

**FEMALE MATE SELECTION FOR LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIPS**

**THESIS**

**Presented to the Graduate Council  
of Texas State University-San Marcos  
in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements**

**for the Degree**

**Master of ARTS**

**by**

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**San Marcos, Texas  
May 2005**

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## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to Frances Carolyn Lester, whose love and support has allowed me to pursue my goals.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to recognize the members of my committee who have worked so hard and have made their own contributions to my success. To Dr. Harold Dorton who has been there the last couple of years encouraging me and supporting me to finish my thesis. You have taught me so much in these last years. I would like to thank you for your patience, understanding, reassurance, and for helping me come to a better understanding of method research. Thank you for everything and helping me to make it the best that it could be. Thank you Dr. Debarun Majumdar for helping me with the statistical aspect of my thesis as well as the methodology. Thank you for taking the time to be on my committee. Dr. Audrey McKinney for a wonderful experience in her women studies class. Your class has inspired me to study women and learn more about women and the field of women studies. Thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedule to be a part of my committee. Thank you to Dr. Susan Day for all the support and encouragement to complete this degree. Thank you to Adla Saad for everything you have done for me these last couple of years.

This manuscript was submitted on May 5, 2005.

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**ABSTRACT**  
**FEMALE MATE SELECTION FOR**  
**LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIPS**

by

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**May 2005**

**SUPERVISING PROFESSOR: HAROLD DORTON**

Some individuals believe that opposites attract. However, in order to have a long-term relationship individuals tend to marry someone who is similar to them. I propose that females tend to select partners who are similar to themselves. Previous studies have shown that individuals do tend to select partners who are similar in age, ethnic background, religion, socioeconomic status, psychological characteristics and personality characteristics. In this study the data supports previous studies. However, this study also examines dating and how dating plays a role in how females select their partners for long-term relationships. This study also investigates how gender differences play a role in selecting a partner for a long-term relationship. The results for this study confirm that females do select partners who are similar to themselves.

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

While some claim that opposites attract, individuals are more likely to marry someone who is similar to them (Buss, 1985). This idea has interested social scientists for several reasons. Human mate selection affects these social trends and social climates through marriage by the distribution of wealth or the division of labor in the home (Buss, 1985). It also affects how and with whom individuals interact. Most researchers suggest that individuals select partners who are similar in age, ethnic background, religion, socioeconomic status, psychological characteristics and personality characteristics (Buss, 1985; Buss and Barnes, 1986; Burgess and Wallin, 1943; Kalmijn, 1994; Vandenberg, 1972).

Mate selection and how individuals select partners for long-term relationships has been an interest to sociologists as well as cultural historians, social psychologists, and evolutionary psychologists. In this study I focused on how individuals select their partners through particular characteristics. I have also found that individuals tend to base these characteristics on their own characteristics. In this study my focus is on the evolutionary theory, the social role theory, assortative mating and dating and using these



theories and ideas to investigate why individuals select the partners they select for long-term relationships.

Evolutionary theory of mate selection explores Darwin's concept of natural selection, sexual selection, assortative mating, and gender differences. The evolutionary theory states that individuals tend to select mates based on particular traits. Women tend to select mates based on social and economic advantages so that they can pass their status and wealth to their offspring. The social role theory used in this study is based on gender differences and the division of labor men in their public roles and women in their private roles. According to this perspective, women select partners who are assertive and have higher earning capacities.

For this study, I decided to select a sample of females only because the student population at the large public university in Texas I selected to collect data from had a higher percentage of females than males. I also selected a sample of females only because my main interest was females and why they select the partners they select for long-term relationships. Therefore, this study examines the traits that females select in their ideal partners. Previous research shows that females tend to look for partners that are able to provide material advantages, which increase their and their offspring's social and economic statuses (Kalmijn, 1994). However, females do not just select their potential partner on assertiveness and wealth capacity, females also look for a potential partner who has similar personality characteristics, physical features, age, socioeconomic status, religion, geographical location, background, psychological characteristics, intellect, and social behaviors. These commonalities reduce friction in relationships because similarities enable interpersonal interactions and joint activities.

Dating theories also explain partnership selection. Dating experiences increase exposure to potential partners, as well as ideal partnership characteristics. According to dating theories, people may date as a postponement to marriage, a pleasurable way to increase social contacts or as an educational experience. Dating provides individuals with the opportunity to interact with other individuals and to determine which traits and qualities they are looking for in a partner. In researching dating theories and relating them to the social role theory and the evolutionary theory researchers may discover how dating can contribute to mate selection.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

#### **DARWIN'S CONCEPTS OF NATURAL AND SEXUAL SELECTION**

The idea of mate selection begins with Darwin's idea of natural selection, which is the study of success in the survival of organisms of all ages, and how the struggle for survival increases competition between organisms as well as cooperation of the same species (Buss, 1986, Darwin, 1881 and Nakamura, 1965). Darwin discusses natural selection within an environment focusing on how organisms adjust to environmental change in order to survive (Darwin, 1881). These changes may be both behavioral and genetic, as an organism's behavioral and genetic make-up may adjust to environmental changes, adapting over several generations (Allen, 1970).

Humans, like other biological organisms, are also responsive to environmental changes (Darwin, 1881). However, since human environments, unlike animal environments, are shaped by culture, humans must also adapt to cultural changes. As a change in culture happens, behavioral and genetic modification takes place in humans in a display of human adaptability (Allen, 1970).

Darwin's concept of natural selection does not solely explain evolutionary change, which led to the proposal of the concept of sexual selection (Darwin, 1881). Sexual selection, when coupled with natural selection, more fully explains evolutionary change (Barnes and Buss, 1986). Sexual selection can be understood by two closely related processes intrasexual selection and intersexual selection (Barnes and Buss, 1986). Intrasexual selection is the tendency of members of one sex to compete with one another for the admittance to members of the opposite sex, while intersexual selection is the tendency of members of the same sex to choose their partners by certain characteristics (Barnes and Buss, 1986).

### *Evolutionary Theory*

Evolutionary theory on mate selection derives from Darwin's concept of natural selection and sexual selection; from his natural selection theory comes the principle that species that adapt to changes in their environment are more apt to survive. From his ideas on sexual selection come two principles: members of the same sex will compete for members of the opposite sex, and members of one sex will select a partner with certain characteristics (Doosje, Rojahn, and Fischer, 1999).

The evolutionary theories on mate selection began with Darwin's theory of evolution, which argues that humans do not differ from animals when choosing their mates. Humans, like animals, select their partner from cues, which are guided by reproductive investment to ensure their survival and maximize their reproductive success. These cues are different for men and women and therefore create gender differences when selecting a partner. Men look for women based on their physical attractiveness, age and health, because of their reproductive value and fertility. Women look for men based

on their social and economic advantages so that they can pass their status and wealth to their offspring (Doosje, Rojahn, and Fischer, 1999). These largely biological explanations are only the beginnings to understanding human mate selections. Humans are shaped by social and cultural forces which are influenced by the environment. These environmental influences on human mate selection process is much more complex than the mate selection process in other animals.

## **HUMAN MATE SELECTION**

Human mate selection has interested both social and natural scientists but their interests and foci differ. Sociologists study mate selection in part because of the preponderance of marriage in Western society, where more than 90% of all individuals marry at some point in their lives (Buss, 1985). More broadly, sociologists have an interest in mate selection because marriage patterns tend to affect the social climate and social trends, such as marriage, the distribution of wealth, and the division of labor in the home (Buss, 1985). Scientists, other than sociologists, have studied mate selection. Cultural historians have shown a great interest in mate selection because individuals go to institutions such as universities or colleges where they have the opportunity to interact and meet individuals who have similar education, similar cultural and social backgrounds, similar religious preferences, similar ethnicity, and similar socioeconomic which encourages assortative mating (Buss, 1985). Social psychologists have studied attraction, which is the beginning of mate selection, and attitudes an individual has toward particular environments, experiences, situations, cultural conditions, or issues (Buss, 1985 and Johannesen-Schmit and Eagly, 2002). Evolutionary psychologists also

study mate selection, looking at sex differences, and how partnership selection methods may be linked to evolved dispositions (Johannesen-Schmit and Eagly, 2002).

### *Gender Differences*

Mate selection based on gender differences has interested family researchers, sociologists, social psychologists, and evolutionary psychologists. Researchers have tried to explain gender differences by looking at traits through empirical and theoretical studies. These studies examine explanations for gender differences between men and women when selecting a potential partner (Sprecher, Sullivan, and Hatfield, 1994). Evolutionary psychologists explore how men and women differ in selecting a mate by looking at the different traits that they desire in a mate, especially those that will enhance their reproductive success. Evolutionary psychologists believe that men's and women's strategies for selecting a mate is based on choosing a mate who will enhance their reproductive success. Accordingly, men tend to look for women who have traits such as youth and good looks and women tend to look for men who have traits such as ambition and status (Sprecher, Sullivan, and Hatfield, 1994). Therefore, evolutionary psychologists also investigate sex differences and how individuals select partners from evolved dispositions, which means that as individuals evolve they develop different strategies to ensure their survival and maximize their reproductive success. This approach allows them the opportunity to study dispositions that are triggered by particular environments and developmental experiences (Johannesen-Schmit and Eagly, 2002).

Social psychologists examine attraction and attitudes an individual has toward particular environments, experiences, situations, cultural conditions, or issues such as the traditional division of labor (Johannesen-Schmit and Eagly, 2002). Social psychological

interest in studying mate selection considers sociocultural factors like youth and beauty when they look at gender differences in partners. The idea behind considering sociocultural factors is that men want partners that are attractive and young and women want partners who can provide material wealth. These sociocultural factors can be explained by traditional sex role socialization (Sprecher, Sullivan, and Hatfield, 1994). Men and women tend to differ in their selection of mates. One theory that explains the gender differences in mate selection is the evolutionary explanation for human social behavior (Sprecher et al., 1994).

### *Evolutionary Theory*

Evolutionary theories of gender differences in mate selection are based on natural selection (Wiederman and Allgeier, 1992). Evolutionary theory, as a whole, suggests that gender differences in mate selection occur because particular traits in mates insure survival advantages of offspring. Men and women have certain traits that enable them to attract and select their potential mate. Women's traits are their physical attractiveness, age and health, due to their reproductive value and fertility. Men's traits are their social and economic advantages so that they can pass their status and wealth to their offspring (Doosje, Rojahn, and Fischer, 1999).

The focus for this paper will be females and the traits females select in their ideal partner. Females place a great deal of value on a potential partner who is willing and able to provide material advantages, food, shelter, and protection and who can increase social and economic status (Wiederman and Allgeier, 1992). This paper focus on females to get a more in-depth idea of what characteristics females are looking for in their ideal partner

and if females do select partners who are social and economic advantage and have the potential to provide for their offspring.

### *Social Role Theory*

Social role theory examines gender differences and how they affect individuals in their selection of their partners. This theory investigates different societal roles that men and women play in society and how the division of labor plays a part when selecting a partner. This division of labor is based on these different societal roles for men and women in society, which evoke different expectations for men and women. These different expectations lead men and women to look for partners with certain socially valued attributes which are link to gender related social roles. These gender related social roles place women in private domain and men in public domain where women are viewed as the nurturant and are expected to be physically attractive and men are viewed as the providers and are expected to compete and achieve in the public domain. The division of labor plays a significant role in how individuals select their partners for a long-term relationship (Doosje, Rojahn, and Fischer, 1999). This stereotypical division of labor assumes that female desirability is based on physical attractiveness and nurturance, and male desirability is based on their earning capacity and assertiveness (Doosje, Rojahn, and Fischer, 1999).

This division of labor is created, in part, by biological make up of the human body. This is especially true in the case of women because they are able to have children and they are able to gestate and nurse, which can limit their opportunities and ability to have a career (Johannesen-Schmit and Eagly, 2002). This influence of gender roles on men and women demonstrates how the division of labor affects traditional female gender



roles which in turn affect man's and women's preferences in their partners characteristics, namely men seek younger, attractive women with good housekeeping skills and women seek men who are older and have the potential to be good providers.

Accordingly, women and men have different responsibilities and obligations when occupying marital, familial, and occupational roles. Women spend more time in domestic labor than men, and men spend more time in occupational paid labor than women. However, the traditional division of labor is weakening due to women having more equal educational and occupational opportunities, allowing them to enter the paid labor work force and reduce their domestic labor. At the same time, society is becoming more sexually egalitarian, which spurs the creation of nontraditional division of labor roles (Johannesen-Schmit and Eagly, 2002). In this nontraditional division of labor, women seek partners who are economically advantaged but who will also allow them to pursue educational opportunity and limit the number of children (Johannesen-Schmit and Eagly, 2002). In other words women still seek partners based on traditional social roles but they also look for a partner who allows them to continue their education and opportunities to work in the work force.

Glick and Fiske (1996) have defined the conditions that keep women in traditional roles as benevolent sexism. Benevolent sexism is defined by a set of interrelated attitudes toward women that are sexist in term of viewing women in stereotypical and restrictive roles. These stereotypical and restrictive roles are created by the division of labor which places women in the private domain (Glick and Fiske, 1996). Glick and Fiske (1996) suggest that there is a balance of power between the sexes in a relationship where men have the structural power and female have the dyadic power. Dyadic power derives from

male reliance on women for domestic responsibilities, but this power is offset by the imbalance of those roles relative to the structural power the male occupation role confers. Consequently, women in traditional roles depend on males for their value and further entrench females in domestic roles.

While evolutionary theory finds that men select partners who are young and good looking and females select partners who are older and have economic advantage, social role theory examines traditional gender roles which place women in the private domain and men in the public domain. These two theories are similar in that they explore mate selection and how gender differences affect how individuals select their ideal partner. Even though these two theories do explore how gender differences affect mate selection they also look at how individuals look for similar characteristics in their ideal partner.

### *Sexual Selection*

The evolutionary theory on mate selection comes from Darwinian concepts of natural selection; however, natural selection does not explain the characteristics that do not have anything to do with the survival value. In order to account for these characteristics Darwin proposed the concept of sexual selection (Buss, 1985). Sexual selection is related to the processes of intrasexual selection and intersexual selection. Intrasexual selection is when members of the opposite sex compete with each other for members of the opposite sex. Intersexual selection is the preference choice of a certain member of the opposite sex (Buss, 1985).

In contemporary western societies, individuals have considerable choices in sexual selection because of their opportunities to meet different types of people (Barnes and Buss, 1986), such as in an university or college settings (Buss, 1985). In examining

the evolutionary theory, women have been known as the sex that is particular when it comes to choosing a mate. Women look for certain characteristics in a man related to socioeconomic status, social and behavioral characteristics, personality, and financial security (Cramer, Schaeter, and Reid, 1996) and men have a tendency to compete for women with other men. Men use their abilities to provide financial security for the women and socioeconomic status to attract women (Buss, 1985) concentrating more on the physical characteristics of women than any other characteristics (Sprecher, 1989).

According to Buss and Barnes (1986), in Western societies not all individuals are coupled; therefore, our mating system can be described as a “serial polygamy”. Serial polygamy is where individuals tend to have successive marriages where one person is married to two or more people but only one person at a time and mating outside of marriage (Buss and Barnes, 1986). This implies that an individual has one spouse at a time but goes through a succession of marriage, divorce, and remarriage. This provides individuals with considerable sexual selection within the mating system. In Western societies monogamy is the norm and the mating system is assortative mating (Barnes and Buss, 1986).

#### *Assortative Mating*

Assortative mating is the term used to describe any systematic departure from random mating. Assortative mating or homogamy is this idea that individuals are likely to marry a partner that is roughly the same age, same socioeconomic status, and same ethnic background. People also tend to marry individuals with similar personalities and psychological characteristics. Assortative mating occurs mainly because most individuals tend to be exposed only to certain people or possible mates because of their social

environments such as schools, neighborhoods, work, or sports (Vandenberg, 1972). Moreover, individuals tend to interact with people who are similar to themselves. Individuals have more opportunities to meet others who are similar to themselves than individuals who are not like themselves (Kalmijn, 2001). Therefore, an individual's environment can be a limiting factor in mate selection because in order for individuals to court, date, or marry they have to meet (Vandenberg, 1972).

An individual's environment can be a limiting factor because they are usually constrained by limited opportunities to interact and meet others (Kalmijn and Flap, 2001). Individuals generally spend most of their time in specific places such as school, work, voluntary associations, and neighborhoods. Therefore, they meet and interact with other individuals in these settings. These settings are usually segregated socially with individuals who have similar education, similar cultural and social backgrounds, similar religious preferences, similar ethnicity, and similar socioeconomic status (Kalmijn and Flap, 2001). This leads individuals to select partners with similar social and cultural characteristics. Buss (1985) finds that age, physical characteristics, ethnic origin, religion, socioeconomic status, intellectual and cognitive variables, personality traits, and social attitudes are characteristics that individuals select in their ideal partners. Moreover, Buss and Barnes (1986) find homogamy in characteristics among partners.

### *Status Homogamy*

Assortative mating or homogamy is this idea that individuals marry partners that are close in age, similar educational background, similar socioeconomic status, similar ethnic background, similar social environments, and similar personalities. Assortative mating can be examined in greater depth at a micro-level by status homogamy.

Assortative mating by status homogamy can be explained as a way that individuals have opportunities to meet someone of the same or similar status. It also deals with cultural factors and economic factors. There are two micro-level hypotheses on assortative mating by status homogamy. The first micro-level hypothesis is the cultural matching hypothesis according to which individuals prefer to marry someone of the similar cultural status (Kalmijn, 1994). The second micro-level hypothesis is the economic competitive hypothesis in which individuals tend to marry someone of high economic status (Kalmijn, 1994).

The cultural matching hypothesis is based on the idea that people prefer to marry someone of similar cultural status (Kalmijn, 1994). In a long-term relationship similarity enables individuals in the relationship to have common basic conversation and similar norms and values. A commonality on cultural views reduces friction within a relationship. Accordingly, individuals look for partners with similar cultural views, similar resources, similar values and behaviors, similar child-rearing beliefs and values, as well as similar political attitudes, cultural literacy, taste in the arts and music, and styles of speech (Kalmijn, 1994). It is important that individuals select a partner with cultural similarities because cultural resources influence the way people interact with one another (Kalmijn, 1994). Individuals with cultural similarities have a relationship in which they can interact with one another with mutual understanding, opportunities for joint activities, and mutual confirmation of behavior and views of the world (Kalmijn, 1994).

The economic competition hypothesis, on the other hand, looks at the idea that people tend to prefer marrying someone of high economic status. Individuals select an

ideal partner based on what their ideal partner can bring to the marriage economically. Consequently, women seek partners with the most attractive economic resources to maximize their own resources (Kalmiji, 1994). This study examines the economic competition hypothesis in the perspective of the traditional sex roles. The perspective of traditional sex roles views women as competing for men with the attractive economic resources and men competing for women with attractive resources such as physical attractiveness, high class origins, and domestic labor (Kalmiji, 1994). Since men and women are competing for different resources there tends to be an exchange between male economic resources and female attractive resources such as high class origins, attractiveness, and domestic labor (Kalmiji, 1994).

This hypothesis looks at women and how they are at a disadvantage in earning in the public domain compared to men and therefore, women are more productive in private domain which means that men and women are exchanging paid and domestic labor (Kalmiji, 1994). In this hypothesis marriage is viewed as an exchange of male occupational prestige and female qualities such as high class and physical attractiveness. In looking at traditional sex roles, women tend to select a partner with the most attractive economic resources to maximize their own resources and men tend to select a partner who has high class origins, who is physically attractive and who is able to provide domestic labor (Kalmiji, 1994).

This study looks at assortative mating at the micro level because it provides a better understanding of how cultural factors, economic factors, traditional sex roles, and the division of labor affect how individuals select their partners for a long-term relationship. The evolutionary theory and social role theory examine how gender

differences play a role in selecting a partner. The evolutionary theory also explores assortative mating in which individuals tend to select a partner based on similar characteristics. This leads to dating and how mate selection is connected to dating and how individuals are able to determine which characteristics are important.

## **DATING THEORIES**

In researching mate selection, sociologists have not directly connected mate selection to dating. Dating enables females to have experiences that create new social contacts and to meet other individuals with similar interests, similar backgrounds, similar education, similar social status, similar values, similar beliefs, and similar political and religious backgrounds. Further, these experiences provide females a better understanding of what they are looking for in a potential partner.

Sociologists have had difficulty defining dating, although McDaniel (1974) identifies five sociologists who established theories of dating, representing three schools of thought that explain female dating behavior. The assertive school supported by Waller and Goer, the assertive-receptive school supported by Burgess and Locke and the receptive school supported by Lowrie. These three schools of thought help sociologists examine females roles in dating and their reason for dating.

Waller (1937) and Gorer (1948) typify the assertive school, which defines dating as exploitative association. Waller(1937) sees dating as a competition in which to postpone marriage. In this competition, the female and the male deceive the other in the pretense of love and devotion in order to have a thrill seeking and exploitative relationship (Waller, 1937; McDaniel, 1974). Similarly, Gorer (1948) defines dating as a competitive effort from females and males to attract a desirable member of the opposite

sex in a game of pretend love (Goer, 1948; McDaniel, 1974). According to both, the reason for dating is recreational and not marriage-oriented.

Burgess and Locke represent the assertive-receptive school, which defines dating as a pleasurable association to increase social contacts (Burgess and Lock, 1945; McDaniel, 1974). Burgess and Locke view dating as an educational process and training in which males and females can find a mate and built their relationship upon companionship and affection. The reason for dating from this school is mate selection and marriage-oriented. Burgess and Locke have constructed four reasons for dating: dating provides opportunities for friendly association, permits a wide range and increases the number of social contacts and engagements, gives opportunities for individuals to determine compatibility and common interests, and broadens choice of mates (Burgess and Locke, 1945; McDaniel, 1974).

Lowrie's work represents the receptive school. The receptive school defines dating as a means for women and men to get trained for becoming compatible mates. Lowrie (1951) defines dating in terms of an educational theory. He examines dating as an educational process. He believes dating allows an individual to gain a broader social experience, enriched personality, greater poise and balance (Lowrie, 1951; McDaniel, 1974). Dating is anticipatory socialization and marriage-oriented.

It is important as a researcher to study all three schools of thought together in order to explain the female's role in dating and her reason for dating. As an individual begins to date other individuals the relationship changes, as do the dating rules. In some cases the female's dating behavior can change from being receptive, to assertive, or a combination of both depending on the relationship and the stage of dating the individual



is in (McDaniel, 1974). While these ideas have served as a basis for sociological ideas on dating, they do little to directly inform contemporary research on the subject. It is important to look at all three schools of thought on dating and using these three school of thought examine how dating can be used as a tool in mate selection. Dating can be used as a tool to allow individuals to determine which traits and qualities they are looking for in a long-term partner.

## **CONCLUSION**

In previous studies researchers have discussed different theories and perspectives of mate selection. In this study I have discussed the different theories and perspectives. I would like to contribute to the previous studies on mate selection and I postulate that even though there are gender differences, when it comes to selecting a partner that through assortative mating individuals tend to select a partner with similar characteristics. In this study I have discussed the evolutionary theory, social role theory, gender differences, assortative mating, and dating theories.

The evolutionary perspective on human mate selection is based on Dawin's concept of sexual selection. This perspective views human mate selection as choices guided by cues that are based on reproductive investment aimed at survival advantages of the offspring (Doosje, Rojahn, and Fischer, 1999). Buss and Barnes (1986) have expanded on this concept by looking at assortative mating in which individuals select a partner based on similarities of one or more characteristics such as age, physical characteristics, ethnic origin, religion, socioeconomic status, intellectual and cognitive variables, personality traits, and social attitudes (Buss, 1985). The social role theory looks at the different societal roles traditionally played by men and women. This theory views

the preference for a partners attributes based on division of labor, women in the private domain and men in the public domain (Doosje, Rojahn, and Fischer, 1999).

There are several dating theories that I considered for this study. The two most relevant schools of thought that stood out for this study were the assertive-receptive and the receptive school of thought. These two school of thought view dating as an educational process which allows an individual to gain a broader social experience, enriched personality, greater poise and balance (Lowrie, 1951; MacDaniel, 1974). Dating several individuals provides one with broader experiences, enriched personality, greater poise and balance, more opportunities to mix socially, increase ability to adjust to others, reduce emotional excitement when meeting the opposite sex, the better ability to judge individuals objectively and sensibly, and wider acquaintances (Lowrie, 1955; McDaniel, 1974).

These theories and perspectives overlap as well as contradict one another. The evolutionary theory and social role theory overlap in that both look at mate selection based on gender differences. They contradict one another in that the evolutionary theory views mate selection based on gender differences based on how individuals select their partner from cues, which are guided by reproductive investment to ensure their survival and maximize their reproductive success. These cues are different for men and women and therefore create gender differences when selecting a partner. Women values are their reproductive ability and fertility which is related to age and health which lead men to look for partner that are young, health and good looking. Men values are their productive capabilities as well as their social and economic advantages which can be passed on to

the offspring therefore women tend to select partners based on economic and social advantages (Doosje, Rojahn, and Fischer, 1999).

While social role theory views mate selection based on gender differences based on the division of labor. This theory looks at societal roles and how the division of labor plays a part when selecting a partner. This division of labor creates different roles for men and women in society, which evoke different expectations for men and women. These different expectations lead men and women to look for partners with certain socially valued attributes which are link to gender related social roles. These gender related social roles place women in private domain and men in public domain where women are viewed as the nurturant and are expected to be physically attractive and men are viewed as the providers and are expected to compete and achieve in the public domain (Doosje, Rojahn, and Fischer, 1999). In viewing mate selection based on gender differences one must look at why individuals tend to a select partner with similar characteristics despite these gender differences.

In this study, I also looked at assortative mating and dating theories and how these two components tie in all these different perspectives and theories. Evolutionary theory and social role theory outline gender differences when individuals select their ideal partners, but do not capture the process by which individuals obtain broader experiences through dating. Dating also provides individuals with opportunities to determine what characteristics are important for their ideal partner to have. Individuals tend to select a partner with one or more similar characteristics such as age, physical characteristics, ethnic origin, religion, socioeconomic status, intellectual and cognitive variables, personality traits, and social attitudes (Buss, 1985). Even though there are gender

differences in mate selection, individuals are able to gain knowledge and find out what characteristics they are looking for when selecting a partner through dating. Dating allows the individual the opportunity to experience different partners so that the individual is able to determine which characteristics are important and how selecting a partner with similar characteristics allows the relationship to have less friction.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHOD**

#### **RESEARCH PURPOSE AND HYPOTHESES**

The purpose of this study is to contribute to research on mate selection and to confirm the findings of previous studies and research that individuals select partners with similar characteristics to themselves. This study tested the following hypotheses:

1. Women are more likely to look for partners based on similar character-specific assortment than not.
2. Women are more likely to seek partners who have social and economic advantages than those who are relatively disadvantaged relative to their own earning potential.
3. Women will seek a partner with socially valued attributes, which reflect traditional social roles.

Literature on natural selection, sexual selection, mate selection, and assortative mating suggests that women on the whole select partners based on similarity. This study examines character-specific assortment factors, characteristics that represent social and economic advantages, and characteristics that represent social attributes that are linked to

traditional social roles. The main focus of this study evaluates if women select partners with similar characteristics instead of selecting partners with opposite characteristics.

The following hypotheses captures those dimensions of similarity of previous studies. I have based the following hypotheses on Vandenberg (1972), Barnes and Buss (1986), and Doosje, Rojahn, and Fischer (1999).

H1: Women are more likely to look for partners based on similar character-specific assortment than not.

I will refer to hypothesis one as the assortative mating hypothesis. Vandenberg (1972) and Barnes and Buss (1986) studied assortative mating and found that women tend to select partners who have character-specific assortments that are similar to themselves. These character-specific assortments are characteristics such as age, race, religion, social status, cognitive abilities, values, attitudes, personality depositions, social class, and physical attractiveness (Buss, 1986). I wanted to test for a relationship between the participant's perception of themselves on specific characteristics and their perception of their ideal partner on the same specific characteristics to determine if individuals select partners who are similar to themselves.

H2: Women are more likely to seek partners who have social and economic advantages than those who are relatively disadvantaged relative to their own earning potential.

I will refer to hypothesis two as the economic role hypothesis. Doosje, Rojahn, and Fischer (1999) research in mate selection is based on evolutionary theory, which examines how women seek someone who is socially and economically advantaged so that these social and economic advantages can be passed on to their offspring (Doosje,

Rojahn, and Fischer, 1999). He also looked at how women are more likely to look at their ideal partner investments such as monetary resources and earning capacity so that their offspring can have survival advantages (Doosje, Rojahn, and Fischer, 1999). In this study I was interested in determining if women still seek a partner with relatively more or similar social and economic advantages as themselves.

H3: Women will seek a partner with socially valued attributes, which reflect traditional social roles.

I will refer to hypothesis three as the social role hypothesis. Doosje, Rojahn, and Fischer (1999) study of the social role theory looks at social valued attributes and how these attributes reflect traditional social roles in selecting a partner. In his study Doosje, Rojahn, and Fischer (1999) found that women tend to place value on the earning capacity of their ideal partners. Women look for men who are good providers and are motivated to compete in the public domain. Doosje, Rojahn, and Fischer (1999) also found that men select women who have nurturance elements and who are physically attractive. I was interested in determining if women tend to seek partners who have the potential for financial success, who will be good providers, and who are motivated to compete for their earnings.

The economic role hypothesis and social role hypothesis are different in that different characteristics were analyzed. The economic role hypothesis explores the evolutionary theory and the economic competition hypothesis from previous research. The characteristics that were analyzed for this hypothesis were based on social and economic advantages. The social role hypothesis examines the social role theory from previous research. This hypothesis investigates gender differences and how traditional

gender roles affect how females select a partner. Therefore, the characteristics that were analyzed for this hypothesis were based on traditional gender roles.

## STATISTICAL ANALYSES

The assortative mating hypothesis asks if women select ideal partners with similar specific characteristics. In order to answer this question, I needed to investigate how women rated themselves on the character-specific assortment characteristics and how they rated their ideal partner on the character-specific assortment characteristics. I believe that the participants would rate their ideal partner the same or opposite direction of their own rating.

The independent variable for assortative mating hypothesis is the participant's self-perception of these specific characteristics, and the dependent variable is the participant's perception of the specific characteristics of their ideal partner. The level of measurement is approximately interval for both the participant self-perceptions and for the participant's perception of their ideal partner. I used a bivariate correlation to test the assortative mating hypothesis.

I used a bivariate correlation to analyze the variables to see if they are related or associated. A bivariate correlation tests if there is a relationship between two variables, in this case self-perception and the participant's perception of ideal partner. A bivariate correlation evaluates each specific characteristic to see if there is a relationship between the self and ideal partner. This analysis tests the strength and direction of relationship between the self and the ideal partner and if the relationship is statistically significant and if it is positive or negative, which determines if their perception of their ideal partner is the same or opposite direction of their own rating.



The economic role hypothesis asks if women seek an ideal partner who is more likely to be social and economic advantaged than themselves. I looked at how women rated themselves on the social and economic characteristics and how they rated their ideal partner on the social and economic characteristics. The participants rated their ideal partner the same or opposite direction of their own rating.

The independent variable for the economic role hypothesis is the participant's self-perception of the social and economic characteristics and the dependent variable is the participant's perception of the social and economic characteristics of their ideal partner. The level of measurement is approximately interval for both the participant self-perceptions of social and economic characteristics and participant's perception of their ideal partner on the social and economic characteristics.

The social role hypothesis asks if women select an ideal partner with socially valued attributes that reflect traditional social roles. I looked at how women rated themselves on the traditional social role characteristics and how they rated their ideal partner on the traditional social role characteristics. Participants rated their ideal partner the same or opposite direction of their own rating.

The independent variable for social role hypothesis is the participant's self-perception of the traditional social role characteristics and the dependent variable is the participant perception of the traditional social roles characteristics of their ideal partner. The level of measurement is approximately interval for both the participant self-perceptions on traditional social role and participant's perception of their ideal partner on traditional social role characteristics. I used a bivariate correlation and a partial correlation to test the economic role hypothesis and social role hypothesis.

I used a bivariate correlation to test the economic role hypothesis and the social role hypothesis. I used a bivariate correlation to analyze the variables to see if they are related or associated. A bivariate correlation evaluated if there is a relationship between two variables, in this case self-perception and participant's perception of the ideal partner. A bivariate correlation examined each specific characteristic to see if there is a relationship between the self and ideal partner, and if that relationship is statistically significant and if it is positive or negative, which determines if their perception of their ideal partner is the same or opposite direction of their own rating.

I used partial correlation to test the economic role hypothesis and the social role hypothesis more in depth. A partial correlation was used to test the two variable; in this case self-perception and participant's perception of the ideal partner controlling for a third. I studied the specific characteristics more in-depth by adjusting for a third variable which was age, religion, and ethnicity to see if the bivariate relationship still holds and if that relationship is statistically significant.

## **SAMPLE SELECTION AND QUESTIONNAIRE**

Two hundred and sixty-six undergraduate females from a large public university in Texas participated in this study. I collected data using a three-section questionnaire that I designed. I used descriptive terms to capture qualities used in Index of Adjustments and Values (Bill et al., 1951). The participants rated themselves and their ideal partner on a five point semantic differential scale. The first section of the questionnaire was designed for the respondents to rate their self-perception relative to these descriptive terms, with a range of choices from one to five. On the five point semantic differential scale when rating themselves, the number one indicates "not very much like me at all",

two indicates "not very much like me", three "neither like me or not like me", four "somewhat like me", and five indicates "very much like me".

In the second section of the questionnaire, the respondents rated their self-perception of their ideal partner relative to these descriptive terms, with a range of choices from one to five where one represents "extremely important", two represents "very important", three "undecided", four "not very important", and five "not very important at all". The third section of the questionnaire asked the participants to answer questions that dealt with their demographic information. The demographic information that I included on the survey pertained to: age, sex, grade point average, total semester average, marital status, if they have been divorced, religious preference, and ethnicity.

## **VARIABLES**

The variables I selected for this study are based on assortative mating. From Buss and Barnes research on assortative mating the term character-specific assortment is used when discussing particular traits such as intelligence, religion, physical characteristics, age, socioeconomic status, social attitudes, personality traits, intellectual and cognitive variables (Buss & Barnes, 1986). To test the character-specific assortment in the assortative mating hypothesis, I selected specific characteristics from the Buss and Barnes study to have the respondents rate themselves on their perception on these characteristics and then they had to rate their perception of their ideal partner on the same characteristics. The characteristics I selected for character-specific assortment were as follows: dependable character, attractive, intelligent, educated, politically conservative, religious, came from a wealthy family, financially secure, enjoy being around most other people, pleasing disposition, emotionally stable, close to their age, desire to have home

and children, similar ethnic background, similar socioeconomic background, and if they had been married before.

I used the characteristics from the questionnaire to create my variables which were broken down into two sets. The first set of variables represented the respondents self-perception of the characteristics from the questionnaire. In the following I have the characteristic from the questionnaire and the variable I created: dependable character the variable is **DEPCHARA**, mutual attractive the variable is **MUTUTT**, education and intelligence the variable is **EDUAIN**, similar educational background the variable is **SIMEDUBA**, similar political background the variable is **SIMPOLBA**, similar religious background the variable is **SIMRELBA**, similar social status the variable is **SIMSOCST**, good financial prospect the variable is **GOFINPRO**, sociability the variable is **SOCI**, pleasing disposition the variable is **PLEDIS**, emotional stability the variable is **EMOSTA**, close in age the variable is **CLOSINAGE**, desire for home and children the variable is **DEHOCH**, same ethnic background the variable is **SAMETHBA**, and not previously marriage the variable is **NOTMARR**.

The second set of variables represented the respondent's perception of their ideal partner from the questionnaire. In the following I have the characteristic from the questionnaire and the variable I created: dependable character the variable is **DEPCHARA2**, mutual attractive the variable is **MUTUTT2**, education and intelligence the variable is **EDUAIN2**, similar educational background the variable is **SIMEDUBA2**, similar political background the variable is **SIMPOLBA2**, similar religious background the variable is **SIMRELBA2**, similar social status the variable is **SIMSOCST2**, good financial prospect the variable is **GOFINPRO2**, sociability the variable is **SOCI2**, pleasing disposition

the variable is **PLEDIS2**, emotional stability the variable is **EMOSTA2**, close in age the variable is **CLOSINAGE2**, desire for home and children the variable is **DEHOCH2**, same ethnic background the variable is **SAMETHBA2**, and not previously marriage the variable is **NOTMARR2**.

Economic role hypothesis examines if women tend to select partners whom they rate as social and economic equals or superiors. Social and economic advantages are positively valued characteristics that are equal or superior to the participant's. The social and economic characteristics I have selected for this study are well educated, intelligent, good financial prospect, similar political background, enjoy being around most other people, pleasing disposition, emotionally stable, and similar socioeconomic background. The variables I used for the economic role hypothesis are **selfse** and **partnse**. The variable **selfse** represented the respondent's self-perception of the characteristics from the questionnaire which are related to social and economic characteristics they are as follows: education and intelligent, similar educational background, similar political background, similar social status, and good financial prospect. The variable **partnse** represented the respondent's perception of their ideal partner of the characteristics which are related to social and economic characteristics from the questionnaire. The variable **partnse** represents the characteristics educated and intelligent, similar education background, similar political background, similar social status, and good financial prospect. These represent social and economic advantages because they provide the researcher with information on social and economic attributes that the participants look for in their ideal partners.

In social role hypothesis, I investigated socially valued attributes that are linked to traditional social roles. Traditional social roles are based on the gender division of labor

in society, especially the traditional split between men's public roles and women's private ones (Doosje, Rojahn, and Fischer, 1999). Therefore, women will tend to seek a partner with socially valued attributes that are linked to these traditional social roles. These attributes are based on society's view of this stereotypical division of labor which assumes that females desire a partner based on earning capacity and assertiveness and males desire a partner based on physical attractiveness and nurturance (Doosje, et al., 1999). Therefore, I created my variables based on females' desire to have a partner who is has a good prospect of being financially secure and males' desire to have a partner who is physically attractive.

The variable I created to define social attributes based on traditional social roles for the respondent is **selfsocr**. The variable **selfsocr** represented the respondent's self-perception of the characteristics from the questionnaire which are as follows: education and intelligent, not previously married, desire for children and home, close in age, and good financial prospect.

Doosje, Rojahn, and Fischer (1999) suggests that women tend to select a partner who is capable of earning enough money to be financially secure and has assertiveness within the work force. Therefore, I created the variable **partsocr** to represent the social attributes based on traditional roles for the ideal partner. The variable **partsocr** represented the respondent's perception of their ideal partner of the characteristics from the questionnaire which are as follows: education and intelligent, not previously married, close in age, desire for home and children, good financial prospect, dependable character, comes from a wealthy family and financially secure.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **RESULTS**

Table 1 contains characteristics of the sample. The participants in this study were 266 female undergraduate students from a large public university in Texas. The participants in this study ranged from age 18 to 33. A majority of the females were in their late teens and early twenties. The responses of participants from the questionnaire were used in the analysis. The sample was composed of Anglo Americans (61.7%), Hispanic Americans (16.7%), African Americans (6%), Native Americans (1.9%), Asian Americans (.8%), Other (1.9%), and participants that choose no one ethnicity (10%). The participants also responded to their religious preferences. The sample was mainly composed of participants with no preference to religion (26.3%), Protestant (22.9), and Catholic (22.6). Other religious preferences were very small; refer to Table 1.

Table 1. Sample Characteristics

| Gender | Number | Percent |
|--------|--------|---------|
| Female | 266    | 100.0   |
| Total  | 266    | 100.0   |

  

| Race              | Number | Percent |
|-------------------|--------|---------|
| Anglo American    | 164    | 61.7    |
| Hispanic American | 44     | 16.5    |
| African American  | 16     | 6.0     |
| Native American   | 5      | 1.9     |
| Asian American    | 2      | 0.8     |
| Other             | 5      | 1.9     |
| No One Ethnicity  | 27     | 10.2    |
| No Indicated      | 3      | 1.1     |
| Total             | 266    | 100.0   |

  

| Religion      | Number | Percent |
|---------------|--------|---------|
| Protestant    | 61     | 22.9    |
| Catholic      | 60     | 22.6    |
| Jewish        | 6      | 2.3     |
| No Preference | 70     | 26.3    |
| Other         | 67     | 25.2    |
| No Indicated  | 2      | .8      |
| Total         | 266    | 100.0   |

Table 2 represents the character-specific assortment characteristics that deal with social status, education, religion, political, and ethic background. Table 3 represents the



character-specific assortment characteristics that deal with personality traits and social attitudes. Table 4 represents the character-specific assortment characteristics that deals with physical characteristics, age, intellectual and cognitive variables, personality traits, and social attitudes.

Tables 2, 3 and 4 indicate that most variables are associated positively, which suggests that there is a positive relationship between the participants' self-perceptions and their perceptions of their ideal partner. Therefore, there is support for the assortative mating hypothesis. Most of the correlations were statistically significant at the 0.01 level and 0.05 level which indicates there is a relationship between participants' self-perception and their perception of their ideal partner. This is consistent with the literature which suggests that individuals are likely to marry a partner who is roughly the same age, same socioeconomic status, and same ethnic background. Individuals tend to select partners based on similar attribute such as intelligence, physical features, and personality characteristics (Barnes and Buss, 1986). Individuals also tend to select partners based on character-specific assortment which is a positive mixture of age, socioeconomic status, religion, geographical location such as a neighborhood, education, ethnic back ground, psychological characteristics, personality characteristics, intellect, physical characteristics, and social behavior (Barnes and Buss, 1986; Buss, 1985; Vandenberg, 1972).

Table 2. Correlations of Female Character-specific Characteristics and Ideal Partner Character-specific Characteristics (N=266)

|                                        | Similar Educational Background | Similar Political Background | Similar Religious Background | Similar Social Status | Same Ethnic Background |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Similar Educational Background Partner | .601**                         | .243**                       | .250**                       | .340**                | .062                   |
| Similar Political Background Partner   | .139*                          | .564**                       | .182**                       | .167**                | .136*                  |
| Similar Religious Background Partner   | .219**                         | .130*                        | .713**                       | .216**                | .221**                 |
| Similar Social Status Partner          | .330**                         | .196**                       | .189**                       | .592**                | .215**                 |
| Same Ethnic Background Partner         | .239**                         | .116                         | .291**                       | .306**                | .637**                 |

\* p&lt; .05

\*\* p&lt; .01

Table 3. Correlations of Female Character-specific Characteristics and Ideal Partner Character-specific Characteristics (N=266)

|                              | Dependable Character | Sociability | Pleasing Deposition | Emotional Stability |
|------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Dependable Character Partner | .516**               | .178**      | .171**              | .083                |
| Sociability Partner          | .102                 | .439**      | .269**              | .139*               |
| Pleasing Deposition Partner  | .245**               | .152*       | .604**              | .180**              |
| Emotional Stability Partner  | .213**               | .159**      | .259**              | .267**              |

\* p&lt; .05

\*\* p&lt; .01

Table 4. Correlations of Female Character-specific Characteristics and Ideal Partner Character-specific Characteristics (N=266)

|                                         | Mutual<br>Attractive | Education and<br>Intelligence | Good Financial<br>Prospect | Close in<br>Age | Desire For Home<br>and Children |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| Mutual<br>Attractive Partner            | .333**               | .172**                        | .231**                     | .152*           | .166**                          |
| Education and<br>Intelligence Partner   | .228**               | .462**                        | .305**                     | .136*           | .105                            |
| Good Financial<br>Prospect Partner      | .132*                | .254**                        | .489**                     | .141*           | .155*                           |
| Close in<br>Age Partner                 | .012                 | .081                          | .148*                      | .411**          | .082                            |
| Desire For Home<br>And Children Partner | .096                 | .197*                         | .149*                      | .144*           | .636**                          |

\* p&lt; .05

\*\* p&lt; .01

Table 5 represents the social and economic characteristics and the traditional social roles. Table 5 indicates that all variables are associated positively, which suggests that there is a positive relationship between the participants self-perceptions of social and economic characteristic and their perceptions of their ideal partner social and economic characteristics. It also suggests that there is a positive relationship between the participants self-perceptions of traditional social roles and their perception of their ideal partner traditional social roles. Table 5 implies that there is a positive relationship between social and economic characteristics and traditional social role characteristics. Therefore, there is support for the economic role hypothesis and the social role hypothesis. All correlations were significant at the 0.01 level which indicates there is a relationship between self social and economic and ideal partner social and economic; self social role and partner social role; as well as self social and economic, partner social and economic, self social role, and partner social role. This is consistent with the literature in that women seek a partner who is older, social and economic advantage and have the

potential to be a good provider. Therefore, women look for particular traits when selecting their potential partner. Women also select their partners based on traditional social roles.

Table 5. Correlations of Social and Economic Characteristics and Traditional Social Roles Characteristics (N=266)

|                                | Self Social<br>and Economic | Partner Social<br>and Economic | Self Social<br>Role | Partner Social<br>Role |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| Self Social<br>and Economic    | 1                           | .662**                         | .632**              | .472**                 |
| Partner Social<br>and Economic | .662**                      | 1                              | .446**              | .662**                 |
| Self Social<br>Role            | .632**                      | .446**                         | 1                   | .657**                 |
| Partner Social<br>Role         | .472**                      | .662**                         | .657**              | 1                      |

\*  $p < .05$

\*\*  $p < .01$

Table 6 represents the self social and economic characteristics and the partner social and economic characteristics when adjusted for ethnicity, age, and religion. Table 6 indicates that all variables are associated positively, which suggests that there is a positive relationship between the participants' self-perceptions of social and economic characteristic and their perceptions of their ideal partner social and economic characteristics. Table 7 suggests that there is a positive relationship between the participants' self-perceptions of traditional social roles and their perception of their ideal partner traditional social roles. Therefore, there is support for economic hypothesis and social role hypothesis. All correlations were significant at the 0.05 level which indicates there is a relationship between self social and economic and ideal partner social and economic and self social role and partner social role. This is consistent with the literature

in that women seek a partner who is older, social and economic advantages, and have the potential to be good providers.

Table 7 indicates there is an association between self social and economic and the partner social and economic when influenced by ethnicity, age, and religion. Table 7 implies that there is association between self social roles and the partner social roles when influenced by ethnicity, age, and religion, indicates a statistically significant, positive relationship between self social roles and the partner social roles when influenced by ethnicity, age, and religion. This is consistent with the literature in that women select partners based on traditional social roles.

Table 6. Partial Correlation among self economic and social advantage and partner economic and social advantage controlling for ethnicity, age, and religion

|                                                                    | Partner Economic and<br>Social Advantage |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Self Economic and<br>Social Advantage<br>Controlling for ethnicity | .6624*                                   |
| Self Economic and<br>Social Advantage<br>Controlling for age       | .6624*                                   |
| Self Economic and<br>Social Advantage<br>Controlling for religion  | .6667*                                   |

\*p < .05

Table 7. Partial Correlation among self social roles and partner social roles controlling for ethnicity, age, and religion

|                                                | Partner Social Roles |
|------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Self Social Roles<br>Controlling for ethnicity | .6550*               |
| Self Social Roles<br>Controlling for age       | .6561*               |
| Self Social Roles<br>Controlling for religion  | .6487*               |

\*p < .05

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

#### **DISCUSSION**

The primary focus of this study was to test specific characteristics and find whether females rate specific characteristics about themselves the same as they would rate their ideal partners for the same specific characteristics. The literature supports the focus of this study in that females select their ideal partner with similar characteristics to themselves despite gender differences. Bivariate analyses revealed an association between the participants' self-perception and the participants' self-perception of their ideal partner. The findings from this study support the idea that females select partners with characteristics to their own. However, the correlations in this study are high. It is important to examine why the correlations are high. In this study the participants rated their self-perception of the characteristics for themselves and then rated their perception of the characteristics of their ideal partner. Since the participants rated themselves and their ideal partner this may be the reason for the high correlations in this study.

## **LIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

Although the study provides interesting findings on mate selection, it has several limitations. The first limitation of this study was the first type of method I used to administer the questionnaire. I first administered questionnaires through the email. This method is known as the CSAQ (computerized self-administered questionnaire). The CSAQ is a self-administered questionnaire that is sent to a sample of the population through the computer (Babbie, 2001, pg. 265). This method of distributing the questionnaires was not a success. I only received 10 responses from 500 participants.

The second limitation of this study was the second type of method I used to administer the questionnaire. I selected a class in which I was able to administer the questionnaire. This presents a limitation in that I am not able to obtain a random sample of the entire population of the females at a large public university in Texas.

The third limitation is the questionnaire that I created for this study. This questionnaire was unclear to some of the participants because of the wording. Therefore, I would need to work on the wording before using this instrument again. For example I used the term emotionally stable, dependable character, and attractive. These terms are broad I would use more specific words for these terms. For emotionally stable I would use expressive of emotions, loving, impulsive, and spontaneous. For dependable character I would use trustworthy, reliable, and responsible. For attractive I would use good-looking, pretty, beautiful, and handsome. By using specific terms the instrument may be clearer to the participants.

## **SUGGESTION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

I would recommend a longitudinal study in which the researcher interviews participants when they are single about the type of individuals they date and particular characteristics they look for when dating. Then the participants would be interviewed again when they were in a long-term relationship and asked questions about whether their partner has similar characteristics to the participant. These questions would be based on the characteristics represented in this study. And the next interview would be when the participant is married. In the interview the participant would discuss whether the spouse has similar characteristics to the participant. These questions would be based on characteristics in this study. Did they marry someone similar to themselves?

## **CONCLUSION**

Mate selection and how individuals select partners for marriage has been a great interest of mine the past couple of years. My interest has continued to extend in the subject in how individuals select their partners. I have found that individuals tend to look for partners with similar characteristics to their own characteristics.

In this study my focus was on the evolutionary theory and the social role theory and using these theories to explain why individuals select the partners they select in long-term relationships. These two theories are the bases for this research of how and why females select particular characteristics to select their ideal partners. I also explored dating theories and how dating is used and affect mate selection. Dating provides opportunities for females to increase their social contacts as well as postpone marriage. Dating can be educational in that it provides females with ways to understand what they are looking for in their ideal partner. It provides opportunities for females to establish



those particular characteristics they are looking for in their ideal partner. I believe that the theories of dating can contribute to mate selection research and help back the evolutionary theory and social role theory.

In looking at these theories one can come to a better understanding why individuals might select their ideal partner for a long-term relationship. In selecting an ideal partner individuals are more likely to select a partner similar to themselves in order to have a relationship that has less friction and a greater chance of success.

## **APPENDIX: QUESTIONNAIRE**



11. I am emotionally stable

5                      4                      3                      2                      1  
 \*-----\*-----\*-----\*-----\*  
 Very Much Like Me      Somewhat Like Me      Neither Like Nor Unlike Me      Not Very Much Like Me      Not Like Me At All

12. My relationships are usually with people not close to my age

5                      4                      3                      2                      1  
 \*-----\*-----\*-----\*-----\*  
 Not Like Me At All      Not Very Much Like Me      Neither Like Nor Unlike Me      Somewhat Like Me      Very Much Like Me

13. I want a home and children

5                      4                      3                      2                      1  
 \*-----\*-----\*-----\*-----\*  
 Very Much Like Me      Somewhat Like Me      Neither Like Nor Unlike Me      Not Very Much Like Me      Not Like Me At All

14. My relationships are usually with people similar ethnic background

5                      4                      3                      2                      1  
 \*-----\*-----\*-----\*-----\*  
 Very Much Like Me      Somewhat Like Me      Neither Like Nor Unlike Me      Not Very Much Like Me      Not Like Me At All

15. My relationships are usually with people similar socioeconomic background

5                      4                      3                      2                      1  
 \*-----\*-----\*-----\*-----\*  
 Not Like Me At All      Not Very Much Like Me      Neither Like Nor Unlike Me      Somewhat Like Me      Very Much Like Me

16. My relationships are usually with people who have not previously been married

5                      4                      3                      2                      1  
 \*-----\*-----\*-----\*-----\*  
 Very Much Like Me      Somewhat Like Me      Neither Like Nor Unlike Me      Not Very Much Like Me      Not Like Me At All

Listed below are some characteristics about your ideal mate or partner. Circle the number under each characteristic that would best indicate the importance the characteristic is to you for your ideal mate or partner.

17. I seek partners with dependable character

5                      4                      3                      2                      1  
 \*-----\*-----\*-----\*-----\*  
 Extremely Important      Very Important      Undecided      Not Very Important      Not Important At All

18. I seek partners who are attractive

5                      4                      3                      2                      1  
 \*-----\*-----\*-----\*-----\*  
 Not Important At All      Not Very Important      Undecided      Very Important      Extremely Important

19. I do not seek partners who are intelligent

5                      4                      3                      2                      1  
 \*-----\*-----\*-----\*-----\*  
 Extremely Important      Very Important      Undecided      Not Very Important      Not Important At All

20. I seek partners who are educated

5                      4                      3                      2                      1  
 \*-----\*-----\*-----\*-----\*  
 Extremely Important      Very Important      Undecided      Not Very Important      Not Important At All

21. I seek partners who are politically conservative

5                      4                      3                      2                      1  
\*-----\*-----\*-----\*-----\*

Not Important At All   Not Very Important   Undecided   Very Important   Extremely Important

22. I seek partners who are religious

5                      4                      3                      2                      1  
\*-----\*-----\*-----\*-----\*

Extremely Important   Very Important   Undecided   Not Very Important   Not Important At All

23. I do not seek partners who are from a very wealthy family

5                      4                      3                      2                      1  
\*-----\*-----\*-----\*-----\*

Extremely Important   Very Important   Undecided   Not Very Important   Not Important At All

24. I seek partners who are financially secure

5                      4                      3                      2                      1  
\*-----\*-----\*-----\*-----\*

Extremely Important   Very Important   Undecided   Not Very Important   Not Important At All

25. I seek partners who enjoy being around most other people

5                      4                      3                      2                      1  
\*-----\*-----\*-----\*-----\*

Not Important At All   Not Very Important   Undecided   Very Important   Extremely Important

26. I seek partners who have a pleasing disposition

5                      4                      3                      2                      1  
\*-----\*-----\*-----\*-----\*

Extremely Important   Very Important   Undecided   Not Very Important   Not Important At All

27. I do not seek partners who are emotionally stable

5                      4                      3                      2                      1  
\*-----\*-----\*-----\*-----\*

Not Important At All   Not Very Important   Undecided   Very Important   Extremely Important

28. I seek partners who are usually close to my age

5                      4                      3                      2                      1  
\*-----\*-----\*-----\*-----\*

Extremely Important   Very Important   Undecided   Not Very Important   Not Important At All

29. I seek partners who have a desire for a home and children

5                      4                      3                      2                      1  
\*-----\*-----\*-----\*-----\*

Extremely Important   Very Important   Undecided   Not Very Important   Not Important At All

30. I seek partners who are similar ethnic background

5                      4                      3                      2                      1  
\*-----\*-----\*-----\*-----\*

Not Important At All   Not Very Important   Undecided   Very Important   Extremely Important

31. I do not seek partners who have similar socioeconomic background

5                      4                      3                      2                      1  
\*-----\*-----\*-----\*-----\*

Extremely Important   Very Important   Undecided   Not Very Important   Not Important At All

32. I seek partners who have not been previously married

5                      4                      3                      2                      1  
 \*-----\*-----\*-----\*-----\*

Not Important At All    Not Very Important            Undecided            Very Important    Extremely Important

33. Age \_\_\_\_\_

34. Sex \_\_\_\_\_

35. Total Grade Point Average \_\_\_\_\_

36. Total Semester Hours Completed \_\_\_\_\_

37. Are you currently married?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes

\_\_\_\_\_ No

38. Have you ever been divorced?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes

\_\_\_\_\_ No

39. Religion preference

\_\_\_\_\_ No preference

\_\_\_\_\_ Protestant

\_\_\_\_\_ Catholic

\_\_\_\_\_ Jewish

\_\_\_\_\_ Other

40. With what one ethnicity do you most closely identify? (check only one)

\_\_\_\_\_ With no one ethnicity

\_\_\_\_\_ Anglo American

\_\_\_\_\_ Hispanic American

\_\_\_\_\_ African American

\_\_\_\_\_ Native American

\_\_\_\_\_ Asian American

\_\_\_\_\_ Other

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## **VITA**

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