

Research Paper

Prioritization of Partner Selection Criteria According the Perceptions of Female Students of Qom University of Medical Sciences



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ABSTRACT

Background and Objectives Marriage is one of the effective factors that can promote mental health and lifestyle and reduce the risk of individual and social disorders. This study aims to prioritize the criteria for partner selection according to the perceptions of female students of Qom University of Medical Sciences (QUMS) in 2017.

Methods This is descriptive-analytical study with a cross-sectional design was conducted in 2017. The study population consists of all single female students of QUMS, of whom 373 were selected by multi-stage sampling method. The instrument was the 22-item Preference Criteria of Spouse Selection Inventory (PCSSI) with acceptable validity and reliability. Data were analyzed in SPSS software, version 20 statistical software using descriptive statistics and Friedman's test, Chi-square test, t-test, and one-way analysis of variance.

Results The age range of the participants was 18-38 years, and their semester range was 1-15. The results of Friedman test showed a significant difference between the mean ranks of partner selection criteria. Mental health had the highest priority, while being from the same ethnicity had the lowest priority. There was a significant negative correlation between age and importance of partner selection criteria ($P < 0.001$). In addition, there was a significant difference between students with associate degree and the students with bachelor's degree, master's degree, and PhD degree in terms of the importance of partner selection criteria ($P < 0.001$).

Conclusion Female students of QUMS pay more attention to mental health, responsibility, and chastity criteria in choosing a partner.

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Extended Abstract

Introduction

Marriage has always been emphasized as the most important social behavior in achieving emotional needs and security. Marriage can reduce the risk of individual and social disorders. Partner selection is the primary step for family formation. The process of choosing a partner includes examining and measuring the characteristics of the future spouse such as appearance, income level, socio-economic status, education, job, family, etc. Nowadays, people's beliefs about finding a good partner are usually different before and after marriage. Among the numerous reasons for the high prevalence of divorce and dissatisfaction in married life in the current era is the existence of irrational beliefs about marriage. Studies have suggested that honesty, loyalty, mutual understanding, good mood, no drug addiction, seriousness in life, having a job, being gentle and peaceful are important criteria for partner choice in Iran. So far, no study has been conducted in this regard in Qom province of Iran. On the other hand, the criteria for choosing a partner by young people can change over time and with the change of generations. In this regard, this study aims to prioritize the criteria of partner selection according to the perceptions of female college students in Qom, Iran.

Methods

This is a descriptive-analytical study with a cross-sectional design conducted in 2017. The study population consists of all single female students from [Qom University of Medical Sciences \(QUMS\)](#). Samples were selected by a multi-stage sampling method from among students with different fields of study and faculty. Inclusion criteria were being single, and declaring consent to participate in the study. Married students and those who returned the questionnaires incomplete were excluded. By using Cochran's formula and considering a sampling accuracy of 5% and confidence interval of 95%, the minimum sample size was determined 277. Due to the availability of more students and in order to increase the accuracy, the sample size increased to 400. The questionnaire was the preference criteria of spouse selection inventory (PCSSI). Of 400 questionnaires, 27 incomplete questionnaires were removed and, finally, the data of 373 questionnaires were included in the analysis. The data were analyzed in SPSS, software version 20 statistical using descriptive statistics and Friedman's test, chi-square test, t-test, and one-way analysis of variance.

Results

The age of the participants was ranged 18-38 years, and their semester range was 1-15. The results of Friedman's test showed that the difference between the mean ranks of partner selection criteria were significant. Therefore, the criteria had different importance for the students. Having mental health and being from the same ethnicity ranked in the first and last places, respectively. There was also a negative significant correlation between age and importance of partner selection criteria ($P < 0.001$). Furthermore, there was a significant difference in the importance of partner selection criteria between students with associate degree, bachelor's degree, master's degree, and PhD degree. Scheffe post hoc test was conducted to make multiple comparisons among four educational levels. The results showed the importance of partner selection criteria for female students with associate degree was significantly different from that for students with bachelor's degree, master's degree, and PhD degree. The students with bachelor's, master's, and PhD degree reported a higher level of importance compared to those with associate degree. In comparing students with bachelor's degree, master's degree, and PhD degree, a significant relationship was found only between students with bachelor's degree and PhD degree; no significant difference was found between students with master's and PhD degree.

Discussion

According to female students of [QUMS](#), mental health, responsibility, and chastity were the partner selection criteria with the highest priority, while income level, physical attractiveness, and being from the same ethnicity had the lowest priority. The results of this study can help the mid-term and long-term planning for choosing a partner in Iran. Future studies are recommended to investigate the perceptions of male students regarding the partner selection criteria and compare the results.

Ethical Considerations

Compliance with ethical guidelines

This study was approved by the ethics committee of [Qom University of Medical Sciences](#) (Code: IR.MUQ.REC.1395.130).

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Authors contributions

Study design and supervision: Ahmad Rahbar and Nasreen Ghasemi; data collection: Nasrin Ghasemi; data analysis: Zabihullah Qarlipour and Ahmad Rahbar; writing: Shahrokh Rahbar, Alireza Omid Eskoi, and Ahmad Rahbar.

Conflicts of interest

According to the authors, there is no conflict of interest.

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