



Read the following article and then answer the questions below.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-32427178>



The quotes are from the BBC article.

1. *The larger the donations they see pledged, the more they are likely to give.*

Consider what you know from social psychology – what word could be used to describe this phenomenon? Clue – you may have come across a study with jelly beans!

2. *When men see large donations to 'attractive' women, they up the stakes considerably, giving up to four times more than they would have given otherwise.*

What are the problems with the conclusion that this difference is purely down to 'attractiveness'?

3. *According to a study published in Current Biology, which looked at nearly 700 fundraising pages from the 2014 London Marathon, men who make donations are competing for women's attention.*

Discuss the strengths **and** limitations of this sample.

4. *It's unlikely men are aware of doing it, but they are programmed to improve their success with women compared to other men.*

What is the usual criticism of such a claim?

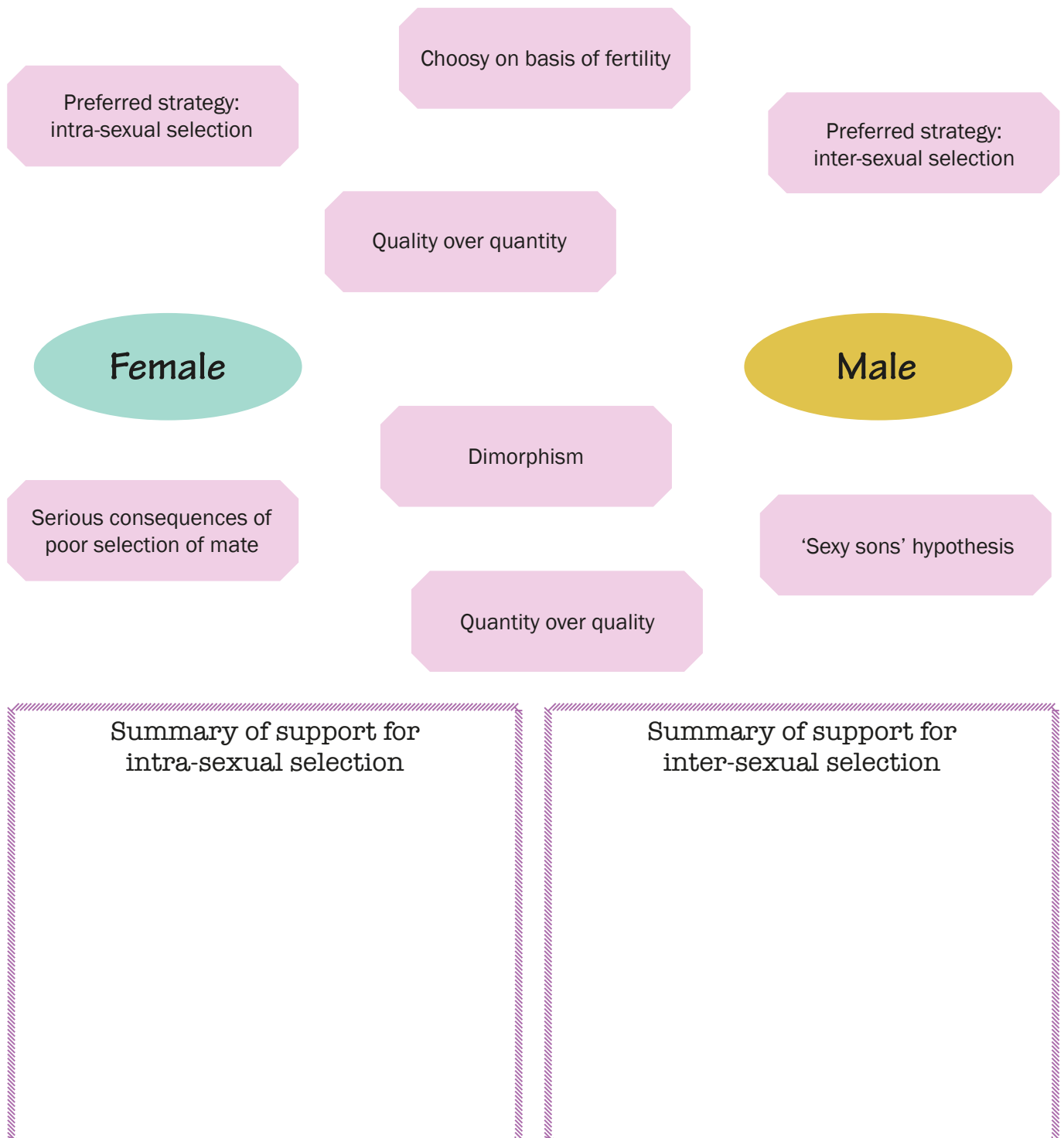
5. *'Women were not found to act in the same way in the study, however, which makes sense in evolutionary terms', Dr Raihani said. 'Women place more emphasis on status and wealth in the opposite sex, whereas men look for youth and fertility in potential mates.'*

How does this relate to evolutionary research in physical attraction and relationships?



### Task

1. Below you will find a number of statements that relate to sexual selection in relationships. Starting with female and one coloured pen, join the statements that relate to female behaviour. Then take another coloured pen and ensure that the remaining statements do refer to male sexual behaviour. Check this using your student book (page 118).
2. When you have finished, write a short description of male and female sexual selection in relationships, without the book – just use the web to help you.





Explain what is happening in the following relationship in terms of self-disclosure. Your account should include the following terms.

- |                     |                      |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| Self-disclosure     | Breadth/broad        |
| Low risk            | High risk            |
| Increasing intimacy | Commitment/committed |
| Depth/deep          | Penetration          |
| Reciprocal exchange |                      |

Sarah and Shane 'meet' via an online dating site with the following profiles:

### Sarah

Fun-loving, attractive 30-year-old with plenty of friends but no one to snuggle up with! My friends think I am friendly and approachable.

I like going to the gym and running but equally enjoy going out to the cinema, restaurants and bars. I work in retail and enjoy my job.

I am looking to meet someone around my age with a good sense of humour and similar interests who is also looking for a long-term relationship rather than a fling!

### Shane

I am a 32-year-old guy who is ready to take life a bit more seriously now. I enjoy all sorts of sport for socialising and keeping fit. I would generally rather go for a quiet meal and chat than go to a loud club.

I have an interesting job in sales so my career is sorted but now I want to look at the other side of my life and find someone special for friendship/dates/ maybe more.

If you think that you could be the one – drop me a line.

#### *The story...*

After a few messages, they meet for coffee and get on really well. They chat about their jobs and friends and feel that they have quite a lot in common. They arrange to meet at the end of the week for dinner. During this second date, Shane says that he really wants to see Sarah again but he cannot make a date for another two weeks as he is in France on business. When Sarah asks more questions, he admits that he is actually out of the country quite a lot and this has made it difficult for him to meet people and sustain relationships. Sarah sees this as a problem – what is the point of going out with someone if he is never there?

During the next two weeks they message daily and Skype once and Sarah finds herself falling for Shane despite the travelling issue. But if the relationship is to continue then she has something to tell him...

On his return they go out for dinner and Sarah takes a deep breath before telling Shane that she is actually a single mum to a 3-year-old girl. She explains that she hasn't lied but she wanted him to get to know her before she told him in case he was frightened off. To her surprise, Shane starts to laugh and says 'I have something to tell you too. I was actually engaged to someone, we were due to get married this summer but she called it off because she couldn't cope with my travelling'.

At the end of the date Sarah says, 'I was dreading telling you about my daughter but I wanted to be honest because I feel like things could get serious between us.' Shane replies, 'I am so glad you did and that I told you about the wedding – I feel really close to you now.'

Read the research summary below, then answer the questions that follow.



Michael Dunn and Robert Searle (2010) conducted a study to test whether having a prestige car can make a person seem more attractive.

The researchers took a photograph of a person sitting in either a Ford Fiesta or a Bentley Continental (worth £75,000 at the time of the study). For male participants the photo showed a woman seated in the car, for female participants it was a man seated in the car. A pilot study confirmed that the man and woman in the photos were perceived as equally attractive by the opposite sex and were thought to be of around average attractiveness.

Half the male participants were shown a photograph of the woman in the Fiesta and the other half were shown the same woman in the Bentley. The female participants were shown the man in either one or the other car. All participants were asked to state their sexual orientation and only those who stated heterosexual were included.

Results showed that the man in the car was rated as significantly more attractive on a rating scale of 1–10 when presented to female participants in a Bentley compared to when he was presented in a Ford Fiesta. The results showed that when male participants were rating the woman in the car there was no difference in the attractiveness rating for the same woman in the different cars.

Dunn, M. and Searle, R. (2010) Effect of manipulated prestige-car ownership on both sex attractiveness ratings. *British Journal of Psychology*, 101(1), 69–80.

## Questions:

- For the study state:
  - The aim.
  - The method.
  - The design.
- The study sought to provide support for the evolutionary prediction that heterosexual women are attracted to men with greater status and resources. This means it would be reasonable to have proposed a directional hypothesis.
  - State the hypothesis that would have been used in relation to the female participants' preferences.
  - Explain, according to evolutionary theory, why the male participants did not rate the woman as more attractive in the prestige car.
- Explain what is meant by the term 'pilot study' **and** explain why the researchers used one in this study.
- What implications does this study have for our understanding of the role of attractiveness in relationships?
- Explain **two** evaluation points for this study.

Kerckhoff and Davis (1962) devised a theory to explain how romantic relationships form and develop. They suggested that there are three main factors that act as filters to narrow down our range of partner choice to a field of desirables. Each of these factors assumes greater or lesser importance at different stages of a relationship.

Once you have read the spread in the student book, close your book and answer the following questions. Have a go on your own and then check with a partner before going back to the book.



### 1. What is meant by the following terms?

Field of availables

Field of desirables

Law of attraction

Complementarity

Homogamy

### 2. In what way are the following factors thought to be important in terms of the theory?

Proximity

Beliefs and values

The ability to meet a partner's needs

### 3. Evaluatively speaking ...

- How did Levinger (1974) explain the failure of modern studies to replicate Kerckhoff and Davis's (1962) original findings on filter theory?
- In what way has the idea of complementarity been questioned in longer-term relationships?
- Some people suggest that online sites have changed the dating game and this theory is no longer valid. Explain what psychologists have found in this regard.



## Outline of the social exchange theory

Thibault and Kelley (1959) suggest that in relationships we try to \_\_\_\_\_ losses and maximise \_\_\_\_\_. We make judgements about relationships based on what we think the \_\_\_\_\_ is. This is based on the \_\_\_\_\_ (what we get out of the relationship) and the \_\_\_\_\_ (what we give up or the negative feelings we experience as a result of the relationship). Rewards minus costs equals the \_\_\_\_\_. Two examples of costs are: stress (e.g. due to annoying habits) and \_\_\_\_\_. Two examples of benefits are: companionship and \_\_\_\_\_. There is also an \_\_\_\_\_ involved in being in a relationship, that is the cost in terms of the lost \_\_\_\_\_, e.g. whilst you spend time with your partner you may miss out on spending time with friends or family.

The \_\_\_\_\_ (CL) is one measure of the profit in a relationship. It is essentially the amount of reward that you believe you \_\_\_\_\_. So where do we get our CL from? A number of suggestions are made including our experiences of \_\_\_\_\_ and social norms. The latter is a view of what is a reasonable reward to expect and is thought to be learned from books, films, and TV programmes such as soap operas. Obviously the more relationships we have, the more the idea is developed. People's CL will differ. Some will have a low CL and will therefore be satisfied with gaining just a \_\_\_\_\_ (or even a loss) from a relationship. Someone with higher self-esteem will believe they are worth a lot more and will have a \_\_\_\_\_.

The theory also suggests that there are four stages of relationship development and these relate strongly to profit and loss. The first is \_\_\_\_\_ which involves exploring concepts of profit through one's own experiences and the experiences of others. Next comes the \_\_\_\_\_ stage where partners begin exchanging and negotiating rewards and costs. This is followed by the \_\_\_\_\_ stage where rewards and costs become more predictable and stability ensues. The \_\_\_\_\_ stage marks the setting of the norms of a relationship.

## Some evaluation of the theory

One criticism of the theory is its lack of consideration of \_\_\_\_\_. There is evidence that a sense of \_\_\_\_\_ is more important than the balance of rewards and costs. As such the SET does not account for many research findings about relationships.

Whilst the theory suggests that we will experience \_\_\_\_\_ when the rewards start to be outweighed by the costs, Argyle (1987) argues that we are not constantly \_\_\_\_\_ the profit of a relationship. In fact, he argues we do not pay attention to it until after we start to feel dissatisfied. This suggests that the theory is not explaining the cause of breakdown but a later symptom.

### Cheat sheet

monitoring	fairness	bargaining	higher CL
equity	gains	deserve to get	small profit
rewards	minimise	previous relationships	profit
opportunity cost	commitment	profit level	comparison level
costs	alternatives	feelings of being loved	time
dissatisfaction	institutionalisation	sampling	

**Extension:** There are only two evaluation points here – **write three more** in your own words using the student book to help you if necessary.

*As the student book suggests, there is a whole variety of possible rewards and costs involved in being in a relationship.*

*Read the following case studies, identifying costs and benefits, to explain why the relationships are successful.*

Julie is in love! Chris is everything she always wanted in a man. He is tall and handsome (a fact that her friends continually comment on). He always acts as if he is proud to have her as his girlfriend and shows her off to his mates, giving her a peck on the cheek in front of them! This makes her tummy flip and her heart skip a beat!

He also likes shopping, believe it or not! She had almost given up hope of finding a man like that. He is generous – often taking note of anything she admires on their shopping trips and turning up with it, gift wrapped on their next date. She had almost given up on men after her last two boyfriends cheated on her, leaving her feeling that no one thought she was good enough for them.

Her mum is concerned because, since she started seeing Chris, Julie hardly sees her own friends. She has even missed a few of the tennis matches she had agreed to play in – because if Chris calls, she drops everything to go and be with him. It has caused a few arguments between Julie and her mum. Luckily though, Chris is also a good listener and gives her cuddles while she moans about her problems.

Raj is thinking of asking Holly to marry him. He just knows she is the one and she is 'the marrying type' because she was engaged before they met. They only split because her fiancé had to move abroad and Holly would not go. She cooks Raj fantastic meals, which is really important as he loves his food! Whenever he leaves stuff at her house she also washes, dries and irons it – how great is that?

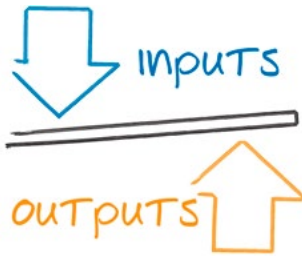
They have shared interests too – she has even started supporting United so that she can spend more time with him and if he can't get her a ticket she will happily drop him off and collect him even it means being a few minutes late for work.

He is always telling his mates that she is perfect (and of course she is the most perfect lover too) and they are getting sick of it and of the fact that she sometimes wants Raj to go to the cinema with her when Thursday and Friday have always been boys' nights out. Raj thinks it will settle down if they get married and he can go back to boys' nights out. When they push him to think of her faults he can only think of the fact that she does always try to change his style of dress – make him more fashionable – and she sulks if he argues with her!

### Extension:

1. Consider in each case what the partner might be thinking about the relationship. It should be easy enough to spot the costs that they may be incurring – but can you imagine what benefits they could be getting (go beyond the details you have been given)? Note that there must be some according to social exchange theory or it would have been over by now!
2. Bad news ... Holly said no when Raj proposed! She said she was happy as they were but 'this relationship is not the sort I am looking for long term'. What might she mean and what does this suggest in terms of the social exchange theory?

 128-129



**Background:**

An important application of equity theory is in couple counselling. For example, where a couple are having problems in their relationship they may contact an organisation such as Relate in order to get some advice. As you will have learned, dissatisfied partners are likely to either feel underbenefitting or overbenefitting.

**Task:**

1. First, read about Sharma and Phil.
2. Then consider the statements that are given below. This shows how different ways of looking at the relationship may result in feeling equity, feeling underbenefitted or feeling overbenefitted.  
For each statement, suggest which of the above feelings are most likely.

Sharma and Phil have been together five years and have two children. They have recently been arguing a lot and want counselling to help them save their relationship. They tell their stories:

Sharma has given up her job to be a full-time mum whilst Phil continues to work full-time. Phil used to come home to a lovely meal and a tidy house, now he comes

home from work to a messy house and Sharma saying how hard her day was.

Phil gives Sharma housekeeping money and babysits while she goes to her book club once a month.

Sharma does all the cooking, shopping and cleaning and 99% of the child care.

**1. Phil**

I am providing for my family, working in a stressful job and no one appreciates just what I do for them.

**Underbenefitting,  
Overbenefitting,  
Or equity?**

**2. Sharma**

I have given up my career so that the children have a parent at home and all Phil can do is moan about a few toys out of place.

**Underbenefitting,  
Overbenefitting,  
Or equity?**

**3. Phil**

I am missing out on seeing my children grow up because I have to go to work but Sharma is missing out on her career and the social side that comes with working.

**Underbenefitting,  
Overbenefitting,  
Or equity?**

**4. Phil**

At the moment I enjoy my work and providing for the family. Sharma gets to see more of them whereas I have to miss the odd school event, etc.

**Underbenefitting,  
Overbenefitting,  
Or equity?**

**5. Sharma**

My 'job' isn't like Phil's because it doesn't finish at 5pm and I don't get 6 weeks' holiday – looking after the children is non-stop and I feel like my brain is stagnating too. Phil doesn't appreciate what I do.

**Underbenefitting,  
Overbenefitting,  
Or equity?**

**6. Phil**

I am able to continue my career and socialise with my work colleagues, whereas my wife has had to set aside a promising career to look after our children.

**Underbenefitting,  
Overbenefitting,  
Or equity?**

**7. Sharma**

I love seeing the children growing up and I would hate to miss any of their 'firsts', e.g. first words, etc. Poor Phil, no wonder he gets grumpy when he comes home. He must see how lucky I am.

**Underbenefitting,  
Overbenefitting,  
Or equity?**

**8. Phil**

My job is easy really and I love feeling that I am really making something of my life. Much as I love my kids I couldn't stay at home with them. I am so lucky to have Sharma – I sometimes wish I was more useful when I do come home.

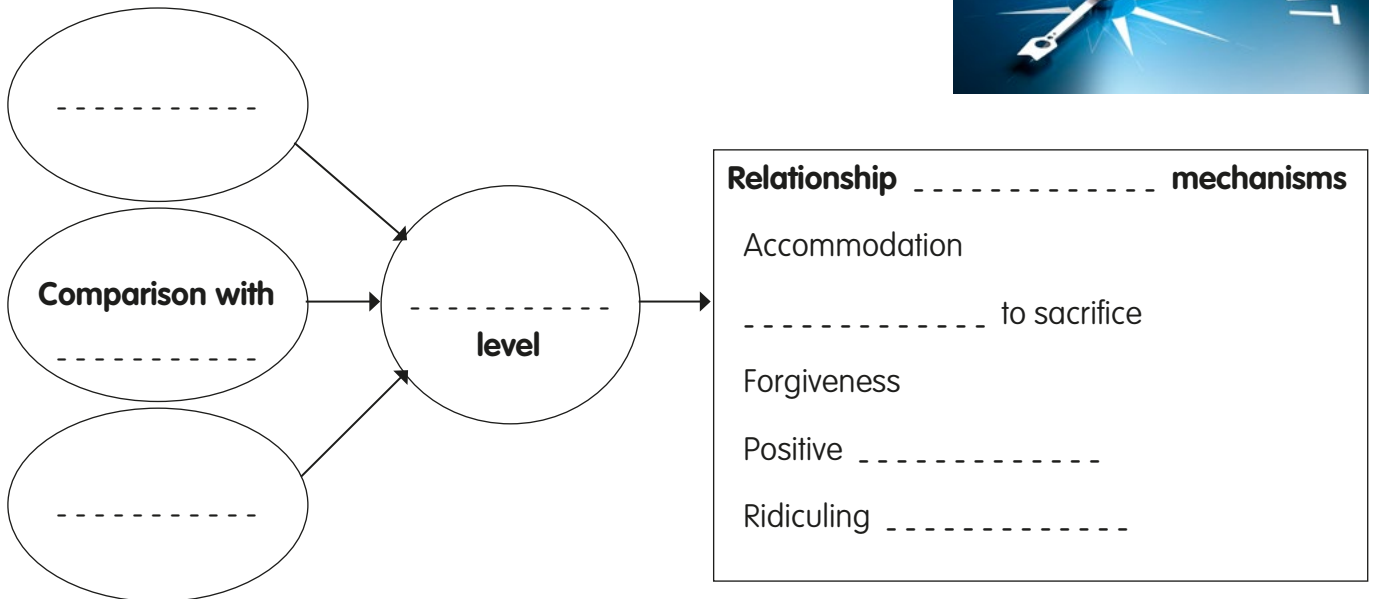
**Underbenefitting,  
Overbenefitting,  
Or equity?**



 130-131



1. Complete the gaps in the following diagram of the model.



2. How do people work out how satisfying a relationship is according to this model?

3. Of the three factors that determine commitment in relationships, two are similar to the assumptions of social exchange theory – which are they and what do they equate to?

4. What did Rusbult say were the **two** types of investment? Give examples of each.

5. Why did Rusbult think that the distinction between commitment and satisfaction was important?

6. One of the strengths of the theory is that it can explain 'intimate partner violence'. Outline how it does this, with reference to relevant research.

7. Explain **one** limitation of the theory.



You have now covered three theories of romantic relationships: social exchange theory, equity theory and Rusbult's investment theory. Below are a number of statements that describe these theories – you need to sort them into the right column and then add two more details about each of the theories (without looking at the student book!).

This theory says that the secret to a committed relationship is a high level of satisfaction, where the alternatives are less attractive and the sizes of the partners' investments are increasing.

This theory suggests that commitment to a relationship depends on three factors: satisfaction, comparison with alternatives and investment.

Suggests that relationships involve people seeking to maximise profits and rewards.

The theory suggests that if one partner overbenefits and the other underbenefits from the relationship then dissatisfaction and unhappiness will result.

The theory suggests that costs, rewards and inequity are all subjective and will differ from one person to another. They also change through the course of a relationship.

This theory contends that there are four stages through which relationships develop. They are sampling, bargaining, commitment and institutionalisation stages.

Suggests there are two ways of measuring profit in a relationship – comparison level (CL) and comparison level for alternatives (CLalt).

An economic theory which states that partners are not interested in what they can get out of the relationship in terms of profit but rather they are most interested in fairness of input.

This theory argues that people stay in romantic relationships not because of satisfaction but because of commitment.

Social exchange theory	Equity theory	Rusbult's investment theory
Add your own		



## The task:

You have been asked by a women's magazine to design a quiz to work out what stage readers are at in their romantic relationships.

You decide to base the quiz on Duck's phase model of relationship breakdown.

The questions should enable a reader to identify the stage they are at.

**FINALLY**, for each stage you should simply explain to people what they should do either to save the relationship or begin to get over it!

To think about ...

- These quizzes work best if you have multiple questions relating to each of the phases.
- You could have multiple-choice answers and then the conclusions could be of the form: 'If your responses are mostly As then you are in the dyadic phase.'
- Alternatively, you could have true and false answers that are marked according to the phase they relate to and then readers know straightaway which phase they are in.
- Regarding the advice part – think about what the reader might do to rekindle the relationship and prevent it deteriorating further through the phases. Or should they accept it is over and, if so, what is the usual next step in the process?

## Research methods review...

1. Why would it be important to pilot this questionnaire before publication?
2. This type of questionnaire appears in magazines quite frequently but if a psychologist were using it to test out Duck's theory, they would have to think about some ethical issues.
  - a) What would they need to consider?
  - b) How should they deal with the issues?
3. If the questionnaire were to be used in research...
  - a) What concerns would you have about the reliability of any data collected using it?
  - b) What would be the best way of selecting a suitable sample to test? Justify your choice.



## Background

This area more than any other within relationship research has to be approached carefully from an ethical point of view. As such the local university has decided not to allow its undergraduates and postgraduates to carry out any research in this area from the next academic year onwards. This decision reaches you via the local press. As you have recently been learning about this type of research, you are ideally placed to comment. Below you will find a number of tasks associated with this.



- 1 Considering the ethical issues that arise in breakdown of relationship research:
  - a) Explain which ethical issues may be of concern to an ethics committee.
  - b) Describe how each of the issues can be dealt with.

### Extension task

**Write some guidelines for undergraduate research.**

Take the issues and suggestions from Task 1 and make them into a leaflet about how the ethical issues in this area should be dealt with.



- 2 Considering the potential benefits that might arise in breakdown of relationship research, explain how breakdown research might be applied to:
  - a) Support people who wish to save their relationships.
  - b) Support people who want to end their relationships in an amicable way.

- 3 Write a brief letter to the university urging them to change their minds and allow relationship breakdown research to continue.  
  
Give examples both of how participants can be protected and how the research may be applied.

Read the following summary of an article by Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic published in full in the *Guardian* in January 2014. Then answer the questions and add any comments of your own.

There is some evidence to suggest that modern relationships have changed enormously with more of a focus on games and sexualisation through the use of technology.

The actual process of dating via mobile technology may have become more important than the actual date itself! In our ‘technosexual’ era dating has become like a game – you swipe to select your love. Whilst one of the most famous apps, ‘Tinder’, aims to match you with the love of your life, this is only a small part of the process and that whole process of who selects who is a big part of the fun.

In an attempt to persuade its consumers that they are serious about finding people’s true love, Tinder populates its files by taking data, including photos and personal information, from Facebook, rather than the user typing in material specifically for the love game. So that means we can be sure that the information is genuine – no one tells lies on Facebook, do they? Next, Tinder will be telling us that people only post their most ‘average’ photos on their pages rather than painstakingly choosing lighting, angles and of course their best clothes. As the article suggests, Tinder increases the ‘average levels of attractiveness compared to the real world’.

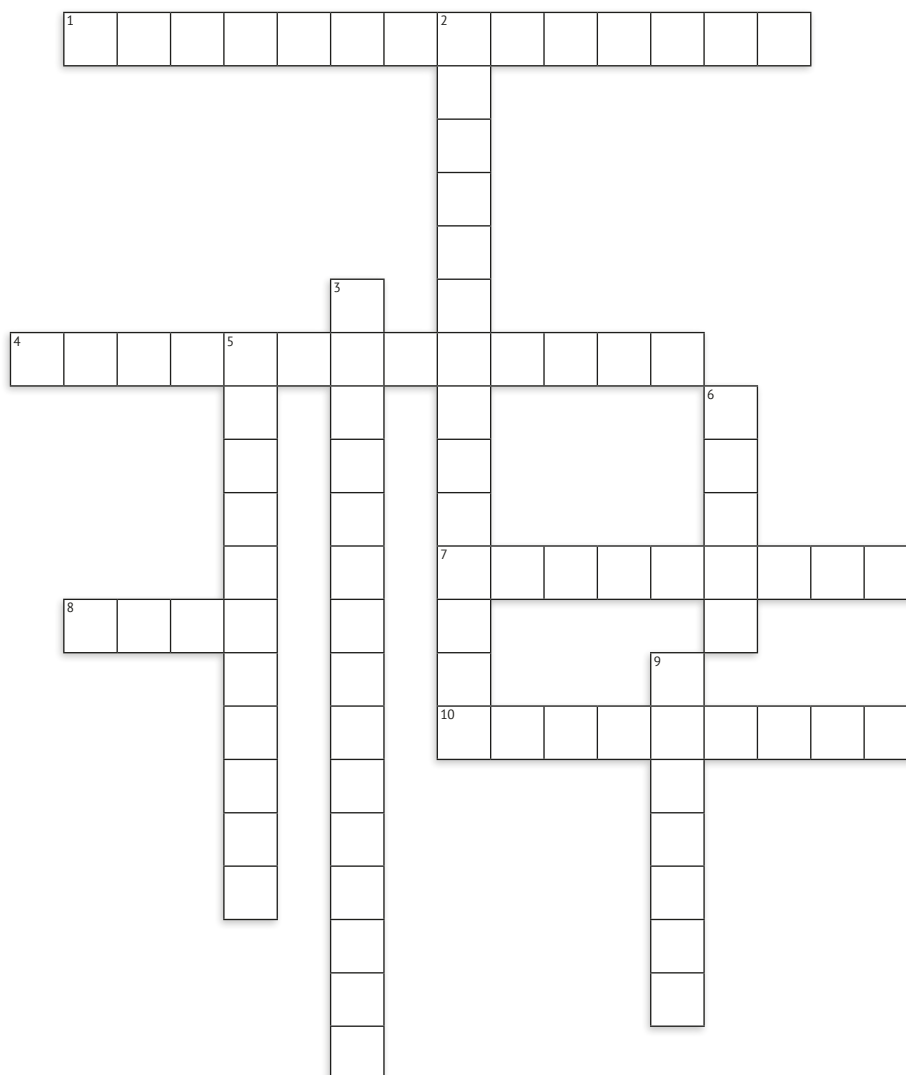
The article goes on to suggest that ‘Tinder enables people to fulfil some basic evolutionary and social needs’. In other words – the technology was only formed to fulfil innate needs of humans. It is suggested that Tinder meets competitive needs and intellectual ones in terms of finding out about other people’s interests and traits and comparing them with our own.

Often people will claim that they wouldn’t get involved with Tinder as it is so brutal in its selection. But is it so very different from traditional online dating? The dating websites will claim complex matching criteria, but the popularity of Tinder suggests that many users don’t even have the patience to read a whole dating profile. ‘They would rather judge 50 pictures in two minutes than spend 50 minutes assessing one potential partner.’ Tinder is perhaps more similar to real-world dating than people want to admit. At a bar, we appraise a potential partner’s looks, then look for signs of their interest in us before trying a chat-up line or some small talk – not very different from Tindering after all.

*The original can be read here:* <https://www.theguardian.com/media-network/media-network-blog/2014/jan/17/tinder-dating-psychology-technosexual>

### Stimulus questions

1. ‘Hook-up apps are more arousing than actual hook-ups.’ From what you have learned in this chapter, why might this be?
2. Why might the whole Tinder process be so exciting? Refer to psychological research to support your ideas.  
  
Extension: From your other knowledge of psychology, why might Tindering become addictive?
3. It is suggested that Tinder increases ‘average levels of attractiveness compared to the real world’. What implication might this have for the theories of physical attractiveness you have been learning about?
4. The article claims a link with evolutionary needs – from what you have learned about evolutionary aspects of relationships and given that there is only a picture to go on, what are men and women likely to be looking for?
5. The suggestion is that the Tinder world of dating is actually very similar to the real-world situation. Do you agree? Refer to research from the chapter as necessary.
6. The final part of the article (not summarised here) suggests that ‘romanticism is dead’ and certainly there is little talk of love in the theories. Discuss!



**Across**

1. The false information that people impart in virtual relationships may be described in this way. (14)
4. Walther's model suggesting more personal information will be revealed in virtual relationships. (13)
7. '\_\_\_\_\_ on a train' effect, linked to anonymity. (9)
8. An obstacle to forming a relationship. (4)
10. Ways of expressing feelings in an online conversation. (9)

**Down**

2. Revealing personal information about yourself. (4-10)
3. A reduction in a person's sense of identity, characteristic of virtual relationships. (2-13)
5. Sproull and Kiesler's (1986) theory about why virtual relationships might be less effective than FtF ones. (7,4)
6. McKenna's partner in 1999, who argued that absence of gating is an advantage of virtual relationships. (5)
9. The type of relationship this spread is about. (7)

Read the synopsis of the study by  
Shedlosky-Shoemaker and Costabile (2014) at:

<http://digest.bps.org.uk/2014/08/inspired-by-soprano-psychologists.html>

Whereas many people are concerned about the negative effects of 'celebrity culture', particularly on young people, this research looked at the potential benefits that may also help us explain why people form parasocial relationships.

Read the article and then answer the questions.

## Questions

1. What is the definition of a parasocial relationship?
2. The article mentions that in this case parasocial relationships are 'operationalised' as fictional characters. Explain what is meant by the term 'operationalisation' in research methods.
3. 'Readers and viewers are protected from social rejection and the physical danger of threatening circumstances.' The researchers suggest that this is one of the advantages of parasocial relationships.
  - a. What do you understand by this?
  - b. To what extent do you agree with this? Try to support your view with examples.
4. 'Self expansion' is suggested as a further benefit of such relationships. Why might this be important for people?
5. *Exam-style question focus*

Jenny is a student and she is obsessed with Justin Bieber. She thinks he is perfect. She often thinks about what he might be doing (when she should be doing her homework). She honestly believes she is in love with him. She has every possible piece of Bieber memorabilia and has joined a chat room where she talks daily to other 'Bieber Babes'. Some of them are not really true fans, though, they just have a passing fancy for him, but for Jenny there is a lot more to it.

Use the research into parasocial relationships to explain:

  - a) The difference in the nature of parasocial relationships between Jenny and some of the other fans.
  - b) One theory for why Jenny might have developed this type of relationship.