

Chinese and American Individuals' Mate Selection Pressures: Self-Focused vs. Mate-Focused

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INTRODUCTION

Mate selection pressures can be common sources of stress for unmarried individuals. Although many studies are informative to the pressures individuals may experience in the mate selection process (e.g., Iwasawa, 2004; Li, Bailey, Kenrick, and Linsenmeier, 2002; Mu and Xie, 2014), few studies focus specifically on such pressures. The lack of empirical research on mate selection pressures might be partly attributable to the practice of inferring one gender's mate selection pressures from the other gender's mate selection preferences and demands. Such inferences may be valid if heterosexual men and women have a shared understanding of what members of the other gender demand and desire, but this agreement is not guaranteed.

Moreover, to our knowledge, no empirical study has explored the directionality of mate selection pressures. That is, in the mate selection process, individuals might focus more on their own traits, feeling pressured about whether these traits will be good enough for their possible mate; we refer to such mate selection pressures as self-focused. Alternatively, individuals might focus more on the traits of their possible mate, feeling pressured about securing a mate who possesses traits that will be good enough for them; we refer to such mate selection pressures as mate-focused. Although inevitably, individuals may experience both types of mate selection pressures, their relative focus on one or the other type might shed light on the sources of their anxiety and stress in the mate selection process, as well as on related values and norms of their respective cultural and societal contexts.

In the current study, we are interested in the relative focuses of individuals' mate selection pressures (i.e., self-focused vs. mate-focused), and particularly, cultural differences between the focuses of Chinese and American individuals. We are also interested in whether the two genders agree on the mate selection pressures facing men and women, and whether one gender's self-focused pressures reflect the other gender's mate-focused pressures. We will first briefly review theories that seem most relevant to individuals' mate selection pressures and their relative focuses.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

Sexual Strategies Theory

Sexual strategies theory (Kenrick and Trost, 1989; Trivers, 1972) suggests that women are valued for their ability to produce viable offspring, as evidenced by traits such as beauty and youth, whereas men are valued for their ability to help raise the offspring, as evidenced by traits such as social status and wealth. Accordingly, individuals might experience pressures concerning particular mate selection qualities that tend to be gender-specific, most evidently, men's wealth and status and women's attractiveness and youth. For instance, Japanese men between 25 to 34 years old reported "can't afford marriage" (Iwasawa, 2004, p. 83) as a top reason when asked why they had not married; by contrast, Chinese women reported "gender double standard of aging" biased against women when describing their mate selection experience (Ji, 2015, p. 1065).

Necessity Traits

Further stressing the importance of traits such as women's attractiveness and men's status in the mate selection process, Li et al. (2002) proposed differences between luxury traits and necessity traits in individuals' mate selection criteria. They argued that attractiveness was a necessity to men, status and resources were necessities to women, and kindness and intelligence were necessities to both men and women. Following this line of

reasoning, individuals might feel the greatest pressure to secure necessity traits in their possible mate: men might feel most pressured to find a spouse who is acceptably attractive, kind, and intelligent, whereas women might feel most pressured to find a spouse who is acceptably wealthy, kind, and intelligent, and has a desirable social status.

Assortative Mating

Assortative mating refers to “the nonrandom coupling of individuals on the basis of resemblance on one or more genotypic or phenotypic characteristics” (Buss and Barnes, 1986, p. 560). Many empirical studies suggest couples show positive assortment across a range of traits, such as social status and physical attractiveness (e.g., Buss, 1985; Buss and Barnes, 1986). Positive assortment might be a particularly relevant concept in Chinese mate selection, evident in traditional key indicators of suitable matching, such as “men dang hu dui,” which refers to mating based on comparable family background and social status. Following the theory of positive assortment, individuals’ own mate selection assets would determine the kind of mate they might be able to attract and secure, and consequently, individuals might feel greater self-focused pressures.

Contrast Effects

Contrast effects might also influence individuals’ mate selection pressures. “A contrast effect is a tendency for judgments along a stimulus dimension (such as weight or temperature) to be shifted away from a prior set of extreme stimuli in the same class (e.g., the same 10-ounce stimulus is judged lighter after lifting a 3-pound weight and heavier after a 2-ounce weight)” (Gutierrez, Kenrick, and Partch, 1999, p. 1126). Applied to mate selection pressures, contrast effects would suggest that individuals’ perceptions of competitors in mate selection and these competitors’ assets affect individuals’ mate selection pressures. For instance, exposure to physically attractive women lowered women’s perceptions of their own mate selection value, and exposure to socially dominant men lowered men’s perceptions of their own mate selection value (Gutierrez et al., 1999). In such cases, individuals might feel

greater self-focused pressures, including how they themselves might compare to possible competitors in the mate selection market.

Cultural Differences Between Chinese and American Mate Selection Markets

Although studies have found substantial commonalities in individuals' mate selection preferences among different cultures (e.g., Buss et al., 1990), culturally embedded mate selection priorities merit notice. For instance, consider the following two Chinese proverbs: “jia you chou qi shi ge bao” (the ugly wife is a treasure at home); and “chou qi ke yi bai tou” (the ugly wife can grow old with you). Such sayings suggest that it might be advantageous for men to marry ugly women because they might be more dedicated to domestic duties and less likely to have extramarital affairs. Although men might naturally desire an attractive wife, Chinese men might consider other traits in their potential wives more necessary, such as chastity (e.g., Buss, 1989).

More importantly, the condition of the mate selection market, such as the availability of single men and women of marriage-age, may also affect the focus of mate selection pressures. The highly skewed sex ratio in China produced an overabundance of marriage-age men but a stark shortage of marriage-age women (e.g., Huang, 2014; Poston and Glover, 2005; Trent and South, 2011). The skewed sex ratio in China compared with America likely placed Chinese men in a more challenging position to secure a mate compared to their American counterparts. The shortage of women in general and the cultural prescriptions such as the hypergamy norm in mate selection (women marrying men of higher status) (e.g., Raymo and Iwasawa, 2005; To, 2013) might lead men with little education and women with high education attainment to experience heightened mate selection pressures (Ji and Yeung, 2014).

Mu and Xie (2014) also noted Chinese individuals' focus on necessity considerations in mate selection in recent years, likely resulting from “increasingly severe economic pressures” (p. 27) as women face steeper competition in the labor market during the post-

1990 reform period and men face higher costs to attract mates and establish households. Moreover, Chinese men might feel further pressured about obtaining sufficient resources because of the cultural norm that demands the groom or his side of the family to provide a residence for the newlyweds, or at least be the chief financier of the residence and other wedding related expenses (Wei and Zhang, 2009).

During mate selection, individuals from collectivistic cultures may value social conformity and others' opinions most, whereas individuals from individualistic cultures tend to place the greatest value on romantic love (e.g., Dion and Dion, 1993; Toro-Morn and Sprecher, 2003). The different emphases could suggest that individuals from collectivistic cultures might feel more pressured to conform to others' opinions in mate selection than individuals from individualistic cultures might feel. Compounding Chinese individuals' mate selection pressures are the meanings associated with marriage that are deeply rooted in the collective, Confucius cultural context of the Chinese society. For instance, Confucian teachings recognize individuals' lives as "the continuation of their parents' physical lives" (Hwang, 1999, p. 169) and being childless as the worst offense against filial piety (e.g., "bu xiao you san, wu hou wei da"). As attaining the milestone of marriage connects closely to Chinese individuals' responsibility to their family of origin, the pressure to fulfill this duty in a timely manner can be intense.

At the same time, perhaps as a result of China's policies promoting gender equality (e.g., the Marriage Law) and economic development (e.g., the Open Door Policy) in the last few decades, Chinese women are expected to participate in the labor market and contribute to the family's finances (The Second Investigation of Chinese Women's Social Status, 2001). Although this new expectation may indeed mean increased pressures to fulfill the roles of a professional, a mom, and a wife, all at the same time (e.g., Kim and Ling, 2001; Park, Smith, and Correll, 2008), it represents a shift away from the traditional gender role division. Similarly, from 1939 to 1996, Americans increasingly conferred value on financial prospects, and by men more than women, likely reflecting women's increasing access to economic

resources and the greater variance among women in these access levels (Buss, Shackelford, Kirkpatrick, and Larsen, 2001).

Based on the literature reviewed above, we expect to observe variant relative focuses of mate selection pressures between Chinese and American individuals and between men and women. We expect men to experience greater pressures about their access to resources (e.g., wealth, status) than women do, and women to experience greater pressures about their age and attractiveness than men do. We also expect Chinese individuals to experience greater mate selection pressures in general and more self-focused pressures than American individuals do. Because this study is predominantly inductive, we do not propose additional hypotheses.

METHOD

Sample

The data for this study form a subset of data collected in 2013 for a larger study on mate selection perceptions and criteria. Participants were never married heterosexual adults, 18 to 39 years old, and citizens and residents of either China or America. We first enlisted contacts in China and America to forward the recruitment letter and the survey link to potential participants. To encourage survey participation, we offered a lottery incentive to participants in the form of one \$50 Amazon gift card and two \$25 Amazon gift cards. These cards were offered separately to Chinese and American participants. Participants were also offered the choice to receive a summary of the study's findings. This recruitment method yielded 708 participants. Additionally, we recruited 672 participants through online survey panel services provided by two secure, encrypted websites: <http://www.qualtrics.com>, for the recruitment of American participants, and <http://www.sojump.com>, for the recruitment of Chinese participants. The websites were responsible for compensating their panelists. In total, 918 participants responded to an open-ended question on their perceived mate selection pressures, including 489 Chinese and 429 Americans. It is unclear whether the participants

who skipped this question did not experience or perceive any mate selection pressures, or simply chose not to discuss this issue. Table 1 summarizes participants' demographic information.

Insert Table 1 about Here

Data

Participants first rated how well the following five statements measuring their felt pressures applied to them (1 = *not at all*, 5 = *completely*): “I feel pressured by my peers to get married”; “I feel pressured by my parents to get married”; “my parents will decide whom I will marry”; “it is important to my parents that I get married”; and “it is important to me that I get married” ($\alpha = .75$). The mean of these item scores represented participants' overall mate selection pressure.

We asked participants: “What are your views of the different pressures, if any, on men and women in choosing a spouse?”, providing separate spaces for participants to list the “pressure on men specifically” and the “pressure on women specifically.” To ensure conceptual equivalency between the English and Chinese versions of the survey, we adopted a modified translation protocol suggested by Herrera, DelCampo, and Arnes (1993), and back-translated the Chinese version of the survey into English (for a detailed discussion of the translation procedure, see Chen, Austin, Miller, and Piercy, 2015).

Analysis

We conducted a directed content analysis of participants' qualitative responses (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). To construct our coding scheme, we referenced various mate selection survey instruments (e.g., Buss et al., 2001; Toro-Morn and Sprecher, 2003), the Big Six

Factors (i.e., Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability, Intellect, and Honesty-Humility) (e.g., De Raad et al., 2010; Saucier, 2009), and the coding scheme of our previous cross-cultural study on Chinese and American individuals' mate selection criteria using data collected in the same larger study (Chen et al., 2015). We also identified patterns by immersing ourselves in the data to develop additional codes specific to mate selection pressures.

We established clear coding rules to differentiate codes that were at times closely connected. For example, we coded the response "More pressure for women to get married. Seen as more 'unacceptable' for them to be unmarried" with the code "get married," and the response "to marry young and early" with the code "age." Though both responses referred to the urgency to marry, the first one focused on achieving the married status, and the second one, on the perceived deadline to achieve this status. Additionally, when a participant named or referred to one mate selection pressure multiple times, we only assigned the corresponding code once, to avoid over-representation of any single participant's experiences. We also employed coding categories. Among these categories, "self-focused pressures" (i.e., feeling pressured about one's own mate selection qualities) and "mate-focused pressures" (i.e., feeling pressured about securing a mate who possesses certain mate selection qualities) include more nuanced sub-codes.

After discussing, establishing, and revising the coding rules and coding scheme, two coders participated in coder training, and achieved an acceptable inter-rater reliability in the pilot test. We then recorded an inter-rater reliability of $K = .92$, using Cohen's Kappa and 10% of the total sample ($N = 92$) (randomly selected). The two coders resolved their differences of opinions through discussions.

Once coding was complete, we compared the cultural and gender differences in participants' perceived mate selection pressures, using chi-square tests with Yate's correction. We examined: a) cultural differences between Chinese men and American men's views of the unique mate selection pressures on men and on women, as well as between such

views of Chinese women and American women; b) gender differences between Chinese men and women's views of the unique mate selection pressures on men and on women, as well as between such views of American men and women; and c) whether women's self-focused pressures reflect men's mate-focused pressures, and vice versa, in each cultural context. We also conducted a two-way analysis of variance, with culture and gender as the independent variables and overall mate selection pressure as the dependent variable.

RESULTS

Mate Selection Pressures – Overall

Chinese individuals reported significantly higher overall mate selection pressure than American individuals did, $F(1, 910) = 322.86, p < .001$. There was also a significant interaction effect between country and gender on participants' overall mate selection pressure, $F(1, 910) = 5.39, p < .05$. More specifically, Chinese men reported higher pressure than Chinese women did, whereas there was no significant difference between American men and women's levels of mate selection pressure.

Self-Focused vs. Mate-Focused Mate Selection Pressures

Insert Table 2 about Here

Insert Table 3 about Here

Overall, Chinese participants overwhelmingly seemed to perceive the greatest amount of pressures regarding individuals' own mate selection qualities, and markedly more so

compared to American participants (see Tables 2 & 3). For perceived pressures on men, 80.3% of all codes from Chinese men (compared to 45.7% from American men) and 86.0% from Chinese women (compared to 29.8% from American women) concerned self-focused pressures. Similarly, for perceived pressures on women, 68.8% of all codes from Chinese men (compared to 47.8% from American men) and 73.2% from Chinese women (compared to 46.5% from American women) concerned self-focused pressures.

Most notably, significantly more Chinese men than American men felt pressured about their wealth ($\chi^2 = 113.06, p < .001$); significantly more Chinese women than American women perceived that men were pressured about their wealth ($\chi^2 = 239.03, p < .001$). Additionally, more Chinese men than American men perceived that women were pressured about their age ($\chi^2 = 21.96, p < .001$). Also, more American women than Chinese women perceived that men felt pressured about being a provider ($\chi^2 = 11.92, p < .001$), getting married ($\chi^2 = 30.14, p < .001$), and having children ($\chi^2 = 36.65, p < .001$). At the same time, more Chinese women than American women felt pressured about their age ($\chi^2 = 41.95, p < .001$), attractiveness ($\chi^2 = 13.66, p < .001$), and family background ($\chi^2 = 11.17, p < .001$).

Though both Chinese women and American women seemed to feel pressured about getting married, they felt slightly different types of pressure in this regard. American women seemed to experience tremendous pressure to attain the married status that is societally and culturally preferred over singlehood, whereas Chinese women seemed most stressed about securing a mate soon enough, thus focusing on the timing of marriage. For instance, one American woman expressed, “In general I think women are more pressured to get married, regardless of his qualities. At least you can say you were married.” Another stated, “... And pressure just to be married—otherwise she is a ‘spinster’ or some other derogatory term that says there is something wrong with her if she isn’t married.” In comparison, one Chinese woman stated, “As women get older, their choices become increasingly limited;” another wrote, “[Women] over 26 are considered leftover women.”

In contrast, American participants perceived pressure to secure certain qualities in their possible mate considerably more frequently than Chinese participants did. For instance, more American men than Chinese men felt pressured to marry an attractive woman ($\chi^2 = 33.14, p < .001$), and perceived that women were pressured to marry a wealthy man ($\chi^2 = 11.41, p < .001$) and a provider ($\chi^2 = 18.99, p < .001$). Similarly, more American women than Chinese women felt pressured to marry a wealthy man ($\chi^2 = 13.19, p < .001$) and a provider ($\chi^2 = 41.30, p < .001$). Additionally, more American women than Chinese women perceived that men were pressured to marry someone attractive ($\chi^2 = 91.10, p < .001$), family-oriented (general) ($\chi^2 = 29.45, p < .001$), and with a good personality ($\chi^2 = 13.01, p < .001$).

Consensus Between Men and Women

Overall, Chinese men and women generally agreed on the mate selection pressures facing each gender. For example, 73.1% of Chinese men and 74.4% of Chinese women found wealth a pressure for men. Nevertheless, more Chinese women than Chinese men perceived that women were pressured about their age ($\chi^2 = 10.02, p < .01$). In comparison, American men and women held more divergent views on each gender's mate selection pressures. Overall, American men perceived self-focused pressures for men more often than American women did ($\chi^2 = 14.07, p < .001$), and mate-focused pressures for men less often than American women did ($\chi^2 = 15.49, p < .001$). More specifically, more American men than American women perceived that men were pressured about their attractiveness ($\chi^2 = 4.82, p < .05$), but fewer American men than American women perceived that men were pressured to marry someone attractive ($\chi^2 = 6.54, p < .05$) and family-oriented (general) ($\chi^2 = 7.49, p < .01$). Furthermore, more American women than American men perceived that women were pressured about their age ($\chi^2 = 6.33, p < .05$), getting married ($\chi^2 = 7.60, p < .01$), and having children ($\chi^2 = 6.45, p < .05$). Fewer American women than American men perceived that women were pressured about their personality ($\chi^2 = 5.47, p < .05$) and wealth ($\chi^2 = 3.95, p < .05$).

From One Gender's Self-Focused Pressures to the Other Gender's Mate-Focused Pressures

Although Chinese men and women shared similar perceptions of each gender's mate selection pressures, neither gender's self-focused pressures reflected the other gender's mate-focused pressures well. For instance, 73.1% of Chinese men felt pressured about their wealth, whereas only 2.1% of Chinese women felt pressured to marry a wealthy man. Likewise, 25.3% of Chinese women felt pressured to be attractive, but only 1.4% of Chinese men felt pressured to marry an attractive woman.

American men's self-focused pressures showed greater alignment with American women's mate-focused pressures, and vice versa. For instance, 15.8% of American men felt pressured about their wealth, and 9.7% of American women felt pressured to marry a wealthy man. Similarly, 12.6% of American women felt pressured to be attractive, and 19.7% of American men felt pressured to marry an attractive woman.

DISCUSSION

Overall, Chinese participants' mate selection pressures overwhelmingly concerned their own mate selection qualities, whereas American participants' mate selection pressures were considerably more mate-focused. Moreover, both Chinese and American participants' mate selection pressures demonstrated gendered focuses.

Chinese Individuals' Mate Selection Pressures

Chinese individuals' heightened pressures on their own mate selection qualities are congruent with characteristics of the Chinese culture and our hypotheses. Perhaps most importantly, individuals from a collectivistic culture (as has been traditionally the norm in China) expect that group members, including themselves, will all contribute to the group's performance and accomplishments, and that such contributions are moreover defining

aspects of their role in the group; individuals from an individualistic culture (as has been traditionally the norm in America) might be more motivated by self-interest and may, as a result, emphasize personal gain over the collective good (e.g., Earley, 1989). Consequently, Chinese individuals might be more concerned about enhancing their own mate selection qualities to contribute sufficiently to their marital unit than their American counterparts might be.

In addition to the intense self-focus, Chinese participants' mate selection pressures also centered heavily on resource-centered necessity traits (Li et al., 2002), with wealth and career most frequently reported as pressures for Chinese men, and age and attractiveness, for Chinese women. It is worth noting that Chinese men and women largely agreed upon the gendered, resources-focused mate selection pressures facing men and women, respectively, which consensus may suggest internalized societal and cultural values. Similarly, a high degree of societal consensus on mate selection values and norms (e.g., hypergamy, focus on resource-centered necessity traits) in the collective Chinese society might prompt individuals to focus on improving their own qualities on the most valued traits, because such enhancement may seem to naturally grant them access to possible mates of accordingly higher qualities. An alternative explanation of Chinese individuals' self-focused resource-centered mate selection pressures may relate to the rising divorce rate and the public's increasingly accepting attitude toward divorce (Xu, Xie, Liu, Xia, and Liu, 2007). As such, relying on spouse's various assets might not always benefit the individual. Pressuring oneself to possess high mate selection qualities possibly reflects anxiety over the stability and longevity of the marriage union.

American Participants' Mate Selection Pressures

For American participants, one gender's self-focused mate selection pressures were much more reflective of the other gender's mate-focused pressures, suggesting that American individuals' mate selection pressures might be more motivated by their possible mate's mate selection demands. As such, American participants' mate selection pressures seemed

particularly aligned with the prescriptions of sexual strategies theory (i.e., women are valued for their ability to produce viable offspring, and men, for their ability to help raise the offspring) (e.g., Kenrick and Trost, 1989; Trivers, 1972). An alternative, and perhaps more pessimistic, explanation for American participants' focus on their possible mate's mate selection qualities might be linked to the increases in narcissism (Twenge, 2006) and decreases in empathy (Konrath, O'Brien, and Hsing, 2011) observed in American young adults. If individuals feel that they are perfect as they are, they might be more concerned about finding a mate that may be good enough for them.

Furthermore, the divergent views on each gender's mate selection pressures between American men and women (e.g., fewer American men than women perceived that men were pressured to marry someone attractive) might reflect a rater bias in terms of what is considered socially progressive and appropriate. For instance, a man worried about marrying an attractive spouse might be viewed as shallow or devaluing of women. The different views between American men and women might also reflect the well-documented self-serving bias: individuals tend to overestimate their own value and their contribution to joint tasks (e.g., Babcock and Loewenstein, 1997). As such, individuals may be inclined to report more self-focused pressures and less mate-focused pressures. For example, a greater number of American women than men reported pressures for women concerning age, getting married, and having children.

Gendered Mate Selection Pressures

For both Chinese and Americans, there is heightened pressure for women to marry. Such pressure on women, a shared perception of both men and women, in part reflects social bias against women who remain single, "seen as less feminine, less loving and nurturing, less sexually attractive and more selfish" (Cockrum and White, 1985, p. 551). Consistent with findings in the existing literature, for Chinese women, the pressure is not only to marry, but also to do so at a sufficiently young age (Ji, 2015). Chinese women's pressure to marry young might serve to reinforce the preferred status hypergamy, as the preservation of age

hypergamy compensates the narrowing gap of education attainment between Chinese men and women (Mu and Xie, 2014).

Contradictory to previous studies that found Chinese individuals showed higher degrees of sexism—both hostile and benevolent—toward women than American participants did (e.g., Chen, Fiske, and Lee, 2009), fewer Chinese participants perceived pressure to conform to traditional gender roles for either men or women than American participants did. American participants' perceived pressures to conform to traditional gender roles are also evident in the more specific pressures articulated such as for men to provide and for women to marry a provider, and for women to be family-oriented and for men to marry someone family-oriented.

At the same time, given Chinese participants' substantial focus on men's wealth and women's age and attractiveness—traits of traditional gender roles, it is conceivable that Chinese men and women might have internalized certain traditional gender roles more than Americans have, in this way accepting such gendered pressures as the norm. Accordingly, they may experience these pressures as self-focused. In the existing literature, self-focus has been linked to, for instance, poorer sexual experience (e.g., Dove and Wiederman, 2000), sexual dysfunction (e.g., Ingram, 1990), and anxiety (e.g., Clark and Wells, 1995). Mor and Winquist's (2002) meta-analysis, synthesizing 226 independent effect sizes, found that overall, self-focus was associated with negative affect. Given the intense self-focus of Chinese participants' mate selection pressures and the fact that Chinese participants reported significantly higher mate selection pressures than American participants did, self-focused pressures might contribute to a stressful mate selection experience more than mate-focused pressures do.

Strengths and Limitations

In interpreting the results of this study, it is important to note that mate selection pressures are not identical to mate selection criteria or preferences. The intense self-focus of

Chinese participants' mate selection pressures does not indicate that they require less of their possible mate than their American counterparts do. In fact, many studies have found that individuals from different cultures share certain mate selection criteria (e.g., Buss, 1989). The differences in individuals' perceptions of mate selection pressures might be taken, most usefully, to reflect their distinctive social and cultural contexts, norms, and values, as well as to suggest possible directions for therapeutic interventions when working with individuals struggling in the mate selection process.

Furthermore, the findings of this study were limited by our recruitment and data collection methods, which rendered the findings more representative of individuals who are comfortable with and can access the Internet than those with restricted affordances in this respect. Moreover, individuals of a lower socioeconomic status and other underrepresented subgroups of the general population might experience additional or variant mate selection pressures, and their mate selection pressures might focus on different areas. Despite these recognized limitations, the findings from the current study illumine different focuses of the mate selection pressures for individuals from two distinctive cultures, and in this respect, contribute to an important but under-studied area of the literature. Researchers and applied professionals should consider the relative focuses of individuals' mate selection pressures and their cultural and societal background as they attempt to understand and help to alleviate and cope with the stress that individuals may experience during their mate selection process.

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Table 1

Participants' Demographic Information

Demographics	China (<i>n</i> = 489)	U.S. (<i>n</i> = 429)
Mean age (SD)	26.0 (3.9)	25.3 (5.1)
Gender		
Male	208	152
Female	281	277
Percentage of only children	61.9%	12.4%
Relationship status		
Single and not involved in a relationship	48.7%	50.6%
Dating but not serious	8.6%	10.0%
In a serious relationship	37.6%	31.9%
Engaged	5.1%	7.5%
Highest education level		
Did not graduate from high school	.4%	1.6%
Graduated from high school	3.3%	12.1%
Had some college education	1.2%	32.2%
Had an associate degree	22%	7.2%
Had a bachelor's degree	49.7%	14.9%
Had some graduate education	7.2%	16.6%
Had a master's degree or higher	16.2%	15.4%

Table 2

Self-Focused and Mate-Focused Mate Selection Pressures on Men and Women – Between-Country Differences

Codes	Pressures for Men				Pressures for Women			
	Men		Women		Men		Women	
	China	US	China	US	China	US	China	US
Self-focused								
Age	2	1	4	5	61***	13	123**	50
Attractiveness	7*	14	6	10	50	28	71***	35
Get married	1	1	1	3		6*	2	35***
Education	1		2	2	4	1	16**	3
Family background	2		6	1	4	1	13***	
Family orientation								
Have children	1	2	3	8	5	10	3	43***
FO general	2	4	1	1	6	6	3	14*
Career	15	7	21*	7	3		10	3
Personality	10	13	14	12	20	12	19*	7
Be a provider	8	14	4	22***				
Social status	10	3	15*	4	1	2	3	
Wealth	152*	24	209**	26	14	8	15*	4
Other	8	4	16	6	7	6	5	14
Mate-focused								
Attractiveness	3	30***	4	88***	1	5	1	12**
Family orientation								
Have children		2	1	12**		1		4
FO general	1	5	1	32***		2		7*
Personality	3	7	5	25***	11	12	15	23
Be a provider					1	17***	3	47***
Wealth				4	3	15***	6	27***
Other		7**		7*	9	1	10	20

Note. Chinese male, $N = 208$; Chinese female, $N = 281$; US male, $N = 152$; US female, $N = 277$. “FO” denotes family orientation. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$, indicating a statistically significant between-country difference within gender, as calculated using the chi-square difference test with Yate’s correction.

Table 3

Code Counts by Category – Between-Country Differences

Categories	Pressures for Men				Pressures for Women			
	Men		Women		Men		Women	
	China	US	China	US	China	US	China	US
Self-focused pressures	220***	91	302***	117	179***	98	292***	217
Mate-focused pressures	7	57***	12	180***	27	69***	40	164***
Pressure from parents and family	21*	5	19	18	28*	9	27	16
Conformity to traditional gender roles		12***	1	25***		5*	1	14**
Pressure from society	8	5	6	7	5	4	5	18**
Pressure from peers	2	7	1	10*	4	6	5	16*
Comparability	6	1	5	2	4		6	2
Mate selection opportunities	6	1	1		5	1	11**	
Other	4	20***	4	34***	8	13	12	20
Total counts	274	199	351	393	260	205	399	467

Note. Chinese male, $N = 208$; Chinese female, $N = 281$; US male, $N = 152$; US female, $N = 277$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$, indicating a statistically significant between-country difference within gender, as calculated using the chi-square difference test with Yate's correction. For the categories of "self-focused pressures" and "mate-focused pressures," the comparison is based on the total code counts, because these two categories have sub-categories and one participant's response might be assigned several codes of the same main category. For other categories, the comparison is based on the group sample sizes, as participants' responses cannot be assigned more than one code of the same category.