

Evolutionary explanations

- Sexual selection:** Partner preferences based on chances of reproductive success (pass on genes)
- **Inter-sexual selection** – evolution of traits that increase attractiveness. Males prefer females who show traits of fertility, women prefer resource related traits (sexy sons' hypothesis)
 - **Intra-sexual selection** – evolution of traits that increase competition, males who are strong/aggressive more likely to survive and pass on genes.
- ✓ Supported by Buss in cross-cultural research
 - ✗ May not be relevant in today's society (women more independent)
 - ✗ May not apply to homosexual relationships
 - ✗ Difficult to test/falsify

Theories: Social exchange theory

- Thibault and Kelly:** Seek 'exchange', aim to maximise rewards and minimise costs (make profit)
- **Comparison Level (CL):** assesses reward based on previous experiences/observations
 - **Comparison to Alternatives (CLAT):** compare profit to being alone or alternative relationship
 - **Four stages:** sampling, bargaining, commitment, institutionalisation
- ✓ Supported by Sprecher and can explain individual differences
 - ✗ Assumes people make rational and logical decisions
 - ✗ Difficult to establish cause and effect
 - ✗ May not apply to communal relationships

Theories: Equity theory

- Walster:** Fairness (equity) is most important, profit should be the same, does not mean equality. Deal with inequity physically and cognitively.
- ✓ Supported by Utne et al – higher equity meant higher satisfaction
 - ✗ May not be important in collectivist cultures
 - ✗ Other factors may be more important

Factors influencing attraction

- Physical attraction:** symmetry (suggests strong genes), babyfaces (provokes caregiving), halo effect (judged to possess positive characteristics), matching hypothesis (choose similar attractiveness)
- ✓ Matching hypothesis supported by Feingold – positive correlation in attractiveness between partners
 - ✓ Supported by cross-cultural research
 - ✗ May not be important to all (MACHO scale)
- Self-disclosure:** Sharing personal info, likes/dislikes, wishes etc, needs to be reciprocal, builds intimacy. Social penetration theory – orientation, exploratory affective, affective, stable.
- ✓ Supported by Sprecher and Hendrick – positive correlation between disclosure and satisfaction
 - ✗ Complex factor – too much could reduce attraction
- Filter theory:** 1) social demography (those we are likely to meet), 2) similarity in attitudes, 3) complimentary (meet emotional needs)
- ✓ Supported by Kerckhoff and Davis – longitudinal study
 - ✗ May lack temporal validity, hard to establish cause and effect

Theories: Rusbult's model of investment

- Rusbult:** SET too simplistic, most important is commitment – more likely to remain in relationship. Three factors influence commitment:
- **Satisfaction** – consider rewards vs. cost, still involves comparison level
 - **Comparison to alternatives** – consider profitability of other relationships/being alone
 - **Investment** – intrinsic (what you put in) and extrinsic (what you have gained) – leads to greater commitment
- ✓ Supported by Le and Agnew – all 3 elements predicted commitment
 - ✗ Too simplistic – does not consider future investments

Theories: Duck's model of breakdown

- Duck:** Breakdown occurs in phases, couples reach a 'threshold'
- Intra-psycho (dissatisfaction is internal), dyadic (talk to partner), social (seek support), grave-dressing (see self in positive light), resurrection (prepared for new relationships)
 - ✓ Supported by Tashiro and Frazier – ppts went through grave-dressing and resurrection
 - ✗ Not supported by Akert – may only apply to one partner
 - ✗ May not apply to homosexual or arranged marriages

Virtual relationships (social media)

- The role of self-disclosure:** May disclose more virtually than FTF due to anonymity
- **Hyperpersonal model** – can manipulate online persona, may be hyperhonest or dishonest, projecting positive image increases disclosure
 - The absence of gating:** Obstacles/barriers to interaction are removed (e.g. physical attraction), relationship more likely to get off the ground.
 - ✓ Supported by McKenna and Bargh – those who are lonely/anxious more likely to reveal true selves
 - ✗ Disclosure may differ according to media platform (more honest on gaming sites)
 - ✗ May be cultural differences in disclosure online
- Related cues theory:** Self-disclosure may be lower online due to lack of non-verbal cues, could lead to deindividuation and a loss of identity
- ✗ Cues may still be present e.g. use of emojis and timing of responses

Parasocial relationships

- Relationships which are one-sided, unreciprocated, often with celebrities
- **Levels of parasocial relationships** – entertainment social, intense-personal, borderline pathological
- Explanations of parasocial relationships
- **Absorption addiction model** – compensate for deficiencies, more likely with poor psychological functioning, focus intensively (absorption) and compelled to maintain it (addiction),
 - ✓ Supported by Maltby – 'psychotic' personalities more likely to be at 'borderline-pathological'
 - ✗ Lacks explanatory power, takes a negative view of parasocial relationships
- **Attachment theory** – insecure-resistant most likely, seek attachment and fulfilment, show clingy and jealous behaviour
 - ✓ Supported by Kienlen – stalkers more likely to have poor attachments
 - ✗ Research is not consistent
 - ✗ Research is retrospective – lacks validity