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Partner preferences: An insight into female's expectations

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Abstract

This study focuses on the factors influencing university female's expectations regarding their ideal partner. The study examines how socio demographic factors, such as education, residential area, parent's occupation and income of parents affect their preferences regarding partner like their appearance, personality, financial stability, cultural values, relationship dynamics etc. Keeping these factors in mind, this study is planned to assess the preferences females have regarding their future partner. For this study, 50 females from Bundelkhand University, Jhansi are randomly selected. A self-structured questionnaire was provided to female respondents who belong to Graduation, Post-graduation and above Post Graduation. The questionnaire was explained by the researcher and respondents were requested to fill each detail carefully. After collection of filled questionnaires, data was analyzed by calculating percentage, mean, S.D and Chi square. Results showed that the majority of respondents (44%) are graduates and for the residence category, the majority of respondents belong to urban areas (56%). Respondent's parent's occupation wise results showed that the majority belongs to the government sector (38%) and the income of respondent's parent's majority (36%) belongs to 60,000-1 lakh monthly. Around 84% respondents have given higher priority regarding partner preferences. The remaining 16% respondents have given average priority and also there's no significant association visible regarding education, residence, occupation and income with partner preferences.

Keywords: Preferences, expectations, life partner

Introduction

As human beings, we all need someone at every stage of our life; we all have various types of relationships (like friends, family, neighbours etc) that serve this purpose. But above all in these relationships choosing a right partner plays a significant role in anyone's future life because this relationship is a foundation for the future life. The concept of an ideal life partner can vary from person to person. The process of choosing a ideal life partner is one of the most significant transitions in an individual's life, influencing not only their emotional and psychological well-being but also their social, cultural, and even financial stability. The first step towards partner selection is rarely simple; it is shaped by personal aspirations, family expectations, societal norms, and cultural traditions. Throughout this procedure, individuals often feel a mix of positive and negative effects that leave impressions on their sense of self and their outlook on future relationships. Partner preferences show those expectations that individuals expect in a future partner, and they play a significant role in shaping and building a relationship, mental and financial stability, and long-term goals. Physiological factors, personal and past experiences, and broader socio-cultural background all affect the process of choosing a partner. Understanding partner preferences is necessary because it gives insight into patterns of attraction, compatibility, and how individuals channelise relationships. While earlier research emphasized evolutionary explanations for mate selection, more recent studies have highlighted the dynamic and context-dependent nature of partner preferences in contemporary societies (Arnocky, 2018; Buss & Schmitt, 2019) ^[1, 2]. Self-perception has also been identified as a key factor shaping mate preferences. Arnocky (2018) ^[1] found that men who rated themselves as having high mate value were more selective, preferring partners who were not only physically attractive but also ambitious, sociable, and similar in values.

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This indicates that partner preferences are influenced not just by universal trends but also by individuals' self-assessment and perceived desirability. Additionally, Buss and Schmitt (2019) ^[2] expanded on evolutionary models of mate choice, emphasizing how mate preferences manifest in behaviors such as attraction strategies, relationship maintenance, and even jealousy. Their work demonstrates that preferences are expressed not only in stated ideals but also in the daily practices of navigating intimate relationships.

In today's context, partner preferences are further shaped by digital platforms and cultural change. Online dating and social media have altered the way individuals filter, evaluate, and select partners, creating new dynamics that were less prevalent in earlier decades. Moreover, broader cultural trends, such as increasing gender equality and shifting family

values, continue to reshape what traits are considered desirable in a partner (Zentner & Mitura, 2012; updated evidence in cross-cultural work such as Conroy-Beam *et al.*, 2019) ^[3]. So this study is planned to assess the key characteristics that females value in their future life partner.

Methodology

For the present study, graduate, post graduate and above post graduate females from Bundelkhand University were selected randomly. For fulfilling the objectives taken, a self-structured questionnaire was prepared and data was collected. Analysis was done to calculate the association of variables with level of priority regarding partner preferences (using SPSS software)

Result and Discussion

Table 1: Profile of the respondents

S. No	Variables	Sub Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	SD
1	Education	Graduate	22	44	1.84	0.842
		Post Graduate	15	30		
		Above Post Graduate	13	26		
2	Residence	Rural	7	14	2.18	0.629
		Urban	28	56		
		Semi urban	15	30		
3	Occupation	Govt job	19	38	2.38	1.413
		Private job	11	22		
		Self employed	8	16		
		Agriculture	6	12		
		Other	6	12		
4	Income	Below Rs. 30,000/-	5	10	2.68	0.935
		Rs. 30,000- Rs.60,000	16	32		
		Rs. 60,000-1 lakh	18	36		
		Above Rs. 1 lakh/-	11	22		

Figures in table 1 portrayed that majority of respondents belong to the graduate level (44%) followed by 30% of post graduates and 26% respondents belong to the above post graduate category while the most of respondents belong to urban society (56%) followed by 30% respondents belong to semi urban areas and only 14% respondents belong to rural areas. The majority of respondents' parents belong to the

government sector (38%), 22% are in private jobs, 16% are self-employed and 12% each are in agriculture and other sectors. Moving on to monthly income, majority of respondent's parents (36%) earn 60,000-1 lakhs whereas 32% between 30,000-60,000/-, 22% earn above 1 lakh, and 10% of respondents' parents earn below 30,000

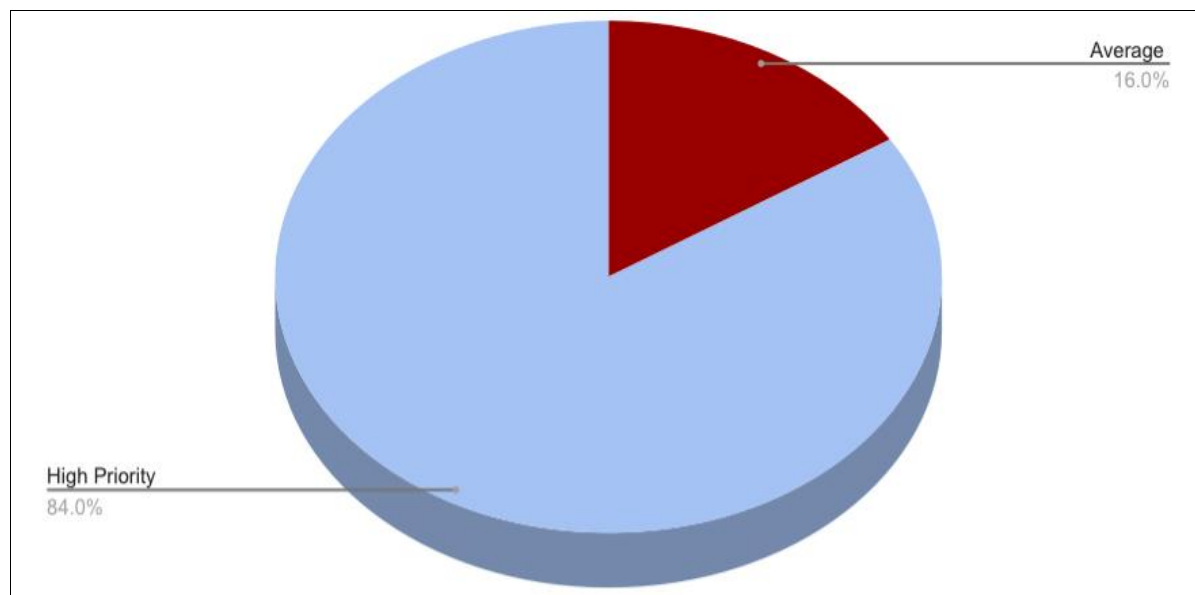
Table 2: Priority level of respondents regarding partner preferences

S. No	Level of Priority	Frequency	Percentage
1	Least Priority (0-27)	0	0
2	Average (28-55)	8	16
3	High Priority (56-82)	42	84

Table 2 divulged that higher priority regarding partner preference was visible with the result obtained by the questionnaire and they are around 84% respondents. The remaining 16% respondents have given average priority. Similar results were visible in a study conducted by Fletcher

et al. (2004) ^[4], the study highlighted that females give higher priority regarding partner preferences.

Data in table 3 disclosed that no significant association was visible regarding education, residence, occupation and income with partner preferences.

**Table 3:** Association of variables with level of priority regarding partner preferences

S. No	Variable	Sub variables	Level of priority regarding Partner Preferences			χ^2	df
			Least priority	Average	High priority		
1	Education	Graduate	0	5	17	0.452	2
		Post Graduate	0	2	13		
		Above PG	0	1	12		
2	Residence	Rural	0	2	5	0.466	2
		Urban	0	4	24		
		Semi Urban	0	2	13		
3	Occupation	Govt job	0	3	16	0.132	4
		Private job	0	1	10		
		Self employed	0	0	8		
		Agriculture	0	1	5		
		Other	0	3	3		
4	Income	Below 30,000	0	2	3	0.208	3
		B/w 30,000-60,000	0	1	15		
		B/w 60,000-1 lakh	0	4	14		
		Above 1lakh	0	1	10		

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