

# Online Dating, Gender Role Beliefs, and Marriage Intentions Among Young Adults

Sanya Singh

Amity University, Noida, Uttar Pradesh

DOI: 10.37648/ijps.v21i01.012

<sup>1</sup>Received: 29/03/2026; Accepted: 16/04/2026; Published: 19/04/2026

---

## Abstract

Young adults have been forming relationships in new ways over the past several years, including finding partners online and changing beliefs about gender roles. Although marriage continues to hold cultural and emotional salience, at least in India, young adults are approaching marriage differently. The present study sought to examine young adults' attitudes towards online dating, beliefs about gender roles, and intentions to marry, and asked whether positive attitudes toward online dating and egalitarian gender role beliefs were associated with stronger marriage intentions. Collection of self-reports of attitudes toward online dating, beliefs about gender roles, and intentions to marry using standardized measures from a sample of young adults who regularly use online dating websites. Results revealed that individuals with positive attitudes towards online dating also reported greater intentions to marry. Similarly, individuals with more egalitarian beliefs about gender roles had more positive attitudes towards marriage. These results suggest that the relationships young adults are having, and their changing ideals about equality, may influence how they perceive long term commitment. The study highlights how young adults are not turning away from marriage but are instead approaching it with greater awareness, personal choice, and changing expectations. In the Indian cultural context, where tradition and modern influences often coexist, these findings reflect an ongoing shift in how relationships are understood and valued. The results contribute to a deeper understanding of how technological and social changes are influencing young adults' perspectives on marriage and commitment.

**Keywords:** *Online Dating; Gender Role Beliefs; Marriage Intentions; Young Adults; Egalitarian Beliefs; Relationship Attitudes; India*

## Introduction

Technology is rapidly changing the way we relate to one another. Not too many years ago, people met their future partners at work, school, church or at a friend's party. They would get to know one another through casual conversations and then spend time together socially. In many countries, including India, couples are typically arranged and/or selected through a longstanding system of matchmaking that takes into account values, background and long-term stability when considering if two people will be compatible.

These days people meet and connect through digital means, and intimacy is increasingly forming in virtual spaces. Communication begins through digital signals, profile information, and messaging instead of through in person interactions. This transformation of communication represents what researchers call the "digitalization of intimacy," in which technology facilitates the development of emotional connections (Hobbs et al., 2017). Today, many young adults are experiencing relationships that start online and then move to being an offline relationship, thereby creating a new paradigm for developing attraction, building trust and becoming emotionally close.

---

<sup>1</sup> How To Cite The Article: Singh S. (April 2026); Online Dating, Gender Role Beliefs, and Marriage Intentions Among Young Adults; *International Journal of Professional Studies*; Jan-Jun 2026, Vol 21, 130-149; DOI: <http://doi.org/10.37648/ijps.v21i01.012>

Dating Apps Help Change Relationship Formation: Dating apps like Tinder, Bumble and Hinge have made it easier than ever to find someone you might want to date. These apps have eliminated the need for relying on social circles and/or family networks to meet your future partner. Rather than finding someone based on their friends or family, you can find someone based on shared interests, appearance or a brief description of yourself.

Although dating apps offer many new possibilities for connecting with others, they also change how we think about selecting a partner. Because the app provides instant gratification through swiping and/or a match notification, the decision of whether to pursue a relationship can become a hasty and superficial decision based on initial impressions and digital communication (Finkel et al., 2012).

Traditional Expectations Remain: many young adults are still navigating traditional expectations regarding relationships and marriage, and they are simultaneously trying to determine how much they value personal choice and independence. This creates a complex dynamic where the modern practice of dating exists alongside longstanding cultural values.

On the one hand, technology provides a sense of freedom and variety. On the other hand, technology can lead to confusion and uncertainty about commitment, emotional investment and long-term intentions (Turkle, 2015). As a result, the formation of relationships today is often a balance between individual desire and societal expectations.

#### The Changing Nature of Relationships Reflects More Than Just Technological Advancements

Therefore, the changing nature of relationships is more than simply a reflection of the advancements of technology, it is indicative of a larger social and psychological transition. Young adults are redefining what intimacy, compatibility and commitment mean within a world where technology plays a dominant role in facilitating our connections.

The transition from a traditional system of matchmaking to a self-initiated, online system of meeting potential partners is a sign of changing attitudes toward autonomy, love and partnership (Kakar & Kakar, 2017).

This context is the foundation upon which the current study seeks to examine how the growing reliance on digitalization and the increased use of dating applications are transforming the formation of relationships among young adults today. The purpose of this study is to better understand how young adults form connections and how the expectations of relationships continue to evolve in a digitally connected world.

#### Online Dating: Changing Nature of Relationships

Meeting someone online is no longer a rare occurrence among young adults today. What was once considered unusual, if not taboo, has become a normal part of daily life. The way people meet, and ultimately the way people understand relationships and attraction, has significantly changed as a direct result of online dating.

Online dating can be defined as the use of digital platforms or mobile applications that enable individuals to create profiles, engage with potential partners, and establish romantic and/or intimate connections through virtual communication (Finkel et al., 2012). One of the key differences between traditional methods of meeting partners (e.g. family, friends, social settings) and online dating is the level of control individuals have over the selection of their partner. When using online dating platforms, users can choose to highlight certain aspects of their personality, preferences and interests. Thus, the process of meeting someone can be both deliberate and highly individualized.

There are numerous advantages and disadvantages associated with online dating. Although online dating provides individuals with convenience and expands the number of possible partners, there are also a multitude of psychological consequences that can occur. For example, for individuals who are shy, lack social skills, or are intimidated by face-to-face interactions, online dating can provide a safe space for them to develop confidence and become more socially exposed (Hobbs et al., 2017). Additionally, communicating through messages and/or emails allows individuals to be more open and expressive about their thoughts and feelings without fear of embarrassment or ridicule (Hobbs et al., 2017). However, online dating can also cause individuals to constantly compare themselves to others, receive rejection through unmatched profiles, and/or struggle with the uncertainty of communication, all of which can negatively impact

an individual's self-esteem and overall wellbeing (Turkle, 2015). The pace at which online dating occurs, particularly the act of swiping and/or matching, can contribute to an environment where relationships are viewed as short lived or replaceable, thus influencing how individuals view commitment and emotional involvement in relationships (Turkle, 2015).

**Online Dating in India Cultural Context:** Online dating has a greater significance for young adults in India, due to the fact that it exists alongside very strong cultural expectations for relationships and marriage. In the past, relationships and marriages were formed under the guidance of family members and with the social approval of the extended family and community. The rise of urbanization, access to education and use of new technologies has allowed young adults to establish their own relationships outside of the guidance of family and community. Young adults are thus able to create their own identities, but at the same time they are still influenced by cultural expectations around relationships and marriage (Allendorf & Pandian, 2016).

As a result, many young adults view dating applications as a means of creating their own independent lives, and at the same time as a means of fulfilling cultural expectations around relationships and marriage. Some young adults see the potential for dating applications to allow them to meet others from a variety of backgrounds, such as other castes, communities or locations. The opportunity to form relationships based on common interests and feelings of closeness and intimacy rather than on factors like caste, location, or social status is appealing. However, safety, social stigma, and fear of social rejection when attempting to marry, can all discourage young adults from engaging openly with dating applications (Kakar & Kakar, 2017). Thus, dating applications represent a unique combination of modern digital practices and traditional cultural expectations in terms of how young adults in India are using and experiencing dating applications.

Dating applications therefore represent more than just a technological trend, as they represent a new way of developing connections, understanding intimacy and creating one's identity in today's world. Through the study of how young adults experience online dating, we will gain a better understanding of how modern relationships are evolving at the intersection of technology, psychology, and culture.

### **Gender Role Beliefs**

People start learning what it means to be a man or a woman in society from the earliest years of their lives. People do not receive explicit instruction regarding how to be male or female; instead, they absorb the information through daily experiences of observing how family members interact with each other, viewing representations of men and women in the media, listening to suggestions from older generations, and seeing how certain behaviours are rewarded or punished. The cumulative effect of these messages shapes gender role beliefs, or the views that individuals hold about how men and women should act, think, and engage in the realm of relationships and family (Early & Wood, 2012).

Historically, there were traditionally well-defined expectations for gender roles. In the past, men were typically seen as the provider and decisionmaker in families, while women were expected to focus on providing care, supporting emotions, and managing the household. Traditional views placed an emphasis on maintaining a stable environment and clear roles for individuals in families. However, various social and economic changes including increased educational attainment, employment, and exposure to global views have fostered the development of more egalitarian beliefs. Egalitarian beliefs promote equal treatment of partners, shared responsibility for tasks and decisions, and joint decision-making processes in both professional and personal realms (Davis & Greenstein, 2009).

Many young adults today find themselves caught between traditional and egalitarian beliefs. Although many young adults desire independence and equality, many also possess internalized expectations derived from family customs and cultural norms. The coexistence of traditional and egalitarian beliefs often becomes apparent in romantic relationships, where the expectations for expressing emotion, dividing finances, committing to the relationship, and planning for future family life emerge.

Socialization Theory provides a framework for explaining how gender role beliefs evolve and endure over time. Socialization Theory posits that individuals acquire gender roles through exposure to various social institutions (i.e.,

family, schools, peer groups, media) that reinforce socially accepted behaviors (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). For instance, children who witness unequal distributions of labor in their homes may grow up believing such divisions of labor to be "normal" whereas exposure to egalitarian relationships may facilitate more adaptive attitudes towards gender roles. Furthermore, these acquired beliefs continue to guide how individuals approach relationships as adults.

The gender role beliefs individuals possess significantly impact their expectations for romance. Those with more traditional views may place importance on long-term commitment, specified responsibilities, and traditional relationship paths. Conversely, individuals with more egalitarian views may define emotional connection, shared decision making, and compatibility as essential components of a romantic relationship. Differences in expectations may affect individuals' preferences for partners, overall satisfaction with their relationships, and intentions for marrying (Overall, Sibley, & Tan, 2011).

Gender role beliefs have become increasingly relevant in contemporary society, especially among young adults as they navigate new forms of relationships (such as online dating and increased individualism) and negotiate between cultural traditions and changing social values. How young adults perceive intimacy, partnership, and future relationship goals will likely be impacted by their views on gender roles.

### **Marriage Intentions Among Young Adults**

For many people, relationships are not only about companionship in the present but also about imagining a shared future. At some point, questions about long-term commitment, stability, and partnership begin to emerge. These thoughts and expectations about whether, when, and why an individual wants to marry are commonly referred to as *marriage intentions*. Marriage intentions reflect a person's attitudes, readiness, and willingness to enter marriage as a future life goal (Willoughby, 2014).

During emerging adulthood a developmental phase typically ranging from the late teens to the late twenties individuals actively explore identity, career paths, and close relationships. This period is often marked by experimentation and self-discovery, but it is also a time when beliefs about long term relationships begin to take clearer shape (Arnett, 2000). Romantic experiences during this stage play an important role in shaping expectations about commitment and partnership. Some young adults may view marriage as an important milestone symbolizing emotional security and social stability, while others may delay or reconsider it due to changing priorities, educational goals, or career aspirations.

Marriage intentions are influenced by multiple psychological factors, including relationship experiences, personal values, gender role beliefs, and perceptions of compatibility. Positive romantic experiences may strengthen the desire for long term commitment, whereas uncertainty or exposure to casual dating cultures may lead individuals to approach marriage more cautiously (Willoughby & Dworkin, 2009). In modern dating environments, where relationships may begin online and evolve gradually, young adults often reassess traditional timelines associated with marriage.

In the Indian cultural context, marriage continues to hold strong social and familial significance. Unlike many Western societies where marriage is often viewed primarily as an individual choice, marriage in India is still closely connected to family expectations, social identity, and cultural continuity (Netting, 2010). Families frequently play an active role in discussions surrounding suitable partners, timing of marriage, and long term compatibility. Even among young adults who value independence and personal choice, cultural expectations regarding marriage remain influential.

At the same time, social change has begun to reshape how marriage is perceived among Indian youth. Increased education, urban lifestyles, financial independence, and exposure to global relationship norms have encouraged individuals to prioritize emotional compatibility and personal fulfillment alongside traditional considerations. As a result, many young adults today navigate a balance between personal relationship experiences and collective cultural expectations when forming intentions about marriage (Allendorf, 2013).

Understanding marriage intentions is therefore essential for studying contemporary relationships, as they represent the point where personal beliefs, romantic experiences, and cultural values intersect. Examining how young adults

think about marriage provides insight into how changing relationship patterns such as online dating and evolving gender role beliefs may influence future family formation and long term commitment decisions.

### Relationship of Variables

Online dating is an experience that changes the way we view love, attraction and relationships; and most importantly, the way we make commitments to one another. Online dating allows for an unprecedented amount of choice in terms of potential partners. With apps and websites, individuals have the opportunity to communicate and potentially connect with many different people at once. This large pool of possible matches exposes us to new personality types, lifestyle choices, and relationship preferences. While having so many options can open up more possibilities for connecting, it also changes the way we perceive commitment. When there are always other options available, relationships become more measured, and decisions about committing to a long-term relationship can take longer and/or become second-guesses (Finkel et al., 2012).

Online dating can also cause a mix of emotions, creating both hopefulness for finding a compatible partner and anxiety about settling down. Additionally, the nature of online dating typically promotes gradual discovery and exploration rather than instant decision-making. Individuals enter into online dating relationships with minimal emotional investment, and can easily choose to exit the relationship as quickly as they entered it via digital means. This ability to easily transition from one relationship to another may alter the way young adults consider what constitutes serious relationships and when they are ready for marriage (Hobbs et al., 2017). Overall, the nature of online dating interactions may help inform how young adults construct their views of long-term commitment and ultimately marry (Hobbs et al., 2017).

**Gender Role Beliefs:** Gender role beliefs also impact the way in which we form our views of love, relationships and marriage. Individuals who adhere to traditional gender role expectations are likely to assume that a romantic partner will fulfill certain specific responsibilities within the relationship (e.g. financially supporting their partner, being the primary caregiver etc.). Adherence to these expectations increases the likelihood that young adults will pursue a long-term commitment, especially if their current partner exhibits characteristics consistent with those expectations. On the other hand, individuals who support egalitarian gender role beliefs may place greater value on emotional compatibility, mutual respect, and joint responsibility, which could lead to young adults evaluating their relationships based on equality and personal satisfaction, rather than solely on societal expectations (Davis & Greenstein, 2009).

These gender role expectations not only affect who individuals want as a partner, but also what type of relationship they desire to be in. When young adults' expectations about gender roles are aligned with their experiences in a relationship, they are more likely to commit to a long-term relationship. Conversely, when expectations and experiences do not match, young adults may have reservations and/or uncertainty about entering into a marriage (Overall et al., 2011).

Together, online dating and gender role beliefs combine to help young adults conceptualize what their relationship will look like in the future. Online dating provides the vehicle for exposure to others and perception of compatibility and options; while gender role expectations serve as the lens through which individuals view relationships and decide what qualities they are looking for in a partner. As such, long-term marriage intentions may be influenced by both the modern relational experiences and internalized societal values of young adults, emphasizing the need to explore these two variables collectively in light of the evolving landscape of modern relationships.

### Research Gap

Despite growing interest in studying online dating, relationships, and gender roles over recent years, significant gaps remain, particularly with regard to the Indian context. For example, much of the prior work on online dating has focused on the relationship building process, self-presentation, and psychological wellbeing, with little attention given to gender role beliefs. Similarly, prior research on gender role beliefs has commonly centered on family dynamics, workplace roles, and attitudes toward gender equality. Moreover, while prior research has tended to separate these

topics, few investigations have simultaneously examined how exposure to online dating environments and individual gender role beliefs interact to predict marriage intentions among young adults.

Given that many Indians continue to hold strong traditional views of marriage; while increasingly adopting digital methods of meeting and forming romantic partnerships, it is critical to better understand how online dating environments and gender role beliefs interact to influence young adults' intentions to marry. Prior work on this topic has largely focused on samples drawn from Western countries, where the social norms and cultural traditions surrounding dating and marriage differ considerably from the more collectivist cultures prevalent in South Asia.

Moreover, since the period of emerging adulthood represents a developmental phase in which young adults actively negotiate and establish their independence in the realm of romance, and plan for and contemplate future marital intentions, very few prior studies have focused exclusively on young adult's use of digital media to explore and establish long-term commitment to marriage in a cultural context undergoing rapid change. Thus, the present investigation attempts to fill this knowledge gap by exploring the ways in which online dating experiences and gender role beliefs jointly contribute to the formation of marriage intentions among young adults. By focusing on an Indian sample, the present investigation seeks to offer insights that are relevant to the Indian cultural context concerning the ways in which changing patterns of relationship development influence decisions about long-term commitment.

### Objectives of the study

The aim of this study is to examine the influence of online dating experiences and gender role beliefs on marriage intentions among young adults. The objectives include:

- To investigate how contemporary relationship experiences influence marriage intentions among young adults.
- To examine the impact of online dating experiences (both positive and negative) on young adults' attitudes toward marriage.
- To explore how gender role beliefs (egalitarian vs. traditional) affect marriage intentions.
- To understand how young adults balance traditional gender role expectations with modern values of equality and independence.
- To analyze how digital relationship experiences shape perceptions of commitment, partner expectations, and relationship stability.
- To examine how gender role beliefs influence expectations regarding marital responsibilities, power dynamics, and future family roles.
- To explore how changing social and digital contexts are reshaping the meaning and perception of marriage among young adults.

### Hypothesis

Based on research indicating that experiences of satisfaction in one's relationship and interpersonal experiences affect long-term commitments and the expectations of relationships, as well as the research focusing on the role of changing gender role beliefs in contemporary relationship expectations, the current study proposes the following two hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Positive online dating experiences will positively correlate with higher marriage intentions among young adults.

Hypothesis 2: Egalitarian gender role beliefs will positively correlate with higher marriage intentions among young adults.

### Review of the Literature:

Research conducted recently has reflected a lot of changes in the formation of relationships, gender ideologies, and marriage expectations among young adults in rapidly modernizing, digitally mediated societies. Recent studies have

shown that there is a strong connection between the digital environments of online dating and the changing gender role beliefs and marital expectations among young adults.

Research on the impact of online dating environments on relationships and relational norms, especially on the development of intimacy and relational norms has increased considerably in recent years. For example, John et al. (2025) investigated the role of trust and privacy/security concerns in the continued use of online dating applications by Indian millennials, and found that trust mediated the relationship between privacy/security concerns and continued use of online dating applications. Similar findings have been presented by Gupta (2025), who demonstrated that digital dating culture has altered youth intimacy by providing the possibility of rapid emotional connections, flexible relational structures, and new relational forms (such as "situationships"), as well as intensified anxiety related to authenticity and commitment. In addition, Nair and Das (2025) investigated online interaction spaces and analyzed Indian Reddit communities and identified gendered narratives in online dating experiences, where men frequently express dissatisfaction with the perceived inequality in dating, while women tend to prioritize safety and authenticity.

Attitudes toward marriage among youth have changed to a significant extent as well. Attri and Mishra (2025) reported changing marriage patterns among Indian youth, characterized by delayed marriages, as well as increased acceptance of love marriages, in addition to persisting cultural influences like caste and family expectations. This trend was supported by Ailsinghani and Paliwal (2025), who reported that young adults increasingly prioritize emotional compatibility and individual happiness over traditional marital obligations, and that there is a greater acceptance of divorce under circumstances of genuine conflict. Similarly, Bhattacharyya and Range (2025) reported that attitudes toward marriage are associated with subjective wellbeing, however, marriage intentions among urban Indian young adults remains ambiguous.

Further sociological studies describe the process of developing decisions regarding marriage among youth. Reed (2025) developed the concept of "marital pragmatism," which refers to the fact that middleclass youth evaluate their marriage choices in terms of risks, compatibility, and parental support rather than solely in terms of traditional norms. Complementing this, Parekh (2024) suggested that online dating serves as a driver of social change in India by altering relationship formation, gender relations and family structures. Furthermore, Chand (2024) demonstrated that digital matchmaking among the Indian diaspora at the same time supports the personal choice and strengthens the cultural compatibility and traditional expectations. Finally, Vincent (2024) pointed out that there is a growing reluctance to marry among youth due to financial concerns, changing gender roles, and fear of unstable marriages.

Finally, largescale attitudinal studies reflect complex transition in gender ideologies. Evans et al. (2022) reported that Indian society displays coexistence of progressive and traditional gender beliefs, i.e., support for equality in public domains in combination with patriarchal expectations in families. Earlier dissertation work by Reed (2022) demonstrated hybridization between arranged and self-choice marriages, and emphasized the importance of decision making between families and individuals.

Empirical studies have also linked gender beliefs to social and relational outcomes. Raj et al. (2021) discovered that progressive gender beliefs concerning adolescents who are married, were associated with greater autonomy, greater connection, and safer marriages. Tripathi (2020) and other institutional views also pointed out continued patriarchal belief among Indian police officers. Therefore, there is a clear need for gender sensitive interventions. In addition to this, Singh and Aggarwal (2020) created a culturally sensitive scale that demonstrated that traditional gender beliefs, significantly predict violent attitudes towards women. While Ray and Rai (2020) investigated relationship views, they discovered that the majority of Indian online dating consumers, desire long term stable relationships while believing in honesty and loyalty. Further, Joshi et al. (2020) identified that online dating was a way for individuals to cope with social isolation, during the COVID19 pandemic, by providing social interaction and emotional relief. Finally, comparative research regarding relational arrangements, by Kh and Veena (2020), demonstrated evolving perceptions towards marriage and live-in relationships among young adults.

Research on gender socialization, has highlighted both developmental and familial influences. Dhar et al. (2019), illustrated the significant influence of parents' gender attitude beliefs upon their children's gender beliefs. Similarly, Chakraborty (2019) demonstrated that playfulness significantly predicted the use of online dating apps among Indian

youth, representing the motivational aspect of digital usage. Additionally, research that has focused on attitudes towards marriage, by Kanak Yadav (2018) illustrated an increase in the endorsement of gender equality within marriage, along with a decrease in the acceptance of traditional hierarchical roles.

Cross-cultural and developmental research illustrates how gender norms are socially constructed. Saewyc (2017) emphasized that adolescence represents a time of critical development for global gender identity formation; while Basu et al. (2017) illustrated how gender norms are communicated through socialization processes within families and communities. Finally, measurement focused scholarship by Jain and Pareek (2017) emphasized the importance of utilizing culturally sensitive tools when assessing gender role attitudes in India.

In addition to longitudinal analyses of societal trends, they provide a broader context for the changes in marriage. Allendorf and Pandian (2016) illustrated that while arranged marriages have not diminished entirely, they have transitioned from being completely controlled by families to include hybrid forms that combine parental involvement with individual choice. Prior to this, earlier generations of research by Shukla (2015) documented the gradual shift toward gender egalitarianism among younger generations; however, resistance remains in areas including dowry practices and inheritance rights. Finally, foundational discussions by Toma (2015) provided evidence that online dating has become a mainstream pathway for relationship initiation; and, Smith and Duggan (2013) illustrated increasingly positive public attitudes toward digital relationship formation. Furthermore, prior sociological work by Sonawat (2001) indicated that despite modernization and urbanization, the central role of marriage and family continues to be an essential part of Indian society.

Overall, existing literature indicates that the technological advancements, shifting gender role beliefs, and evolving sociocultural expectations, together contribute to the development of contemporary relationship formation and marriage intentions among young adults. Nevertheless, although the number of empirical studies on each of these topics separately has increased, the amount of psychological studies investigating how online dating experiences and gender role beliefs jointly influence marriage intentions among young adults, continue to be limited, thus identifying an essential area for future empirical study.

### **Rationale of the study**

Despite growing interest in studying online dating, relationships, and gender roles over recent years, significant gaps remain, particularly with regard to the Indian context. For example, much of the prior work on online dating has focused on the relationship building process, self-presentation, and psychological wellbeing, with little attention given to gender role beliefs. Similarly, prior research on gender role beliefs has commonly centered on family dynamics, workplace roles, and attitudes toward gender equality. Moreover, while prior research has tended to separate these topics, few investigations have simultaneously examined how exposure to online dating environments and individual gender role beliefs interact to predict marriage intentions among young adults.

Given that many Indians continue to hold strong traditional views of marriage; while increasingly adopting digital methods of meeting and forming romantic partnerships, it is critical to better understand how online dating environments and gender role beliefs interact to influence young adults' intentions to marry. Prior work on this topic has largely focused on samples drawn from Western countries, where the social norms and cultural traditions surrounding dating and marriage differ considerably from the more collectivist cultures prevalent in South Asia.

Moreover, since the period of emerging adulthood represents a developmental phase in which young adults actively negotiate and establish their independence in the realm of romance, and plan for and contemplate future marital intentions, very few prior studies have focused exclusively on young adult's use of digital media to explore and establish long-term commitment to marriage in a cultural context undergoing rapid change. Thus, the present investigation attempts to fill this knowledge gap by exploring the ways in which online dating experiences and gender role beliefs jointly contribute to the formation of marriage intentions among young adults. By focusing on an Indian sample, the present investigation seeks to offer insights that are relevant to the Indian cultural context concerning the ways in which changing patterns of relationship development influence decisions about long-term commitment.

## Methodology

### Research Design

The current research adopts a quantitative study strategy to analyze the interrelations between online dating experiences, gender role beliefs, and the intention to marry among young people. As such, this study utilizes a correlational and predictive research design to explore the degree to which positive online dating experiences and egalitarian gender role beliefs are connected to and predict the intention to marry. This design was chosen since it allows researchers to identify connections between variables without manipulating them.

### Participants

The sample size of the current study consisted of 140 young adults between the ages of 18 and 30 (75 females and 65 males). The sample was obtained via a random sampling technique through a number of online platforms and social networking sites where many individuals have experienced and/or have been exposed to online dating environments.

### Inclusion Criteria:

In order to be included in the current study, individuals met four inclusion criteria:

- they were between the ages of 18 and 30
- they resided in India
- they were single and understand English
- they had utilized online dating services.

Participation in the study was entirely voluntary and informed consent was collected from all participants before data collection began.

### Exclusion Criteria:

In order to be eligible for the current study, individuals must not be:

- below the age of 18
- above the age of 30
- residing outside India
- individuals must not be married
- individuals should have a profile at online dating site.

### Variables

The present study identified three primary variables that were analyzed. Online dating experiences and gender role beliefs were defined as the independent variables, and marriage intentions as the dependent variable.

Online dating experiences define the perceptions and evaluations individuals develop as a result of their online dating experiences. Gender role beliefs describe the opinions individuals hold with regard to the relative positions of males and females in relationships and in society. Marriage intentions define the degree to which young adults indicate their interest in pursuing marriage in the future.

Therefore, the purpose of the present study was to determine whether the independent variables of online dating experiences and gender role beliefs are correlated to and predict variations in the dependent variable, marriage intentions among young adults.

## Tools Used

### Attitudes Toward Online Dating Scale (ATODS)

Barreto (2015) created the Attitudes Toward Online Dating Scale (ATODS), a scale that was designed as an attitudinal scale for use in psychological studies on the perceptions and beliefs of individuals concerning online dating.

The Attitudes Toward Online Dating Scale was used in the present study to evaluate the attitudes toward online dating of participants. Specifically, the scale assessed the beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes of the participants toward the use of online dating as a means of establishing romantic relationships. The scale measured both positive and negative attitudes toward online dating, including the efficacy of online dating, safety concerns regarding online dating, the authenticity of online users, and the expectations of participants concerning long-term relationships.

The Attitudes Toward Online Dating Scale includes 12 items that assess the attitudes toward online dating practices.

Respondents completed a five point Likert scale to answer questions on the Attitudes Toward Online Dating Scale. The five points on the Likert scale include:

- 1 = Strongly Agree
- 2 = Agree
- 3 = No Opinion
- 4 = Disagree
- 5 = Strongly Disagree

The reliability of the Attitudes Toward Online Dating Scale was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha. Previous studies utilizing the ATODS reported satisfactory levels of internal consistency reliability.

Scoring: Respondents' answers are scored by adding up the scores of each respondent to each item. Respondents' answers to negatively phrased items (i.e., items that mention potential risks of online dating, such as misrepresentation, desperation, and potential relational problems) are reversed scored so that respondents can be scored consistently.

A higher total score indicates that the individual has a more positive attitude toward online dating, and therefore has a lower likelihood of having a more negative or sceptical attitude toward online dating.

### Gender Role Beliefs Scale (GRBS)

The authors of the Gender Role Beliefs Scale (GRBS) are Paul S. Kerr and Ronald R. Holden (1996).

The Gender Role Beliefs Scale (GRBS) is a self-reporting scale intended to evaluate the beliefs and attitudes of an individual concerning traditional and egalitarian gender roles. The GRBS assesses the expectations concerning etiquette for males and females, the division of household chores, and the decision-making authority within interpersonal and marital relationships. The GRBS is commonly used to evaluate gender ideology in social and relational research.

The GRBS contains 20 items to assess gender role beliefs.

Respondents answer the items of the GRBS using a seven point Likert scale:

- 1 = Strongly Agree
- 2 = Somewhat Agree
- 3 = Neutral
- 4 = Somewhat Disagree
- 5 = Disagree
- 6 = Somewhat Disagree

7 = Strongly Disagree

Reliability: According to the results of previous studies (Kerr & Holden, 1996), the GRBS shows a very satisfactory level of internal consistency reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of approximately  $\alpha = .89$ , showing a high level of reliability.

Scoring: The scores of all 20 items are added together to obtain a total score ranging from 20 to 140. Items marked (R) are reverse scored before calculating the total score.

Lower scores indicate more traditional gender role beliefs. Higher scores indicate more egalitarian (feminist) gender role beliefs.

### Marital Attitude Scale (MAS)

The Marital Attitude Scale (MAS), developed by Elizabeth B. Braaten and Lisa A. Rosén (1998), is a self-reporting tool used to measure the general views people have about traditional heterosexual marriage. It provides a way to measure global assessments of marriage including people's beliefs about committing to marriage, their feelings about divorce and what they believe about the value and importance of being married. In this current study, we use the scale to provide insight into people's plans to get married because positive views about marriage have been directly linked to the likelihood that young adults will plan to get married.

The scale contains 23 items that evaluate one's view of marriage. For each item, the participant uses a 4point Likert scale to rate his/her response. The options available to the participant include:

- 0 = I Strongly Agree
- 1 = I Agree
- 2 = I Disagree
- 3 = I Strongly Disagree

Braaten and Rosén (1998) found that the internal consistency of the Marital Attitude Scale to be adequate. They calculated a Cronbach's Alpha of approximately .88 which indicates acceptable reliability.

To calculate the participant's score for the scale, each of the participant's responses is reversed and then added together to create a total score.

A higher total score represents a more positive view of marriage. A lower score represents less than a positive view of marriage.

### PROCEDURE

Data for this study were collected via an internet based survey created using Google Forms. The link to the survey was sent to participants via several online dating apps. Before participants completed the survey, they read a consent form. This form explained the reason for the survey, the requirements for eligibility, the requirements for participation and how their data would be protected.

Participants who agreed to participate in the survey and read the consent form were able to continue on to the survey itself. The survey began with demographic questions followed by the Attitudes Toward Online Dating Scale, the Gender Role Beliefs Scale and the Marital Attitude Scale. At the start of each portion of the survey, clear instructions were given to guide the participants' responses accurately.

Participant's confidentiality was guaranteed and there were no questions that asked for any personally identifiable information. Participants were also instructed to answer the survey honestly based on their own thoughts and opinions. On average, it took participants around 1015 minutes to complete the survey.

## ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study complied with standard ethical guidelines for conducting psychological research. Participants were required to sign an informed consent document before participating in the study. Thus, participants knew the exact nature and reasons for the study.

Voluntary participation in the study was also ensured; therefore, participants were told that they could decline to answer any question or withdraw from the study at any time without suffering any consequences. No identifying details were collected when participants completed the survey (e.g., name, contact information, etc.). All of the participant's responses were kept confidential and were only used for educational and research purposes. The data collected during the study were securely stored and only accessible to the researcher to protect the participant's anonymity and ethical conduct of the study.

## STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used to analyze the data collected for this study. Before any statistical testing occurred, the data were checked for accuracy and completeness. Summary statistics were generated to describe the study's variables, specifically mean values and standard deviation values.

## Results

A Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships between online dating attitudes, gender role beliefs, and marriage intentions among young adults. The results indicated that attitudes toward online dating were significantly positively associated with marriage intentions, such that more negative views of online dating were related to more negative intentions toward marriage. Similarly, gender role beliefs showed a significant positive relationship with marriage intentions, suggesting that individuals who held more traditional gender role beliefs tended to report less favorable attitudes toward marriage. A multiple regression analysis further revealed that both online dating attitudes and gender role beliefs significantly predicted marriage intentions, with gender role beliefs emerging as the stronger predictor. Overall, the model explained a meaningful proportion of variance in marriage intentions, indicating that both attitudes toward online dating and gender role beliefs play an important role in shaping young adults' perspectives on marriage.

**Table 1:** *Descriptive Statistics for Online Dating Attitudes, Gender Role Beliefs, and Marriage Intentions*

Variable	Mean	SD	SE	Min	Max
Online Dating Attitudes	2.87	0.52	0.06	2.08	4.67
Gender Role Beliefs	3.94	0.71	0.08	2.45	5.60
Marriage Intentions	1.49	0.29	0.03	0.70	2.22

The descriptive statistics revealed that participants showed moderate attitudes toward online dating ( $M = 2.87$ ,  $SD = 0.52$ ). Gender role beliefs were also moderate to slightly traditional ( $M = 3.94$ ,  $SD = 0.71$ ). Marriage intentions showed relatively positive attitudes toward marriage overall, as indicated by lower mean scores ( $M = 1.49$ ,  $SD = 0.29$ ). The relatively small standard errors indicate that the sample mean estimates are reliable and representative of the population.

Higher scores on online dating attitudes indicate more negative attitudes toward online dating. Higher scores on gender role beliefs indicate more traditional gender role beliefs. Higher scores on marriage intentions indicate more negative attitudes toward marriage.

**Table 2:** *Pearson Correlation Matrix Among Study Variables*

Variable	1	2	3
1. Online Dating Attitudes	—		
2. Gender Role Beliefs	.21	—	
3. Marriage Intentions	.34**	.41**	—

N = 80.

p < .01.

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships between online dating attitudes, gender role beliefs, and marriage intentions. Results showed a significant positive correlation between online dating attitudes and marriage intentions ( $r = .34$ ,  $p < .01$ ), indicating that more negative attitudes toward online dating were associated with more negative marriage intentions. Gender role beliefs were also significantly positively correlated with marriage intentions ( $r = .41$ ,  $p < .01$ ), suggesting that individuals with more traditional gender role beliefs tended to have more negative attitudes toward marriage. Additionally, online dating attitudes and gender role beliefs were positively correlated ( $r = .21$ ), although this relationship was weaker.

**Table 3:** Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Marriage Intentions

Predictor	B	SE B	$\beta$	t	p
Constant	0.62	0.19	—	3.26	.002
Online Dating Attitudes	0.18	0.06	.29	3.02	.003
Gender Role Beliefs	0.21	0.05	.37	4.20	< .001

Model Summary:

$R^2 = .31$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .29$ ,  $F(2, 77) = 17.45$ ,  $p < .001$

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine whether online dating attitudes and gender role beliefs predicted marriage intentions. The overall regression model was statistically significant,  $F(2, 77) = 17.45$ ,  $p < .001$ , explaining approximately 31% of the variance in marriage intentions ( $R^2 = .31$ ).

Online dating attitudes significantly predicted marriage intentions ( $\beta = .29$ ,  $p = .003$ ), indicating that individuals with more negative attitudes toward online dating reported more negative marriage intentions. Gender role beliefs also significantly predicted marriage intentions ( $\beta = .37$ ,  $p < .001$ ), suggesting that individuals with more traditional gender role beliefs had more negative attitudes toward marriage.

Among the predictors, gender role beliefs emerged as the stronger predictor of marriage intentions.

A Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships between online dating attitudes, gender role beliefs, and marriage intentions among young adults. The results indicated that attitudes toward online dating were significantly positively associated with marriage intentions, such that more negative views of online dating were related to more negative intentions toward marriage. Similarly, gender role beliefs showed a significant positive relationship with marriage intentions, suggesting that individuals who held more traditional gender role beliefs tended to report less favorable attitudes toward marriage. A multiple regression analysis further revealed that both online dating attitudes and gender role beliefs significantly predicted marriage intentions, with gender role beliefs emerging as the stronger predictor. Overall, the model explained a meaningful proportion of variance in marriage intentions,

indicating that both attitudes toward online dating and gender role beliefs play an important role in shaping young adults' perspectives on marriage.

### Discussion

The present study was conducted to examine the influence of online dating attitudes and gender role beliefs on marriage intentions among young adults. It was hypothesized that online dating attitudes would significantly predict marriage intentions and that gender role beliefs would also significantly predict marriage intentions. Further, it was expected that both independent variables would jointly contribute to explaining variance in marriage intentions. The findings of the Pearson correlation and multiple regression analyses supported these hypotheses. Online dating attitudes were significantly associated with marriage intentions, and gender role beliefs also demonstrated a significant relationship with marriage intentions. Moreover, in the regression model, both predictors emerged as significant, with gender role beliefs functioning as the stronger predictor of marriage intentions.

The findings regarding online dating attitudes align with recent literature that highlights the transformative role of digital environments in shaping relational norms and expectations. For instance, John et al. (2025) found that trust plays a crucial mediating role in the continued use of dating applications among Indian millennials, suggesting that digital relational spaces are not merely casual platforms but psychologically meaningful contexts. Similarly, Gupta (2025) reported that digital dating culture has reshaped youth intimacy by introducing flexible relational forms and rapid emotional connections, while also intensifying anxiety related to commitment and authenticity. The present finding that negative attitudes toward online dating are associated with less favorable marriage intentions suggests that individuals' perceptions of digital relationship spaces may generalize to their broader views about long term commitment. This is further supported by Ray and Rai (2020), who observed that many Indian online dating users desire long term stable relationships despite engaging in digital platforms. Thus, attitudes toward online dating appear to reflect deeper relational schemas that extend into marital expectations.

The second major finding of this study that gender role beliefs significantly predict marriage intentions strongly resonates with existing scholarship on gender ideology and relational outcomes. Evans et al. (2022) highlighted the coexistence of progressive and traditional gender beliefs within Indian society, particularly the tension between public equality and private patriarchy. The current findings suggest that individuals endorsing more traditional gender role beliefs tend to report less favorable marriage intentions. This may reflect concerns regarding rigid marital expectations, unequal role distribution, and anticipated conflict within marriage. Supporting this interpretation, Singh and Aggarwal (2020) demonstrated that traditional gender beliefs significantly predict problematic relational attitudes, including acceptance of violence against women. Similarly, Raj et al. (2021) found that progressive gender beliefs were associated with greater autonomy and safer marital outcomes. Taken together, these findings suggest that gender ideology shapes not only relational behaviors but also the desirability and perceived viability of marriage itself.

The regression results further revealed that gender role beliefs emerged as the stronger predictor of marriage intentions compared to online dating attitudes. This is consistent with developmental and socialization research. Dhar et al. (2019) demonstrated that parental gender attitudes significantly influence children's gender beliefs, indicating that gender ideology is deeply rooted in early socialization processes. Saewyc (2017) also emphasized adolescence as a critical developmental stage for gender identity formation. Because gender role beliefs are formed through long-term socialization within families and communities (Basu et al., 2017), they may exert a more stable and enduring influence on life decisions such as marriage. In contrast, online dating attitudes, though influential, may represent more recent and context dependent experiences shaped by technological exposure.

The findings also align with broader sociological shifts in marital expectations. Attri and Mishra (2025) documented delayed marriages and increased acceptance of love marriages among Indian youth, while Ailsinghani and Paliwal (2025) reported prioritization of emotional compatibility and individual happiness over traditional obligations. Reed (2025) introduced the concept of "marital pragmatism," wherein youth evaluate marriage based on compatibility, risks, and parental support rather than unquestioned tradition. The present study contributes to this narrative by demonstrating that psychological variables particularly gender role beliefs play a significant role in shaping these pragmatic evaluations. Young adults who endorse egalitarian beliefs may envision marriage as a partnership of equals,

thereby strengthening positive intentions. Conversely, those perceiving marriage through rigid traditional frameworks may experience ambivalence or resistance.

Furthermore, the findings can be understood within the context of hybrid relational systems described by Allendorf and Pandian (2016), who observed a shift from strictly arranged marriages to blended models combining parental involvement and individual choice. Parekh (2024) similarly argued that online dating acts as a driver of social change by altering gender relations and family structures. In this transitional context, young adults are negotiating between traditional cultural expectations and modern individualistic values. This negotiation may explain why both online dating attitudes and gender role beliefs significantly predict marriage intentions each reflects a different dimension of social change: technological modernization and ideological transformation.

The meaningful proportion of variance explained by the regression model indicates that marriage intentions are not random or purely situational; rather, they are shaped by identifiable psychosocial factors. However, the findings also suggest that additional variables may contribute to marriage intentions, such as financial stability (Vincent, 2024), subjective wellbeing (Bhattacharyya & Range, 2025), and broader sociocultural pressures (Sonawat, 2001). Future research may benefit from incorporating these dimensions to develop a more comprehensive predictive model.

In conclusion, the present study provides empirical support for the joint influence of online dating attitudes and gender role beliefs on marriage intentions among young adults. While digital experiences contribute to shaping relational expectations, deeply internalized gender ideologies appear to exert a stronger influence. These findings highlight the importance of understanding marriage intentions within the broader framework of technological change, gender socialization, and evolving cultural norms. Psychologically informed, gender sensitive interventions and educational programs may help young adults navigate these transitions in healthier and more egalitarian ways.

### Implications of the Study

Although the study did not explore the nature of social networking in detail, there were several instances when social networking was referenced in terms of how participants found out about their romantic partners (i.e., social media sites, email, texting). Although participants did not discuss social networking as an alternative to traditional forms of communication (e.g., face-to-face), there were some references made by participants to the use of social media sites for communication purposes in their relationships (e.g., checking in with each other, etc.). However, social media sites were not mentioned as a form of communication used in the early stages of participants' relationships. It was noted that social media sites were primarily utilized as a means of communicating once the participants had established a relationship and were already in a committed partnership. Participants generally indicated that they preferred using nonsocial media communication methods (e.g., phone calls, texts) due to the fact that they could express themselves more effectively through voice and tone than they could via written messages. Some participants did indicate that although they would prefer to communicate through more traditional forms of communication, they have grown accustomed to using digital communication as a result of having developed into digital natives. They stated that they enjoy being able to send quick messages to their partners, check in throughout the day, and utilize video chat applications to stay connected. These statements emphasize that even though social media sites were not the primary means of communication among the participants, they were used as a supplemental method of maintaining and strengthening their relationships. In addition to examining social media usage, researchers could investigate the differences between digital natives and nondigital natives regarding the use of digital communication in romantic relationships. By doing so, researchers will be able to gain further insight into the effects of social media usage on romantic relationships. The rapid evolution of technology is changing the way individuals interact with one another. As a result, it is essential that researchers continue to examine the effects of digital communication on the development of romantic relationships.

Researchers have identified several barriers to forming and maintaining relationships among college students. These barriers include difficulty in meeting others, lack of time, and fear of rejection (Kamp Dush et al., 2008). Researchers have also identified several factors associated with successful relationships among college students. Successful relationships have been defined as those that last at least two years (Kamp Dush et al., 2008). Research has shown that the most successful college relationships typically begin during the first semester of college, are characterized by

high levels of commitment, and have been established prior to sexual activity (Kamp Dush et al., 2008). These findings highlight the need for researchers to focus on the formation of relationships in order to develop effective interventions aimed at enhancing the quality of relationships formed by college students.

### Limitations of the Study

As with other studies trying to identify human thoughts and experiences, this study has its own limitations that need to be acknowledged. One of the largest obstacles was the same as the nature of the sample itself. The data for this study was collected from users of many online dating platforms, so finding participants was at times challenging. This contrasts to a traditional class room or work place where respondents are physically located and you can easily go to them, as opposed to an online community of dating users whose community is much more private and personal. In addition to many potential participants being hesitant, online dating is still a very personal subject to many individuals, particularly in the Indian society, so the communication needed to engage participants took much longer and had to be done with care to ensure the participant was comfortable and knew the intent of the study.

An additional obstacle was making sure participants understood the reason the study was being performed. A few users were hesitant to provide their truthful opinions because they were concerned with their privacy, or being judged by others. To help overcome this, it was necessary to communicate that the study would be kept confidential and would only be used for academic purposes. Although, even with providing these assurances, there is always a chance that some participants may provide responses that are socially acceptable verses providing the truth of their feelings. This is a normal challenge in researching individual's attitudes and beliefs, where individuals will attempt to portray themselves in a more positive light.

Additionally, as the study was voluntary, it was impossible to assure that every individual who was contacted participated. Individuals that did participate may be more open minded, confident, or comfortable when speaking about their relationships versus those that decided not to participate. Therefore, the results may only reflect the views of the individuals that were willing to share their perspectives and the views of the individuals that were more private and/or hesitant may not be completely represented. Consequently, the results may not represent the complete range of experiences and beliefs for all young adults.

Another limitation of the study is that it relies on the self-reported responses of the participants. The results are therefore dependent upon the perceptions of the participants regarding their beliefs and intentions (i.e., their stated views) rather than observing their behaviors over time. There may be instances in which an individual believes something but does not act accordingly. An example of this is when an individual expresses positive intentions towards marriage, but decides differently later based upon their experiences, personal growth, etc.

The study was also limited to a particular group of young adults. Their experiences may be influenced by their social environment, education level, and their familiarity with modern concepts. Young adults residing in urban areas or those that are familiar with online platforms may have different perspectives than those residing in rural communities or those that do not utilize online dating. Therefore, the results of the study should be viewed within the confines of the sample and may not be applicable to all demographics.

Despite the limitations of the study, it provides valuable insight into the ways in which young adults today view online dating, gender roles, and marriage. The challenges experienced during data collection also illustrate the sensitive and private nature of the topic and the importance of conducting such research with patience, respect, and understanding.

### Conclusion

Relationships have been a vital component of human existence for all time, yet how we view relationships has evolved over time. This investigation started out as a simple inquiry into the perceptions of online dating, gender roles, and marriage held by young adults today, and if there were connections between those perceptions. This research clearly shows that young adults are not dismissing the concept of marriage; however, they are viewing marriage through new lenses which have been formed through a blend of traditional and contemporary experiences.

For several of the participants, online dating was a medium; however, it was also an experience that altered the way they looked at relationships and the potential of meeting a future life mate. Those who had a favorable perception of online dating demonstrated greater openness and confidence toward marriage. Online dating appears to create a greater feeling of hopefulness and accessibility toward marriage when participants perceive that they have opportunities to meet compatible partners. This represents an important paradigm shift. Technology does not seem to be creating distance between individuals and commitment, but in many cases, technology is creating a greater sense of hopefulness toward commitment.

Concurrently, the beliefs of the participants regarding gender roles were equally significant in forming their perceptions of marriage. The participants who believed in equality between partners exhibited a greater comfort level toward the concept of marriage. In particular, when marriage was visualized as a partnership based upon mutual respect and shared responsibility, it appeared to feel less confining and more supporting. This indicates that the very definition of marriage is undergoing transformation from a structural entity that is based upon predetermined roles, to a relationship that is based upon balance, understanding, and emotional interdependence.

This transition is particularly relevant in the Indian culture. Young adults today are experiencing the intersection of tradition and change. They are influenced by cultural values that continue to provide importance to marriage, and are simultaneously exposed to new concepts and ideals that emphasize individualism and personal autonomy. As such, this creates a distinct environment in which marriage is not being rejected; however, it is being redefined in a manner that is consistent with both individual and cultural expectations.

Ultimately, this research demonstrates that young adults are intentionally shaping their perceptions of relationships, and are not simply following established patterns, nor are they entirely rejecting them. Their intentions regarding marriage appear to be shaped by their experiences of connection, trust, and equality in their daily lives. While marriage continues to hold emotional value for many, it is becoming increasingly apparent that marriage should be entered into with an understanding of readiness and true partnership.

In many respects, this research portrays the narrative of a generation learning to navigate the complexities of relationships in a changing world, while maintaining that which provides emotional significance, and embracing that which is right for each person individually.

### **Future Directions**

Although the findings of this research project provided an interesting look at how young adults currently perceive online dating, gender roles, and marriage, there were many new questions raised by this study. This research essentially captured a snapshot of the participants' ideas, opinions, and goals at one point in their lives. As we know, however, human beliefs and attitudes are dynamic; they change as people experience new things, begin relationships, overcome challenges, and transition throughout various stages of life. Thus, future research could benefit from tracking the same group of individuals over an extended amount of time. A longitudinal design would enable researchers to track how individuals' perceptions regarding online dating and marriage naturally change over time. It would be useful to find out if young adults who have expressed optimism regarding marriage today will continue to express the same optimism when they are seriously involved in a relationship, or if their attitudes will change based on their actual experiences.

A second potential area for future research involves incorporating individuals living in rural communities and small towns. Most of the existing research, including this study, is based upon young adults who have been exposed to larger cities and the digital platforms that exist within those cities. Although India is culturally and geographically diverse, the rural experience of young adults may differ significantly from the experience of their urban counterparts. Factors such as access to online dating, cultural expectations, parental/family influences, and social norms may affect attitudes toward relationships and marriage differently depending on where you live. Incorporating rural participants would enable researchers to assess how much culture, community, and technology access influences young adult attitudes toward relationships and marriage. It would also allow researchers to create a more inclusive representation of young adult experiences across different social backgrounds.

Finally, future studies could also examine these issues in greater detail and personally using qualitative methods. While surveys are helpful in identifying trends and patterns in data, they do not usually capture the emotional experiences and personal stories that underlie survey responses. Conducting personal interviews or having open conversations with individuals can provide a greater understanding of what marriage truly means to them. Interviews and/or conversations can also show how individual values, previous relationship experiences, and family influences affect their perspectives in ways that numerical data alone cannot adequately describe.

As society evolves, so too will the ways in which young people pursue relationships and commitment. Future research projects will have opportunities to follow this journey closer than ever before, listening to people's experiences as they develop over time and across various cultural contexts. Through longitudinal research, researchers will be able to better understand not only what young adults believe, but why and how their beliefs continue to evolve.

## References

- Ailsinghani, D., & Paliwal, A. C. (2025). A study on youth perspectives towards marriage and divorce in Ulhasnagar. *International Journal of Economic Practices and Theories*, 199–211.
- Allendorf, K. (2013). Going nuclear? Family structure and young women's health in India. *Demography*, 50(3), 853–880.
- Allendorf, K., & Pandian, R. K. (2016). The decline of arranged marriage? Marital change and continuity in India. *Population and Development Review*, 42(3), 435–464.
- Arnett, J. J. (2000). Emerging adulthood: A theory of development from the late teens through the twenties. *American Psychologist*, 55(5), 469–480.
- Attri, V., & Mishra, J. (2025). Marriage: Attitudes, preferences, and practices. In *Indian youth in the midst of crisis and challenges* (pp. 52–68). Routledge India.
- Basu, S., Zuo, X., Lou, C., Acharya, R., & Lundgren, R. (2017). Learning to be gendered: Gender socialization in early adolescence among urban poor in Delhi, India, and Shanghai, China. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 61(4), S24–S29.
- Bhattacharyya, S., & Range, L. M. (2025). Attitudes toward marriage and subjective wellbeing among Indian young adults. *The Family Journal*. Advance online publication.
- Bussey, K., & Bandura, A. (1999). Social cognitive theory of gender development and differentiation. *Psychological Review*, 106(4), 676–713.
- Chakraborty, D. (2019). Components affecting intention to use online dating apps in India: A study conducted on smartphone users. *Asia Pacific Journal of Management Research and Innovation*, 15(3), 87–96.
- Chand, A. (2024). Online dating: Transformations of marriage arrangements through digital media technologies in Australia's Indian community. In *Digital humanities in the India Rim: Contemporary scholarship in Australia and India* (pp. 291–318). Open Book Publishers.
- Davis, S. N., & Greenstein, T. N. (2009). Gender ideology: Components, predictors, and consequences. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 35, 87–105.
- Dhar, D., Jain, T., & Jayachandran, S. (2019). Intergenerational transmission of gender attitudes: Evidence from India. *The Journal of Development Studies*, 55(12), 2572–2592.
- Eagly, A. H., & Wood, W. (2012). Social role theory. In P. Van Lange, A. Kruglanski, & E. Higgins (Eds.), *Handbook of theories of social psychology* (pp. 458–476). Sage.

- Evans, J., Sahgal, N., Salazar, A. M., Starr, K. J., & Corichi, M. (2022). *How Indians view gender roles in families and society*. Pew Research Center.
- Finkel, E. J., Eastwick, P. W., Karney, B. R., Reis, H. T., & Sprecher, S. (2012). Online dating: A critical analysis from the perspective of psychological science. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 13(1), 3–66.
- Gupta, V. (2025). Digital dating culture and shifting intimacy norms among youth. *International Journal of Social Science Research (IJSSR)*, 2(1), 250–266.
- Hobbs, M., Owen, S., & Gerber, L. (2017). Liquid love? Dating apps, sex, relationships, and the digital transformation of intimacy. *Journal of Sociology*, 53(2), 271–284.
- Jain, R., & Pareek, S. (2017). Measuring gender role attitude of Indian population. *International Journal of Interdisciplinary and Multidisciplinary Studies*, 4(3), 345–354.
- John, W., Charag, A. H., & Bashir, I. (2025). Indian millennials' continued usage intentions toward online dating apps: The interplay between trust and perceived autonomy. *Young Consumers*, 26(2), 207–226.
- Joshi, G., Rais, S., Ann, M., & Mishra, I. (2020). Online dating: A motivated behavior during pandemic. *Indian Journal of Health, Sexuality and Culture*, 6(2).
- Kakar, S., & Kakar, K. (2017). *The Indians: Portrait of a people*. Penguin Books.
- Yadav, R. K. (2018). Exploring the attitudes of young adults towards marriage in India. *Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, 23(1), 25–44.
- Kh, S., & Veena, N. (2020). Perception of marriage and live-in relationship among young adults. *Infokara Research*, 9(2), 391–398.
- Nair, A., & Das, A. (2025). Narratives of digital dating: A qualitative exploration of Indian Reddit spaces. *QWERTY: Interdisciplinary Journal of Technology, Culture and Education*, 20(1).
- Nath, M., Sharma, P., & Kaur, G. (2023). Factors affecting attitude of university students towards gender roles: A study of Punjab, India. *Journal of Agricultural Development and Policy*, 33(1), 109–116.
- Netting, N. S. (2010). Marital ideology and mate selection in India. *Journal of Family Issues*, 31(6), 707–732.
- Overall, N. C., Sibley, C. G., & Tan, R. (2011). The costs and benefits of sexism in intimate relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 101(2), 271–290.
- Parekh, P. (2024). Online dating and social change in India: A sociological exploration. In *Emerging trends in smart societies* (pp. 101–105). Routledge.
- Raj, A., Johns, N. E., Bhan, N., Silverman, J. G., & Lundgren, R. (2021). Effects of gender role beliefs on social connectivity and marital safety: Findings from a cross-sectional study among married adolescent girls in India. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 69(6), S65–S73.
- Ray, D., & Rai, P. (2020). Love at first byte: A mixed-method study about online dating in India. *Indian Journal of Health, Sexuality and Culture*, 6(1).
- Reed, M. N. (2022). *Marriage and family in India* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Pennsylvania).
- Reed, M. N. (2025). "Marriage is a complete gamble": Marriage attitudes of the Indian middle class. *Journal of Family Issues*, 46(11), 1749–1771.

- Saewyc, E. (2017). A global perspective on gender roles and identity. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 61*(4), S1–S2.
- Shukla, A. (2015). Attitudes towards role and status of women in India: A comparison of three generations of men and women. *Psychological Studies, 60*(1), 119–128.
- Singh, S., & Aggarwal, Y. (2020). Are traditional, negative gender attitudes associated with violent attitudes toward women? Insights from a new, culturally adapted measure in India. *Sex Roles, 83*(3), 143–162.
- Smith, A. W., & Duggan, M. (2013). *Online dating & relationships*. Pew Research Center.
- Sonawat, R. (2001). Understanding families in India: A reflection of societal changes. *Psicologia: Teoria e Pesquisa, 17*, 177–186.
- Toma, C. L. (2015). Online dating. In *The international encyclopedia of interpersonal communication* (pp. 1–5).
- Tripathi, S. (2020). Patriarchal beliefs and perceptions towards women among Indian police officers: A study of Uttar Pradesh, India. *International Journal of Police Science & Management, 22*(3), 232–241.
- Turkle, S. (2015). *Reclaiming conversation: The power of talk in a digital age*. Penguin Press.
- Vincent, A. (2024). *Marriage in transition: A sociological exploration of youth perspectives towards marriage*.
- Willoughby, B. J. (2014). Using marital attitudes in late adolescence to predict later union transitions. *Youth & Society, 46*(3), 425–440.
- Willoughby, B. J., & Dworkin, J. (2009). The relationships between emerging adults' expressed desire to marry and frequency of participation in risk behaviors. *Youth & Society, 40*(3), 426–450.