

## Marital prospects of Muslims in the health industry: changing misbeliefs about Muslimah healthcare providers

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### Abstract

**Background:** The marriage market seems to have trend reversely for Muslimah health care professionals. Such has been related to later age of academic graduation, conferred careership status, and the “new” financial advantage. These typically contribute for the Muslimah to be on the extreme end of the marriage deterrent gap.

**Methods/Result:** This study aims at providing a review of Islamic virtues typical of Muslimahs and why insightful Muslim men, especially those working in the health industries, need to be consciously available to reverse this negative trend. Identified as central to the reversal is the universal golden rule model of premarital education, that emphasized the centrality of Deen as enshrined in the Quran and Hadith.

**Conclusion:** The reviewers concluded that the deterrent to marital prospects of Muslimah working in the health sector can be reverse utilizing the universal premarital golden rule model.

Key words: Muslimah, Healthcare professionals, Marital prospects, Health industry

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### Introduction

Marriage is a major biopsychosocial milestone that both men and women of all human cultures globally participate in. The seal of the prophets, Muhammad (SAW), described it as a core act of living that guaranteed those engaging in it the completion of half of their live purpose in worship. That is “When a person has married,

he has completed half of his religion; so let him fear Allaah with regard to the other half.”<sup>1</sup> Such is the value of marriage that several studies have reported. Several other benefits of marriage range from: health behaviours to health care access, use and cost; mental health; physical health and longevity; and intergenerational health effect.<sup>2</sup>

The importance of this human activity has led to the existence of marriage market. This market dynamic has been observed to have promoted positive assortative marital union among those with western education.<sup>3</sup> The study emphasised higher educational gap which exists between men and women. Such result might contribute to why the marriage market seems to be reversely skewed for unmarried female healthcare workers compared to other women, since fewer men might belong to those with similar or slightly higher educational qualification.

Among the women in health care industry, the acquisition of higher degrees do come at a later age of graduation. This might be a red flag to a further delay in getting married, considering the attained educational and conferred careership status, the “new” stringent financial advantage, and the stigma of falsehood image that labelled healthcare workers in the negative. All of these typically scare the would-be suitors. In other words, Muslimah healthcare providers are on the extreme end of the marriage deterrent gap.

It is this skewed marital prospect that is facing female Muslim healthcare providers, and this study aims at providing a review of Islamic virtues typical of Muslimahs and why insightful Muslim men, especially those

working in the health industries, need to be consciously available to reverse this negative trend. To achieve the goal of this review, the authors will provide an Islamic view of women, introduce the universal golden rule model of premarital education, and some other ways to bridge the rising marital deterrent gap, using the Quran and Hadith as the major reference sources.

### **Islamic view of women**

Islam has no confusion about the two genders, male and female i.e. man and woman respectively. Further, Islam identified both genders as of the same essence, as they are created from a single soul. This is emphasised in the Quran as follows: “O mankind! Reverence your Guardian-Lord, who created you from a single person; created of like nature his mate, and from this pair scattered (like seeds) countless men and women. Reverence Allah through Whom you demand your mutual rights, and reverence the wombs (that bore you); for Allah ever watches over you.”<sup>4</sup>

The above shows the equal high esteem both men and women have in Islam. Hence, Islam rewards both equally with respect to how they equitably fulfil their duties, rights, virtues, merits, sincerity, faith, obedience, ability, truthfulness, tolerance, fear of God, charity practices (i.e. alms giving), fasting,

self-preservation, social responsibilities, remembering God and finally piety.<sup>5</sup> Summarily, the value of women with respect to men, in Islam, has been described by Prophet Muhammad (SAW) as: "Women are the twin halves of men."<sup>5</sup>

The Islamic policy for women can be inferred from the above foundation sources. Hence, Islam puts men and women together in undertaking social responsibilities, primary of which is attaining education to worship Allah. By extension, education for fulfilling social responsibilities and justice is very dear to Islam, and hence both men and women are encouraged and mandated to excel in them. This provides also for why we need women in the health sector too. But, with the identified, marital assortative social shifts<sup>3</sup> from non-Islamic values that fails to appreciate the marital yearning of good educated Muslimahs, we keep experiencing the widening and deepening marital deterrent gap.

### **Bridging the marriage deterrent gap**

#### The pre-marriage golden rule

The best of mankind, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said, "A woman is married for four (4) things i.e. her wealth, her family status, her beauty, and her religion. So, you should marry the religious woman; (otherwise) you will be a loser."<sup>7</sup> This universal golden rule

model of premarital education is conceived to be better represented for the aspiring Muslims and non-Muslims as illustrated in Figure 1. The figure provides the grand model for any Muslim to follow when considering the approach to choosing a marital partner. This emphasized the centrality of the "deen" as every Muslim focus in life. With the above model embraced, then we can look at some other solutions.



Figure 1: The universal golden rule model of premarital education

#### The virtuous educated Muslimah element

Based on the universal premarital golden rule model, it is perhaps pertinent, for the Muslimah to upgrade herself in the deen. This can be through learning about and emulating the most virtuous woman in history, Maryam bint Imron (i.e. Mary) the mother of Prophet Isa (AS; i.e. Jesus). Maryam and other categories of most virtuous women in history are better labeled as "The Queens of Jannah," or Mujaddidaat. They include: Khadeejah

bint Khuwaylid, Fatimah bint Muhammad, Maryam and Aasiyah bint Muzahim the wife of Firaun (Pharaoh). ” These four women are beautiful examples of perfect, righteous women. They embodied sound aqeeda, kindheartedness, smartness, balanced ambitiousness, consistency, great understanding, bordered sociability, better anger management skills and very low tendency to panic.

In other words, the Queens of Paradise’s core element is good character enmeshed in respect to Allah, the Creator, and His creations. Good character in the service of Allah means adhering to the sound creed (aqeedah), and performing acts of worship (ibadah). On the other hand, good character in dealing with Allah’s creation means being just, merciful, forgiving, kind, and patient in our interactions with others (mu’amalat). Remember that doing a good deed and doing deed with good intention are separate things. The latter increases the likelihood that Allah will accept the good deed and will reward accordingly.

#### Rolling back the falsehood fueled negative image

It is the duty of all to struggle against the stigma of falsehood wrongly labelled against Muslimah health workers about their chastity. Such is a grave misgiving. Hence, all

should be guided by Allah’s (SWT) instruction us in the Quran that: “Believers, when an ungodly person brings to you a piece of news, carefully ascertain its truth, lest you should hurt a people unwittingly and thereafter repent at what you did.”<sup>8</sup> The need to speak good or be silent is another vital practice for all to imbibe. Remember that every profession must have a reasonable Muslim representation.

#### Who should marry a Muslimah healthcare worker? You, if you are conscious

The conscious male to marry a Muslimah working in the health care industry is the Muslim healthcare elite. He should be recognised by being virtuous too, emulating the best of mankind, Prophet Muhammad (SAW). His training should be by following the universal premarital golden rule model. Furthermore, he must be realistically conversant with the necessity and values of a healthcare provider. Also, he must know that his conscientious participation will go a long way in preventing the demoralization of Muslimah. In addition, his virtuous participation in getting married will help prevent the big calamity the best of humankind warns us to nip in the bud.

Thus, the Holy Prophet commands that “once anyone who practices religion correctly and have good character approaches you to marry

your daughters, you should succumb to the offer, otherwise a calamity might befall you.”

### Conclusion

The reviewers concluded that the marital prospects of Muslimah working in the health sector is challenged with widening and deepening marriage deterrent. Utilising the main sources of Islam, the Quran and Hadith, this challenge was approached through the universal premarital golden rule model. Further ways out of the challenge were identified and discussed. However, the review did not address the basic orientation a lady might have acquired from her parents and the community she lives in. Therefore, future review should take this into consideration.

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