



Articles

Sex Differences and Individual Differences in Human Facilitative and Preventive Courtship

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Abstract

Although cooperative mating strategies have been observed in other species, the extent to which men and women act to facilitate the mating success of others has been under-researched, especially among unrelated individuals. The present study addressed this gap in knowledge by exploring potential sex differences and individual differences in attitudes toward facilitating and preventing friends' mating among 256 heterosexual undergraduate men and women. Results showed that women were more likely than men to express attitudes toward preventing the sexuality of friends, whereas no sex difference existed in facilitative mating. For both men and women, positive reciprocity beliefs and high self-perceived mate-value predicted positive attitudes toward facilitative mating. Among women, preventive mating was predicted by low sociosexuality and high intrasexual (within-sex) competitiveness.

Keywords: facilitative mating, mating strategies, mating competition

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Human courtship studies typically focus on the behavior of two individuals who are directly involved in establishing a mating relationship (e.g., Grammer, 1989; Kenrick, Sadalla, Groth, & Trost, 1990; Landolt, Lalumière, & Quinsey, 1995; Oesch & Miklousic, 2012). However, courtship does not occur in isolation; rather it is often facilitated or impeded by third-party individuals (Sprecher, 2011). Much of the research surrounding extradyadic influences on courtship has been conducted within the context of kin relations. Parents and offspring sometimes hold discordant views about with whom the offspring should mate (Apostolou, 2008; Buunk & Solano, 2010; Perilloux, Fleischman, & Buss, 2011), and parents have been found to influence the mating behaviors of their offspring (Apostolou, 2007; Bereczkei, Gyuris, Kovacs, & Bernath, 2002; Leslie, Huston, & Johnson, 1986; Perilloux, Fleischman, & Buss, 2008). Because parents and offspring share 50% of their genes, parents can effectively enhance their own inclusive fitness by ensuring the reproductive success of their offspring (Hamilton, 1964).

Yet some researchers have suggested that courtship-influencing behaviors also exist outside of kin relations, where individuals do not stand to benefit in terms of vicarious reproductive success through interfering in another person's mating behavior (Wright & Sinclair, 2012). Sprecher (2011) asked participants to recall a romantic relationship that they had tried to influence in the past five years. Participants also reported on their approval or dis-

approval of the relationship, the behaviors they engaged in to influence the relationship, and whether the participants believed their actions had ultimately affected the relationship. Results showed that individuals' approval or disapproval predicted whether they engaged in relationship-facilitating (positive influence) or relationship-damaging (negative influence) behaviors. Moreover, these actions correlated with the belief that the participant had actually influenced the outcome of the relationship in a meaningful way.

Does peer influence affect individuals' courtship decisions? [Wright and Sinclair \(2012\)](#) exposed participants to a mate-choice paradigm wherein they were asked to make dating choices following negative or positive feedback from a parent or a friend. Results showed that the friend's opinion (but not the overall parental opinion) influenced participants' likeability of potential dating partners, as well as their choice to interact with that person again. Moreover, research has found that approval from friends is related to satisfaction and stability within the romantic dyad (e.g., [Parks, Stan, & Eggert, 1983](#); [Sprecher & Felmlee, 2000](#)). Taken together, these findings suggest that courtship (i.e., the process of romantic or mating relationship formation) is susceptible to the influence of peers. In the present study, we examine whether men and women differ in the ways in which they attempt to influence others' courtship processes, and we test hypotheses as to why men and women might engage in these behaviors in the absence of any direct inclusive fitness benefits.

Sex Differences in Facilitative Mating

In a first of its kind study, [Ackerman and Kenrick \(2009\)](#), using sex-ambiguous schematic situational drawings, tested participants to see which sex they would assign to the caricatures displayed in the presented scenarios. One scenario depicted one friend helping another friend approach a prospective member of the opposite-sex, whereas the other scenario displayed a friend trying to help a friend avoid a member of the opposite-sex from engaging in a prolonged social interaction with them. Participants perceived men as more likely to help their same-sex friends interact with the opposite-sex member. Participants perceived women as more likely to prevent their same-sex friends from interacting with members of the opposite-sex.

These preliminary results suggested that expectations exist as to which sex is more likely to facilitate or circumvent the mating efforts of their same-sex friends. In a follow-up study, [Ackerman and Kenrick \(2009\)](#) asked participants of both sexes using a Likert-type scale how likely a friend was to "help you to avoid people you are not romantically interested in" and how likely a friend was to "help make it easier to attract people you are romantically interested in" (p. 1290). Results showed that men were more likely to report that their male friends were more likely to help them gain access to members of the opposite-sex in comparison to women. Conversely, women reported that their same-sex friends were more likely to help them avoid members of the opposite-sex. However, the aforementioned studies fell short of assessing individuals' own attitudes toward facilitative or preventive courtship. It was therefore expected that men would be more likely than women to hold positive attitudes toward facilitative courtship, whereas women would be more likely than men to hold positive attitudes toward preventive courtship (H1).

Individual Differences in Facilitative Courtship

There are also potential individual differences in facilitative and preventive courtship. The hypothesis of direct reciprocity was proposed by [Trivers \(1971\)](#) to explain many altruistic behaviors among nonrelatives. Reciprocity involves behaving in a manner which benefits another individual at some cost to oneself. In turn, it is expected that the recipient will return assistance at a future point in time. If the cost to the actor is less than the benefit to the recipient, then such interactions can lead to gains in survival and or reproduction ([Trivers, 1971](#)). Regarding facilitative mating alliances, it seems possible that the costs of helping a friend consort with a new partner (e.g.,

time, energy, monetary cost), may be outweighed by the benefits of some future reciprocal interaction. Thus, it is expected that facilitative courtship may not be a purely altruistic act, but rather a service provided in anticipation of future reciprocity.

It is further hypothesized that individuals who can best withstand the cost of facilitative courtship for the benefit of another's mating success would be most likely to engage in facilitative mating. For example, individuals who are themselves high in mate-value, and who can easily attract members of the opposite sex, have little to lose in terms of facilitating the mating success of another, and thus they may subsequently benefit from a favor offered in return to them at a later point in time. It is well-established that both men and women desire partners who are kind to others (e.g., Li, Bailey, Kenrick, & Linsenmeier, 2002), and helpful individuals are rated as being more attractive to both men and women as long-term partners (Moore et al., 2013). Thus, individuals may benefit their value as a mate by advertising their seemingly altruistic and caring nature by helping friends find partners – a behavioral strategy termed “competitive altruism” (Hardy & Van Vugt, 2006; Roberts, 1998). We therefore expected facilitative courtship to be predicted by endorsement of reciprocity beliefs as well as their high mate-value (H2). As a corollary, we predicted that individuals who score higher on sociosexuality would also be more likely to harbor facilitative attitudes. Individuals who score higher on sociosexuality (an amalgamation of sexual attitudes, desire and previous sexual behaviors) tend to exhibit less inhibition surrounding sexuality, and may also be more willing to facilitate friends' romantic relations.

Individual Differences in Preventive Courtship

Ackerman and Kenrick (2009) found that participants believed women were more likely than men to receive help from their friends in creating barriers or thresholds for suitors. This behavior was interpreted by the authors as being purely facilitative in that women may ban together in aiding a friend avoid an undesirable man or to test a man's commitment in pursuing that particular woman. From this perspective, it is predicted that altruism and reciprocity should predict attitudes favoring such preventive courtship. However, Ackerman and Kenrick (2009) also noted an alternative hypothesis that such mating prevention behaviors may in fact be competitive and interfering in nature. According to Parental Investment Theory (Trivers, 1972), female sexuality is a scarce resource (relative to men's). Kenrick, Li, and Butner (2003) noted that human sexual decision-making does not occur in isolation, but is often influenced by third parties. Following a social marketing perspective, Baumeister and Vohs (2004) argued that women would regulate the value of their sexuality by artificially restricting the supply by having women place “pressure on each other to exercise sexual restraint” (Baumeister & Vohs, 2004, p. 344). In effect, women may seek to regulate other women's sexuality as a competitive mechanism to maintain the value of their own sexuality. From this perspective, it would be expected that intrasexual competitiveness and restricted sociosexual orientation would predict preventive courtship attitudes (H3).

Method

Participants

Participants were recruited between November 2013 and March 2014 via posters and stations placed in common areas around the campus of a Canadian university. The sample consisted of 256 participants (105 men, 151 women) between the ages of 18 and 31 ($M_{\text{age}} = 21$, $SD = 2.98$). The ethnic composition of the sample was as follows: Caucasian (90%), Aboriginal (4%), Black (3%), Asian (2%), and South Asian (1%). Participants received

a chance to win one of two \$100 draws as remuneration for their time. See Table 2 for descriptive statistics relating to each of the following measures.

Measures

Facilitative and preventive courtship attitudes — We developed a brief self-report questionnaire designed to capture attitudes toward both facilitative and preventive courtship (Appendix A). The measure consists of ten items scored using a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = “strongly disagree”, 5 = “strongly agree”). A principle components analysis using a varimax rotation and no fixed number of factors showed that each of the seven facilitative courtship items contributed to a single factor with item loadings ranging between 0.71 and 0.88. The items contributed 32.9% toward explained variance and were internally consistent among both men ($\alpha = .85$) and women ($\alpha = .84$). The remaining three items loaded on a unique factor of preventive courtship, with factor loadings ranging between 0.80 and 0.98. The items contributed an additional 20.5% toward the total explained variance of 53.4% (Table 1).

Table 1

Varimax Rotated Component Matrix for Factor Analysis of the Facilitative and Preventive Courtship Scale (CPCS). Values Below 0.3 are Suppressed

Item	Factor	
	Facilitative Courtship	Preventive Courtship
1. It is important to introduce my single friends to people who they are romantically interested in.	0.77	
2. I often think about who I can set my single friends up with.	0.78	
3. It is important for me to prevent my single friends from hooking up with someone undesirable.		0.80
4. It is important to encourage my single friends to flirt with a partner whom they find attractive.	0.73	
5. Helping my friends' romantic success is important.	0.84	
6. It is important to help my single friends when they are having difficulty talking to someone they are romantically interested in.	0.71	
7. It is important to give my single friends advice on how to attract a partner.	0.79	
8. It is important to make sacrifices in social situations to help my single friends' dating success.	0.88	
9. It is important to stop a single friend from “hooking up” with someone if I feel they will regret it later.		0.98
10. It is important for me to tell unappealing strangers to stay away from my single friends		0.91

Self-perceived mate-value — Self-perceived mate-value was assessed using the Components of Mate-Value Survey (CMVS; Fisher, Cox, Bennett, & Gavric, 2008). The measure consists of 22 items with response options ranging along a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = “strongly disagree”, 7 = “strongly agree”). The CMVS incorporates items from a diverse set of mate-value dimensions including sociality (e.g., “I run into friends wherever I go”), how the respondent is viewed by members of the opposite sex (e.g., “Members of the opposite sex are attracted to me”), parenting (e.g., “I would make a good parent”), wealth (e.g., “I want people to think that I am wealthy”), physical attractiveness (e.g., “I would like members of the opposite sex to consider me sexy”), relationship history (e.g., “After I date someone they often want to date me again”), and fear of romantic failure (“I often worry about not having a date”). In the present study, the measure showed good internal consistency among both men ($\alpha = .84$) and women, ($\alpha = .89$).

Intrasexually-competitive attitude — Participants next completed the Intrasexual Competition Scale which assessed the degree to which an individual is motivated to compete with members of the same sex (Buunk & Fisher,

2009). Previous research has found the Intrasexual Competition Scale to be a valid and reliable tool for measuring attitude toward intrasexual competition (Buunk & Fisher, 2009). The scale consisted of 12 items rated on a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = “not at all applicable” to 7 = “completely applicable.” Example items include: “I would not hire a competent man/woman as a colleague,” “I can’t stand it when I meet another man/woman who is more attractive than I am,” “When I’m at a party, I enjoy it when men/women pay more attention to me than other men/women,” “I wouldn’t hire a very ambitious man/woman as a colleague,” and “I always want to beat other men/women.” In the present study, the measure showed good internal consistency in both men ($\alpha = .85$) and women ($\alpha = .87$).

Altruism — The 20-item Altruistic Personality Scale was used to measure dispositional altruism (Rushton, Chrisjohn, & Fekken, 1981). The measure consists of items that assess the frequency of altruistic acts toward others. Example items include: “I have given directions to a stranger”, “I have donated blood”, “I have offered to help a handicapped or elderly stranger across a street”, and “I have helped a classmate who I did not know that well with an assignment when my knowledge was greater than his or hers”. Response options ranging along a 5-point Likert-type scale (0 = “Never”, 7 = “Very Often”). The measure showed good internal consistency in both men ($\alpha = .86$) and women ($\alpha = .87$).

Positive reciprocity — The Personal Norm of Reciprocity (PNR) scale was used to assess beliefs in the social norms of positive reciprocity (Perugini, Gallucci, Presaghi, & Ercolani, 2003). Positive reciprocity norms reflect a tendency to react reciprocally to positive interpersonal behaviors (e.g., “I go out of my way to help somebody who has been kind to me before”). Endorsement of items on this PNR positive reciprocity scale reflects conditional behavior that is distinct from dispositional inclinations such as altruism. The measure consists of 9 items with response options ranging along a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = “Not true of me”, 7 = “Very true of me”). Previous research has shown the positive reciprocity scale to be psychometrically-unique from negative reciprocity. In the present study, the positive reciprocity scale showed good internal consistency among both men ($\alpha = .90$) and women ($\alpha = .85$).

Sociosexuality — The Revised Sociosexual Orientation Inventory (SOI-R) was employed to measure participants’ aggregate sociosexual attitudes, desires, and behaviors (Penke & Asendorpf, 2008). The SOI-R is comprised of 9 items scored using a 9-point Likert-type scale. Individuals who score low on the inventory require greater emotional investment and lengthier courtship before engaging in sexual relations, whereas individuals who score high on the inventory are willing to engage in sexual relations in the absence of relational commitment. In the present study, the SOI-R items showed good internal consistency for both men ($\alpha = .87$) and women ($\alpha = .87$). Table 2 presents descriptive statistics for all measures.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics

Measure	N		M		SD		Min.		Max.	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
1. Facilitative Courtship	95	141	3.20	3.04	0.80	0.79	1.71	1.14	5.00	5.00
2. Preventive Courtship	95	142	2.60	3.03	0.93	0.93	1.00	1.00	5.00	5.00
3. Mate Value	87	134	4.50	4.22	0.69	0.93	2.29	1.24	6.00	5.86
4. Sociosexuality	90	135	3.00	2.44	0.87	0.83	1.11	1.00	4.78	4.44
5. Positive Reciprocity	91	142	5.26	5.49	0.93	0.92	2.56	2.67	7.00	7.00
6. Altruism	87	131	2.95	2.88	0.56	0.62	1.75	1.25	4.35	4.40
7. Intrasexual Competition	93	141	2.64	2.42	1.03	1.01	1.00	1.00	5.00	5.33

Results

Hypothesis 1: Sex Differences

In order to test potential sex differences in our outcome variables, a series of independent samples *t*-tests were conducted. Sex was entered as the grouping variable, with (1) preventive courtship and (2) facilitative courtship being entered as the test variables. Men and women differed significantly in their attitudes toward preventive courtship, $t(1, 234) = -2.72, p < 0.01$, such that women ($M = 3.01, SD = 0.93$) were more likely than men ($M = 2.65, SD = 0.96$) to endorse preventive courtship attitudes. Contrary to expectations, however, men ($M = 3.20, SD = 0.86$) and women ($M = 3.00, SD = 0.78$) did not differ significantly in their facilitative courtship attitudes, $t(1, 234) = 1.26, p = n.s.$, although men were slightly higher on this dimension.

Hypothesis 2: Individual Differences in Facilitative Courtship

Next, linear regression analyses were performed for men and women in examining individual differences in these behaviors. In each regression equation, mate-value, sociosexuality, positive reciprocity, and altruism were entered as independent variables with facilitative courtship attitude entered as the dependent variable. Results showed that among men, mate-value ($b = 0.44, p < .05$) and positive reciprocity ($b = 0.45, p < .01$) were statistically-significant predictors of facilitative courtship behavior. The model contributed .35 toward explained variance (R^2_{adj}). Among women, mate-value ($b = 0.34, p < .001$) and reciprocity ($b = 0.17, p < .05$) similarly predicted facilitative courtship behavior with the model contributing .14 toward explained variance (R^2_{adj}).

Hypothesis 3: Individual Differences in Preventive Courtship

Again separate linear regression analyses were performed for men and women, with mate-value, sociosexuality, positive reciprocity, and altruism, again entered as independent variables, this time along with intrasexual competition. Preventive courtship attitudes were entered as the dependent variable. Results showed that among men, none of the independent variables predicted preventive courtship, (b 's = -.12 to .14, *n.s.*). The model contributed .04 toward explained variance (R^2_{adj}). Among women, results showed that sociosexuality negatively predicted preventive courtship attitudes, ($b = -0.32, p < .01$), and that intrasexual competition positively predicted preventive courtship attitudes ($b = 0.27, p < .01$). The model contributed .16 toward explained variance (R^2_{adj}).

Discussion

To recapitulate the findings of [Ackerman and Kenrick's \(2009\)](#) study, participants were asked to rate social interactions using a schematic drawing paradigm in which raters perceived men to engage in more facilitative mating behavior in comparison to women. Conversely, women in this same study more so than men were perceived to engage in preventive courtship; a behavioral strategy hypothesized to reflect altruism and reciprocity in offering mutualistic protection ([Ackerman & Kenrick, 2009](#)).

The authors of the present study utilized [Ackerman and Kenrick's \(2009\)](#) previous research as a backdrop and an impetus for carrying out this current investigation. The authors of the present study asked participants to evaluate their own perceptions of facilitating and preventing behaviors within the mating context, taking into account sex differences and individual differences in both facilitative (i.e., assisting others) and preventive (i.e., impeding others) mating behavior.

In some non-human species, males have been shown to assist each other in obtaining mating opportunities ([Cockburn, 1998](#); [Feh, 1999](#)). These types of facilitating behaviors may increase a conspecifics' reproductive fitness (e.g., [Wiszniewski, Corrigan, Beheregaray, & Möller, 2012](#)) which at first glance may appear counterintuitive, unless the behavior operates based on principles of reciprocity or perhaps as a signal of one's own mate-value (i.e., as a form of competitive altruism). In contrast, little is known about facilitating behavior among non-human female animals.

Interestingly, in the present study on humans which examined both men and women, no sex differences were observed with respect to facilitative courtship attitudes. Such facilitative courtship may seem counterintuitive given the body of research demonstrating the prevalence and utility of within-sex mating competition among men and women alike (see [Arnocky & Piché, 2014](#); [Arnocky, Ribout, Mirza, & Knack, 2014](#); [Arnocky, Sunderani, Miller, & Vaillancourt, 2012](#); [Arnocky & Vaillancourt, 2012](#) for review). This finding may reflect the fact that both men and women expect to gain from facilitating the mating success of others. Our examination of individual differences in facilitative courtship seems to support this hypothesis. Male and female participants who held positive attitudes toward reciprocity were more likely to endorse a positive attitude toward facilitative courtship. It has been argued that facilitative courtship across many species functions as a form of reciprocity, whereby one's cooperative and (seemingly) sacrificial behavior might be rewarded or repaid in the future ([Wiszniewski, Corrigan, Beheregaray, & Möller, 2012](#)). One additional possibility is that men and women who are able to help others procure a mate actually benefit themselves by enhancing their own mate value by signaling to other potential mates their willingness and ability to aid others ([Hardy & Van Vugt, 2006](#); [Roberts, 1998](#)), and this is one potential explanation of the observed link between facilitative courtship and self-perceived mate-value.

Another potential explanation of the positive association between mate value and facilitative courtship suggests that the cost of facilitative courtship is particularly low for high mate-value individuals. Because individuals who are of higher mate value are more frequently sought after by members of the opposite-sex (i.e., having a larger pool of romantic/ sexual partners than they possibly have the time and energy follow-up with), we suspect these same individuals are also in a position to forego some mating opportunities and are willing to do so in order to enhance their friend's mating success. This facilitating behavior may also be coupled with the fact that individuals with higher mate value are more selective of who they mate with (e.g., [Buss & Shackelford, 2008](#)) and thus they do not seize the opportunity to mate with every willing partner who wishes to mate with them. In turn, not only do

high-mate value men and women have a greater abundance (i.e., “quantity”) of prospective mates to choose from but they also have the ability to discriminate more carefully and select prospective mates who are of a higher caliber (i.e., “quality”). From this standpoint, men and women who are of higher mate value may also have the luxury of helping their friends mate with little cost incurred onto them. Future research would benefit from further examining the directionality of the link between mate-value and facilitative courtship. Future research would also benefit from examining whether facilitating friends’ mating success helps to strengthen coalitional ties among the same sex friendship group.

Consistent with previous research, the results of the present study showed that women held more positive attitudes toward preventing friends’ sexual behavior. Among women, preventive courtship (i.e., impeding the romantic or sexual opportunities of friends) was predicted by low levels of sociosexuality and high levels of intrasexual competitiveness. These findings suggest that taking such preventive actions against friends’ sexuality may not be a function of a helping or pro-social orientation, as evidenced by the null findings for both altruism and reciprocity as predictors of preventive courtship. Rather, preventive courtship attitudes may be a function of a desire to restrict the sexuality of one’s female competitors. [Baumeister and Vohs \(2004\)](#) suggested that women will actively deter other women from engaging in promiscuous sexual behavior due to marketplace conditions of supply and demand. Given that men, on average, desire sexual intercourse more frequently and with relatively more partners than women (see [Baumeister & Tice 2001](#) for a review), women are inherently afforded with an advantage within the mating market (i.e., ability to demand certain qualities in men in return for sexual access). Accordingly, women who engage in promiscuous sexual behavior drive the price of sex down (see [Baumeister & Vohs, 2004](#)), in effect “cheapening” the resource of sexual access. From this perspective, it has been suggested that women as a group would be more inclined to restrict and punish other women from engaging in short-term sexual liaisons as it diminishes their own sexual currency. This translates into some women employing a preventive mating strategy with each other. Those who endorse low sociosexual and high intrasexual competitive attitudes may be especially attuned to regulating other women’s sexuality.

Evidence did not lend credence to intrasexual competitiveness predicting men’s preventive courtship behavior. At first glance, this result may be surprising, especially given the emphasis on intrasexual conflict for mating opportunities among men that pervades much of the literature (see [Archer, 2009](#) for review specific to aggressive competition). It may be that for men in particular, the benefits of alliance formation and cooperation might outweigh the benefits of direct mating competition between friends. Men have been shown to “form alliances and compete with other men to acquire the status and resources that make them desirable to women” ([Buss, 1996](#), pp. 309). Thus, the formation and maintenance of alliances may serve as a competitive strategy for enhancing reproductive success.

Limitations and Future Directions

There are limitations and future directions to consider surrounding this study. One limitation is the use of undergraduate students to draw inferences based on sex-differentiated mechanisms underlying men and women’s courtship behavior. Future studies could benefit from exploring a wider range of age groups to render these findings more generalizable to the larger population. We suggest that the use of undergraduate students is only an initial entry point in an attempt to understand the processes which promote facilitative and preventive modes of action with regards to helping or circumventing a friend in securing a romantic and/ or sexual partner.

We suspected that it is possible that those who engage in facilitative courtship may already be in a romantic relationship and therefore are not actively seeking to find someone. We tested this potential explanation post-hoc: there was no correlation between facilitative courtship style and current relationship status ($r = -.08, p = n.s.$).

Another interesting point of inquiry unaccounted for in the present study was the extent to which men and women help or deter their friends from engaging in finding a short-term or a long-term mate. However, we argue that often times the facilitator/preventer cannot necessarily anticipate ahead of time what the outcome will be (i.e., a short-term sexual partner or a long-term romantic relationship), especially given that a short-term encounter can indeed evolve into a long-term romantic relationship. Nevertheless, men and women may become more or less likely to facilitate a friend's romantic success if they believe that the relationship will be of a short or long-term nature. For instance, we would expect that the relationship between low sociosexuality, high intrasexual competition, and preventive courtship would not exist (or would be buffered considerably) in circumstances of long-term mating facilitation. Similarly, we might expect to observe sex differences with men more than women being willing to explicitly facilitate short-term sexual relations (e.g., [Ackerman & Kenrick, 2009](#)).

Finally, an intriguing avenue for further exploration would be to investigate whether individuals tailor their facilitative/preventive courtship behavior to specific friends. There is a paucity of research on the dynamics of friendship pairings and friendship circles with regards to their role in the mating process. Suppose that for some friendship pairings, a conduit (i.e., the friend arranging the set-up) may facilitate encounters with potential mates, whereas for other friendship pairing, the conduit may stifle the attempts and hinder the process of their friend locating and securing a possible mate. Further, it is possible that persons who are unattached romantically ("single") might object to their friend's attempts to set them up with a mate and this in turn might affect their friends' intentions about facilitating/preventing a relationship. Future research might benefit from examining the extent to which a friend's individual characteristics and personality traits may or may not promote or prevent these behaviors.

Conclusion

This study examined sex differences and individual differences in facilitative and preventive courtship. Women report a greater willingness to prevent a friend from engaging in sexual activity. Women's preventive courtship attitudes were predicted by both low sociosexuality and high intrasexual competition, supporting [Baumeister and Vohs' \(2004\)](#) view that women may act to regulate the sexuality of other women. No sex differences were found among individuals in their willingness to facilitate friends' mating success. Facilitative courtship was predicted by reciprocity and high mate-value in both sexes, suggesting that individuals may sacrifice time and effort in helping a friend find a partner with the expectation of reciprocity. Taken together, these findings highlight the need to extend research efforts beyond the study of individualistic competition for mates, toward a broader conceptualization of mating, which sometimes occurs collaboratively.

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Competing Interests

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