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INFLUENCE OF COUNSELLING SERVICE ON PERSONA-SOCIAL FACTORS OF MATE SELECTION AMONG UNDERGRADUATES' STUDENTS IN JALINGO EDUCATION ZONE, TARABA STATE.

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Abstract
This paper investigated the Influence of counselling service on persona-social factors of mate selection among undergraduates' students in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State. Two research questions guided the study and two hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted descriptive survey design. The population of the study is 10,097 students drawn from four state public tertiary educational institutions in Taraba State. The sample size for this study is 370. A Self-developed structured questionnaire titled 'Influence of counselling service on persona-social factors on mate selection questionnaire (ICSPSMSQ) was used for data collection. The reliability of the instrument was obtained using Cronbach-Alpha and yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.779 Descriptive statistics of mean, and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while a Chi-square goodness of fit was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that cultural factors and educational factors are highly Influential on mate selection among undergraduate students in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State, Nigeria. It was concluded that cultural and educational factors significantly influence mate selection among undergraduates. The study recommends that Youths should receive counselling on cultural and educational factors of mate selection before making decision on their choice of mate.
Keywords: Counselling Service, Persona-Social factors, Mate selection

Introduction

The choice of a marriage partner is one of the most serious decisions people face in life. In contemporary Nigeria, this decision usually follows a long learning period during which people engage in more informal and often multi-partner relationships; i.e., dating. Today, human mate-choice criteria are thought to vary mostly between men and women (Buss, 2022). Humans also vary in their ability to translate such criteria into actual mate choice, as a result of some situational constraints that vary from one geographic setting to the other. But the criteria themselves seem to vary little among human populations. Culturally, there are methods by which mate-selection is carried-out in every society, that have to do with the ways of life of the people. In South-western

Nigeria, before now, parents and families played a significant role in mate-selection for their children. The parents and families go as far as negotiating for a wife whom they believe would be compatible with their children (Ogunjuyigbe and Adeyemi, 2023). There are some underling factors that can necessitate such choice of mate by parents. These factors range from the family history of the intended mate; to the intended mate social standing such that issues like health, socio-economic and moral factors come into reckoning.

Selecting a mate is one of the most decisions in our life. In choosing a mate, an individual should analyze himself to know and be clear based on the needs and values about what kind of life he/she ideally wants and do what's best to achieve it. This includes knowing what personality characteristics and values we want our partner to have (Nadig, 2023). And in this case, males and females have different trait preferences in choosing their potential partners. Mate selection has never been dismissed from the society and social conditions (Brown, 2022). Many studies indicate that selecting a mate is one of the most important decisions that individuals make in their lifetime (Abdullah,2019), one of young people's major tasks, especially when they are in university, is to find a state of identity. They need to develop intimacy with others at this stage. In this case, intimacy is an essential ability to relate one's deepest hope and fears to another person, and also to accept the intimacy needs of another person. In the process of mate selection, various qualities may attract a university student to a partner. However, when a relationship develops they may find those qualities undesirable. This realization may lead to an end in the relationship. On the other hand, there is an assumption that individuals bring factors from their own family (before marriage) to marital life, which may affect their relationship. Therefore, mate selection among students should be paid close attention (Young,2023). Health trait, age, body shape, social trait, educational trait, cultural trait like religion and clothing, psychological trait, physical and beauty, genetic trait, occupation, and so on are usually the focuses for mate selection. The concept of each strategy is not universal. For example, based on O'Neil (2022), physical beauty is a key factor if love is an important strategy for partner selection. However, the concept of beauty is different among cultures. In traditional societies in Africa, plump and large bodies are attractive, while in Europe and North of America such physical feature is considered ugly and unhealthy. While in china, moon-shaped face is desirable, angular face is attractive in North Europe.

Educational factors is another important strategy in mate selection (Maliki, 2019). Graduates preferred to marry someone with good educational factors like themselves. Marrying partners with lower educational factors could cause challenges. Similar educational factors results

in similar attitudes, values and believes among spouses (Acitelli, 2021). Religion is an important strategy for selecting mates. Religion is an important criterion for selecting mates (Badahdah & Tiemann, 2019; Maliki, 2019). Religion and politics powerfully relate to individual's values and beliefs (Furnham, 2019). According to Maliki (2019), it is significant for potential mates to have similar religious beliefs. Maliki (2019) showed that students preferred to marry within their religious group. Religion can be a binding force for those with the same religion to get married together. Religion and politics powerfully relate to individual's values and beliefs (Furnham, 2019). According to Maliki (2019), it is significant for potential mates to have similar religious beliefs. Maliki (2019) showed that students preferred to marry within their religious group. Religion can be a binding force for those with the same religion to get married together.

Statement of the Problem

With all that has been seen and experienced by youngsters in the hands of peer groups, the issue of mate selection amongst the youth cannot be over-emphasized. Considering the fact that majority choose mate so as to gain identity. Most of the youngsters have a problem of identity, they are not always sure of who they are, they therefore look for certain facilitating factors for their mate selection. Some factors are well-defined, while some are not, but the fact that there is a facilitating factor which is the determinants of their selection of mates which can either be good or bad has the problem. Today, youths give little or no room to their parents to play the traditional role of negotiating on whom their children marry and this has brought about a drastic change in the family structure (Fasoranti and Owagbemi, 2022). Youngsters tend to choose mates for wrong reasons which need to be paid attention to. University undergraduates are the ones who is just entering maturity, and have the tendency to deviate from social norms as a result of search of identity. If the factor for the selections are not well noted by parents and guardians, the future of such young person is blur because attitudes imbibed by young ones tend to define them and their future.

The issue of mate selection strategy among students of tertiary institutions in Taraba State has remained a problem over the years, and this has resulted to so much failed marriages. Students of tertiary institutions in Taraba State experience challenges of mate selection strategies as a result of negligence of group guidance services. It is against this back drop that the researcher has deemed it fit to conduct this study. The fact that students of tertiary institutions in Taraba State cannot make realistic choice with regard to their mate selection is a serious problem and this study seek to identify the With this socio-cultural change in our society which has also brought about

deviation from our culture, it is therefore necessary to know what necessitate the choice of mate among the university undergraduate. Therefore this study is set out to investigate the perceived influence of counselling on persona-social factors of mate selection among undergraduates' students in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State.

Objective of the Paper

The Purpose of this study is to investigate the Perceived Influence of counselling on persona-social factors of mate selection among undergraduates' students in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State. Specifically the study intends to:

i. Examine the Influence of cultural factors on mate selection among undergraduates' students in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State.
ii. Examine the Influence of educational factors on mate selection among undergraduates' students in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State.

Research Questions

The following research questions have been posed to guide the paper.

i. What is the Influence of cultural factors on mate selection among undergraduates' students in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State?
ii. What is the Influence of educational factors on mate selection among undergraduates' students in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State?

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were formulated for the study and were tested at a level of significance:

$H0_1$ There is no significant Influence of cultural factors on mate selection among undergraduates' students in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State.

$H0_2$ There is no significant Influence of educational factors on mate selection among undergraduates' students in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State.

Literature Review

Selecting a mate is one of the most decisions in our life. In choosing a mate, an individual should analyze himself to know and be clear based on the needs and values about what kind of life he/she ideally wants and do what's best to achieve it. This includes knowing what personality characteristics and values we want our partner to have (Nadig L.A. 2023). And in this case, males and females have different trait preferences in choosing their potential partners. Among male traits, it has been recently advocated that personality traits are important in mate choice and mating

behavior (Godin, et al. 2021). Personality traits refer to behavioral difference between individuals, consistent over time and /or across situations (Reale et al. 2020) personality traits are linked to various life-history traits and physiological traits. During mate choice, females could use male personality types to acquire information on male life-history strategies and choose suitable mates. On one hand, females can all have the same preference if a given male personality type increases reproductive success similarly for all females, on the other hand, females can differ in their preferences for male personality types because of behavioral or genetic compatibilities.

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey design. The population of the study is 6,000 300 level students of Taraba state university, 315 National Diploma 2 students of college of agricultural science and technology and 3,700 ND 2 Students of Taraba state polytechnic and 82 students' college of nursing and midwifery. respectively totalling 10,097 students drawn from Two (4) state public tertiary educational institutions in Taraba State. The sample size for this study is 370 determined using Krejcie and Morgan (1970). Self-developed structured questionnaire was used, titled 'Influence of counselling service on persona-social factors on mate selection questionnaire (ICSPSMSQ). Constructed by the researcher and validated by experts. The ICSPSMSQ was duly validated by three experts in the Faculty of Education, Taraba State University, Jalingo. The reliability of the instrument was obtained using Cronbach-Alpha and yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.779 Descriptive statistics of mean, and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while a Chi-square goodness of fit was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Data Presentation

Research Question One: What is the Influence of cultural factors on mate selection among undergraduates' students in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State?

Table 1. Mean and Standard Deviations of Rating scale on the Influence of cultural factors on mate selection among undergraduates' students in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State.

S/N	Statement	Mean	Std. dev.	Dec.
1.	Partner must be from the same ethnic group	2.88	0.62	HI
2.	Partner must be of the same tribe	3.44	1.16	HI
3.	Partner must be from the same race	3.99	1.09	HI

4.	Partner must have the same cultural factors	2.59	1.03	HI
5.	socially dominant and culturally successful marriage partner	3.50	1.02	HI
6.	marrying a culturally successful partner provides with social benefits	3.51	0.80	HI
7.	marrying a culturally successful partner provides with reproductive benefits	3.44	1.50	HI
8.	marrying a culturally successful partner provides with psychological benefits	3.50	1.19	HI
9.	The environment where I live has a lot to do with who I choose as my mate	2.66	1.08	HI
10.	Before going into a relationship I need to know if there are any similarities between me and my choice	3.22	1.09	HI
Cluster Mean/Standard deviation		**3.27**	**1.11**	**HI**

Source: Field work (2025). Criterion Mean: X≥ 2.50=>Had Influence; X ≤2.50 => Very low Influence

Results in Table,1 showed response on the Influence of cultural factors on mate selection among undergraduates' students in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State. All the items have the mean rating scales in the region of 2.5 to 3.49 which shows high Influence of cultural factors on mate selection among undergraduates' students in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State.

Research Question Two: What is the Influence of educational factors on mate selection among undergraduates' students in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State?

Table 2 Mean and Standard Deviations of Rating Scale on the Influence of educational factors on mate selection among undergraduates' students in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State.

S/N	Statement	Mean	Std. dev.	Decision
1.	I want my potential partner to have a similar level of education as with mine	2.57	1.31	HI
2.	I consider a potential mate's academic achievements, intellectual abilities, or alma mater when evaluating them as a partner	2.66	0.16	HI

3. I believe that individuals with higher levels of education tend to prioritize different mate qualities (e.g., intelligence, career ambition) compared to those with less education.	3.61	1.31	HI
4. I give much weight to a potential partner's educational factors when considering long-term compatibility and relationship satisfaction	3.22	0.17	HI
5. I believe that educational homogamy (similarity in education levels) between partners is important for a successful relationship.	3.53	1.33	HI
6. The importance I place on a partner's educational level is high	2.75	0.15	HI
7. I don't felt judged or stigmatized by others for my choice of romantic partner based on educational differences	3.66	1.11	HI
8. Individuals from prestigious universities or highly-ranked institutions have an advantage in the dating market within your social circles	3.60	0.38	HI
9. I consider a potential partner's future educational or career aspirations when evaluating them as a mate	3.54	0.19	HI
10. My educational factors and experiences shape your preferences and approach to mate selection	3.66	1.12	HI
Cluster Mean/Standard deviation	**3.28**	**0.85**	**HI**

Source: Field work (2025). Criterion Mean: X≥ 2.50=>Had Influence; X ≤2.50 => Very low Influence

Results in Table 2 showed responses on the Influence of educational factors on mate selection among undergraduates' students in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State. All the items have the mean rating scales in the region of 2.5 to 3.49 which shows that the Influence of educational factors on mate selection among undergraduates' students in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State is high.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant Influence of cultural factors on mate selection among undergraduates' students in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State.

Table.3 Chi-square Test on the Influence of cultural factors on mate selection among undergraduates' students in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State.

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	82.899	18	.000
Likelihood Ratio	76.183	18	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	70.717	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	185		

From Table,3 chi-square at 18 degree of freedom ($\chi^2 = 82.899$, $p = .000$). This signifies that there is significant Influence of cultural factors on mate selection among undergraduates' students in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State. Thus, null hypothesis that There is no significant Influence of cultural factors on mate selection among undergraduates' students in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State is not retained. Rejecting the hypothesis implies that cultural factors is Influential on mate selection among undergraduates' students in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant Influence of educational factors on mate selection among undergraduates' students in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State.

Table 4.: Chi-square Test on the Influence of educational factors on mate selection among undergraduates' students in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State.

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	83.699	19	.032
Likelihood Ratio	78.665	19	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	80.042	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	185		

Table, 4. presents chi-square test at 19 degree of freedom ($\chi^2 = 83.699$, $p = .032$). This signifies that There is significant Influence of educational factors on mate selection among undergraduates' students in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State. Thus, null hypothesis that says There is no significant Influence of educational factors on mate selection among undergraduates' students in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State is not retained. Rejecting the hypothesis implies that educational factors is influential on mate selection among undergraduates' students in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State.

Discussions

Results in table1 showed response on the Influence of cultural factors on mate selection among undergraduates' students in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State. All the items have the mean

rating scales in the region of 2.5 to 3.49 which shows high Influence of cultural factors on mate selection among undergraduates' students in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State. The cluster has a mean of **3.27**; this implies that cultural factors is highly Influential on mate selection among undergraduates' students in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State, Nigeria. Similarly, chi-square at 18 degree of freedom ($\chi^2 = 82.899$, $p = .000$). This signifies that there is significant influence of cultural factors on mate selection among undergraduates' students in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State.

The result is in Contradict the result of Odio, (2021) determine the factors considered in making choice of partners in marriage by final year students and elite youths in general in a Nigerian University. The findings revealed that Sociological factors played the topmost part in influencing marriage choice, this was followed by physical factors which has virtually the same level of consideration. The least considered factor was cultural factors.

The present study supports the findings of John, (2019) Investigated factors responsible for cohabitation among students of Federal University of Technology Minna, Niger State, Nigeria. The findings in terms of prevailing factors of cohabitation include: Peer pressure, inadequate hostel accommodation, poverty, access to pornographic materials and inability to manage sexual urges among others. Some of the recommendations include; concerted effort should be made to provide additional on-campus hostel accommodation/facilities, student orientation should be organized as soon as new students resume, rules regulating students' conduct in hostel accommodation should extend to off-campus accommodation particularly in cultures that frown at cohabitation and timely organization of seminar and workshops for students and parents on reproductive health, social skills, sporting activities and distracting effect of cohabitation.

The study is in agreement with the study conducted by Saminu (2018) Investigated the Role of Personality Traits in Mate Selection Preferences among College Students in Karnataka. Findings are presented in a simple percentage. The trait preferences of the respondents were influenced by their sex. Never the less this study suggests the similarity that males and females put importance to traits, which can help them develop and maintain an intimate and strong interpersonal relationship with their mate. The study is in agreement with the study conducted by Sandi (2020) Investigated the role of education in mate selection among college students both urban and rural areas in Bagalkot district, Karnataka.

Conclusions

Based on the analyses of the data, the findings revealed that cultural and educational factors significantly influence mate selection among undergraduates.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the findings:

The study recommends that Youths should receive counselling on cultural and educational factors of mate selection before making decision on their choice of mate.

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