

## **DOES FAMILY BACKGROUND MATTER IN A RELATIONSHIP?**

Faisal Md Tanvir Islam

BSc in Computer Science & Engineering, North South University, Dhaka

DOI: 10.46609/IJSSER.2020.v05i01.017 URL: <https://doi.org/10.46609/IJSSER.2020.v05i01.017>

### **ABSTRACT**

When I started doing work on my research, I realized that this was an obvious question that was baffling a lot of people. Although people have their own opinions, it was important to find out whether family background is an important issue for getting into relationship. My hypothesis was that it was one of the most important issues. It was relatively easy to find out information on the internet as it was a widely debated topic however it was not that easy finding information in print and it was tougher referencing them. The real surprise came during the surveys when I realized just how timid we all can be. Most of us were very rigid of admitting that there can be many other factors other than love for getting into any relationship. However, once they filled up the survey it was evident that most, if not all, have fallen for quite a few friends depending on their understanding and the bonding they shared. Also it was proved that they learnt the importance of family since childhood. So ultimately my hypothesis holds, people who share common background and similar networks are better suited as marriage partners than people who are very different in their backgrounds and networks. Opposites may attract and love can be blind but this may not be enough to live together harmoniously as couples. Seeing things from same perspective makes it easier to communicate and reason with the partner.

**Keywords:** People, Family, Relationship, Surveys, Vital functions

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Relationship is a significant aspect of our life and to a great degree it is an essential part as well. Some form of physical attraction and the appearance of two individuals forge this

relationship. But there is another important factor to consider before getting into any relationship and that is the 'Family Background' of both the partners. Here family background and status focus on the facts like- wealthy / average / disadvantaged, criminal history, significant other's family morals/ethics/values, etc.

But there's also this saying "What's love got to do with background"? But the truth is that coming from the same background can enhance a relationship. Our background develops our values and ideas about love, life and relationship. So this project is directed towards the intention of trying to establish a general perception amongst the youth regarding the importance of family background in a relationship.

As such the family is the pillar of all relationships as thus required for any person to survive. It is the most crucial factor in determining how a child turns out as an adult. Family background defines who we are as a person. Family enables us to feel a sense of belonging and gives us purpose in an otherwise mundane life that possibly does not bear any form of vital functions besides the role of the family. Relationship refers to the feeling of being in a close personal association and belonging together. It is a familiar and very close affective connection with another as a result of a bond that is formed through knowledge and experience of the other.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

Intimacy is about being emotionally close to your partner, about being able to let your guard down, and let him or her know how you really feel. Intimacy is also about being able to accept and share in your partner's feelings, about being there when he/she wants to let their defenses down.

To be able to share our 'inner-world' with a partner we love, and to be able to share our partner's experiences, is one of the most rewarding aspects of a relationship. Intimacy often doesn't need words, but being able to put feelings and experiences into words makes intimacy more likely to occur. Intimacy involves being able to share the whole range of feelings and experiences we have as human beings - pain and sadness, as well as happiness and love. Most of us, however, find it easier to share some types of feelings than others. For example, are you and your partner able to let each other know how you feel about each other? Saying 'I love you' is important. Assuming your partner knows about your love because of the way you behave is usually not enough. How do you feel when you are sad, a little depressed, in need of some comforting and reassurance? Are you able to let yourself be dependent and to receive some nurturing? Is this balanced in your relationship, or is one partner the 'strong one' who never needs to show any vulnerability? If so, is this really how you want things to be in your relationship? How do you feel about yourself? - when you've taken a bit of a knock and are feeling small and 'put down', or when you've achieved something that makes you feel good about yourself. How do you feel about sex? - What you like and don't like in your love-making, and about how your sexual relationship could be made more enjoyable for you. Do you really know what your partner thinks and feels, or do you have to guess and 'mind-read'? Are you able to be open with your partner, or do you have a feeling that your partner would not be able to accept some of your feelings? These

are the situations when love is not enough to handle everything properly. Right there needs the same wavelength of mind which comes from similar mentality or same background. We may not give it much thought but all of us experience many different kinds of relationships that add valuable support to our lives every day. Let's consider the importance of relationships in our lives. Some important relationships:

- We may have a special someone, a lover, partner, husband or wife; the person who knows us best of all, with whom we share our daily strives, successes, stuff. We will regard that person as our ally, soul mate, life companion.

- We may have friends with whom we share a coffee, a glass of wine, a drink, the weekly game, maybe complain to them about our problems, and get advice and feedback from.

- Family is often the people who remind us about what's important in our lives. Our children are often the reason we work as hard as we do, the motivation behind our determination to do well, the people whom we care about the most. Our parents and siblings are the people with whom we grew up, they knew the young us and often we want to make them proud. Our family's opinion of us matters.

- Then there are our colleagues at work. Many of us spend most of our time with work colleagues. They're people who may offer us support, with whom we share our daily struggles, who recognize our skills, accomplishments, efforts and particular areas of expertise. But what happens if those relationships go wrong? What happens if we start to feel irritable jaded, unappreciated? We may feel that there are not enough hours in the day to accommodate everything and everybody that nothing seems to be going right, that money worries are escalating, that we're on a treadmill and getting nowhere fast. Stress can gradually accumulate until it starts to impact on our joy for life.

Stress can cause disturbed sleep patterns, a lack of enthusiasm for people and the things that were once important to us. Over time we may lose our sense of humor, become aggressive, intolerant and maybe introverted. Differences of mind can lead to a devastated relationship. Gradually those important relationships can be damaged by our negative behavior. Help is available. Counseling and hypnotherapy can help improve these situations by either working with one person in a stressful relationship or by seeing both people for relationship counseling. Working with one individual helps to focus attention on their specific issues, deal with unhelpful patterns of behavior, responses or attitudes that may date back many years. It can help a person become more confident, appropriately assertive, understand themselves better, learn to listen and communicate their feelings more effectively. When a relationship is important to us we need to communicate that message to the other person. Relationship counseling can help us to learn the

importance of becoming more open, encourage us to take a risk in trusting someone, expose our inner thoughts and feelings, and become a little vulnerable. The time spent in relationship counseling can provide an important opportunity to communicate to the other person that they matter, their opinions count, and they are respected and valued by us. We also need to consider ourselves. Caring about someone else does not mean becoming a doormat, a 'yes' man or desperate to please. Equal relationships are about give and take, supporting each other's weaknesses, sharing each other's strengths. Sometimes we need to be tough in a relationship for it to work well. We may need to disagree, state our own opinion firmly, be clear about how we feel. But doing that with consideration and regard can enable a relationship to become an adult partnership, become enduring and, as such a valuable addition to our lives.

### **3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Through extensive research I have identified a few areas that I would like to focus my project on, these areas will be directed towards youngsters between the 19-25 years of age:

1. Do people really believe that family background is important for a relationship?
2. If they do then what factors make them believe so?
3. Is coming from same backgrounds make relationships more compatible and long lasting?
4. If people think love has nothing got to do with background then what do they look for in their partners?
5. "When you marry a person, you are also marrying his/her family"- Do people still get along with this thought?
6. Someone is with a person and his/her family has a criminal background (even if there is nothing wrong with his/her) - If this is the case what should be your priority?
7. Is family background a 100% guarantee for a successful relationship?

### **4. HYPOTHESIS**

Opposites may attract but they may not live together harmoniously as couples. From my research I expect to find that people who share common backgrounds and similar social networks are better suited as marriage partners than people who are very different in their backgrounds and networks. Seeing things from the same perspective makes it easier to communicate and reason with the partner, without seeing that person as somebody from another planet. And naturally people are likely to be more compatible. So this proposal is directed towards the hypothesis that in majority case amongst the people between the ages of 21-26 years, similar family background is more likely to lead to a successful relationship. I strongly feel and want to prove that people who share common background and similar networks are better suited as marriage partners than people who are very different in their backgrounds and networks. Opposites may attract but they

may not live together harmoniously as couples. Seeing things from same perspective makes it easier to communicate and reason with the partner.

## **5. METHODOLOGY**

### **5.1 Primary Research:**

Primary data for both hypothesizes will be collected through a survey questionnaire that will be designed specifically for young people between the age ranges of 21 to 26 years old. The survey questionnaire will try to establish the perception of the participant indirectly through queries regarding personal experience and will also try to form a relationship between those particular perceptions and the kind of shows that they expose themselves to the most.

For Primary research, my main focus was 21-26-year-old university going students, mostly from North South University, some from BRAC University. There were 30 respondents, divided amongst men and women.

### **5.2 Secondary Research:**

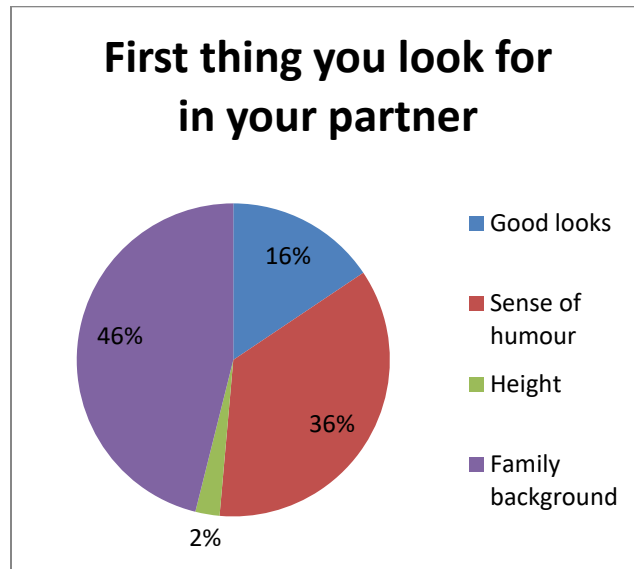
Secondary Date for both hypothesizes would involve collecting information through any books, websites, forums, journals, magazine/newspaper articles etc. Thus for my secondary research, I had to rely upon the internet mostly. There have been a few published works by psychologists and acclaimed authors on this topic so it wasn't hard finding information on the internet.

## **6. PRIMARY DATA ANALYSIS:**

Depending on the data collected through the survey, consisting of 16 questions, I have been able to develop interpretations in the form of pie charts and column. I came to a few conclusions regarding the overall response.

### **6.1 What is the first thing you look for in your partner?**

- a) Good looks
- b) Sense of humor
- c) Height
- d) Family background

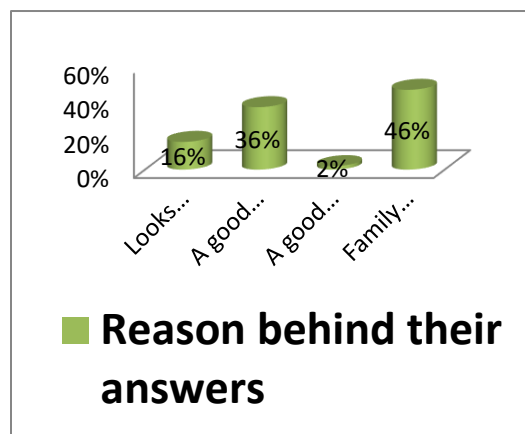


**Figure 6.1: First thing you look for in your partner**

A greater number of correspondents, around 46%, agree with my hypothesis and when it comes to marriage the first thing one look for in his/her partner is the family background. Nearly 36% are indifferent towards this claim. They think sense of humor is important. And Very few people think goods looks and height are important which are around 16% and 2% respectively.

So according to most of my correspondents, family back ground is a vital issue in case of choosing partners and then comes sense humor. Some also thinks looks can be an issue and very few takes height in consideration.

**6.1.1 The reason behind what you chose in question no2.**



**Figure 6.2: Reason behind their answer**

From my above data we can find out some reasons behind their thoughts.

The reasons behind their answers are:

- ✓ Looks come first
- ✓ A good sense of humor makes things easy
- ✓ A good height makes a person more attractive
- ✓ Family background ensures good morality

### 6.2 Family Background is important for a relationship- Do you really believe this?

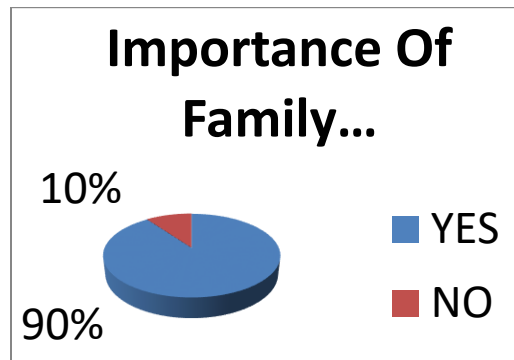


Figure 6.3: Importance of family

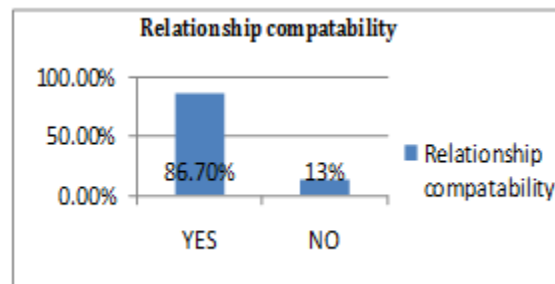
Around 90%%, **agree** with my hypothesis and believe that family background is important in a relationship. Nearly 10% are indifferent towards this claim.

The reasons behind their 'YES' are:

- Similar upbringing leads to less misunderstanding between couples
- It makes the relationship stable
- Same background reflects more or less same mentality

So the graph completely reflects that most of the people think that having a similar background before getting into any kind of relationship is very important.

#### 6.2.1 Coming from same background makes relationship compatible



**Figure 6.4: Relationship compatability**

Nearly 86.7% of the respondents have said that coming from same background makes relationship compatible. Around 13% thinks differently.

Reasons behind 'YES':

- Life style matches
- Can cope up with each other's family well.

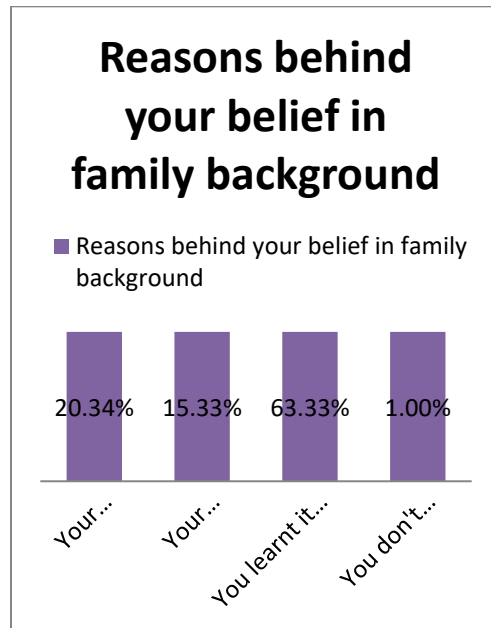
Reasons behind 'NO':

- Other than family background some other factors like childhood trauma, any kind of unwanted incidents can affect and change the person. In that case background doesn't matter.
- So people have their different opinions regarding the issue that similar family background makes relationship more stable. Though there are some conflictions, majority goes with my hypothesis.

**6.3 What makes you believe that background is important?**

- a) Your surrounding couples
- b) Your experience
- c) You learnt it from your family
- d) You don't believe in it



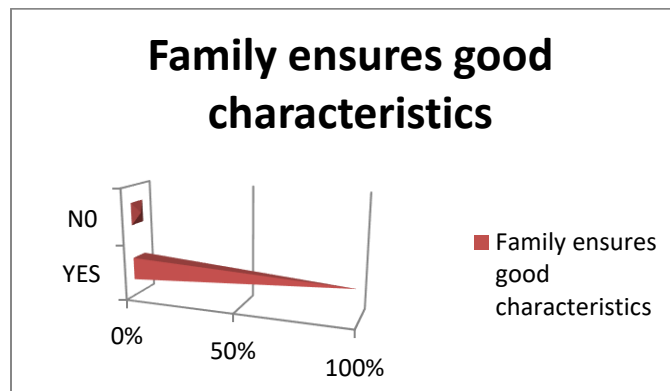


**Figure 6.5: Your belief in family background**

Clearly, a majority of respondents (around 63.33%) claimed that they have always learnt from their family that family background is the most important thing and thus they started believing in it. Further 20.34% have learnt it from their surrounding couples. Around 15.33% have agreed that they learnt it from their past experiences. Only 1% has been said that they don't believe in all these.

It implies that people grow up since childhood believing in that family background is important.

**6.4 Do you think family is important to build up the characteristics of a person?**

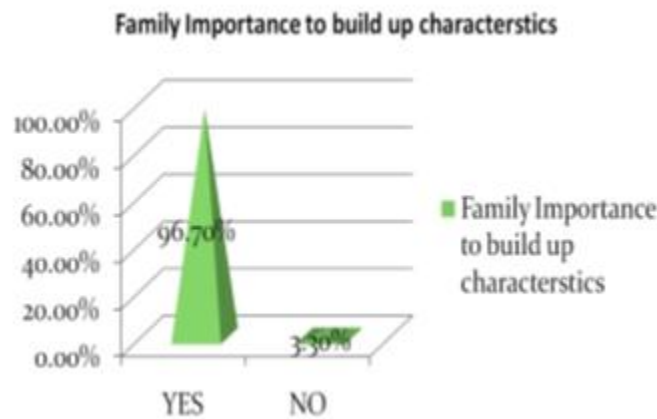


**Figure 6.6: Family ensures good character**

Clearly majority of the respondents (98%) feel family is very important to build up the characteristics of a person. Only 2% think differently that family is not important to build up the characteristics of a person

Family is very important to build up the characteristics of a person and it determines that how the person will turn out to be in future. So majority thinks family has an important role here which relevant to mu hypothesis.

**6.5 People who belong to a good family, usually tend to be a better human being- Do you think so?**



**Figure 6.7: Family importance to build up characteristic**

Reasons behind their answers:

- A person learns to differentiate between right and wrong from his/her family.
- People who are from good family background tend to have comparatively more moral values.

It's the family which teaches a person to be a good human being from his/her childhood. Morality, values and good characteristics these qualities are taught from family. So it can't be denied that family is the first teacher for a person who can teach how to be a good human being in his/her life.

**6.6 Love has nothing to do with family background.**

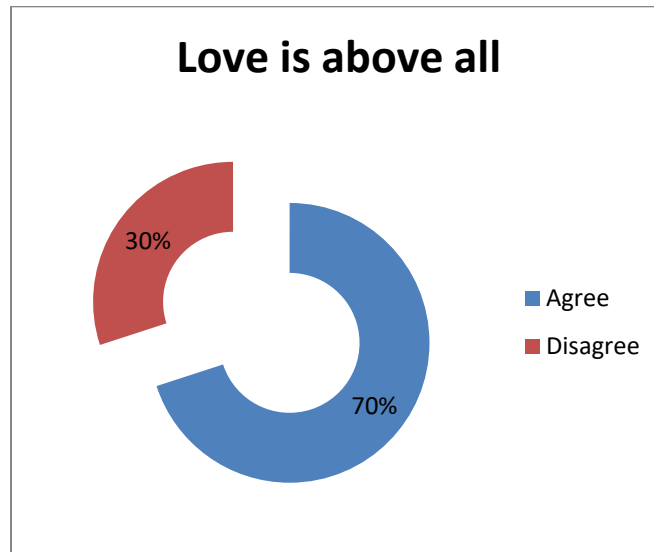


Figure 6.8: Does love above all?

A greater number of correspondents, around 70%, disagree with my hypothesis and believe that Love has nothing got to do with a family background. The reason behind this claim will be explained in the limitations section. Nearly 30% are indifferent towards this claim.

The reasons behind their answers:

- Love just happens
- Love is blind

### 6.7 Love can always redeem the issue of family background



Figure 6.9: Does love redeem the issue of family background

About 26.67%, accept that love can always redeem the issue of family back ground 3.33% of the respondents think Love can not always do so.

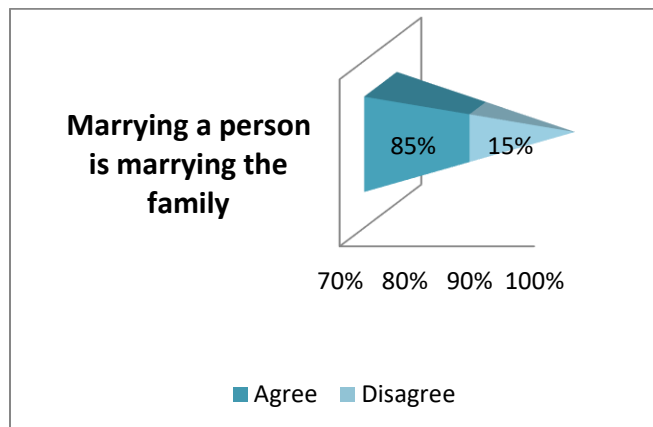
This finding **supports** my hypothesis that love is not the most important thing to be in a relationship. There are many other things other than love that can affect a relationship and these are equally important as love.

### 6.7.1 If the answer is 'YES' - what makes you believe so?

Reasons:

- Love can make up any differences.
- Love works like magic.
- Love is blind

### 6.8 "Marrying a person is like marrying his/her family"- Do you agree with this statement?



**Figure 6.10: Marrying a person is marrying a family**

Majority of the respondents (85%) think that marrying a person is marrying the whole family of that person. Only 15% have different opinions.

When a person get married he/she get attached to a complete new family and he/she has to fulfill all his/her responsibilities towards them. It's become their duty to look after that new family like the way he/she does for his/her own family.

#### 6.8.1 Reasons behind the answers:

- One needs to get along with a family which is totally new for him/her
- Marriage is a social bond in our society.

- This thought us more applicable for girls.

### 6.9 Is family background a 100% guarantee for a successful marriage



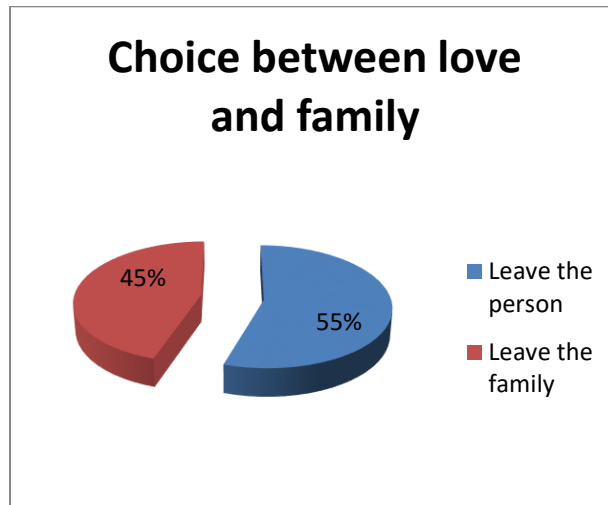
**Figure 6.11: Family background ensures successful marriage**

More than half of the respondents, around 70.03%, think sometimes family background ensures a 100% successful marriage. Only 23.30% thinks this is not true. 6.67% were sure about it.

This proves that even though it is said ‘love is blind’ or ‘opposite attracts’, the truth is people still there can be many other factors to make a relationship successful but among all them family background plays the vital role.

### 6.10 You love a person and his/her has a criminal background (though there is nothing wrong with the person) and your family doesn't want you to be with that person. Whom do you choose?

- You'll go for this person leaving your family.
- You'll listen to your family and leave the person.



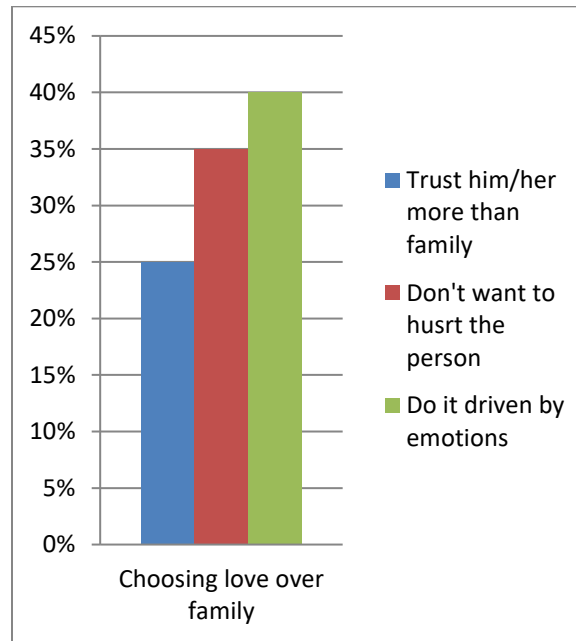
**Figure 6.12: Choice between love and family**

From the survey it was found that 55% of the people have said that they will leave the person and stick with the decision of their family and 45% of the respondents said that they will go for the person whom they love leaving their family behind.

Moreover, there is a very less difference between these two different opinions. Some people think love is everything and for this they can sacrifice anything. On the other hand, there are some people for whom family is their main priority.

**6.10.1 If your answer is 14(a) what will make you to choose him/her over your family?**

- a) You trust him/her more than your family
- b) You don't want to hurt the person
- c) You'll just do it driven by your emotion



**Figure 6.13: Why choosing love over family?**

A greater number of correspondents, around 40%, agree that if they choose love over family, they will do it driven by their emotions. If we look carefully we will notice that the percentage of people who don't want to hurt the person they love is 35%. And only 15% have agreed that they will do it because they trust the person they love more than their family.

This survey clearly reflects people choose their love over family just driven by their emotions. They don't think about the consequences. They just do it for the peace of their mind without thinking.

## 7. SECONDARY DATA ANALYSIS

During the research I had to study tentatively to find out what are the aspects that people considers family background a vital issue. Social relationship affects mental health. So it is very important to have a similar mentality to maintain a sound relationship. Smith and Christakis (2008), the renowned sociologists asserted, "Social integration refers to overall level of involvement with informal relationships, such as having a spouse, and with formal social relationships, such as those with religious institutions and volunteer organizations. Quality of relationships includes positive aspects of relationships, such as emotional support provided by significant others, and strained aspects of relationship, such as conflict and stress. Each of these aspects of social relationships affects health. We discuss the broad effects of these features of relationships for health, and, for ease of discussion, we use the terms "social relationship" and

“social ties” interchangeably throughout this article” (p. 16). Given this we can see that relationships have a huge effect on our lives no matter which type of they are. So an equal relationship leads to a peaceful life and a health. Social ties influence health behavior, in part, because they influence, or “control,” our health habits (Umberson et al. 2010). For example, a spouse may monitor, inhibit, regulate, or facilitate health behaviors in ways that promote a partner’s health (Waite 1995, p. 5). Religious ties also appear to influence health behavior, in part, through social control (Ellison and Levin 1998). Social ties can instill a sense of responsibility and concern for others that then lead individuals to engage in behaviors that protect the health of others, as well as their own health. Social ties provide information and create norms that further influence our life as well. Research across disciplines and populations suggests possible psychosocial mechanisms to explain how social ties promote a peaceful relationship and sound health. Mechanisms include (but are not limited to): social support, personal control, symbolic meanings and norms, and mental health. While most studies focus on only one or two of these mechanisms, it is clear that connections between mechanisms are complex, and that these interconnections may explain the linkage between social ties and health better than any single mechanism (Thoits 1995; Umberson et al. 2010). We can notice that social class of the life partner should be a major consideration before getting into any relationship.

As the old saying goes "Familiarity leads to intimacy". Just because a man finds a woman appealing doesn't mean he will automatically act on his desires. He must think about the overall condition if the girl is right for his family, if she can cope up with them or if this new relation is going to give her peaceful life.

A study by Joann Miller and Ted. M Brimeyer looks at class socialization and how it affects people. The research showed how studying the past, present and anticipated or aspired future class locations is necessary for understanding the attitude and beliefs associated with class. These will directly and indirectly shape their ideas on beliefs and values. (p. 27)

All the above secondary information is very helpful in understanding the extent of importance of family background. However, it is not very specific to the topic of the research which is “Importance of family background in a relationship”. Still analyzing these data it can be said that people who have similar social status are tend to be in a more stable relationship. This makes their relation more compatible. Seeing life from same perspective makes life a lot easier. Having a same wavelength of mind is a key to a successful relationship.

## **8. LIMITATIONS**



I would have loved to focus on other aspects of media more such as the internet, but I couldn't as it would have made the research too lengthy. It was tough collecting sources for secondary research as I had to rely on the internet due to less availability of public libraries, thus it was tough collecting proper information such as author's name, publication date etc. Another limitation I must add would be the number of respondents. I have only distributed questionnaires to 20 students of North South University. This is a remarkably tiny portion compared to the total population of the institution. I have not done justice by stating my primary research went according to my hypothesis by interviewing only 20 respondents.

## **9. CONCLUSION**

From my research, I would like to conclude by saying Family background is a very important issue for getting into any kind of relationship. Many respondents have scoffed at the notion that background is not important in a relationship. But as they started answering the questions, the truth ultimately got revealed. A nearly 93% of my respondents think that family background is a major factor that should be thoroughly looked into, reconciled and balanced before making a lifetime commitment. The fact that two people know each other so well and share a lot of things with each other does at some point keep them wondering if they are meant to be in a relationship. But in reality love is enough to maintain life long relationship. Same wavelength of mind, same mentality, similar goals in life and most importantly same perspective these are the factors that determines a successful relationship. Love can just happen but commitment is a responsibility which is needed to be fulfilled with complete honesty. Relationships last longer when both partners share basic beliefs in such matters as parenting, friends, religion, leisure time and division of household labor. Background helps with compatibility. Coming from similar race, religion, social class, education and around the same age, are more likely to be compatible and indicates a long-lasting relationship.

## **REFERENCES**

- [1] Conley, D. (2006). Family Background and Race over the Life Course. New York: National Bureau of Economic Research. Intellect,
- [2] G. (2001, May 5). Is Family Background is Important in determining whom you date? Retrieved from [www.goddessintellect.com: http://goddessintellect.com/is-family-background-important-in-determining-who-you-date](http://goddessintellect.com/is-family-background-important-in-determining-who-you-date)
- [3] Lareau, A. (2007). Inequalities in the Rhythms of Daily Life. Minneapolis: National Council on Family Relations.

- [4] McIntosh, J. (2007). Social class, family background, and intergenerational mobility. *European Economic Review*, 118-120.
- [5] U. Debra & K. M. Jeniffer (2010). *Social Relationship & Health: Aflashpoint for health policy*. New York: J health soc behave.
- [6] Stritof S. (2010, June 10). Importance of family history to your marriage. Retrived from <http://marriage.about.com/od/familyoforigin/a/familyhistory.htm>