

Abstract

The current study examined the effects of gender and relative attractiveness compared to one's partner on his/her relationship maintenance strategies used and psychological outcomes in the relationship. 288 university undergraduate students in Hong Kong completed an online survey that measured specific maintenance strategies used and psychological outcomes in their romantic relationships. Results indicated a main effect of relative attractiveness on both maintenance strategies used and psychological outcomes, with individuals of lower relative attractiveness using more strategies and having better psychological outcomes in general. Men were also found to use more maintenance strategies compared to women, and overall their strategies and outcomes changed more according to the relative attractiveness than that in women. Results were explained with the evolutionary hypothesis, mate selection preferences and the Investment Model.

Keywords: Relative physical attractiveness; Relationship maintenance strategies; Relational Effort; Forgiveness; Relationship satisfaction; Anxiety.