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## The Study of Effectiveness of Premarital Interpersonal Choices and Knowledge Program (PICK) on making decision in Mate selection of Single Students

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### Abstract

The decision making in romantic relationships, such as to start dating, marriage proposal, or ending a relationship, can have long-lasting and important consequences. This study was conducted to aim the effectiveness of Premarital Interpersonal Choices and Knowledge Program (PICK) on decision making in mate selection of single students with a quasi-experimental research design to pre-test and post-test and control group. 36 single students were selected voluntary and on 1 score of standard deviation lower than the mean in Relationship Decision-making Scale and inclusion/exclusion criteria, and were assigned randomly to a experiment group (n = 18) and a control group (n = 18). The participants completed the relationship decision-making scale in two stage of pre-test and post-test. The experiment group participated in 9 sessions, twice a week, 90 minutes each, in a Premarital Interpersonal Choices and Knowledge Program (PICK). The findings indicated that Premarital Interpersonal Choices and Knowledge Program (PICK) has led to increase awareness of relationship decision-making in experimental group rather than in control group. Therefore, the Premarital Interpersonal Choices and Knowledge Program is a appropriate method to improve decision-making in mate selection.

**Keywords:** Premarital Interpersonal Choices and Knowledge Program (PICK), decision making in mate-selection, single students

### Extended Abstract

The decision making in romantic relationships, such as to start dating, marriage proposal, or ending a relationship, can have long-lasting and important consequences. In fact, unsuccessful romantic decisions are one of the most commonly reported types of regret (Morrison & Ross, 2011). The quality of decision making in romantic relationships can have a profound impact on quality of life. During this decision, the characteristics of a marriage partner, such as physical attractiveness and communication with

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partner, may cause people to experience falling in love (Burke, 2007). The Lack of conscious deciding, defined as sliding can be the basis for entering a relationship and moving toward it, like marriage or sex (Yoshida, 2013). A particular dangerous instance of sliding occurs when individuals do not pay attention to the warning signs of a destructive relationship such as accelerating the relationship, uncertainty or avoidance or negative interpretations at the beginning of the relationship. Lack of actively assessing for the presence of these characteristics may lead the individuals to be in relationships more in destructive communication and behaviors (Markman, Stanley Blanberg, 1994). Awareness of such warning signs could avert much of unnecessary suffering and might be provided through psycho-educational interventions. Having knowledge of warning signs alone may be insufficient unless individuals have the confidence or self-efficacy to use the knowledge in their relationships. Also, in order to enact decisions in relationships, partners have to believe that they can bring about changes in the relationship. Sliding may, thus, occur because the person lacks confidence in his or her ability to change its course (Vanmin & Fincham, 2011).

One of the programs in the field of premarital education is the Premarital Interpersonal Choices and Knowledge Program (PICK). This program is specifically designed for people seeking an intimate relationship or making decisions to enrich current relationships. (Hawkins, Carroll, Doherty, & Willoughby, 2004). The curriculum is designed to help people make healthy choices (Bradford, Stewart, Pfister, & Higginbotham, 2016). This program was developed by Van App (2007) based on the relationship attachment model as a model for close relationships. It is an image tool for communication links in one relationship and consists of five components of know, trust, rely, commit and touch. A combination of these five communication bond provides a picture of the general feeling in a relationship and provides meaningful information about the sense of love, attachment, and proximity in the relationship (Fig. 1).

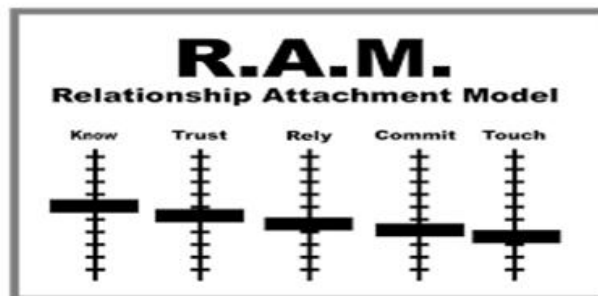


Figure 1  
relationship attachment model

Researches have shown that this program has led to an increase in knowledge about communication skills, knowledge about choosing a spouse,

and knowledge about communication patterns (Stewart, 2015; Boehme, 2017; Harris, 2017), reduction of ideal expectations (Abbasi, 2015; Rajabi, Abbasi, Sudani, & Aslani, 2016) and communication beliefs (Abbasi, 2015; Rajabi et al., 2016), reduction of the fear of marriage, and an increase of the incentive for marriage (Rajabi, Mahmoudi, Aslani, & Amanollahi, 2017). Thus, the purpose of this research is to answer the question whether Premarital Interpersonal Choices and Knowledge Program (PICK) can lead to appropriate decision making of single students in mate-selection or not.

### Method

The current research was an expanded quasi-experimental design and pretest and post-test with the control group. The population of this study included single students of Islamic Azad University of Sari. 36 single student were selected voluntarily and based on 1 score of standard deviation lower than the mean in Relationship Decision-making Scale and inclusion an exclusion criteria for research, written consent, and observance of all ethical standards of research and were assigned randomly 18 participants were randomly assigned to the experimental group and 18 to the control group. All Premarital Interpersonal Choices and Knowledge Program (PICK) sessions were administrated the Faculty of Human Sciences. At first, a pre-test was administered in experiment and control groups. Then the Premarital Interpersonal Choices and Knowledge Program (PICK) administrated once in a week for the experimental group in 9 sessions, 90 minutes in each session.

### Instruments

**Relationship Deciding Scale (RDS):** This scale was designed by Venus and Fincham (2011) to decide in romantic relationship or mate selection. It has 12 items and three subscales such as relationship confidence; knowledge of warning signs; and deciding. Each item is arranged on a 5-point continueme, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The higher scores in this scale indicate more awareness. The validity of this scale was confirmed by the use of factor analysis. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the relationship confidence subscale was 0.89, the knowledge of warning signs 0.80 and the deciding 0.71. (Vanmin & Fincham, 2011). In this study, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of decision making scale and its subscales were 0.81, 0.74, 0.77 and 0.75 respectively. The concurrent validity of this scale has been calculated with Indecisiveness Scale (Elaydi, 2006) which is statistically significant (0.37,  $P < 0.001$ ).

### Data analysis

Data were analyzed using covariance analysis, and SPSS-23 statistical software.

### Findings

In the experiment group, the mean and the standard deviation of relationship making decision scores increased from pre-test ( $M = 34.61$ ,  $SD = 3.38$ ) to post-test ( $M = 48.61$ ,  $SD = 4.46$ ), but in the control group, the mean and the standard deviation of relationship deciding scores did not change from pre-test ( $M = 33.94$ ,

SD = 2.36) to post-test (M = 34.00, SD = 2.63). In other subscales, such as relationship confidence, knowledge of warning signs and deciding, there was an increase in experimental group, but no in control group.

The results showed that the ratio of F analysis of covariance of the experimental and the control groups were different in relationship confidence ( $F = 96.03, P = 0.001$ ), awareness of warning signs ( $F = 53.04, P = 0.001$ ) and deciding ( $F = 84.96, P = 0.001$ ), subscales. These findings indicate a significant difference between the two groups in the above variables. Furthermore, the effect size indicator shows that 91% of the changes in relationship deciding scores in experiment group result from the implementation of the educational program).

**Discussion**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of Premarital Interpersonal Choices and Knowledge Program (PICK) on decision making in mate- selection on single students, and findings showed that PICK Program was effective in relationship confidence, knowledge of warning signs and deciding subscales.

In order to explain the effectiveness of PICK program on relationship confidence it can be stated that in the PICK program, individuals are trained to create a mental trust-profile of someone who wants to marry. In this program, people learn that knowing is necessary to trust the relationship. The main principle of the program is that before you really know people, you should avoid excessive trust in your partner. Therefore, people learn how to put together undeniable information about their partner to create a trustworthy image of partner. Moreover, the program, using the Trilogy of consistency (Figure 2), provided the opportunity for young people to get a realistic picture of their partner. The three major areas that should be compared for consistency are (1) the patterns of partner’s conscience in relationship, (2) the patterns of partner’s family background, and (3) the patterns of partner’s relationships to others, especially previous romantic partners (Van App, 2007). With this skill, young people can determine their level of confidence in knowing their partners by looking at the consistency among patterns from the conscience, patterns from the family, and patterns from other relationships.

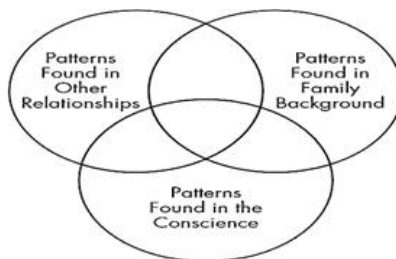


Figure 2  
Trilogy of consistency

Another finding from the study showed that this training program has increased the awareness of warning signs. The more a person is able to recognize the warning signs in a relationship, the less likely to be involved in falling in love (Van Epp, 2008). Van Epp (2007) believes that individuals do not pay attention to warning signs because they create an over-developed emotional attachment that may lead to a separation of HEAD from HEART. The Premarital Interpersonal Choices and Knowledge Program (PICK) can increase attention to warning signs by training these topics in heart knowledge. For example, this APP introduces people with blind signs of love and the consequences of not paying attention to warning signs in a romantic relationship, and it teaches people that accelerating the relationship and traditional dating methods are not emotionally and physically safe, and lead to the selection of undesirable partners.

The other finding of this study showed that this program has played an important role in increasing the awareness of decision. HEAD knowledge education in the field of predictors of a person's behavior, compatibility, communication skills, family background patterns, patterns of communication with others and conscientiousness can play an important role in deciding the individuals to continue or to terminate the relationships. For example compatibility skills can play an important role in decision making in relationships. Compatibility is more complex than just similarity. True compatibility consists of three dimensions: chemistry, complementarity, and comparability. If any of these three components is not present, the true compatibility is compromised (Van Epp, 2007). Teaching this skill in this program can help people make a better decision to continue with their partner.

#### **Contradiction of interests**

The author had no conflict of interest in conducting this study.

#### **Moral considerations**

The implementation of this research has been followed by ethical considerations such as informed consent and confidentiality of information. Also, this article has an ethics code number IR.IAU.SARI.REC.1397.025 approved by the Ethics Committee of the Islamic Azad University of Sari Branch.

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