In this investigation, data on young, single adults' preferences in marital partners were gathered from three very diverse cultures: the United States, Russia, and Japan. Based on evolutionary, social learning, historical, and cross-cultural perspectives, the authors hypothesized that in all three cultures they would find certain traditional gender differences. Men would care more than women about physical attractiveness, whereas women would care more than men about status (e.g., intelligence; ambition; money, status, and position; potential for success) and personality attributes (e.g., kindness, understanding, expressiveness, openness). Women would be more "choosy" overall than would men. The authors also hypothesized that people from the United States (a Western individualist culture) would expect more from their relationships than would those from Japan (an Eastern collectivist culture). Finally, the authors predicted that gender differences would be smallest in the United States and largest in Japan. They found strong support for all but the last of these hypotheses and found weak support for that one.

MEN'S AND WOMEN'S PREFERENCES IN MARITAL PARTNERS IN THE UNITED STATES, RUSSIA, AND JAPAN

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What do men and women desire in a marital partner? Since the 1930s, sociologists, family researchers, and psychologists have learned a great deal about the traits young American men and women desire in a romantic or marriage partner (Buss, 1985, 1989; Hill, 1945; Howard, Blumstein, & Schwartz, 1987). In the standard method used to examine mate selection preferences, subjects are given a list of traits and asked to rate how much they desire each in a partner.

Recently, one issue that has received a surge of research attention is the nature of gender differences in marital preferences. This interest has grown

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in part because of the development of evolutionary explanations for gender differences in human social behavior (Buss, 1989; Buss & Schmitt, 1993; Cunningham, 1986; Kenrick & Trost, 1989). Although studies conducted with American subjects have found marked gender differences in preferences, there is almost no evidence as to whether or not such gender differences exist worldwide (for an exception, see Buss, 1989). In this study, we examine the traits that young, single adults desire in marriage partners in samples collected from three very different societies: the United States, Russia, and Japan.

There has been a great deal of theorizing about the kinds of cultural differences that might be expected to exist in preferences even though very little data have been collected. In the first section of this article, we discuss American theories and research concerning gender differences in preferences. We review two theoretical explanations (evolutionary theory and social learning theory) for the gender differences that have been found and their implications for the cross-cultural similarities and differences we might expect in mate preferences. In the second section, we review historical and cross-cultural perspectives on cultural and gender differences in mate preferences. In the third section, we review the handful of recent investigations that have studied cross-cultural differences in preferences.

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN PREFERENCES: EVOLUTIONARY AND SOCIAL LEARNING EXPLANATIONS

According to sociobiological theory, men and women desire different things in sexual and marital partners because they must invest different amounts of resources, time, and energy in producing and caring for offspring. Symons (1979), a sociobiologist, stated, "According to evolutionary biology, an animal's 'fitness' is a measure of the extent to which it succeeds in passing on its genes to the next generation" (p. 6). It is to both men's and women's evolutionary advantage to produce as many progeny as possible. But men and women differ in how much they are required to invest to maximize the number of offspring. Men need invest only a negligible amount of energy to *conceive* a child. (A single man can conceivably father an almost unlimited number of progeny.) Women must invest a great deal more in their infants if the infants are to survive. (They must spend 9 months carrying them and then nurse and protect them until the children can survive on their own.) In tribal societies, most women were lucky to produce even five surviving children (Hrdy, 1981).

Sociobiologists (Buss, 1989; Buss & Barnes, 1986; Buss & Schmitt, 1993; Trivers, 1972) contend that, as a consequence of this difference, in the course of evolution men and women have come to be genetically programmed to desire very different traits in their mates. Men are predisposed to prefer mates with traits that testify to their *reproductive value*—traits such as good looks and youth. (Presumably, both are indicators of good health and probable fertility.) Women, on the other hand, prefer mates with traits that signal men's *potential for resource acquisition* and their *ability and willingness to support* their mates and their progeny. In contemporary society, sociobiologists argue, women should prefer men who are intelligent and ambitious and who possess the potential for success as well as money, status, and position. They should also prefer men who are expressive, kind, and considerate as well because these traits signal men's ability to stay committed to them and their offspring. Researchers, using the standard mate selection questionnaire (the list of traits) as well as many other types of methods (e.g., experiments, content analyses of personal want ads), have amassed considerable support in favor of these contentions (Buss, 1989; Feingold, 1990; Sprecher, Sullivan, & Hatfield, 1994).

Some sociobiologists go on to argue that, overall, women should also be more selective or "choosy" than men in selecting casual sex partners and perhaps even mates (Kenrick & Trost, 1989). Women should care more than men about a wide array of personality characteristics (Buss, 1989). There is some evidence in favor of the proposition that American women are more choosy than are American men (Buss & Barnes, 1986; Howard et al., 1987).

Recently, Buss and Schmitt (1993) argued that the largest gender differences should exist for brief sexual encounters such as "one-night stands" or brief affairs. Gender differences should begin to disappear as both men and women are required to invest similarly large amounts in the survival of children (in, say, a monogamous marriage). There is some support for this hypothesis, although gender differences are generally found in preferences in all types of relationships.

Some feminists have sharply criticized sociobiological theorizing. They point out that sociobiological arguments have been used to justify the status quo—to justify existing differences in men's and women's political, economic, and social positions and to legitimate the subjugation of various cultural, ethnic, racial, religious, and sexual minorities. They criticize sociobiologists who assume that it is "writ in the genes" that men will "naturally" try to dominate women; that men will insist on youth and looks, whereas women must settle for more solid virtues; that men will be selfish, ambitious, and ruthless, whereas women will be warm and nurturant; that men will be promiscuous while insisting that their mates be chaste and faithful; and that men are programmed to rape *and* to react jealously if their mates try to engage in extrarelationship sexual activity (Berscheid, 1993; Bleier, 1984; Collier & Rosaldo, 1981; Quinn, 1977).

Feminist scholars as well as historians, anthropologists, sociologists, and psychologists have not looked to ancient genetic codes to explain gender differences but rather have pointed to different socialization and social opportunities experienced by men and women. This perspective has been variously called the "social argument," "principles of social factors," "social learning theory," "structural powerlessness hypothesis," and "socioeconomic explanation." The theorists, who we call "social learning theorists," contend that in all cultures people's choices are shaped by cost/benefit considerations. In traditional male-dominated societies, they point out, women generally lack the social, educational, and economic means to make it on their own. Thus it is not surprising that women are generally forced to focus on the ability of potential mates to *acquire resources* and to be willing to *invest them* in a relationship. Unlike the sociobiologists, however, social learning theorists would predict that as social conditions change (as, say, casual sex becomes safer and as birth control techniques become increasingly effective; as women's social and economic position improves; and if society begins to subsidize day care facilities, time sharing, and parental leaves), men's and women's preferences in partners and mates should become increasingly similar. There is some evidence in support of social learning theorists' contentions. There is evidence that in different times and places, men and women have readily adapted to very different social realities and that, as a consequence, their preferences in romantic and sexual partners have varied dramatically (Bleier, 1984; Reiss & Lee, 1988; Tavris & Offir, 1984; Travis & Yeager, 1991). Researchers have also found that in those societies where women possess a measure of economic independence, they begin to focus more on sex appeal than they do on practicality in choosing sexual partners (Gangestad, 1993). (However, see Wiederman & Allgeier, 1992, for some conflicting evidence.)

Because the sociobiological and social learning perspectives generally make almost identical predictions concerning gender differences in mate selection preferences, theorists have found it difficult to come up with a simple, critical test to determine which perspective best explains the existing data (Feingold, 1990). There are some differences in the perspectives, however. Sociobiologists tend to focus on cultural universals; social learning theorists tend to predict cultural similarities *and* differences in what men and women desire in marital partners, depending on the sociocultural realities.

CULTURAL AND GENDER DIFFERENCES: HISTORICAL AND CROSS-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

Historians point out that throughout the centuries, four cultures possessed the most political and economic power and the most influential cultural traditions. These four were East Asia (today's China, Japan, Korea, and southeast Asia), South Asia (India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Sri Lanka), the Middle East or West Asia (Egypt, Persia [Iran], Mesopotamia [Iraq], Palestine, Syria, and other Arab countries), and Western civilization (Europe and, recently, Canada and the United States). Until the year 1500, the four major groups were by and large separate and independent cultural units. In these different cultures, people valued different traits in potential mates (Braudel, 1984; Stavrianos, 1981). Historians also point out that since 1800, the world has become increasingly "Westernized." Increasingly, people from far-flung cultures have come to place a higher value on individualism, personal happiness, personal freedom, and gender equality; to accept the notion that the world can change (McNeill, 1963; Rapson, 1988). They have come to desire much the same things from love, sex, and intimate relationships. Thus, according to the historical argument, although prior to 1500-1800 there existed large cross-cultural differences in preferences, today such cultural differences have decreased dramatically.

Although many cross-cultural theorists would probably agree with this historical scenario (Yang, 1986), most still expect cultural, ethnic, and national groups to vary to some extent in their attitudes toward love, sex, and intimacy (in general) and in their preferences in mates (in particular) and to continue to do so for the foreseeable future (Berry, Poortinga, Segall, & Dasen, 1992; Hatfield & Rapson, 1993a, 1993b; Kağitçibaşi, 1990).

One major way cross-cultural researchers classify cultures is according to how individualistic or collectivistic they are. Western, individualist cultures (such as the United States, Britain, Australia, Canada, and the countries of northern and western Europe), they argue, tend to value personal goals over collectivist goals. They put a high value on love, sex, and intimacy. They are fairly egalitarian. Collectivist cultures (such as China, Africa, Latin America, Greece, southern Italy, Japan, and the Pacific Islands), on the other hand, press their members to subordinate personal goals to group goals. Such societies dismiss romantic love, sex, and intimacy as threats to social order. Collectivists value authority and hierarchy; men are dominant (Triandis, McCusker, & Hui, 1990). Scholars point out that individualist and collectivist cultures differ greatly in their expectations as to whether marriages should be arranged or be love matches, what parents and young people should look for in mates, and what both have a right to expect from marriage. For example, Chu (1985) noted that whereas for Americans love and compatibility are the first priority, for traditional Chinese men and women the couple's compatibility is of little consequence; family social status is paramount. Chinese men, of course, expect to dominate their wives. Other cross-cultural researchers confirm the existence of such differences (Doi, 1973; Ho, 1982; Hsu, 1985).

Thus although historians and cross-cultural theorists generally work within similar paradigms, they do differ a bit in their emphases. Historians, who focus on sweeping historical changes that occur over centuries, focus on the fact that today men and women in different cultures are becoming increasingly similar in what they want from marriage partners. Cross-cultural theorists tend to focus on both cultural similarities and cultural differences in men's and women's desires.

REVIEW OF RECENT CROSS-CULTURAL RESEARCH ON MATE PREFERENCES

As we have already stated, there have been very few cross-cultural studies of marital preferences. A few exceptions exist, however. The most noteworthy exception is a comprehensive cross-cultural study conducted by Buss (1989; also see Buss et al., 1990). Buss asked more than 10,000 men and women from 37 countries to rate the importance of 12 different traits in choosing a marital partner. The 37 countries represented a diversity of geographic, cultural, political, ethnic, religious, racial, and economic groups. Buss found that both culture and gender had important impacts on what people valued in marital partners. In the main, men and women in the various cultures were similar in the traits they desired in spouses. When men and women were asked what they cared about most, for example, both said they desired marital partners who were intelligent, kind, and understanding. In such instances, Buss (1989) concluded that "species-typical mate preferences may be more potent than sex-linked preferences" (p. 13). There were, however, a few consistent gender differences in preferences in almost all the cultures. Men seemed to care a little more than women about traits that signaled reproductive capacity (e.g., good looks), and women cared a little more than men about traits that were cues to resource acquisition (e.g., good financial prospects).

Buss (1989) also found that sometimes cultural differences, ecological differences, or mating system differences exerted a powerful influence on the value men and women attached to a trait. For example, men and women in China, India, Indonesia, Iran, Taiwan, and Israel (Palestinian Arabs only) attached a high value to chastity, whereas those in Sweden, Norway, Finland, the Netherlands, West Germany, and France felt that prior sexual experience

was unimportant and irrelevant. A few respondents in those countries stated that chastity was undesirable.

Wallen (1989) conducted some secondary analyses of Buss's data to determine how important cultural differences versus gender differences were for 5 of the 12 mate selection traits. She found that for 2 traits, good financial prospects and good looks, gender accounted for 45% and 40% of the variance, respectively, whereas geographical origin accounted for only 17% and 8% of the variance. For the traits chastity, ambition, and preferred age difference, on the other hand, gender accounted for only 5%, 16%, and 11% of the variance, respectively, whereas geographical origin accounted for 59%, 44%, and 38% of the variance. She concluded that, in general, a cultural perspective may well be more powerful than the evolutionary perspective (which focuses on gender) in understanding mate selection.

Other recent investigations of cultural and gender differences in preferences have been more limited in scope. Sprecher and Chandak (1992), for example, surveyed men and women who lived in Bombay, Madras, Amravati, and Delhi, India. In most of these Indian families (80%), marriages had been arranged for generations. Respondents were asked what traits were most important in the arranged marriages about which they knew. Respondents agreed that selections were generally made on the basis of religion (whether one was a Hindu, Muslim, or Christian), social class, education, and family background. Today, of course, many Indians are beginning to arrange their own love matches. When these same respondents were asked what *they* wanted in a mate, they indicated that they cared most about kindness and understanding, a sense of humor, expressiveness and openness, potential for success, and being a good conversationalist. These researchers also compared the mate selection preferences of Indian students to those of American students. Their preferences were generally surprisingly similar. (The American sample, however, preferred the traits outgoing personality, physically attractive, and athletic more than did the Indian sample.)

In general, researchers have only begun to explore cultural, ethnic, and racial differences in mate preferences (Goodwin & Tang, 1990; South, 1991).

PURPOSES OF THIS STUDY

Although theorists have provided an abundance of speculations concerning possible cross-cultural differences in men's and women's mate selection preferences, as yet very few data exist. Of course, we cannot hope to provide definitive data as to how culture and gender affect preferences either. What we can hope to do, however, is to contribute to the limited existing body of knowledge in this area by studying mate preferences in the wider world. Thus we decided to explore men's and women's mate preferences in three different societies—the United States, Russia, and Japan, societies that vary greatly in individualism/collectivism.

The United States was selected as the prototype of an individualist society; it is, of course, a modern, Western, industrial society. Modern Russia was chosen as a representative of a culture that is intermediate in individualism/collectivism; it is a modern, Western and Eastern, industrializing society. Japan was selected as a prototype of a collectivist society; it is, of course, a traditional, Eastern, modern, industrial society. (For information on the variety of ways in which these societies differ, see Hofstede, 1983; Schwartz, 1993, 1994; Shlapentokh, 1984; Stern, 1979; Triandis et al., 1990).

This study was designed, then, to determine what men and women in three very different societies desire in their mates. We plan to test five major hypotheses derived from the evolutionary, social learning, historical, and cross-cultural perspectives discussed earlier.

Our first two hypotheses address the issue of gender differences, overall, in the traits desired in partners. As stated previously, evolutionary psychologists contend that, in the course of evolution, men and women have come to be genetically programmed to desire very different traits in marital partners. Social learning theorists predict similar gender differences for social structural reasons. In line with their predictions, we present our first hypothesis:

> Hypothesis 1: In all cultures, men will be predisposed to prefer marriage partners with traits that testify to their reproductive value (traits such as good looks), whereas women will be predisposed to prefer traits that signal men's potential for resource acquisition (traits such as intelligence; ambition; potential for success; money, status, and position) as well as traits that signal men's willingness to invest in a long-term relationship (traits such as kindness, understanding, expressiveness, and openness).

These two theories also predict that, overall, men and women will differ in choosiness. Thus our second hypothesis states the following:

> Hypothesis 2: Overall, women will be more choosy or selective than will men in selecting marriage partners.

In our next two hypotheses, we make predictions concerning cultural differences in marital preferences. Although historians caution us that cultural and gender differences in values are disappearing rapidly, cross-cultural theory leads us to our third hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: Culture will have a significant impact on men's and women's marriage partner preferences (people from the three nations will differ in their ratings of the importance of various traits).

Cross-cultural researchers also contend that in Western, individualist cultures men and women are preoccupied with personal fulfillment, whereas in collectivist cultures people have more modest aspirations; the latter are more willing to subordinate their needs to those of the group. This leads us to our fourth hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4: Men and women in Western, individualist cultures (such as the United States) will expect/demand more from potential marriage partners than will those in mixed or collectivist cultures (such as Japan).

In our fifth hypothesis, we consider the way culture and gender should interact in influencing marriage partner selection preferences:

Hypothesis 5: Traditional gender differences will be weakest in Western, individualist, more-or-less egalitarian cultures (such as the United States), intermediate in mixed societies (such as Russia), and greatest in Eastern, collectivist, hierarchical societies (such as Japan).

METHOD

SUBJECTS

The data for this report come from a survey study conducted with college students recruited from universities in the United States, Russia, and Japan. After eliminating subjects who failed to indicate their gender or who were already married, we had a sample size of 1,519 subjects (634 men and 885 women).

The U.S. sample consisted of 970 participants from five different universities: Illinois State University (n = 470); Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas (n = 272); the University of Hawai'i at Honolulu (n = 96); Bradley University in Peoria, Illinois (n = 78); and Millikin College in Decatur, Illinois (n = 54). The Russian sample consisted of 327 participants from the Vladimir Poly-Technical Institute, which is about 100 miles from Moscow. The Japanese sample consisted of 222 participants from two universities: Nanzan University in Nagoya (n = 108) and Tohoku University in Senda (n = 114). These eight universities were chosen because they were the home universities of the authors or because the authors had contact with

TABLE 1
Demographic Information on the U.S., Russian, and Japanese Samples (percentages)

	United States (N = 970)	*Russia* (N = 327)	*Japan* (N = 222)
Gender (percentage females)	63	49	53
Age (percentage ages 18-21 years)	78	63	84
Median age	20	21	20
Identified race/ethnicity	79% White/ Caucasian	94% White/ Caucasian	94% Asian
Background			
Setting in which grew up			
Rural	8	14	7
Small town	18	12	20
Large town or small city	20	44	35
Suburb	40	3	19
Large city	14	26	18
Family's social class			
Upper	7	4	1
Upper middle	37	12	23
Middle	44	49	57
Lower middle	8	10	14
Working	3	25	5
Lower	1	1	1

faculty members from the universities who were willing to distribute the questionnaire. Table 1 presents demographic information on the samples from the three countries.[1]

PROCEDURE

In each country, the questionnaire was completed by university students, most often during class time. The one exception was at Tohoku University in Japan, where students received class credit for completing the questionnaire at home. Subjects recorded their responses to the questionnaire on an optical-scan sheet. This was done primarily so that the data from Russia and Japan could be more easily transported to the United States.

The questionnaire was translated into Russian for the Russian sample. Later, back translations were conducted to check on the accuracy of the translation. A professor of Russian languages from a university in the United

States back translated the Russian questionnaire into English and assessed the accuracy of the original translation. Further, an independent assessment was made by a second professor of Russian languages from another U.S. university. Both experts concluded that the original translation was good. Only a few problems in the lengthy questionnaire were noted, but none was found in the measures used in this study (with one minor exception, which is discussed later).

The questionnaire remained in English for the Japanese sample. This was done because the Japanese students who were asked to participate had excellent command of the English language. For example, many of the Japanese subjects were English language or American studies majors and thus had many years of formal instruction on the English language. Japanese subjects were also allowed to use Japanese-English dictionaries if it was necessary. The professors who distributed the questionnaire in their classes reported that the subjects did not seem to have any problems completing and understanding the questionnaire.

MEASUREMENT

One section of the questionnaire was titled "Traits Desired in a Partner" and began with the following directions.

> Many people have an idea of the kind of marriage partner they would like. Following are several characteristics that might be considered desirable in a marriage partner. Please rate each of the characteristics on the following scale:

A 5-point response scale followed each of the items. The options ranged from a neutral response (1 = *It does not matter to me if my partner has this characteristic*) to a very strong preference (5 = *This would be a necessity; I would not even consider a person as a marriage partner if he/she did not have this characteristic*). The 12 items listed all referred to positive traits: physically attractive/good looks; intelligent; athletic; ambitious; good conversationalist; outgoing and sociable; money, status, and/or position; skill as a lover; kind and understanding; potential for success; expressive and open; and sense of humor. These items were selected after we studied several other mate selection lists including the original one used by Hill (1945) and more recent ones (e.g., Howard et al., 1987).

A concern could be raised about whether these items lose any meaning in the translation into Russian. The U.S. experts of the Russian language who were asked to judge the quality of the Russian translation reported that all of the items had the same meaning in the Russian version of the questionnaire, with one exception: "Athletic" translated as "athletic build." Although we present the results for this item, any differences found for the Russian sample must be interpreted with caution.

A choosiness index was calculated by averaging subjects' ratings across the items. The higher the index, the more choosy or "demanding" the subject can be considered to be, at least for the traits that were listed.

RESULTS

PRELIMINARY RESULTS

Before we turn to our tests of Hypotheses 1-5 and explore the impact of gender and culture on mate preferences, we begin by highlighting the traits that the total sample (collapsing over both culture and gender) rated as most and least important in marriage partners. Table 2 presents the list of the 12 traits and their mean importance ratings for the total sample.

Overall, men and women desired each of the 12 traits at least to some degree. For example, most of the traits were rated at the midpoint of the scale (*I have a moderate preference for this characteristic*) or higher. However, subjects naturally cared more about some traits than they did about others. The most desired traits were those referring to "internal" personality attributes, particularly those that are likely to contribute to the long-term maintenance of a marriage (e.g., kind and understanding, expressive and open). Traits that subjects deemed as less critical were "external" attributes such as money, status, and position; ambition; and physical attractiveness. Although American society sometimes stresses the importance of romance and sexuality in marriage, skill as a lover was rated as only moderate in importance. People were least concerned about whether or not their partners were athletic.

Now that we have some idea as to how people valued the 12 traits overall, let us turn to our hypotheses.

TESTS OF THE HYPOTHESES

We set out to explore five major hypotheses derived from the evolutionary, social learning, historical, and cross-cultural perspectives. To test these hypotheses, a 2 × 3 (Gender × Culture) ANOVA was conducted for each of the 12 attributes and for the overall choosiness index. We conducted the regression version of ANOVA in which one factor is assessed with the other factor controlled. This approach was used because the ratio of males to females varied across societies. Because of the large sample size, the significance level was set at $p < .01$.

TABLE 2
Ratings of the Mate Selection Traits in the Total Sample

Trait	*Mean Rating*
Kind and understanding	4.38
Has sense of humor	3.91
Expressive and open	3.81
Intelligent	3.73
Good conversationalist	3.72
Outgoing and sociable	3.47
Ambitious	3.36
Physically attractive	3.27
Skill as a lover	3.17
Shows potential for success	2.95
Money, status, and position	2.50
Athletic	2.50

Gender Differences in Marital Preferences

Hypotheses 1 predicted that men and women in all cultures should differ in the traits they desired in marital partners. The first column of Table 3 contains the F values for the main effects of gender for the 12 attributes. As can be seen, the gender main effect is significant for 11 of the 12 traits. (Only good conversationalist failed to reach significance.)

We also found support for the nature of these gender differences as predicted in Hypothesis 1. Table 4 presents the mean ratings for men and women in the total sample. As hypothesized, men rated physical attractiveness as more important than did women. Further, as hypothesized, women preferred intelligence; ambition; potential for success; money, status, and position; kindness and understanding; and expressiveness and openness to a greater degree than did men.

In Hypothesis 2, we proposed that, overall, women should be more selective or choosy than men in selecting mates. As reported in Table 3, the main effect of gender was significant for the choosiness index. On average, men rated the 12 traits as less important ($M = 3.24$) overall than did women ($M = 3.51$). We see, then, that there is strong support for both of the hypotheses concerning gender differences in mate selection preferences.

Cultural Differences in Marital Preferences

Hypothesis 3 proposed that culture would have a strong impact on men's and women's preferences in marital partners. The second column of Table 3 presents the F values for the main effect of culture for the 12 items. Culture had a significant effect for all 12 traits. The means for each culture separately are presented in Table 5.

TABLE 3
F Values From the Gender × Culture ANOVA for the Mate Selection Traits

Trait	*Gender*	*Culture*	*Interaction*
Kind and understanding	25.45**	11.33**	2.45
Has sense of humor	18.93**	82.78**	0.58
Expressive and open	11.89**	122.29**	2.83
Intelligent	22.95**	57.25**	0.57
Good conversationalist	5.42	36.71**	1.05
Outgoing and sociable	30.30**	44.75**	2.73
Ambitious	55.31**	108.66**	12.30**
Physically attractive	81.72**	58.34**	0.58
Skill as a lover	8.57*	75.39**	0.20
Shows potential for success	86.71**	20.10**	3.57
Money, status, and position	124.14**	15.81**	4.53*
Athletic	27.41**	4.74*	13.49**
Overall choosiness	72.12**	111.54**	2.94

*$p < .01$; **$p < .001$.

TABLE 4
Ratings of the Mate Selection Traits for Men and Women in Total Sample

Trait	*Men's Ratings*	*Women's Ratings*
Kind and understanding	4.21	4.51
Has sense of humor	3.75	4.02
Expressive and open	3.64	3.93
Intelligent	3.55	3.85
Good conversationalist	3.62	3.79
Outgoing and sociable	3.31	3.58
Ambitious	3.03	3.58
Physically attractive	3.55	3.08
Skill as a lover	3.06	3.26
Shows potential for success	2.61	3.20
Money, status, and position	2.12	2.76
Athletic	2.40	2.58
Overall choosiness	3.24	3.51

TABLE 5
Ratings of the Mate Selection Traits, by Culture

Trait	*U.S. Ratings*	*Russian Ratings*	*Japanese Ratings*
Kind and understanding	4.43[a] (1)	4.42[a] (1)	4.14[b] (1)
Has sense of humor	4.11[a] (2)	3.74[b] (2)	3.25[c] (3)
Expressive and open	4.07[a] (3)	3.51[b] (6)	3.10[c] (5)
Intelligent	3.92[a] (4)	3.36[b] (7)	3.37[b] (2)
Good conversationalist	3.84[a] (5)	3.72[a] (3)	3.21[b] (4)
Outgoing and sociable	3.54[a] (7)	3.63[a] (4)	2.91[b] (6)
Ambitious	3.67[a] (6)	2.83[b] (9)	2.75[b] (7)
Physically attractive	3.40[a] (8)	3.27[a] (8)	2.74[b] (8)
Skill as a lover	3.23[a] (9)	3.56[b] (5)	2.38[c] (11)
Shows potential for success	3.09[a] (10)	2.81[b] (10)	2.57[b] (10)
Money, status, and position	2.49[a] (12)	2.70[a] (11)	2.22[b] (12)
Athletic	2.54 (11)	2.35 (12)	2.58 (9)
Overall choosiness	3.53[a]	3.33[b]	2.94[c]

NOTE: Means with different superscripts are significantly different. Numbers in parentheses are the rank orderings of the traits based on the mean ratings.

More specifically, what differences did we find across the cultures? Post hoc Scheffé tests (within one-way) were conducted to determine which samples differed significantly from one another. American subjects scored significantly higher than did subjects from the other two countries on the traits expressive and open and sense of humor; Russian subjects scored significantly higher than did Japanese subjects on these traits. All three samples also differed from each other on the trait skill as a lover, but in this case Russian subjects desired this trait the most and Japanese subjects desired it the least. For the traits kind and understanding; good conversationalist; physically attractive; and money, status, and position, Japanese students scored significantly lower than did subjects from the other two countries, but there were no differences between the U.S. and Russian samples. On the traits intelligent, ambitious, and potential for success, the U.S. subjects scored significantly higher than did both the Russian and the Japanese students, but there were no significant differences between the Japanese and Russian subjects. For athleticism, no two countries were significantly different from one another (although the overall F value was significant).

Because the samples from the different countries may use the response scale provided in different ways, we also compared the relative importance of the traits across the three cultures. Table 5 contains, in parentheses, the rank ordering of the items based on the mean scores. All three samples rated the internal personality traits as the most desirable and the external attributes as least desirable. Some minor differences were found across societies. For

example, Americans gave more relative importance to expression and openness than did the other two samples, the Japanese gave more relative importance to intelligence than did the other two samples, and the Russians gave more relative importance to skill as a lover.

In Hypothesis 4, we proposed that men and women in Western, individualist cultures will expect/demand more in potential mates than will people from mixed or collectivist cultures. Support was found for this hypothesis. The culture main effect for the choosiness index was significant. American subjects had a mean on the choosiness index that was significantly higher than the indexes for the Russian and Japanese subjects. Further, the mean for the Russian subjects was significantly higher than the mean for the Japanese subjects. Thus American students are most choosy, Russian students are intermediate in choosiness, and Japanese students are least choosy—at least for the items that were included in this study.

The Interaction of Culture and Gender in Shaping Marital Preferences

Hypothesis 5 proposed that traditional gender differences will be smallest in a Western, individualist, more-or-less egalitarian culture such as the United States, intermediate in a mixed society such as Russia, and greatest in an Eastern, collectivist, hierarchical society such as Japan. Table 6 presents the means for males versus females within each culture separately.

First, we examined gender differences for physical attractiveness across the three cultures. The interaction between gender and culture was not significant. This nonsignificant interaction means that the greater preference men gave physical attractiveness was found in all three societies. This can be seen in the means presented in Table 6.

Second, we examined the Gender × Culture interaction for an index (mean) created from the four traits considered to be traditionally desired more by women than by men and that refer to resource acquisition. These were the traits intelligent; ambitious; money, status, and position; and potential for success. The ANOVA yielded a significant Gender × Culture interaction, $F(2, 1496) = 7.92, p < .001$. As we hypothesized, the difference between men and women was larger in Japan ($M = 2.31$ for males and 3.11 for females, $t = -8.76, p < .001$) than it was in the United States ($M = 3.02$ for males and 3.46 for females, $t = -9.49, p < .001$)[2] or in Russia ($M = 2.77$ for males and 3.09 for females, $t = -4.75$, $p < .001$). We tested this prediction further by examining the Gender × Culture interaction for an index containing all the traits that evolutionary psychologists say women will prefer more than will men because of their implications for parental investments—the four traits

TABLE 6
Gender Differences in Mate Preferences Within Each Culture

Trait	*U.S. Ratings*		*Russian Ratings*		*Japanese Ratings*	
	Men	*Women*	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*	*Women*
Kind and understanding	4.21	4.56	4.29	4.55	4.09	4.19
Has sense of humor	4.00	4.18	3.64	3.85	3.08	3.41
Expressive and open	3.91	4.17	3.51	3.52	2.94	3.24
Intelligent	3.79	4.01	3.25	3.48	3.17	3.54
Good conversationalist	3.75	3.89	3.59	3.84	3.20	3.22
Outgoing and sociable	3.43	3.60	3.48	3.79	2.64	3.15
Ambitious	3.35	3.86	2.82	2.84	2.28	3.17
Physically attractive	3.73	3.20	3.48	3.06	3.02	2.48
Skill as a lover	3.11	3.30	3.48	3.63	2.23	2.50
Shows potential for success	2.77	3.28	2.59	3.03	2.10	2.99
Money, status, and position	2.14	2.70	2.38	3.03	1.66	2.71
Athletic	2.57	2.52	2.08	2.61	2.30	2.82
Overall choosiness	3.39	3.61	3.22	3.44	2.73	3.12

referred to earlier in this paragraph as well as kindness and understanding and expressiveness and openness. The interaction for this index was also significant, $F(2, 1486) = 6.16$, $p < .01$. The difference between men and women was larger in Japan ($M = 2.71$ for males and 3.31 for females, $t = -7.77$, $p < .001$) than it was in the United States ($M = 3.36$ for males and 3.76 for females, $t = -10.39$, $p < .001$)[2] or in Russia ($M = 3.16$ for males and 3.41 for females, $t = -4.05$, $p < .001$).

When we examine the Gender × Culture interaction for each of the 12 individual items, however, we find that here our results are far less strong than we had anticipated. In Table 3, we find that we secure a significant Gender × Culture interaction on only 2 of the 7 traits that evolutionary psychologists identified as traditional gender differences (ambitious; money, status, and position) and on only 1 other trait (athletic). On all 3 items, as predicted, gender differences were smaller in the American sample than they were in the Japanese sample.

More specifically, we found that women preferred ambitious partners more than did men in the United States ($t = -7.77$, $p < .001$) and in Japan ($t = -6.20$, $p < .001$) but not in Russia ($t = -.45$, n.s.), where no gender difference was found. Athletic partners were preferred more by women than by men in Russia ($t = -4.52$, $p < .001$) and in Japan ($t = -4.24$, $p < .001$) but not in the United States ($t = .68$, n.s.), where no difference was found. For money and status, a gender difference in the same direction was found in all three societies but was larger in Japan ($t = -8.65$, $p < .001$) than it was in the United States ($t = -7.64$, $p < .001$) and Russia ($t = -5.00$, $p < .001$).

There appears, then, to be strong support for the contention that culture has a significant impact on people's preferences in mates (Hypothesis 3). There was also clear evidence for Hypothesis 4. Men and women were far choosier in the United States than they were in Russia. However, there was only weak evidence in support of Hypothesis 5—that traditional gender differences will be weaker in the United States than they will in Japan.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Research on cross-cultural differences in mate selection is still in its infancy. Some pioneering researchers—evolutionary psychologists such as Buss (1989) and cross-cultural researchers such as Triandis et al. (1990), Markus and Kitayama (1991), Chu (1985), Ho (1982), Hsu (1985) and Doi (1973)—have offered a set of compelling theoretical paradigms as to the impact that culture and gender should have on love and mate selection preferences. However, very little research exists to confirm or disconfirm their intriguing speculations. This article, then, was written to add a small piece to the accumulating literature on cultural and gender differences in mate selection. This study leads us to several conclusions.

First, there is considerable support for the two hypotheses derived from the evolutionary psychologists' and social learning theorists' models of mate selection (Hypotheses 1 and 2). Hypothesis 1 proposed that, in all cultures, men will tend to prefer mates who possess traits that testify to their *reproductive value*, whereas women will prefer mates with traits that signal men's potential for *resource acquisition* and men's willingness and ability to support women and their progeny. We found considerable support for this proposition. In all cultures, men rated physical attractiveness as more important than did women. In all cultures, women rated intelligence; ambition; potential for success; money, status, and position; kindness and understanding; and expressiveness and openness as more important than did men. Hypothesis 2 proposed that men will be less choosy or selective than women in selecting their mates. We also secured clear evidence in support of this hypothesis. On average, women rated the 12 traits as more important overall than did men.

Culture was also found to have a significant impact on men's and women's marital selection preferences (Hypothesis 3). As predicted, young people in the three cultures differed significantly in the importance ratings given to the

12 characteristics. (However, the samples from the different countries were quite similar in the relative importance of the traits.)

Hypothesis 4 not only predicted that cultural differences will exist but also predicted the nature of those differences. It proposed that people in Western, individualist cultures (such as the United States) will expect/demand more in potential mates than will people from mixed or collectivist cultures (such as Japan). This hypothesis also received strong support from our data. On average, American students were most choosy, Russian students were intermediate in choosiness, and Japanese students were least choosy.

We also looked at how gender and culture interacted in their effects on mate preferences. Hypothesis 5 proposed that traditional gender differences will be weakest in Western, individualist, more-or-less egalitarian cultures (such as the United States), intermediate in mixed societies (such as Russia), and greatest in Eastern, collectivist, hierarchical societies (such as Japan). The data provided only weak support for this final hypothesis. Men in all three cultures cared more about physical attractiveness than did women. (Here, the Gender × Culture interaction was not significant.) When we examined the Gender × Culture interaction for the traits that women are assumed to care about most, on the other hand, we found that, as predicted, the difference between men and women was smallest in the United States and largest in Japan. Here, then, we found support for this hypothesis. When we examined the Gender × Culture interaction for each of the 12 individual items, however, we found a significant interaction on only 2 of the 7 traits that evolutionary psychologists have identified as traditional gender differences.

In this study, then, we found evidence that both gender differences (that the evolutionary and social learning theorists emphasize) and cultural differences (that the cross-cultural researchers emphasize) shape people's preferences in mates. It could be argued that we would have found more and stronger cross-cultural and gender differences if we had surveyed older respondents and/or those who were not college educated. Further, more individualist and collectivist societies could have been sampled. More generally, caution must be exercised in interpreting cross-cultural data because it is almost impossible to ensure that samples from different countries are comparable. In this study, we compared convenience samples of university students from three countries. We do not know to what extent each sample was representative of the larger population. The sample from the United States (where most young people attend college) may be more representative than the samples from Russia or Japan (where a smaller proportion of the general population continue their education).

What suggestions do we have for future research? In this study, we explored the extent to which men and women in three diverse societies cared about the traits that Western psychologists have identified as important over the past 60 years. Eventually, we would hope for more cross-cultural collaborations in such investigations. For example, we propose that subsequent researchers from a wide array of cultures get together and draw up a list of traits that peoples throughout the world might consider to be important. Such collaboration is critically important. For example, in this article, Hypothesis 4 tested whether those in Western cultures would be more choosy/demanding than those in collectivist cultures. A cynic might question our conclusion. Perhaps those in collectivist societies would score higher on choosiness if the list contained traits that they have traditionally identified as important (e.g., right family background, right religion, fits in with my family). Only subsequent research can refute or support such possibilities.

It is also critically important to begin to conduct research to explore the impact of culture on mate selection processes over time. Historians argue that prior to 1800, before Westernization, cultural differences were far more pronounced than they are today. Many historians have observed that the same process of Westernization that occurred in the West over a 500-year period (from 1500 to the present) has been telescoped into a 50-year period in the non-Western world. They assume that cultural differences will eventually disappear. Some cross-cultural researchers, however, dispute this thesis. Kağitçibaşi (1990), for example, argued that there is no reason to expect that Westernization should spread to other regions of the world. To settle questions concerning the Westernization of the world, researchers must begin to assess current values in the area of love, sex, and intimacy in several of the most collectivist societies (e.g., rural China, Guatemala, Indonesia, Pakistan) so that they can track whether or not predicted changes occur over the coming decades.

NOTES

1. We would like to make two comments about the demographic information on the subjects. First, although it would have been desirable to have equal numbers of men and women in all three countries, the U.S. classes sampled had a greater proportion of women than they did of men. Second, although some of the subjects in Japan did not check the ethnic category "Asian/Oriental," we have reason to believe that all subjects completing the questionnaire in Japan were Japanese but that a few may have been confused by the question or preferred to choose the "other" category instead of "Asian/Oriental." Similarly, of the 6% of Russian students who did not indicate that they were "White/Caucasian," probably most were.

2. Note that the mean differences were larger in Japan than they were in the United States but that the t value was larger in the United States. This is because the value of the t statistic is dependent on sample size, and the U.S. sample was much larger than the Japanese sample.

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