *Evolutionary Psychology, 6*(4), 575-585.
- Hu, Z. (2002). Contemporary college students' love and mate selection standards. *China Youth Study, 6*, 29.
- Jaffe, K., & Chacon-Puignau, G. (1995). Assortative mating: Sex differences in mate selection for married and unmarried couples. *Human Biology, 67*(1), 111-120.
- Li, Y. (1989). Contemporary Chinese people's mate selection standards. *Social Sciences in China, 4*, 61-74.
- Liu, J., Zhang, H., & Zhu, Y. (2015). Interpretation of abrupt rising of divorce rate induced from ecological niche separation after National College Entrance Examination. *Journal of Hunan College of Science and Technological, 36*(5), 163-165.
- Liu, Z. (2010). High school students' love investigation report. *Campus Psychology, 6*, 380-383.
- Lucas, M., Koff, E., Grossmith, S., & Migliorini, R. (2011). Sexual orientation and shifts in preference for a partner's body attributes in short-term versus long-term mating contexts. *Psychological Reports, 108*(3), 699-710. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2466/07.PR0.108.3.699-710>
- Miller, R. (2012). *Intimate relationship* (6th ed.). McGraw-Hill Education.
- Peres, Y., & Meivar, H. (1986). Self-presentation during courtship: a content analysis of classified advertisements in Israel. *Comparative Family Studies, 17*(1), 19-32.

- Qian, M. (2003). Changes of mate selection criteria for Chinese women in the latest fifteen years. *Journal of Peking University (Philosophy & Social Sciences)*, 40(5), 121-128.
- Rusbult, C. E. Van Lange, P. A. M., & Wildschut, T. (2000). Perceived superiority in close relationships: Why it exists and persists. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 79(4), 521-545. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.79.4.521>
- Schwarz, S., & Hassebrauck, M. (2012). Sex and Age Differences in Mate-Selection Preferences. *Hum Nat*, 23, 447-466. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s12110-012-9152-x>
- Tu, M. (1998). High school students' puppy love-related problem and adolescents' sex moral education. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 1, 22-24.
- Wang, L. (2012). *Study of the criteria of choosing spouse of unmarried and married women* (Master's thesis, Hebei Normal University, Hebei, China). Retrieved from <http://cdmd.cnki.com.cn/Article/CDMD-10094-1013108002.htm>

Copyrights

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).