Role of Personality Traits in Mate Selection Preferences among College Students in Karnataka

Sandhya S. J.

Researcher, Department of Post Graduate Studies & Research in Sociology, Karnatak University, Dharwad, India

Abstract: *Marriage is the foundation of all social relations which further constitutes a family. Especially for long term partners, university students, about marriage and the criteria for choosing the right partner for proper planning to preserve family is of great importance. To find out the relevance of the claim, this quantitative study was designed to know the desirable traits being considered by the college students in selecting their potential mate, and how males and females differ in their preference. Using simple random sampling, 2624 college students were selected of which 1081 male and 1543 females studying in final year degree in colleges of sampled study area of Bagalkot in Karnataka, India through a questionnaire. Being exploratory in nature findings are presented in a simple percentage. The trait preferences of the respondents were influenced by their sex. Never the less this study suggests the similarity that males and females put importance to traits, which can help them develop and maintain an intimate and strong interpersonal relationship with their mate.*

Keywords: Mate selection, traits desirability, college students and personality traits

1. Introduction

Selecting a mate is one of the most decisions in our life. In choosing a mate, an individual should analyze himself to know and be clear based on the needs and values about what kind of life he/she ideally wants and do what's best to achieve it. This includes knowing what personality characteristics and values we want our partner to have (Nadig L.A. 2015). And in this case, males and females have different trait preferences in choosing their potential partners.

Among male traits, it has been recently advocated that personality traits are important in mate choice and mating behavior (Godin and Dugatkin1996: Schuctt et al. 2010; David and Cezilly 2011; Schuett, Godin, et al. 2011). Personality traits refer to behavioral difference between individuals, consistent over time and /or across situations (Sih et al. 2004: Reale et al. 2010) personality traits are linked to various life-history traits (Wolf et al, 2007; Boon et al. 2008; Smith and Blumstein 2008; cote et al, 2010, 2013) and physiological traits (Koolhaar et al. 1999; careau et al, 2008). During mate choice, females could use male personality types to acquire information on male life-history strategies and choose suitable mates (Schuett et al. 2010).

On one hand, females can all have the same preference if a given male personality type increases reproductive success similarly for all females, on the other hand, females can differ in their preferences for male personality types because of behavioral or genetic compatibilities (Schuett et al. 2010).

There are two perspectives which explain the differentiation of male and female in human mate selection behavior, one the evolutionary psychology perspective, and the socio-structural perspective. The evolutionary psychology perspective stated that both sexes prefer partners who are successfully capable in terms of reproduction. However, the socio-structural perspective explains that the different roles of males and females in society also take place in choosing their potential mates. These perspectives have been useful in interpreting and explaining the sex differences and human behavior in selecting mates. It helped in predicting the desirable personality traits for both sexes.

In most studies, a female's physical attractiveness, being healthy, and youthfulness were highly valued by males (Buss David M 1989:Pawlowski, B., & Dunbar, R.I.M 1999). The more attractive a woman is, the higher her chance not only to get married but also being married to a male with high socioeconomic status (Berrett, L. 2002). These characteristics directly refer to a female's reproductive viability. But Buss argued that men prefer partners who were younger than them. A female's fertility is strongly related to her age, but not as to how much younger, she is than her partner. But females strongly prefer partners who have good social status, good economic capability and male who have strong commitment to family (Towns, J.M.& Roberts L & Buston, P.M & Emlen S.T. 2003) Also females are much concerned on the male's readiness to share his resources (Todosijevic, B: Ljubinaovic,S & Arancic.A 2003:Thornhill.R & Gangested S.W. 1993). In addition, despite theoretical reasons to believe that females should prefer intra sexually dominant male (Sadalla, Kenrick & Vershure, 1987), both sexes self-report much lower preferences for dominance related traits than for traits related to kindness and trustworthiness (Botwin et al, 1997: Fletcher et al 1999:Kenrick et al 1993). Further, traits that indicate a male's ability to protect his spouse and his offspring were considered as important criteria by a female.

The researcher's were interested to identify desirable trait preferences of the mate selection criteria among college students in both rural and urban areas of Karnataka, using simple random sampling about, 2624 college students of whom 1081 boys and were 1543 girls, studying in the final year of their first degree BA, BSc, BCom, BBA, BCA, BSW, B.Ed, B PEd, MBBS, BDS, BE, BAMS, BSc (Nursing), BSc (Horti), LLB, and Ayurvedic of various colleges and university, institutions in the district of Bagalkot in Karnataka. Since the study area of Karnataka in particular, India is too big, so Bagalkot district was chosen

for the sampling area on the lottery method. This study is mainly objected towards exploring the expectations and desirable traits of college students about their ideal mate, who could be and the effects of their various background personalities on choices of mate selection.

2. Method

This is a survey study that makes use of the descriptive survey design. Respondents in this study were 2624 undergraduates, studying in the final year degree of professional and nonprofessional from various colleges in Bagalkot district, Karnataka. Data were collected by administering the questionnaire included on a list of various traits. The questionnaire was collected on the same day administration from each respondent. To explore this issue, compute a set of stable matches that would be predicted to arise from the observed in the set of information collected a simple percentage was used to analyze the data.

3. Results

This study shows the differences between male and female college students studying in the final year, in their trait preference in choosing their potential mate. The desired traits chosen by a male and female respondent in mate selection criteria were the product of successive communicating between themselves and with their environment which maintains the balance in the social system.

Table 1: Frequency of the respondent's sex

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	1081	41.20
Female	1543	58.80
Total	2624	100.00

This table shows the frequency and percentile distribution of respondents' sex. Majority of the respondents are female (58.80%) compared to male with 41.20%. These days a large number of females are opting for higher education. The study area of Bagalkot has a total number of 12675 enrolled college students studying in the final year degree class during the academic year 2016-17, which is about 20% of the total college students, though many colleges affiliated to different universities in the region.

Table 2: Frequency of physical traits of Respondents

Physical Traits	Male (1081)		Female (1543)	
	No.	Percentage	No.	Percentage
Body structure	375	34.50	535	34.67
Taller than me	370	34.22	600	38.88
Complexion	350	32.37	501	32.47
Musenler/Sexy	355	32.84	513	33.25
Is good looking	393	36.35	565	36.61
Dentition	401	37.10	586	37.99
Good taste in clothes	370	34.22	540	34.99
Neat & Clean	427	39.50	618	40.05
Weight	281	26.00	427	27.67
Health teeth	345	31.91	491	31.82
Age similarity	435	40.24	615	39.86
		34.47		35.29

This table shows that the percentage distribution of physical traits of Respondents, all are found having almost equal in percentage. It can be reduced in the results that male respondents give lesser importance to the physical traits than females do. The result proves that physical health, body structure age similarity, weight, dentition, height, and complexion are some of the many important factors in mate selection. Regard height, females prefer a male who is taller than they are and in contrast, males prefer a female who is smaller than they are.

Table 3: Frequency of social traits of the Respondents

Social Traits	Male (1081)		Female (1543)	
	No.	Percentage	No.	Percentage
Faithfull	510	47.18	745	48.28
Kindness	525	48.57	785	50.87
Loyalty	495	45079	715	46.38
Sociable	430	39.79	625	40.50
Humor	505	46.71	739	47.89
Accountable	475	43.94	689	44.65
Compassionate	425	39.31	620	40.81
Integrity	435	40.24	640	41.47
Ethical	449	41.53	650	42.12
Empathetic	419	38.76	610	39.53
Enthusiastic	410	37.93	595	38.56
Assertive	455	42.09	650	42.12
Communicative	515	47.64	750	48.60
Religion	415	38.39	605	39.20
		42.71		43.64

Male (42.71%) and female (43.64%) respondents show that social traits were important for both sexes. Even if looking at the means, it shows that females give higher importance to all social traits compared to males even yet they fall under the same intervals. Considering that females have higher mean value Bussu D M & Barness M.L. (1986), in their studies on preference in human mate selection shows that, kindness is one of the tops among other social characteristics that male and female preferred consensually.

Besides, this study shows that both sexes highly prefer traits such as being faithful that are the most preferred social traits for sexes, sincerity, tenderness, reliability, passion, and carefulness. In contrast, Todosijevic, B., Ljubinkavic, S., and Arancic, A (2003) in their studies found that the most undesirable traits for both sexes are those traits that have opposite implications to those they chose as desirable like conceitedness, selfishness, insecurity, aggressiveness, and shyness.

Table 4: Frequency of personality traits of the Respondents

Personality Traits	Male (1081)		Female (1543)	
	No.	Percentage	No.	Percentage
Ambitious	450	41.62	648	41.99
Accountable	430	39.78	620	40.18
Charming	435	40.24	635	41.15
Cheerful	455	42.09	655	42.45
Confident	440	40.70	632	40.95
Courageous	445	41.16	645	41.80
Creative	446	41.25	640	41.47
Caring	460	42.55	660	42.77
Emotionally Stable	456	42.18	658	42.64
Enthusiast	440	40.70	630	40.83
Honest	460	42.55	665	43.09

Intelligent	455	42.09	660	42.77
Dominant	425	39.31	615	39.85
Responsible	435	40.24	635	41.15
Trustworthy	465	43.01	670	43.42
Obedient	445	41.16	645	41.80
Optimistic	435	40.24	635	41.15
Sincere	450	41.62	650	42.12
Integrity	440	40.70	635	41.15
Understanding	455	42.09	655	42.45
Respectable	445	41.16	645	41.80
Open-minded	440	40.70	635	41.15
Loyal	455	42.09	660	42.77
		41.27		41.79

Details in the above results show that males (41.27%) and female (41.79%) respondents indicate both concerned with their potential mate's capability of being trustworthy. This trait can be directly referred to as factor sexual fidelity. Buston, P.M & Emlen, ST (2003) in their studies found out that males have a stronger preference for sexual fidelity more than females. Presumably, because males experience adultery much more than females do. The present study shows that both males and females prefer the trustworthy trait is more important, which can refer to bring sexual fidelity to a relationship. But equally, both male and female did not place too much importance on the trait being dominant, but still considered as an important factor. Geory, D., Vigil, J. & Craven, J.B (2003) in their studies indicate that both males and females put a high value on the potential mate's personality characteristics. Gaulin, S. (2004) in his study found that females have much favor to the personality traits which directly refers to the mate's capacity of providing resources and having central over it. However Geary, D., Vigil, J. & Craven, J.B (2003), in their studies on the evolution of Human Mate choice, it is argued that man has a high preference for personality characteristics which they can nurture a compatible relationship with. Hence, the difference between both male and female preferences is based on how they make certain attributes meaningful in their criteria of one's personality.

Table 5: Frequency of achievements traits of the Respondents

Achievements Traits	Male (1081)		Female (1543)	
	No.	Percentage	No.	Percentage
Education	475	43.94	685	44.39
Economic	455	42.09	660	42.77
Professional	440	40.70	635	41.15
Occupation	445	41.16	640	41.47
Awards & Recognitions	425	39.31	615	39.85
Performance	415	38.39	605	39.20
Attainment	450	41.62	655	42.45
Triumph	430	39.79	625	40.50
		40.87		41.47

This table shows that both males and females preferred someone well educated. Male respondents subsequently prefer a mate who is successful in her job, on the other side female respondents subsequently prefer a financial stable mate. Overall, it shows that females give higher importance to all achievement traits compared to males. This proves the study of Buss, D.M. & Barner, M.L (1986) in their human mate selection and showed that women significantly favored education and the capacity of men to earn money. In the study of the same author's on socio-economic status and physical attractiveness in mate selection choice, proved women preferred financially stable men because according to her potential mates who are good financial prospects have a clear sign of acquiring resources together with industriousness and hard work. Whereas women preferred socio-economic status more important than men because they prefer partners that will take care of them financially. But men preferred than them which is contradicted by our result which revealed that male students preferred women who are less educated and less earning females who can provide for themselves.

Hitsch, G.J., Hortacsu, A & Arioly, D (2010) in their studies it is stated that men have little preferences in partners with a successful job than females do. Moreover, in another study of Sprecher and others, it is also found that men preferred women who have no stable job who had less earning, and who had less education.

But these observations are contrary to the result of the table above, which tells those male college students to have a high preference for women who are well-educated and successful in their job. Todosijevic, B., Ljubinkovic, S & Arancic, A (2003) in their study noticed that education can be a signal for earnings potential and success in the job is directly referring to a mate's unspiritual wealth. Thereupon, male respondents are indirectly looking for their mate's potential in earning, wealth and status. Therefore college students give lesser importance on the achievement traits of their mate than females do.

Table 6: Frequency of spiritual traits of the Respondents

Spiritual Traits	Male (1081)		Female (1543)	
	No.	Percentage	No.	Percentage
Chastity/Purity	470	43.47	675	43.75
Refine	475	43.94	685	44.39
Devotion	450	41.62	650	42.12
Worship	435	40.24	630	40.83
Prayer	445	41.16	640	41.47
Religion	425	39.36	625	40.50
Sacred	440	40.70	635	41.15
Orthodoxy	430	39.79	630	40.83
Theism	445	41.16	645	41.80
		41.27		41.87

This result shows that the respondents put high preferences on a partner who values the refine of a person and followed by Chastity/Purity and devotion. These results recognize Hatifield, E.,& Rapson, R.L. (2006) in their studies on passionate love, sexual desire, and mate selection, reveals that cultural values are an important factor to affect one's mate preferences. Indians have different traditions and cultures and practice their religious beliefs so well, that they have exercise well today. Thereupon both mate and female pay much importance to the spiritual characteristics of a person, even when it comes to their mate selection.

Overall, the result shows that both male and female respondent give the highest importance to their mate's personality traits followed by spiritual traits, while achievement traits, for male and physical traits for the female, is the least their prefer.

Hence female college students consistently have higher trait preference in selecting their mate compared to males. This reflected the study of Maliki that good character train such as supportiveness, emotional characteristics, and personality traits predominate physical attractiveness. This might be a person who possesses good characteristics that will bring better marriage than those who are just physically attractive.

4. Summary and Conclusion

The results disclose that males and females put importance on physical trains. As for the male, good looking females were attractive for them because it is a possible indicator of good reproductive health. Meantime female perceived good appearance as male's likeness of having better opportunities in the job and a lesser chance of having an illness.

On the other hand, in the preference of social traits, it can be inferred that males and females prefer a mate possessing qualities that they can develop a healthy relationship when it comes to communication and socializing.

When it comes to personality traits, it was revealed that males and females have a high preference for a partner, which is trustworthy. Being understanding honest, caring, responsible, and sincere, are also equally considered. These personality traits are pointers of a healthy and faithful relationship that is why they are essential to building a strong and intimate relationship with the potential male.

When talking about a mate's achievement, males find it desirable if their partners are well-educated and who are successful in their job. Besides, females seek well-educated partners, and at the same time, a financially stable partner. These results are quite suppressing those male favor partners who have lower educational profile than them. However, as per the females they consider potential mates who have the qualities of providing resources for the household.

And lastly, as to their spiritual traits both male and female respondents prefer a mate who values, chastity, refine and devotion. This result is affected by cultural values because it can affect a person's choice of a mate; and religion, as a part of the cultural values can bind the marriage life of a couple.

The study would like to advise for both male and female college students of Karnataka, India to put importance and effort in valuing their physical, social, personality and spiritual and also achievements traits. These days male and female college students in Karnataka want to have the most and the best out of their potential mates.

References

[1] Careau V, Thomas D. Humphries MM, Reale D. (2008). Energy metabolism and animal personality. Oikos. 117:641-653.

[2] Godin JG, Dugatkin L.A. 1996. Female mating preference for hold males in the guppy, *Poecilua rekiculata*. Prpc Mat; Acad Sci USA. 93:10262-10267.

[3] Schuett W, Godin J-GJ, Dall SRX, 2011. Do female zebra finches *Taeniopygia gullala,* choose their mates based on their 'personality'? Ethology. 1177:908-917.

[4] Sih A, Bell A, Johnson JC, 2004. Behavioral syndromes: an ecological and evolutionary overview. Trends Ecol Evol. 19:372-378.

[5] Smith BR, Blumstein DT 2008. Fitness consequences of personality: a meta-analysis. Behav Ecol. 19:448-455.

[6] Botwin, M.D., & Shackelford, T.K. (1997). Personality and mate preferences: Five factors in mate selection and marital satisfaction. Journal of personality, 65, 107-136.

[7] Ellis, B.J., Simpson, J. A., & Campbell, L. (2002). Trait-specific dependence in romantic relationships. Journal of personality, 70,611-659.

[8] Fletcher, G.J.O., Tither, J.M., O' Laughlin, C., Friesen,M., & Overall, N. (2004). Warm and homely or cold and beautiful? Sex differences in trading off traits in mate selection. Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 30, 659-672.

[9] Pillsworth, E.G. (2008). Mate preferences among the Shuar of Ecuador: Trait rankings and peer evaluations. Evolution and Human Behaviour, 29, 256-267.

[10] Nadig, L. A. (n.d.). Selecting a Mate. Retrieved August 3, 2015, from http://www.drnadig.com/selecting.htm

[11] Shoemake, E. G. (2007). Human mate selection theory: An integrated evolutionary and social approach. Journal of Scientific Psychology, 11, 35- 41.

[12] Eagly, A. & Wood, W. (1992). The Origins of Sex Differences in Human Behavior. American Psychological Association, Inc. Vol. 54, No. 6, 408-423.

[13] Buss, David M. (1989). Sex Differences in Human Mate Preferences: Evolutionary Hypotheses Tested in 37 Cultures. Behavioral and Brain Sciences

[14] Pawlowski, B., & Dunbar, R. I. M. (1999a). Impact of market value on human mate choice decisions. Proceedings of the Royal Society of London, Series B, 266, 281–285.

[15] Barrett, L. (2002). Human Evolutionary Psychology.

[16] Townsend, J.M., & Roberts, L. (n.d). Gender Differences in Mate Preference among Law Students: Divergence and Convergence of Criteria. Journal of Psychology, 127 (5), 507-528

[17] Buston, P. M. & Emlen, S. T. (2003). Cognitive processes underlying human mate choice: The relationship between self-perception and mate preference in Western society. PNAS, 100(15).

[18] Todosijević, B., Ljubinkovic, S., & Arančic, A. (2003). Mate selection criteria: A trait desirability assessment study of sex differences in Serbia. Evolutionary Psychology, 1: 116-126.

[19] Thornhill R. & Gangestad S. W. (1993). Human facial beauty. Human Nature 4 (3):237-269

[20] Maliki, A. E. (2009). Determinants of Mate Selection Choice among University Students in South-South Zone of Nigeria. Edo Journal of Psychology, 2(2), 165-174.

[21] Buss, D. M. & Barnes, M. L. (1986). Preferences in Human Mate Selection. Journal of Personality & Social Psychology, 50(3), 559-570.

[22] Gaulin, S. (2004). Evolutionary Psychology.

[23] Kenrick, D.T., Sadalla, E.K., Groth, G., & Trost, M.R.(1990). Evolution Traits and the stages of Human Courtship: Qualifying the Investment model. Journal of Personality, 58, 97-116

[24] Hitsch, G. J., Hortaçsu, A., & Ariely, D. (2010). What Makes You Click? – Mate Preferences in Online Dating.

[25] Geary, D., Vigil, J. & Craven, J. B. (2003). Evolution of Human Mate Choice. The Journal of Sex Research, 41(1), 27-42.

[26] Marriage and mate selection. (2008). In P. Regan (Ed.), The mating game: A primer on love, sex, and marriage. (2nd ed., pp. 61-79). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications

[27] Sandhya, S.J (2013). Socioeconomic Status and Physical Attractiveness in Mate Selection Choice. International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications, Volume 3, Issue 10, ISSN 2250-3153

[28] Sprecher, S., Sullivan, Q., & Hatfield, E. (1994). Mate Selection Preferences: Gender Differences Examined in a National Sample. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 66(6), 1074-1080

[29] Hatfield, E. & Rapson, R. L. (2006). Passionate love, sexual desire, and mate selection: Cross-cultural and historical perspectives.