



Attitude of Female University Students towards the Process of Mate Selection

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ABSTRACT

Relationships are the primary bond that holds people together and one of the important relationships that people have throughout their life is their marriage. In Pakistan, choosing a mate for a female is a dynamic process that is influenced by a wide variety of circumstances, such as parental participation, the social and educational level of the spouse, among many others. The objective of current study was to know the attitude of female students of Punjab University towards the process of selecting their marriage partners. It was a quantitative study and data was collected from 268 female students of final year selected through simple random sampling. Data was collected with the help of questionnaire as tool of data collection, whereas data was analyzed statistically by applying chi square test and it was found that educational and financial status were most important variables considered by females while choosing the spouse among other factors including maturity of spouse and qualities of character. It is concluded on the basis of study findings that in a patriarchal society like Pakistan females have very little autonomy in decision making and it is recommended that awareness should be created among people to consider opinions of girls while choosing their mate so that they could be involved in the most important decision of their family life.



Introduction

Relationships are the main factor that binds people together, while marriage is one of the important connections that people form in their life, furthermore couples join together through marriage and there are spiritual and mental aspects to this relationship in addition to the physical (Alavi et al., 2014). The motivations for relationships may be found in physiological, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization requirements, in accordance with Maslow's hierarchy of needs (McLeod, 2007). Marriage is built on the truths that men and women are complementary, that a man and a woman are required for reproduction biologically, and that children require both a mother and a father, while all human civilization is built on this essential component and marriage unites a man and a woman as husband and wife, who will thereafter be the parents of any offspring that their marriage produces (Anderson, 2013). Making the decision of a spouse has long-term consequences, while local cultural norms and ecologies modulate mate preferences in important ways (Keklik, 2011 ; Scelza & Prall, 2018). Human mating has been mostly governed by parental supervision for much of human history (Buunk et al., 2010). It is believed that mate preferences would differ between cultures as a result of the local ecological and social environment, as well as between people as a result of each person's unique experiences and life history (Pisanski & Feinberg, 2013). It is widely believed that choosing a spouse, or marrying in Pakistani culture, is a very important decision for Pakistanis, because it is not just an agreement between two people, it is thought that picking a mate involves both religion and culture, furthermore the choices made by parents and other family members are seen as being quite

significant in this regard (Husain & Gulzar, 2015). There are many different marriage customs in Pakistan, from young people selecting their mates on their own to preparations made by parents or elders and majority of marriages are planned by parents, not because they wish to impose their own preferences but rather because they care about their children's marital happiness and want the best for them (Elias & Malik, 2009). Marital satisfaction in Pakistan appears to be significantly influenced by parental engagement in partner choosing (Arif & Fatima, 2015). Mate selection is a dynamic process that is impacted by a wide range of social and environmental variables, while a person's age may also have a significant impact on underlying variation that affects mate choices (Munro et al., 2014). Not everyone is appealing when looking for a spouse and it indicates that there is consensus on what is regarded as desirable as well (Mende, 2022).

Literature review

A study was carried out by SJ. (2013) to determine the trends and patterns in college students' partner preferences in Bagalkot. A sample of 762 respondents who were enrolled in their final year of study at professional and non-professional institutions, were included for the study since they were close to graduating and had reached marriageable age. An interview schedule was developed and utilized in order to comprehend and analyze the behavioral patterns. The majority of respondents, according to the findings, believe that marriage is a significant and unavoidable event in everyone's life. Choice intra-caste marriages with parental approval and following traditional ceremonies were preferred. Horoscope matching was preferred whereas dowry was viewed as a social evil. Male respondents preferred partners who were younger than they were, whilst female respondents preferred partners who were either older or close to their own age. Male and female age differences of 2-3 years were thought to be ideal.

A survey of 505 university students in China and 338 students in the United Kingdom was done as part of a research by Higgins et al. (2002) to inquire about opinions on marriage, sexual behavior, and mate-selection preferences. The results demonstrate that traditional values are more persistent in mate-selection preferences in China than in the United Kingdom and suggest that, despite a significant social transformation over the past two decades, a relatively conservative mindset still prevails in China. Particularly among women, traditional morals and attitudes are prevalent.

Maliki . (2009) conducted a study with the objective to provide an understanding of the variables that influence university students' mate preferences in the south-south region of Nigeria. A descriptive survey was used in the investigation. The sample consisted of 1420 undergraduate students in Nigeria's south-south region who were chosen at random. They ranged in age from 16 to 46 years, with 907 male students and 512 female students. The study's key conclusion suggested that students value character above all other qualities when choosing a companion.

Buunk et al. (2010) conducted a study which looked at the possibility that a culture's level of collectivism and the amount of parental influence on mating are related. Four samples were given a scale to gauge the level of parental impact on mate preference: 80 students from 30 other nations are studying in the Netherlands, together with 371 students from the Netherlands, 197 students from Kurdistan, Iraq, and 102 students from Canada. Parental impact was shown to be stronger in more collectivistic nations, with the Kurdish group reporting higher levels of parental influence on mate choice than the Dutch sample, while individuals from East Asian backgrounds (who have more exposure to collectivistic cultural norms) expressed stronger parental influence than individuals from European backgrounds did in the Canadian sample.

Yaquan & Gowoon (2023) carried out a study to examine the differences in marital partner preferences between women from the two classes in Shandong Province, China, and explains why such patterns exist by drawing on qualitative in-depth interviews with 30 middleclass and working-class women. The results of the study shows that local structural elements and familial factors have a significant impact on women's preferences for partners, while this aptitude is a result of women's desire to uphold their parents' and their own families' traditional values and social mores.

A study was conducted by Locke et al (2020) to examine undergraduates (n = 2,071) and their parents (n = 1,851) in eight nations (Canada, India, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Malaysia, Philippines, and the United States) to rate or rank qualities they would want in the student's partner in order to examine cultural, parental, and personal sources of young adults' long-term partner preferences. It was discovered by the study that young people all across the world want spouses who matched both their own personalities and their parents' choices.

Finding out the factors Malaysian postgraduate students consider while choosing a partner was the aim of a qualitative study conducted by Alavi et al. (2014). For the semi-structured interview, 30 respondents were purposefully selected. Thematic analysis was used for analyzing the data. The results were divided into three groups based on the importance of the factors for choosing a mate: the most important, the important,

and the somewhat important. The results demonstrate that while choosing a mate, Malaysian postgraduate students prioritized both internal factors, like religion, and exterior aspects, such physical appearance, furthermore mental health, profession and financial status were the most crucial criteria for choosing a partner, while these factors were closely followed by intelligence, sociability, education, character and purity.

Oladeji & Ariyo (2014) conducted a study to determine how mate choice among Nigerian teenagers of reproductive age is influenced by social and economic factors. The sample for the study consisted of a total of 200 adolescents, 92 of whom were female and 108 of whom were male. Their mean age was 26.3 years, with ages ranging from 21 to 28. Author-created questionnaire was used to collect data, while frequency counts, percentages, multiple regression, and Pearson product moment correlation statistics were used to analyze the data. The study's findings showed that the dependent variable was significantly predicted by a combination of the independent variables (social and economic factors). Additionally, the results showed a strong correlation between each of the variables—social characteristics, economic level and mate selection.

To determine the variations in partner choosing criteria among three generations of Pakistani women, Khalid & Hassan (2019) carried out a qualitative study. Three distinct age groups were chosen to examine the differences between them as a result of social and technological change. Three women in the following age categories (grandmothers, mothers, and their marry able grand/daughters) were specifically sought out from six different households to participate in semi-structured interviews. Thematic analysis was used to examine the interview transcripts. Findings indicate that in general, potential families' social backgrounds and compatibility remained the most essential characteristics. The choosing of a mate was heavily influenced by both exterior factors, such as high financial standing and a respectable work, as well as internal factors like morality and religiosity.

Worldwide, choosing a spouse is a highly widespread cultural practice, and women frequently have a tough time meeting the requirements. A qualitative research was conducted by Abbas & Ferdoos (2022) to understand the preferences of highly qualified women from Skardu, Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan, in the choosing of husbands and the impact of spouses' unique backgrounds. A total of 15 single, working women were chosen as respondents, and data were collected through purposive sampling from a variety of Skardu institutions, including banks, colleges, and hospitals. The data was collected using an interview guide, and it was then thematically assessed. Results showed that the majority of the women in the region place a high priority on a potential spouse's higher level of education, personal characteristics, educational homogamy, financial stability, family background, and sociability. Physical beauty and shared cultural and linguistic origins were not thought to be crucial criteria for accepting any proposal, though.

Above mentioned literature review depicts that mate selection worldwide influenced by many factors and in Pakistan it is also a dynamic process especially in the case of females. But a very small literature is available on this topic and a gap exists to be filled by research. Current study investigated the opinions regarding the preferences of young female students towards the process of selecting their marital partners. The findings of the research help to understand the attitude of educated female' preferences in mate selection to be keep in view while making decisions for them.

Methodology

It was a cross sectional study and used quantitative research methodology. A sample of 268 female final-year students was chosen at random to provide data. The objective of the current study was to determine how Punjab University's female students considered about the selection of their spouses. Questionnaire was used to gather the data, and the chi square test was used to do statistical analysis on the data. The study findings help to understand the attitude of females who are of marriageable age in Pakistani culture and are ready or going to make a family unit after marriage. It is essential to create understanding of preferences/attitude of females regarding the mate selection for proper match making, which could help in strengthening family system in our society for its smooth functioning.

Results

According to the results table 1 shows that more than half i.e. 58 percent respondents want to live in nuclear family system, while 42 percent respondents preferred to live in joint family system after marriage.

Table 1

Preferred Family System after Marriage

Preferred family system	Frequency	Percentage
Nuclear family system	156	58
Joint family system	112	42
Total	268	100

Table 2 depicts the desired characteristics of mates of the respondents. According to the results mostly respondents i.e. 56.3 preferred that their mate should be modern in his looks and attitude, while 43.7 percent respondents want their mate as simple. Almost half i.e. 49.3 percent respondents want that their mate should have a clean shaved look and 45.1 percent want a mustached look of their mate, while only 5.6 percent respondents want to have a bearded mate. Mostly respondents i.e. 67.5 percent preferred a tall heighted mate, while 32.5 percent preferred medium height of their mate. According to the results 23.51 percent respondents desired that their mate should be religious and 31.34 percent desired to have a mate with liberal attitude, while 45.15 percent respondents want their mate to have a moderate attitude.

Table 2

Preferences of Respondents Regarding Characteristics of Mate

Types of characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Fashion		
Simple	117	43.7
Modern	151	56.3
Total	268	100
Appearance		
Mustached	121	45.1
Clean shaved	132	49.3
Bearded	15	5.6
Total	268	100
Height		
Tall	181	67.5
Medium	87	32.5
Total	268	100
Attitude		
Religious	63	23.51
Liberal	84	31.34
Moderate	121	45.15
Total	268	100

Table 3 depicts that according to results 24.63 percent respondents desired that their mate should be an army officer and slightly lower number of respondents i.e. 22.76 desired that their mate should be a businessman. The respondents who want to marry CSP officer was 19.77 percent, while 10.82 and 10.45 percent respondents' preferred profession of the mates were engineer and doctor respectively. Only 7.08 percent respondents preferred that the mate should be a college or university teacher, while according to 4.08 percent respondents they don't have any particular choice of preferred profession of mate.

Table 3

Preferences of Respondents Regarding Profession of Mate

Preferred profession of mate	Frequency	Percentage
Army officer	66	24.63
CSP officer	53	19.77
College/University teacher	19	7.08
Doctor	28	10.45
Engineer	29	10.82
Businessman	61	22.76
From any profession	12	4.48
Total	268	100

The results in table 4 shows the mode of seeing the mate before marriage and according to results 42.2 percent respondents want to know their mate through their own parents, while 36.2 percent respondents want to see their mate in person. The attitude towards seeing the mate/partner through photograph was reported by 21.64 percent respondents.

Table 4

Attitude of Respondents towards Seeing the Partner before Marriage

Types of attitude towards seeing the partner	Frequency	Percentage
Personally	97	36.2
By photograph	58	21.64
Through parents	113	42.16
Total	268	100

Table 5 depicts the types of preferred qualities of mate according to the importance given by the respondents e.g. social and economic status of partner and his family, qualification, personality traits and physical appearance of mate etc.

Table 5

Preferences of Respondents Regarding Qualities of Mate

Qualities	Very Important	Important	Not Important	Pearson Square	Chi- df	P-value
Economic condition of partner	78	158	32			
Social status of his family	54	102	112			
Social condition of partner	145	105	18	590.336	18	0.000
Favorable social status of the partner	98	138	32			
Qualification	206	51	11			
Good looking	97	119	52			
Strong physique	119	112	37			
Pleasant personality	168	88	12			
Sound character	168	86	14			
Mature personality	223	32	13			

Discussion

Various factors have an influence on the dynamic process of mate selection, while in Pakistani culture,

choosing a mate is considered to be a highly important decision because it entails more than simply two individuals coming to an agreement. According to the findings of the current study preferred family system of the respondents after marriage was nuclear family system. The study also found that the respondents considered different characteristics of the mate like fashion sense, facial appearance, height and attitude to be keeping in view while selecting the mate. According to current study the other factors which affect the mate selection was the profession of the mate and some professions were more desirable like CSP officer, army officer and businessman. Furthermore economic and social status of mate and his family, qualification, character and different traits of personality were among the other factors which were found important for mate selection among respondents. These findings are in line with the study findings by Khalid & Hassan (2019), Oladeji & Ariyo (2014) and Alavi et al. (2014) that the choice of a mate was significantly affected by both internal and external criteria, such as morality and spirituality, as well as external factors like wealth and a respected job. Moreover Abbas & Ferdoos (2022) also found the similar results as majority of the women in the study give importance to a partner's higher degree of education, personal traits, financial stability, family background, and sociability. Another study by Maliki.(2009) also found the same that qualities of character were important factors while choosing a mate. The current study also found that mostly respondents preferred to know/see their partners through their parents, the reason behind this might be is in Pakistani culture parents are considered more important to take decision for their children in mate selection specially for females. Similar results were also found by SJ. (2013), Higgins et al. (2002), Locke et al (2020) and Buunk et al. (2010) that involvement of parents and traditional values of culture influence selection of mate among young people.

Conclusion

According to the study findings and above mentioned discussion it is concluded that female students have certain preferences while choosing a mate and they believe certain qualities should be taken into account while selecting a mate e.g. social and economic status, qualification and good character of spouse are among important determinants for mate selection. It is essential to consider the preferences of females in the process of their mate selection, so that they could be able to involve in most important decision of their family life, which can further influence their future.

Recommendations

1. It is important to use the media to educate people about the need of taking young girls' preferences into account when making partner selections.
2. Young individuals should receive marital counseling to assist them in making the best decisions.

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