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Who Finds Bill Gates Sexy? Creative Mate Preferences as a Function of Cognitive Ability, Personality, and Creative Achievement

ABSTRACT

Creativity is sexy, but are all creative behaviors equally sexy? We attempted to clarify the role of creativity in mate selection among an ethnically diverse sample of 815 undergraduates. First we assessed the sexual attractiveness of different forms of creativity: ornamental/aesthetic, applied/technological, and everyday/domestic creativity. Both males and females preferred ornamental/aesthetic forms of creativity in a prospective sexual partner than applied/technological and everyday/domestic forms of creativity. Secondly, we assessed the simultaneous prediction of general cognitive ability, personality, divergent thinking, self-perceptions of creativity, and creative achievement on preferences for different forms of creativity in a prospective sexual partner. The results were generally consistent with assortative mating. The most robust predictors of a preference for applied/technological forms of creativity in a potential sexual partner were intellectual interests and creative achievement in applied/technological domains. In contrast, the most robust predictor of a preference for ornamental/aesthetic forms of creativity was openness to experience. The results suggest that openness to experience and its associated aesthetic, perceptual, and affective aspects are the primary characteristics influencing the sexual attractiveness of a creative display. Further, the results demonstrate the importance of also taking into account individual differences in personality, interests, and creative achievement when considering the sexual attractiveness of different manifestations of creativity.

Keywords: creativity, intelligence(s)/intellect, styles, personality, mating, mate selection, openness to experience.

Let's face it: creativity is sexy. People all over the world list creativity as a desirable quality in a mate (Buss, 1989; Geher & Kaufman, 2013; Li, Bailey, Kenrick & Linsenmeier, 2002; Rowatt, DeLue, Strickhouser & Gonzalez, 2001), and people who are more creative across domains—including the arts, music, and humor—report more sexual partners than less creative individuals (Beaussart, Kaufman & Kaufman, 2012; Clegg,

Nettle & Miell, 2011; Greengross & Miller, 2011; Kaufman et al., 2010; Nettle, 2008; Nettle & Clegg, 2006). For example, in a recent study a young male confederate carried a guitar, a sports bag, or nothing at all on a city street. He then solicited phone numbers from 300 young women. He received more phone numbers when he carried the guitar than in the other two conditions (Guéguen, Meineri & Fischer-Lokou, 2014). But are all creative behaviors equally sexually attractive—that is, are creative scientists and technologists, such as Bill Gates or Steve Jobs—also equally attractive to members of the opposite sex?

Looking through an evolutionary lens, Geoffrey Miller, and colleagues have argued that human creativity evolved as a result of sexual selection through mutual mate choice (Geher & Kaufman, 2013; Geher & Miller, 2008; Kaufman, Kozbelt, Bromley & Miller, 2007; Miller, 1999, 2000a,b). According to Miller and colleagues, our more recently evolved creative cultural displays (e.g., art, music, humor, language) are analogous to the peacock's tail: they serve the function of attracting mates by acting as fitness indicators, revealing a person's level of cognitive ability and personality (Penke, Denissen, & Miller, 2007; Miller, 2009; Miller & Tal, 2007; Penke, Denissen & Miller, 2007).

Extending this argument, Feist (2001, 2007) argued that applied/technological displays of creativity, as seen in modern behaviors in domains such as technology, science, and engineering, were shaped largely by natural selection pressures, and have their basis in our evolved capacities for tool and technological use. In addition, Feist argued that ornamental/aesthetic forms of creativity, such as those involved in art, music, and other aesthetic domains, were shaped primarily by sexual selection pressures, and therefore should be perceived as more sexually attractive than applied/technological displays of creativity. Considering that ornamental/aesthetic aspects of creative expression play on our evolved perceptual functions and evoke strong emotions in the perceiver, this could increase the chances for a sexual response. Therefore, according to this account, ornamental/aesthetic displays of creativity are predicted to be more sexually attractive than applied/technological displays of creativity.

Although this theory accounts for species-typical behaviors, it ignores the many differences within our species that may impact mate selection. Assortative mating (i.e., the tendency for people to be attracted to and to mate with those similar to themselves in genotype and/or phenotype, such as attractiveness, intelligence, and other traits) may operate on the level of personality and interest, which would influence which forms of creativity are considered sexually attractive. For instance, those who are more scientifically inclined may prefer mates who are also scientifically inclined, whereas those who value fantasy and aesthetics may prefer mates who are aesthetically inclined. An investigation of individual differences in mate preferences for different forms of creativity would add further nuance for the sexual selection account, showing not only how we differ from other species but also how we differ from each other *within* our species.

Prior research has found sex-differentiated associations when investigating the association between creativity and sexual outcomes, and that short-term mating motive enhances creativity in men more than women. For example, Griskevicius, Cialdini, and Kenrick (2006) tested the hypothesis that priming participants with sexually attractive mate cues (choosing an attractive opposite sex image) would enhance creative responses in men more than women. They found support for this hypothesis in the judged creativity of stories before and after a mating cue in a sample of undergraduates ($N = 91$; 61% female).

Similarly, Clegg et al. (2011) examined the relationship between artistic success and mating success in a sample of 236 visual artists (64% female). Artistic success was measured as a summed total of self-reported ratings on variables such as artistic success (i.e., “are you a professional, serious, or hobby artist?”), number of exhibitions, number of days art was displayed, the price range of their sold art, and the percentage of income they earned from their art. Mating success was assessed via self-reported number of lifetime sexual partners. Because the distribution of the number sexual partners was so skewed ($M = 10.67$, $SD = 21.75$), the researchers log transformed the mating success score. They found that artistic success predicted mating success in men but not for women. Finally, engagement in a wide range of creative behaviors is more associated with number of sexual partners within the past year for men than women (Beaussart et al., 2012). Beaussart and colleagues asked more than 700 college students (85% female) the amount of time they spent doing creativity activities during the last year, such as painting pictures, taking artistic photographs, writing poetry, writing an original computer program, or presenting scientific or mathematical papers. They also asked them how many sexual partners they had during the last 12 months. They found that number of sexual partners predicted creative activity of men but not of women.

OVERVIEW AND HYPOTHESES

This study, therefore, attempts to fill two important gaps in our understanding of the role of creativity in mate selection. First, a la Feist we investigated the rated sexual attractiveness of different forms of creativity. In addition to ornamental/aesthetic and applied/technological forms of creativity, we examined everyday/domestic forms of creativity (e.g., interior decorating, making a new recipe) to distinguish the sexual attractiveness of culturally valued forms of creativity from those that are more personal in form. Second, we investigated individual differences in preferences for different forms of creativity. We predicted assortative mating effects, such that preferences for different creative behavior will be predictable based on an individual’s personality, interest, and creative achievement in similar domains. Our primary analyses were also sex-differentiated to allow us to integrate our findings in the larger literature on the sexual selection of creativity.

METHOD PARTICIPANTS

Eight-hundred and fifteen individuals participated. The sample included 119 males, M (SD) age = 24.3 (6.2) years, and 696 females, M (SD) age = 24.2 (6.8) years. The sample was ethnically diverse, including people who reported the following backgrounds: Hispanic or Latino ($N = 356$), European American/White ($N = 247$), African American/Black ($N = 94$), Asian American/Pacific Islander ($N = 79$), Indian or Middle Eastern ($N = 11$), Native American ($N = 11$), and Other ($N = 49$). Participants were recruited through announcements in undergraduate courses and were offered extra course credit for their time.

PROCEDURE

In each testing session, participants completed several surveys online, which were presented in the following order: (a) a demographic questionnaire, (b) the Openness/Intellect Scale, (c) the Creative Achievement Questionnaire (CAQ), (d) the Self Assessment of

Creativity Scale (SAC), (e) the Creative Behavior Mating Preferences Checklist (CB-MPC), (e) the IPIP Big 5 Personality Questionnaire, (f) the Word Knowledge Test, (g) a divergent thinking item taken from the Abbreviated Torrance Test for Adults (ATTA), and (h) an abbreviated version of the Raven's Progressive Matrices Test (Raven, Raven & Court, 1998). In some cases, participants failed to complete one or more of the measures, which means that the degrees of freedom in the analyses sometimes vary slightly.

The details and scoring of each measure are now provided. These are discussed in a way that reflects our conceptual approach to the phenomenon rather than the task presentation order listed above.

MEASURES

Creative behavior mating preferences checklist (CB-MPC)

The Creative Behavior Mating Preferences Checklist (CB-MPC) consists of 43 items assessing the extent to which individuals find various behavioral manifestations of creativity sexually attractive in a potential mate. Checklist items were compiled from multiple sources. First, we included all items in the 27-item Creative Activities and Interests Checklist (Griffin & McDermott, 1998), which assesses involvement in 5 creative domains: visual arts, performing arts, literary arts, and musical arts, and domestic arts. We changed the item about "busking" enthusiasm to "street performing" to reflect the American English language of the participants. We also added scientific items from Holt, Delaney, and Roe (unpublished data) based on the Creative Behavior Inventory (Hocevar, 1979). To quantify the measures, we modified the responses from a "yes" checklist format to a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*sexually unattractive*) to 5 (*extremely sexually attractive*). Items included such activities as "painting a picture", "writing short stories", and "making websites". Because this instrument is of the greatest interest, it is analyzed item-by-item below.

General cognitive ability (g)

General cognitive ability, or *g* (Carroll, 1993; Chabris, 2007; Spearman, 1904), was estimated by combining performance on two measures: a shortened version of the Raven's Progressive Matrices Test (Raven et al., 1998) as an estimate of nonverbal cognitive ability, and the Word Knowledge Test as an estimate of verbal cognitive ability. The Raven's Progressive Matrices Test consisted of 12 items, in increasing order of difficulty, with a 15-minute time limit ($M = 3.7$, $SD = 2.5$, $Range = 0-11$). On each item, participants were shown a 3×3 grid showing some pattern or progression from left to right and top to bottom, and had to choose one of eight possibilities to correctly complete the pattern in the missing lower-right cell of the grid. Performance was gauged by number of questions answered correctly. The mean score for this test suggests that the sample may be restricted in range when it comes to nonverbal cognitive ability, with the upper part of the range not well represented.

The Word Knowledge Test (developed by researchers at University of Kent [<http://www.kent.ac.uk/careers/tests/synonyms.htm>]) consisted of 39 items, with a 5-minute time limit ($M = 24.7$, $SD = 5.5$, $Range = 7-39$). On each item, participants were given a target word and three other words, the correct one of which was either a synonym or antonym of the target word; participants' task was to choose the correct word. Performance was assessed by number of questions answered correctly. Scores on the Ravens and Word

Knowledge tests were positively correlated, $r(799) = .383$, $p < .001$. To balance the estimates of verbal and nonverbal cognitive ability into a unitary estimate of g , all scores were z -transformed on each measure and the two z scores averaged. A higher composite z score represents greater general cognitive ability.

Personality measures

The IPIP Big 5 Personality Questionnaire consists of 50 items tapping into the five standard factors identified by personality researchers: Extraversion, Neuroticism, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Intellect. We used the 40 items used to measure E ($\alpha = .83$), N ($\alpha = .70$), A ($\alpha = .83$), and C ($\alpha = .72$). Responses for each item were made on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Items tapping into each of these four factors (E, N, A, and C) were separately averaged, yielding one measure of each personality dimension, with a higher score indicating a greater tendency to exhibit characteristics of that dimension.

For the fifth factor, Openness/Intellect, we administered the 20 items for the Openness/Intellect aspect of The Big Five Aspect Scales (BFAS; DeYoung, Quilty & Peterson, 2007). In the BFAS, each of the five major domains is divided into two subtraits that measure key aspects of the domain. Here we focused specifically on the distinction between Openness and Intellect, administering 10 items relating to Intellect (e.g., “Like to solve complex problems”, “Think quickly”, “Have a rich vocabulary”, “Can handle a lot of information”; $\alpha = .79$) and 10 items relating to Openness (e.g., “Enjoy the beauty of nature”, “Need a creative outlet”, “Believe in the importance of art”, “Get deeply immersed in music”; $\alpha = .78$). To avoid confusion and to be consistent across all of our scales, responses for each item were made on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*definitely false*) to 5 (*definitely true*). Responses were reverse-scored where appropriate, and the Openness and Intellect items were then separately averaged, yielding one Openness and one Intellect measure, in which a higher score indicates a greater propensity to exhibit that characteristic.

Creativity

The remaining instruments assessed various aspects of the construct of creativity. One, creative achievement, was assessed using the Creative Achievement Questionnaire, or CAQ (Carson, Peterson & Higgins, 2005). This instrument asks participants to report the extent to which they have made creative achievements in several domains: visual art, music performance, music composition, dance, architecture, creative writing, humor, inventions, scientific discovery, theater/film, and culinary arts. The original CAQ collapses music performance and music composition, but we separated the two domains. For each domain, participants indicated their level of creative achievement, ranging from 0 (not having any training or recognized talent in that area) to 7 (having received national recognition for their creative achievements in that area). If a participant checked off the highest level of creative achievement, they were asked to also indicate the number of times they have achieved that level of recognition. Each participant received a separate score for each domain, corresponding to the sum of their responses (see Silvia, Wigert, Reiter-Palmon & Kaufman, 2012, for scoring details). Thus, a higher score represents a higher level of creative achievement for that participant in that domain.

Participants also completed the SAC, a self-report measure of their own self-perceived level of creativity. The scale, a condensed version of the measure from Kaufman and Baer (2004), as used by Kaufman, Pumacahua and Holt (2013), consists of six items, each on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*). Items included statements such as “I consider myself to be very creative”. Responses were reverse-scored where appropriate and then averaged, with a higher score indicating higher self-reported creativity ($\alpha = .81$).

The final creativity-related measure explored divergent thinking ability, assessed by one item from the Abbreviated Torrance Test for Adults, or ATTA: “Just suppose you could walk on air or fly without being in an airplane or similar vehicle. What problems might this create? List as many as you can”. Participants had 3 minutes to generate as many responses as they could. Responses were measured for fluency (total number of responses) and originality (uniqueness of responses, compared to a set of typical responses for this task), using the standard scoring guidelines of the ATTA. Scores for fluency and originality were positively correlated, $r(800) = .65, p < .001$, Spearman’s rho (800) = .59, $p < .001$. Raw scores for both fluency and originality were positively skewed; also, as some scores on each measure equaled zero, a constant of 1 was added to each score on each measure, and then each set of scores was *ln*-transformed. These scores were each converted to standard scores, which were then averaged to provide a unitary estimate of divergent thinking performance.

RESULTS

The data were almost fully complete. Some people had missing scores on some items, but the variables we analyzed were at least 98% complete.

GROUP-LEVEL CREATIVE MATE PREFERENCES

Table 1 shows the most preferred creative behaviors in a potential sexual partner, ranging from most to least preferred creative behavior. There was high agreement in the ranking of preferences among males and females, $r(43) = .84, p < .001$. For both sexes, more ornamental/aesthetic items top the top of the list, leaving more applied/technological items at the bottom. For both sexes, the following items made the top 10: “Playing sports”, “Taking a date on a spontaneous road trip”, “Recording music”, “Making a clever remark”, “Performing in a band”, “The taking of artistic photographs”, and “Dressing in a unique style”. In contrast, the following items were in the bottom 10 for both sexes: “The development of scientific experimental designs”, “Applying math in an original way to solve a practical program”, “Exterior decorating”, “Presenting scientific or mathematical papers”, “Making websites”, “Writing an original computer program”, “Making ad campaigns”, “Entering projects or papers into a science contest”, and “Making clothes”. Therefore, at the group level of analysis, ornamental/aesthetic displays of creativity appear to be more sexually attractive than more applied/technological displays of creativity.

STRUCTURE OF THE CB-MPC

To assess the possible presence of separate factors on the CB-MPC, we analyzed all items in the CB-MPC using a principal components analysis with varimax rotation (see Table 2). Three underlying components were extracted, using scree plots, interpretability considerations, and Feist’s model for guidance.

TABLE 1. Descriptive Statistics: Creative Behavior Mate Preferences Checklist

Creative activity	Females		Males	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Playing sports	3.8	1.2	3.3	1.2
Taking a date on a spontaneous road trip	3.8	1.3	3.4	1.3
Recording music	3.4	1.3	3.0	1.2
Making a clever remark	3.4	1.2	3.0	1.2
Writing music	3.3	1.3	2.8	1.1
Performing in a band	3.2	1.2	3.0	1.1
The taking of artistic photographs	3.1	1.2	2.9	1.2
Performing in comedy	3.1	1.2	2.9	1.1
Dressing in a unique style	3.1	1.1	3.1	1.2
Writing poetry	3.0	1.3	2.8	1.2
Inventing new recipes	2.9	1.2	2.8	1.1
The drawing of pictures	2.9	1.2	2.8	1.1
Performing in dance	2.9	1.2	3.2	1.1
The painting of pictures	2.9	1.2	2.8	1.1
The making of sculptures	2.8	1.2	2.7	1.1
Writing short stories	2.7	1.2	2.7	1.1
Styling your hair in an interesting way	2.7	1.2	2.9	1.2
Street performing	2.7	1.2	2.6	1.2
Writing plays	2.7	1.2	2.6	1.1
Performing in a play	2.7	1.1	2.8	1.2
Participating in video production	2.6	1.0	2.9	1.1
Performing in a short film	2.6	1.1	2.6	1.1
Writing magazine articles	2.6	1.1	2.5	1.1
Writing speeches	2.6	1.1	2.4	1.1
The construction of scientific or technical objects	2.5	1.1	2.3	1.1
Writing journal articles	2.5	1.1	2.4	1.1
The renovation of old or antique objects	2.5	1.1	2.5	1.1
The making of useful or decorative objects	2.5	1.1	2.7	1.1
Participating in event planning	2.5	1.0	2.6	1.1
Participating in an orchestra	2.5	1.1	2.7	1.2
Directing a short film	2.5	1.0	2.7	1.1
Participating in drama production	2.5	1.0	2.7	1.2
The development of scientific experimental designs	2.4	1.1	2.3	1.2
Applying math in an original way to solve a practical program	2.4	1.0	2.4	1.2
Exterior decorating	2.4	1.0	2.5	1.1
Presenting scientific or mathematical papers	2.4	1.1	2.3	1.1
Growing and gardening	2.4	1.0	2.5	1.0
Making websites	2.3	1.0	2.5	1.2
Writing an original computer program	2.3	1.0	2.2	1.1
Interior decorating	2.3	1.0	2.5	1.1
Making ad campaigns	2.3	1.0	2.4	1.1

TABLE 1. (Continued)

Creative activity	Females		Males	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Entering projects or papers into a science contest	2.2	1.0	2.3	1.1
Making clothes	2.2	1.0	2.6	1.1
Ornamental/Aesthetic items	2.9	.83	2.8	.78
Applied/Technological items	2.4	.84	2.4	.94
Everyday/Domestic items	2.5	.71	2.7	.82

Note. Descriptive statistics for all items on the Creative Behavior Mate Preferences Checklist, split by females ($N = 696$) and males ($N = 119$), ordered from most sexually attractive to least sexually attractive based on the average endorsements of female participants. Overall means and standard deviations for females and males for each group of items (Ornamental/Aesthetic, Applied/Technological, and Everyday/Domestic) are given at the bottom.

The first component consisted primarily of items relating to ornamental/aesthetic aspects of creativity (e.g., “Writing music”, and “Painting pictures”). Items loading strongly on the second component were generally related to applied/technological forms of creativity (e.g., “Applying math in an original way to solve a practical problem”, and “Writing an original computer program”). The third component was comprised mostly of items relating to everyday/domestic forms of creativity (e.g., “Interior decorating”, and “Growing and gardening”).

To explore whether ornamental/aesthetic items were considered more sexually attractive than applied/technological items, as suggested above, we classified items based on the results of the principal components analysis. We chose this approach over factor scores because the raw means are themselves informative, but varimax rotated factor scores necessarily have factor means of 0. The scores showed good internal consistency, skew, and kurtosis: Ornamental/aesthetic— $\alpha = .96$, skew = .07(.09), kurtosis = $-.12$ (.17), applied/technological ($\alpha = .93$, skew = .65(.09), kurtosis = .40(.17), everyday/domestic ($\alpha = .88$, skew = .50(.09), kurtosis = .79(.17).

A repeated measures within-subjects analysis of variance revealed highly significant differences among all of the groups of items. Of greatest theoretical interest, the mean preference for ornamental/aesthetic items ($M = 2.9$, $SD = 0.8$) was higher than the mean preference for the applied/technological items, $M = 2.4$, $SD = 0.9$; $F(814) = 356.2$, $p < .001$; $d = .59$. Although both males and females also showed a significant difference in preference for ornamental/aesthetic items compared to applied/technological items, the effect size for females ($d = .60$) was larger than for males ($d = .46$). Preference for ornamental/aesthetic items was also higher than for everyday/domestic creativity items, $M = 2.5$, $SD = 0.7$; $F(814) = 287.8$, $p < .001$; $d = .53$, and preference for everyday/domestic creativity was higher than for applied/technological creativity, $F(814) = 30.8$, $p < .001$; $d = .12$.

Next, in order to explore possible sex differences in preferences for different forms of creativity, we compared the scores of male and female participants on each of the three components. We found reliable sex differences on two of the components. Females

TABLE 2. Principal Component Analysis of CB-MPC Items

Creative activity	Factor		
	Ornamental/ Aesthetic	Applied/ Tech	Everyday/ Domestic
Writing music	.81	.20	.08
Recording music	.79	.14	.06
Writing poetry	.75	.17	.20
Performing in a band	.74	.14	.08
The drawing of pictures	.72	.24	.28
Writing plays	.70	.28	.22
The painting of pictures	.70	.22	.33
Writing short stories	.70	.30	.21
The taking of artistic photographs	.69	.22	.32
Performing in comedy	.68	.19	.19
Performing in a play	.65	.10	.38
Playing sports	.64	.10	.01
The making of sculptures	.63	.25	.34
Street performing	.61	.11	.29
Participating in video production	.57	.21	.42
Writing speeches	.54	.45	.16
Performing in dance	.53	.01	.41
Taking a date on a spontaneous road trip	.52	.16	.09
Participating in drama production	.51	.13	.43
Performing in a short film	.49	.27	.44
Performing in an orchestra	.48	.31	.32
Making a clever remark	.45	.29	.16
The renovation of old or antique objects	.45	.36	.44
Directing a short film	.41	.37	.36
The development of scientific experimental designs	.19	.86	.14
The construction of scientific or technical objects	.19	.83	.16
Presenting scientific or mathematical papers	.17	.82	.18
Writing an original computer program	.18	.80	.20
Entering projects or papers into a science contest	.16	.75	.26
Applying math in an original way to solve a practical problem	.14	.72	.10
Writing journal articles	.43	.64	.23
Writing magazine articles	.45	.59	.27
Making websites	.23	.54	.43
Interior decorating	.06	.23	.80
Exterior decorating	.11	.33	.72
Making Clothes	.19	.18	.69
Growing and gardening	.08	.37	.65

TABLE 2. (Continued)

Creative activity	Factor		
	Ornamental/ Aesthetic	Applied/ Tech	Everyday/ Domestic
Styling your hair in an interesting way	.30	.01	.54
The making of useful or decorative objects	.43	.30	.53
Making ad campaigns	.22	.47	.49
Participating in event planning	.41	.23	.48
Dressing in a unique style	.39	.01	.42
Inventing new recipes	.37	.30	.41

Note. $N = 815$. Factor loadings over .40 are shown in bold. Explained variance for the *Ornamental/Aesthetic*, *Applied/Technological*, and *Everyday/Domestic* factors = 42.6%, 8.0%, and 4.9%, respectively. Total explained variance = 55.4%.

scored higher than males on Ornamental/Aesthetic preferences, $t(813) = -2.92$, $p < .01$; $d = .20$. This indicates that overall, females show a stronger preference than do males for ornamental/aesthetic creativity in a prospective sexual partner. In contrast, males scored higher than females on Everyday/Domestic preferences, $t(813) = 5.53$, $p < .001$; $d = .39$. Thus, males more strongly prefer everyday/domestic forms of creativity in a prospective sexual partner than do females. Finally, although there was no statistically reliable sex difference in Applied/Technological preferences, there was a trend for females to score higher than males, $t(813) = -1.64$, $p = .10$; $d = .12$. This trend suggests that females show a slightly stronger preference for applied/technological forms of creativity in a prospective sexual partner than do males.

Given the observed sex differences, particularly for preferences of Ornamental/Aesthetic and Everyday/Domestic creativity, we also conducted principal component analyses separately for male and female participants. No substantial differences were found in the pattern of factor loadings, nor did the substitution of sex-specific factor scores in later analyses impact our results. In the following analyses the reported results are thus based on factor scores extracted for the entire sample.

CORRELATIONS AMONG PREDICTOR VARIABLES

To set the stage for the main regression analyses, in which scores for Ornamental/Aesthetic, Applied/Technological, and Everyday/Domestic creativity (derived from the CB-MPC) for male and female participants would be predicted by a set of independent variables, we first examined correlations among those independent variables. These variables (whose scoring was described in the *Method* section) included measures of general cognitive ability, the Big Five personality factors, and three indices of creativity: three sets of scores on the Creative Achievement Questionnaire (described below), participants' reported self-perceptions of their level of creativity, and fluency and originality scores for divergent thinking on an item from the *Abbreviated Torrance Test for Adults*.

To facilitate a match between each participant's own level of creative achievement and their preferences among possible creative behaviors of prospective mates, we modified the standard method of scoring the Creative Achievement Questionnaire, in the light of

the results of the principal component analysis described above. Specifically, we combined relevant sets of items on the CAQ and derived three scores for each participant, indicating their self-reported level of creative achievement in ornamental/aesthetic, applied/technological, and everyday/domestic domains. Domains classified as ornamental/aesthetic were visual art, music performance, music composition, dance, creative writing, humor, and theater/film. Applied/technological domains were inventions and scientific discovery. Everyday/domestic creativity consisted of the culinary arts item. (The architecture item was not included in the analysis, as it arguably involves high degrees of both artistic and scientific creativity, and indeed showed relatively high positive correlations with both ornamental/aesthetic and applied/technological domains.) As expected, scores on each item were positively skewed and were thus \ln -transformed. Within each set of items, \ln -transformed scores for relevant items were averaged, providing a unitary estimate of creative achievement in ornamental/aesthetic— $\alpha = .70$, skew = 1.6 (.09), kurtosis = 3.8 (.17), applied/technological, $\alpha = .62$, skew = 2.6(.09), kurtosis = 8.1(.17), and everyday/domestic domains. The correlations among the predictor variables are shown in Table 3, for males and females separately.

There were no notable differences in the pattern of correlations between males and females, and most of the correlations are consistent with the prior literature. For both males and females, g was moderately related to divergent thinking, which is consistent with an emerging literature suggesting that the moderate overlapping variance between measures of general cognitive ability and divergent thinking is due, in part, to a shared reliance on executive functioning (Beaty & Silvia, 2012; Gilhooly, Fioratou, Anthony & Wynn, 2007; Nusbaum & Silvia, 2011).

Interestingly (considering the aims of the current study), the three forms of creative achievement (ornamental/aesthetic, applied/technological, everyday/domestic) did not significantly correlate with most of the variables except themselves. The inter-CAQ correlations indicate that participants who had creative achievements in one set of domains tended to have achievements in other kinds of domains as well. The highest correlation between a CAQ-derived measure and a non-CAQ-derived measure among both males and females was between Ornamental/Aesthetic creative achievement and Openness to Experience (males: $r = .23$, $p < .05$; females: $r = .23$, $p < .01$). These results make sense; after all, the Openness to Experience aspect of the BFAS includes items relating to aesthetic and artistic interests. In contrast, g was not positively correlated with creative achievement in ornamental/aesthetic, applied/technological, or everyday/domestic forms of creativity among males or females.

In sum, many of the correlations shown in Table 3 are consistent with findings reported elsewhere in the literature. However, in terms of their absolute strength, most relations are at best moderate; this suggests that all of the variables can be included as predictors in regression analyses without undue concern for collinearity (a point corroborated by formal tests for collinearity in the regression analyses). We now turn to the regression analyses, which form the centerpiece of the Results.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTIC PREDICTORS OF MATE PREFERENCES DIFFERENCES

Here, we attempt to determine the characteristics that make one more likely to value ornamental/aesthetic versus applied/technological versus everyday/domestic creativity in

TABLE 3. Correlations among Predictor Variables (Males [$N = 119$] above the Diagonal, Females [$N = 696$] below the Diagonal)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Male <i>M (SD)</i>	Female <i>M (SD)</i>
1. <i>g</i>	—	.13	.43	.30	.12	.50	.47	-.01	.01	-.15	.31	.48	-.08 (.89)	.01 (.82)
2. Extraversion	.04	—	.16	.04	.16	.23	.09	.15	.10	-.09	.26	-.05	3.21 (.51)	3.22 (.65)
3. Agreeableness	.43	.26	—	.51	.24	.43	.48	.05	.02	.01	.33	.27	3.57 (.56)	3.84 (.56)
4. Conscientiousness	.16	.13	.33	—	.11	.46	.29	-.09	.11	.12	.11	.13	3.36 (.45)	3.42 (.51)
5. Neuroticism	.02	.10	.00	.17	—	.12	.09	-.09	-.12	-.07	.12	.03	3.15 (.53)	2.94 (.53)
6. Intellect	.24	.27	.26	.31	.22	—	.64	.08	.18	.09	.50	.40	3.55 (.56)	3.48 (.57)
7. Openness to experience	.36	.13	.51	.16	-.03	.38	—	.23	.08	.05	.60	.29	3.55 (.66)	3.73 (.60)
8. Ornamental/Aesthetic CAQ	.07	.12	.07	-.01	.00	.16	.23	—	.44	.28	.11	.00	.08 (.84)	-.05 (.68)
9. Applied/Technological CAQ	.10	.06	-.01	.04	.12	.10	.01	.35	—	.37	.09	.05	.45 (1.32)	-.08 (.95)
10. Everyday/Domestic CAQ	.08	-.01	.06	.06	.14	.02	.04	.27	.29	—	-.05	-.14	.24 (.28)	.20 (.23)
11. Self-perception creativity	.12	.21	.19	.06	.07	.37	.41	.37	.18	.07	—	.27	4.08 (.83)	3.89 (.91)
12. Divergent thinking	.32	.09	.24	.15	.01	.16	.24	.15	.13	.11	.17	—	.03 (.90)	-.01 (.89)

Note. For males, any $|r| > \sim .18$ is significant at the .05 level; for females, any $|r| > \sim .075$ is significant at the .05 level. All participants included, *df* vary based on missing data on particular combinations of variables. Correlations with creative achievement were calculated using Spearman's rho.

prospective sexual partners. Data for females and males were analyzed separately, given expected differences in responses predicted by sexual selection theory. Six isomorphic analyses were conducted. In each analysis, the dependent variable was one set of factor scores from the CB-MPC (either a preference for ornamental/aesthetic, applied/technological, or everyday/domestic creativity in a potential sexual partner), for either females only or males only, and the set of 12 independent variables was identical (see above, Table 3).

In the first regression analysis, we investigated the independent predictors of scores on the Ornamental/Aesthetic factor among females. The regression was highly significant, $F(12,664) = 14.21$, $p < .001$, adjusted- $R^2 = .23$. As can be seen in Table 4, six predictors were significant at the .05 level, with one more approaching significance. These results indicate that women who particularly value displays of ornamental/aesthetic creativity in prospective mates tend to score higher in general cognitive ability, agreeableness, openness to experience, are somewhat lower in neuroticism ($p = .06$), see themselves as creative generally, have made their own creative achievements in ornamental/aesthetic domains, and have made fewer creative achievements in everyday/domestic creative domains. Notably, one of the two strongest predictors of valuing displays of ornamental/aesthetic creativity among women was their own creative achievement in ornamental/aesthetic domains. Also, it is notable that the top independent predictor was openness to experience, whereas Intellect was not a significant independent predictor.

In the second regression analysis, we investigated the independent predictors of scores on the Applied/Technological factor among females. The regression was again significant,

TABLE 4. Results for the Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Individual Differences among Females' Preferences for Displays of Ornamental/Aesthetic, Applied/Technological, and Everyday/Domestic Creativity in Prospective Sexual Partners

Predictors	Ornamental/ Aesthetic Creativity	Applied/Technological Creativity	Everyday/Domestic Creativity
	β	β	β
<i>g</i>	.09*	-.07	-.05
Extraversion	.02	-.07	.01
Agreeableness	.16*	-.06	-.02
Conscientiousness	-.01	.08*	.08*
Neuroticism	-.07	-.08*	.01
Intellect	.05	.11*	-.12*
Openness to experience	.23*	.09	.03
Ornamental/Aesthetic CAQ	.12*	-.10*	.09
Applied/Technological CAQ	.01	.17*	.02
Everyday/Domestic CAQ	-.09*	.09*	.08
Self-perception creativity	.08*	.01	.11*
Divergent thinking	.04	.07	-.05

* $p < .05$.

$F(12,664) = 4.38$, $p < .001$, adjusted- $R^2 = .06$. Six predictors were significant at the .05 level, with two more approaching significance (see Table 4). Here, it appears that women who particularly value displays of applied/technological or scientific creativity in a prospective sexual partner tend to be more conscientious, lower in neuroticism, higher in Intellect, have made their own creative achievements in applied/technological and everyday/domestic domains, and have made less creative achievements in ornamental/aesthetics domains. They also show a trend for greater openness to experience ($p = .07$) and divergent thinking ($p = .07$). Notably, the strongest predictor of valuing displays of applied/technological creativity among women was their own creative achievements in applied/technological domains—similar to the results above for ornamental/aesthetic creativity. Also of note is the finding that, unlike with the Ornamental/Aesthetic factor, openness to experience was *not* a robust predictor of a preference for applied/technological creativity among females.

In the third regression analysis, we investigated the independent predictors of scores on the Everyday/Domestic factor among females. The regression was again significant, $F(12,664) = 2.66$, $p < .01$, adjusted- $R^2 = .03$. Here, three variables were significant (see Table 4). Specifically, the results suggest that women who particularly value displays of everyday/domestic creativity in prospective mates tend to be more conscientious, perceive themselves as more creative in general, and have fewer intellectual interests. There was also a trend for them to have more creative achievements in ornamental/aesthetic ($p = .07$) and everyday/domestic forms of creativity ($p = .07$, although note that we only looked at creative achievement in the culinary arts). The results for the Everyday/Domestic factor were somewhat weaker than for the other two regression analyses. That is, the predictors in this regression explained less of the variance in scores.

We now turn to isomorphic analyses of the data for males, beginning with predictions of scores on the Ornamental/Aesthetic factor. The regression was significant, $F(12,104) = 2.38$, $p < .01$, adjusted- $R^2 = .13$, but more muted than in the corresponding analysis of females. As can be seen in Table 5, three predictors were significant. The results suggest that men who particularly value displays of ornamental/aesthetic creativity in a prospective sexual partner tend to be more open to experiences, have made their own creative achievements in everyday/domestic creativity domains, and have fewer intellectual interests. Interestingly, unlike all of the regression results for females, a male's own creative achievement in domains corresponding to the dependent variable was not a significant predictor of mating preferences.

In the next regression analysis, we investigated the independent predictors of scores on the Applied/Technological factor among males. The analysis was again significant, $F(12,104) = 2.35$, $p < .05$, yielding approximately the same amount of explained variance as the preceding analysis, adjusted- $R^2 = .12$. Again, as can be seen in Table 5, three predictors were significant. Specifically, the results suggest that men who particularly value displays of applied/technological creativity in prospective mates have greater intellectual interests, make their own creative achievements in applied/technological domains, and are relatively lower in general cognitive ability (although this is most likely a suppression effect due to the high correlation between Intellect and g). This last finding echoes the results of all three regression analyses of females (a concordance between self-reported creative achievement in the domain corresponding to the dependent variable), but not for males for ornamental/aesthetic creativity.

TABLE 5. Results for the Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Individual Differences among Males' Preferences for Displays of Displays of Ornamental/Aesthetic and Applied/Technological Creativity in Prospective Sexual Partners

Predictors	Ornamental/ Aesthetic Creativity	Applied/ Technological Creativity	Everyday/ Domestic Creativity
	β	β	β
<i>g</i>	.04	-.26*	-.11
Extraversion	-.09	.04	.20
Agreeableness	.04	.15	-.10
Conscientiousness	-.05	-.02	.20
Neuroticism	-.06	.18	-.10
Intellect	-.39*	.13*	-.18
Openness to experience	.47*	-.15	-.02
Ornamental/Aesthetic CAQ	.02	-.04	-.10
Applied/Technological CAQ	.00	.26*	.18
Everyday/Domestic CAQ	.19*	.08	.07
Self-perception creativity	.05	-.05	.16
Divergent thinking	.07	.18	.03

* $p < .05$. Statistically significant numbers are bolded.

In the final regression analysis, we investigated the independent predictors of scores on the Everyday/Domestic factor among males. In this case, the regression analysis was not significant, $F(12,104) = 1.32$, $p = .22$, adjusted- $R^2 = .03$. Extraversion and conscientiousness showed weak, marginal effects ($p = .08$ and $.09$, respectively); no other predictors were remotely significant. Results for this outcome variable are thus not particularly informative.

DISCUSSION

The current study aimed to deepen our understanding of the role of creativity in mate selection. We went about this in two ways. First we investigated the stated mate preferences of different forms of creativity, particularly those varying along the lines of ornamental/aesthetic and applied/technological creativity. The results were clear: for both males and females, ornamental/aesthetic forms of creativity were considered more sexually attractive than applied/technological forms of creativity. These results are consistent with Feist's (2001, 2007) hypothesis that ornamental/aesthetic forms of creativity should be considered the most sexually attractive, as these evolved through sexual selection mechanisms more so than did applied/technological forms of creativity, which Feist argues were more strongly influenced by natural selection pressures.

We also found significant individual differences in reported mate preferences, and these differences were most robustly predicted based on personality and creative achievement. Although general cognitive ability negatively predicted a preference for applied/

technological forms of creativity among males, and the prediction was also in the negative direction among females, this was most likely due to a suppression effect considering g and Intellect were significantly positively correlated with each other. The regression findings are in line with assortative mating, and suggest that intellectual interests are a more robust predictor of a preference for applied/technological forms of creativity in a mate than general cognitive ability. In contrast, the most robust personality predictor of a preference for ornamental/aesthetic creativity in a mate among both males and females was openness to experience. Crucially, openness to experience was not a significant predictor of a preference for applied/technological or everyday/domestic forms of creativity among either males or females.

These findings are also consistent with other research that has looked at the differential predictive validity of Openness and Intellect on creative achievement. Nusbaum and Silvia (2011) found that a preference for engagement with complex problem solving and abstract reasoning (“Intellect”) predicted fluid reasoning (a highly g -loaded ability) but not total creative achievement across ten domains of creativity in the arts and sciences, whereas a preference for engagement with sensory and perceptual information (“Openness to Experience”) significantly predicted total creative achievement but not fluid reasoning.

Differentiating between domains, Kaufman (2013) found that two factors relating to Openness to Experience (affective and aesthetic engagement) were significantly associated with creative achievement in the arts, whereas two factors relating to Intellect (g and intellectual engagement) were significantly associated with creative achievement in the sciences. In a regression analysis, intellectual engagement was the sole independent predictor of creative achievement in the sciences, above and beyond the effect of g . Similarly, in a 42-year longitudinal investigation of the predictors of creative achievement, Feist and Barron (2003) found that general cognitive ability measured at age 27 was a much weaker predictor of creative achievement at age 72 than observer-rated intellect and measures of personality such as self-confidence, intellectual curiosity, and tolerance.

Our findings also suggested that assortative mating (“like attracts like”) plays a role in the sexual attractiveness of creativity. In general people find attractive creative achievement in domains in which they themselves achieve. For example, creative achievement in applied/technological domains predicted a preference for applied/technological creativity in a potential mate. Creative achievement in ornamental/aesthetic domains predicted a preference for ornamental/aesthetic creativity among females, and everyday/domestic creative achievement predicted a preference for ornamental/aesthetic creativity among males. One possible reason for the less consistent results may be an artifact of the instrument used. In the CAQ, high levels of creative achievement in ornamental/aesthetic domains can be more open to interpretation; many of the highest-level items are based on having creative work reviewed or published in a national publication. In contrast, high-level items in applied/technological are based on firmer standards (i.e., earning a patent, receiving a grant, or publishing in a scientific journal). Applied/technological creative achievement as measured in this study may better reflect “actual” creative achievement than in the other two domains.

Although our findings provide a fairly coherent perspective, the present study has some limitations. Because our sample consisted primarily of university students, we had a restricted range in terms of levels of creative achievement. Future studies, using a wider

age range, may find that higher levels of creative achievement are associated with a different pattern of variables than what we found. Our sample was also restricted in range in terms of levels of nonverbal cognitive ability, with the upper range not well represented. It may very well be that stronger effects of g on creative achievement and creative mate preferences will be found using a sample with a wider range of nonverbal cognitive ability.¹

Also, the fact that our sample was restricted in age may have affected the ratings of the sexual attractiveness of creativity. It's possible that the college students in our sample were more interested in short-term mating, and that the results would have been different if older people were included in the sample with a wider range of mating goals. What's more, our creativity mating preferences checklist specifically asked about the sexual attractiveness of the creative behaviors, but not about preferences for long-term mating. Research shows that reminders of love and sex have different effects in terms of creative and analytic thinking (Forster, Epstude & Ozelsel, 2009). Therefore, future research should not only include a wider age range, but also distinguish between a preference for creative behaviors in both a short-term and long-term mating context.

Another limitation is our measurement of everyday/domestic creative achievement. Because we were restricted by the items on the CAQ, we could only focus on creative achievement in the culinary arts as our indicator of everyday/domestic creative achievement. Future research should broaden the measurement of the range of everyday/domestic behaviors that exhibit individual differences in terms of publicly recognized achievement. Finally, our study included about six times more females than males, and our assortative mating findings were more easily interpretable among females. Future research using a still large but more gender-balanced sample would yield equivalent power within each gender group.

Nevertheless, we think that the current investigation provides some highly suggestive evidence that ornamental/aesthetic forms of creativity are rated as sexier than applied/technological forms of creativity (as seen by the Bill Gates' of the world), and that there are also meaningful individual differences in preferences for different forms creativity that can be predicted by personality, interests, and creative achievement. We hope this study stimulates further research and discussion on both the proximal and distal variables impacting the mating success of individuals exhibiting different kinds of cultural creative displays, as well as the differing selection pressures that operated on the evolution of the many manifestations of creativity demonstrated in our species.

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¹ On the other hand, for variables such as creative achievement and g , high scores may not be all that relevant to evolutionary accounts in which selection pressures operated on individuals living in relatively small groups.

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