

Abstract

The present study investigated (a) whether the gender role attributes predict actual partner perception and ideal partner preference, (b) whether the difference between partner perception and partner preference affects subjective experience while dating as well as relationship satisfaction. 193 college students, of which 86 currently dating, were administered the Partner Perception Questionnaire (PPQ) assessing Beauty, Prospect, Support, Communication and Sense of Humor of the actual and ideal partner, the Chinese Personal Attributes Questionnaire (CPAQ) assessing Communion (femininity), Cognitive/ Behavioral (masculinity), and Emotional Sensitivity (femininity and masculinity), and the Experience Sampling Method (ESM) providing random snapshots of feelings and emotions in everyday life while dating. Comparatively, gender role attributes are better predictors of partner perception while gender is a better predictor of partner preference. The gender role of Communion predicts the partner perception Support, and both Communion and Emotional Sensitivity predict Prospect. The dissimilarity between partner perception and partner preference influence several emotions while dating. In particular, participants reported less positive emotions but higher satisfaction with the relationship when the perceived Prospect in their actual partner was higher than in their ideal partner. Results are discussed with reference to the evolutionary theory and Hong Kong social context.