

Abstract

The main aim of this study is to contribute to understanding of family influence on mate choice and satisfaction in long-term relationship. Studies suggest that family has significant influence on mate choice. According to the theory of sexual imprinting, individuals create an image of the opposite sex parent during early childhood, which is in adulthood used as a template for partner choice (Berezkei et al., 2002). However, in accordance with phenotype matching theory, the preference for similar traits like parents have, could be preferences for self-similarity, because they share with parents a half of genome. So it could mean, that they prefer self-similar traits more than parent-similar traits (Rushton, 1989).

Forty nine couples participated in our research and also partner and parents of our respondents filled a set of standardized questionnaires. In the second study women evaluated male somatotypes and completed a questionnaire on the relationship with their father during childhood. The study showed many interesting results.

Studies aimed on sexual imprinting have focused only on the influence of the opposite sex parent (Wiszevska et al., 2007), however, we found that the parent of same sex influences partner choice of their offspring too. These findings support more the phenotypic matching theory, than theory of sexual imprinting. Concerning the theory of sexual imprinting, we supported the results that women prefer (and subsequently choose) partners with similar somatotype like their father had, but only in the case they had good relationship with them during childhood. This influence was stronger in ideal than in real partner.

Furthermore, it appears that women have a higher degree of relationship satisfaction, if they are more similar in the personality traits with a partner. On the other hand men are more satisfied in the relationship if they are complementary with partner. Long-term relationship satisfaction of parents was not related with homogamy in personal characteristics. Even if the influence of parents and partner similarity in personality characteristics showed that women reported greater satisfaction when the partner has a similar personality traits of the same sex parent (mother), while the men if their partner was more complementary with the same sex parent (father).

We also focused on the influence of parents' rating of respondent's partner on respondent's satisfaction in the relationship. This results suggest that for women satisfaction is more important evaluation of the partner's parents, than how is her partner rated by her parents, while in men is more important how is rated his partner by his own parents.