Announcer ([00:03](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/yKLVnXcV2epeLcu4TJLWOtQyzubSEod8ZTsKPxXVGm0I6EPpL741jQo1uznreyaPhWand9HS5XA4CtwgDQ8VjxXZW2k?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3.29)):

The Missouri State Journal, a weekly program keeping you in touch with Missouri State University.

Emily Yeap ([00:10](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/yKLVnXcV2epeLcu4TJLWOtQyzubSEod8ZTsKPxXVGm0I6EPpL741jQo1uznreyaPhWand9HS5XA4CtwgDQ8VjxXZW2k?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=10.18)):

What do we look for when choosing a romantic partner? How do men and women differ in their preferences for a mate? Curious to find out, Dr. Bogdan Kostic, associate professor of psychology at Missouri State University, dived into mates choice research. I'm Emily Yeap.

Kostic joins me today to highlight some key things his studies have revealed.

Dr. Bogdan Kostic ([00:32](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/yKLVnXcV2epeLcu4TJLWOtQyzubSEod8ZTsKPxXVGm0I6EPpL741jQo1uznreyaPhWand9HS5XA4CtwgDQ8VjxXZW2k?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=32.729)):

I'm actually a memory researcher by training. Mates choice research has really been kind of one of my side interests, and so to start it off exploring what kinds of things people are looking for in romantic partners, particularly how it's different for men and women.

What I found really interesting is that if you start looking at some of the previous research on mate choice preferences, men and women, there are some differences in what they want, but there's also a lot of overlap. So for example, pretty much everybody is looking for a romantic partner who is kind, who is intelligent, who is funny. That's something we all agree on. But if you start to look into kind of more of the particulars, you start to see little differences there. One good example is that if you ask people about the age of their ideal partner, heterosexual men tend to want a female partner who's a little bit younger, and heterosexual women tend to want a partner who's a little bit older.

Other interesting differences are if people are looking for more of a short-term mating strategy or a long-term mating strategy. So for example, are you looking for Mr. Right or Mr. Right Now? And there are some differences there, where women tend to be more interested in long-term partners, whereas men seem to be open to either short-term or long-term partners; pretty much anything.

But one of the most interesting differences I came across is if you look at people's willingness to engage in sexual intercourse with a partner they've known over different timeframes, you see a marked difference there, where the typical question is if you ask people, imagine somebody you've known for X amount of time that you find attractive. You know, would you be willing to have sex with this person. At like a timeframe of about five years, both men and women are very open to having sex with somebody they've known for that period of time. But the shorter the time period, everything shorter than five years, things start to diverge. If you look at three years or one year, men are more open to these relationships than women. Even if you look at down to timeframes of like someone you've known for one day, one hour, for women, the door is pretty much closed. They're not willing to consider someone they've only known for one day or one hour. For men, there's still some possibility. So I think that's interesting.

Emily Yeap ([02:41](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/yKLVnXcV2epeLcu4TJLWOtQyzubSEod8ZTsKPxXVGm0I6EPpL741jQo1uznreyaPhWand9HS5XA4CtwgDQ8VjxXZW2k?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=161.34)):

Kostic’s most recent study on this topic looked at sex-based differences and how they would hold across different sexual orientations.

Dr. Bogdan Kostic ([02:49](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/yKLVnXcV2epeLcu4TJLWOtQyzubSEod8ZTsKPxXVGm0I6EPpL741jQo1uznreyaPhWand9HS5XA4CtwgDQ8VjxXZW2k?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=169.31)):

There is some previous research comparing heterosexual versus homosexual people on some standard sex-based differences. And the most common ones are jealousy. Men tend to be more upset than women by physical infidelity than emotional infidelity. Other things like men tend to be more interested in visual sexual stimuli than women are. Men tend to be more interested in short-term mating than women are, and a few others.

And there was one study in particular that looked at how those patterns held across sexual orientation. So comparing men and women and heterosexual and homosexual participants. That study found that the differences between men and women seems to hold regardless of whether those men were heterosexual or homosexual. In other words, the most important factor is your sex. Are you male or female? Gay men tended to respond about the same way as heterosexual men, and same thing for lesbian and heterosexual women.

But the one thing that I've noticed in this literature is that these studies either did not consider bisexual people or they just combined homosexual and bisexual participants. And I thought that might be overlooking something. So, I did a large study collecting data from internet-based sources, and I did reach out to some in-person groups at Missouri State University to see if any of them would respond, and I got a good sample size.

I looked at about 14 different measures that had previously shown difference between men and women. So stuff like responses to infidelity, short-term, long-term mating preferences, things like what characteristics do you want in your mate? How important is financial resources to you? How important is youth to you? How important is industriousness and ambition? So a variety of things that show difference between men and women.

When comparing just the heterosexual men and heterosexual women, we replicated every one of those findings, but when we broke things down, comparing just different men with each other and different women with each other, so comparing heterosexual, homosexual and bisexual men, we found a fair number of differences there between heterosexual and bisexual men. Many more differences there than when comparing heterosexual and homosexual men. Same thing for looking at women.

But the takeaway message is if you look at just where the differences are, there are a lot of differences when you're looking at just bisexual people, which to me suggest that bisexual orientation is kind of an understudied area that's kind of inappropriately combined with homosexual in the past. So there's a lot of value in studying just that one population.

Emily Yeap ([05:10](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/yKLVnXcV2epeLcu4TJLWOtQyzubSEod8ZTsKPxXVGm0I6EPpL741jQo1uznreyaPhWand9HS5XA4CtwgDQ8VjxXZW2k?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=310.83)):

That was psychologist Dr. Bogdan Kostic from Missouri State. I'm Emily Yeap for the Missouri State Journal.

Announcer ([05:18](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/yKLVnXcV2epeLcu4TJLWOtQyzubSEod8ZTsKPxXVGm0I6EPpL741jQo1uznreyaPhWand9HS5XA4CtwgDQ8VjxXZW2k?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=318.02)):

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