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Gender Differences in Expectations, Purposes and Attitudes to Marriage in University Students

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Abstract
This study aim is to examine gender differences in attitudes, expectations, and purposes of marriage among university students in Bandar-Abbas. 627 participants (62.8% female and 37.2% male) were selected to participate from the available population. They were asked to complete the Socio-demographic Characteristics Form, a semi-structured interview for their intents and purposes of marriage, and the Marital Scales, which measure attitudes and expectations of marriage. Findings indicated that 90.2% of the participants intended to marry. The emotional, religious, and sexual were the three main purposes of marriage. The Findings indicated significant differences in priorities of the marriage purposes among men and women. The results revealed that there were significant differences between attitudes and expectations of marriage of men and women.
Keywords: gender differences, marital attitudes, marital expectations, purposes of marriage.

Introduction

Historically, raising children and financial security were considered as the primary reasons for marriage (Campbell & Wright, 2010) .Researchers believed that individuals develop their attitudes based on a variety of experiences, including messages received from family, media, religious values, and peer groups (Shurts & Myers, 2012). Like any other social phenomenon, marriage has norms that are different in different periods of time and from one community to another (Kazemi-pour, 2009). However, as gender roles have evolved, traditional marriage in which the man as breadwinner and woman as the one who does household chores and child-rearing has changed (Ogletree, 2015). In most societies, attitudes toward marriage have been changing due to generational differences in socio-economic characteristics such as education, employment and urban origins (Askari Nodushan, Abbasi Shavazi, & Sadeghi, 2009). Goals and motives for marriage tend to evolve over time. The nature of marriage is dependent on social and cultural factors embedded within the values and norms of a society (Amani & Behzad, 2011). Cherlin (2004) believes that one of the major developments in the last century is changing marriage from a traditional institution to a friendly marriage where individual choice and personal growth are emphasized (Amani & Behzad, 2011). Dramatic changes in family formation, delay in marriage, and the rapid decline in the marriage rate have led to scientific research and public discussion about attitudes toward marriage, avoiding marriage, and the factors affecting successful marriage (Harris & Lee, 2007).

Like other Third World countries, Iran is in a transition from tradition to modernity (Kazemi-pour, 2009). The arrival of modernization in the social structure of the community and, thus, the social structure of families has created changes in norms and values and has profoundly impacted human relationships and marriages. One of the major challenges with serious

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ramifications for the family institution is the transformation in attitudes, beliefs, norms, customs, and rituals related to marriage and mate selection (Sarokhani & Mogharebiyan, 2011).

The expected roles, expectations, and purpose for family formation are the important matters in marriage. Expectations are essential within the establishment of a relationship because they can be used as a guide to deal with the interaction of partner when no relationship history exists (Drigotas, Safstrom, & Gentilia, 1999). Expectations can be used to inform and help an individual with evaluating interpersonal information and defining further interactions (Rubin, Kim, & Peretz, 1990). Marital expectations have an important impact on forming intimate relationships and physical and emotional health. Khamse (Khamse, 2003) defined marital expectations as the subjective assumptions and standards, the "should" and "should not" that spouses have about each other and marriage, which may be based on facts or not. Expectations consist of what couples consider as appropriate roles in marriage and how their beliefs about marriage are effective or successful (Rios, 2010). Expectations can align values and attitudes of couples, and harmonize behaviors, thus, increase the chance of development of the relationship (West, 2006). Furthermore, Expectations have an effect on marital satisfaction and interactions (Rios, 2010). Unrealistic and idealistic expectations that individuals bring with them into marriage can increase the marital dissatisfaction and distress which are the risk factors for divorce (Dillon, 2005). Even some studies indicated that unrealistic expectations are one of the significant premarital factors contributing to divorce (Larson, Benson, Wilson, & Medora, 1998; Sharp & Ganong, 2000). Factors that can play important role in the expectations of marriage are as follows: age, ethnicity, gender, religion, marital status and experiences about relationships (Park & Rosén, 2013).

Another important issue that receives research attention is the purposes of marriage. Today, there is a broad discussion about the significant purpose and qualities of marriage. The fundamental purpose of marriage is established on human recognition over time and across cultures that men and women are different in countless ways that are complementary. One of the significant purposes of marriage is gender integration (Wardle, 2011). In fact, the purposes and reasons for marriage have changed across the time. As Campbell and Wright (2010) stated, marriage in the West is largely based on love and satisfaction, while Coontz's study (2004) indicated that before the mid-1800s, the great majority of people married for social, political, and economic reasons. The important point in this transition that can attract attention is an idealistic perspective on marriage and goals (Campbell, Wright, & Flores, 2012).

The numerous reasons for getting married were mentioned in various studies. The most common reasons were love, strong friendship and intimacy with spouse, happiness, and lifelong commitment (Campbell & Wright, 2010; Cherlin, 2004; Manap et al., 2013). For instance, in a recent study of American newlywed women's reasons for marriage, 81% of participants' primary reason for marriage was love (Campbell & Wright, 2010). Other reasons included long-term stability (13%), religion (5%), having children (3%), social pressure (2%), and legal (2%), and financial reasons (1%), respectively. In a study conducted in Malaysia, Manap and colleagues (2013) discovered that the purpose of marriage of single Malaysian youth was based on religious, biological and socio-psychological motives. The religious motive was considered the main purpose of marriage (Manap et al., 2013).

On the other hand, investigating the gender comparisons concerning the attitude toward marriage is important (Ogletree, 2015). Baber and Tucker (2006) in their study, have found that more women are egalitarian than men and have sexual attitudes less than men. Bumpass, Rindfuss, Choe, and Tsuya (Bumpass, Rindfuss, Choe, & Tsuya, 2009)in their study indicated

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that in comparison with woman, men without firmly believe that women can have a perfect and satisfying life without being married. While there were a few disagreements between men and women about the opinion that men can have a perfect and satisfying life without marriage. In another study, Blakemore, Lawton, and Vartanian (2005) reported that more women desire to marry than men. Servaty and Weber (2011) investigated gender differences in attitudes toward marriage in their study. The results showed that there is no difference between men and women in this area. Another finding of the study was that both men and women believe that people should get married for reasons of love but women have a more powerful opinion on this than men.

Although marriage is a voluntary act which depends on personal demands, desires and point of views, human social life and his complex relationship with the surrounding makes marriage to be affected by bilateral relations with economic, social, demographic and political variables (Kazemi-pour, 2009). Since the formation and sustenance of a successful romantic relationship are considered as a challenge. Individuals may run into difficulties when they intend to find a desirable partner or any partner (Clark & Beck, 2011). Moreover, research on examining gender differences in attitudes toward marriage among young people indicated different or contradictory results. In research conducted by, Braaten and Rosén (1998) and Larson et al. (1998) gender differences in attitudes toward marriage among young people were not found. Klein (2005) found that undergraduate female students have more positive attitudes toward marriage than male students. As a result, issues related to marriage and the young peoples' attitude toward marriage, especially among the university students seem necessary. So the main question of the current study is whether there is a difference between male and female students regarding attitudes toward marriage and purposes of marriage?

Material and Methods

Subjects

Participants and Procedure: Seven hundred and eighty- eight participants (54% female and 46% male) in the age range of 18 to 29 participated in this study. The mean age of all participants was 24.6 (SD=5.22) years, (for women M=23.7, SD=4.11, for men M=25.14, SD=5.41). All participants were undergraduate and postgraduate students from various universities in Bandar Abbas.

Measures

Socio-demographic Characteristics Form: The Socio-Demographic Characteristics Form is a semi-structured form, designed to assess age, gender and educational characteristics of the sample.

The Marital Scale: To examine the attitudes and expectations of the marriage of the participants, they completed the Marital Scales (Park & Rosén, 2013). The Marital Scales are a 36 items self-report instrument with 3 main subscales including: the Intent to Marry Scale (IMS) that assesses intent to marry, the General Attitudes towards Marriage Scale (GAMS), which examines general attitudes towards marriage, and the Aspects of Marriage Scale (AMS), which measures expectations for marital relationships. The inventory also contains 10 subscales that are rated on a seven-point Likert scale from 0 to 6; ranging from 0 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). The subscales are as follows: intent for marriage, positive attitude, negative attitude, fear and doubt, romance, respect, trust, finance, meaning and physical intimacy. The Marital Scales are applicable for anyone regardless of marital status or sexual orientation. Higher scores

indicate more positive intent to marry for the IMS, more positive attitudes towards marriage for the GAMS and more positive expectations for marriage for the AMS (Park & Rosén, 2013).

Park and Rosén (2013) reported that Cronbach's α for the IMS was 0.91, for GAMS was 0.84. Reliability for the AMS was excellent with a Cronbach's α of .92. A study was conducted to examine the factorial validity and psychometric properties of the scale in Iran. Results indicated internal consistency based on Cronbach's α (0.88). Internal consistency (Cronbach's α) of three subscales was determined as well, Cronbach's α for the IMS was 0.80, for GAMS was 0.84 and for AMS 0.88 (Fallahchai, Fallahi, & Park, 2016).

Purpose of marriage: To examine the purpose of marriage, participants were asked 2 questions: "Do you intend to get married? What are your purposes of getting married? Please rank them from one to five in order of importance. "In the stage of analyzing data, the purposes were reviewed and the similar responses were combined. The responses were classified into 6 categories including the following: emotional, religious, sexual, socio-cultural, financial, and idealistic purposes. Also, a category was devoted to the participants who had no specific purposes.

Procedure

Participants were asked to complete the questionnaires regarding demographic information, and the Marital Scales, which measure future attitudes and marital expectations by mean scores. The following questions were used to begin the interview: "Do you intend to get married?" What is your purpose of marriage?" The participants responded with full description, and they were asked to clarify their ambiguous responses. The participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity.

Statistical Analysis

Data collected from participants were analyzed by SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) 20.0 version software. To test Persian version of The Marital Scales, Cronbach alpha coefficient was calculated.

Results

In examining the first question concerning the percentage of participants tend to get married, data from participants' responses indicated that in total, 90.2% of the participants responded positively, and 9.8% replied negatively. In comparing the response of male and female participants, the data suggested that 88.8% of females and 91.4% intended to get married. To examine the second question about the main purposes of marriage, after eliminating irrelevant responses and combining data based on similar cases, the responses were categorized into six main groups summarized in the table below.

Table 1.Distribution of Participants' Self-reported Purposes of Marriage by Gender

Gender		Emotional	Sexual	Religious	Financial	Socio-cultural	Idealistic	No purpose
Female	N	491	233	292	170	156	133	48
	P	32	15	19	11	10	9	3
Male	N	235	414	416	220	73	31	116
	P	16	26	26	15	5	2	8
Total	N	726	647	708	390	229	164	164
	P	23	21	23	13	8	6	6

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As it was seen in table 1, three main purposes of the marriage of the participants were emotional, religious, and sexual respectively. The comparison of males and females' purposes indicated that women ranked emotional purposes first and religious and sexual were ranked second and third, while men rank sexual and religious goals as the most important purposes for marriage, while the emotional purpose was the next.

Based on the last research question whether there is a difference between the attitudes and expectations of the marriage of male and female participants, the findings are reported as follows:

First, Box-Cox and Leverne's Tests were conducted for homogeneity of Variance. Based on the data, this result was obtained: [Box's M (F=1.507, P=0.185) & Levene's (F=.437, P=0.512)].

It showed that the assumption of the homogeneity of Variance in the variable of marital expectations was confirmed in the two groups. Therefore parametric tests were acceptable.

Table 2. *Results of Multivariate Analysis Of Variance (MANOVA)*

	Test	Value	F	P	Eta coefficient
Gender	Wilkes's Lambda	1.07	8.45	0.001	0.988
	Pillal's Trace	0.92	7.41	0.001	0.988
	Hoteling's Trace	1.98	14.67	0.001	0.988
	Roy's Largest Root	1.98	14.67	0.001	0.988

Then, Multivariate Analysis Of Variance (MANOVA) was conducted. The results revealed a significant difference between men and women in the expectations of marriage shown in Table 2 ($p<0.001$).Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) and Bartlett's tests also were calculated. The calculated KMO was 0.89 and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ($p<0.001$) indicating that the sample size was adequate for the analysis.

Table 3. Analysis of Marital Scales and Their Subscales

	Gender	N	Mean	SD	SS	MS	DF	F	Eta coefficient	Power
Intent to Marry	female	425	10.77	2.97	227.01	227.01	1	7.47**	0.64	0.640
	male	363	8.96	2.48						
GAMS	female	425	46.36	7.11	506.28	506.28	1	8.173**	0.651	0.768
	male	363	48.29	7.86						
AMS	female	425	113.11	11.58	853.56	853.56	1	11.46**	0.777	0.871
	male	363	116.30	13.79						
total	female	425	170.36	21.84	1826.42	1826.42	1	28.55**	0.896	0.981
	male	363	174.08	24.42						

Based on the data shown in Table 3, there is a difference between men and women in total scores (F=28.55, P≤0.001). Also, findings reveal significant differences in the three subscales. [Intent to Marry (F=7.47, P≤0.001); GAMS (F=8.17, P≤0.001); AMS (F=11.46, P≤0.001)]

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the attitudes, expectations, and the purpose of marriage among male and female undergraduate and postgraduate university students in Bandar Abbas, in Iran, with regard to gender differences.788 students (54% female and 46% male) between the ages of 18 and 29 years participated in this study. The first finding of the study revealed that 90.2% of participants tend to marry. Women's intent to marry was higher than men.

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This finding is close to the results of Popenoe and Whitehead (2004) which found that 85% of adults in the United States desired to marry. On the other hand, this finding is not consistent with the results of Braaten and Rosén (1998) and Larson et al. (1998) reporting no gender differences in this area.

To explain this finding, we can say that with regard to the role of culture, and religious beliefs, and commitment to community traditions or customs, it seems that marriage and family in Iranian society, particularly among women are very important. On the other hand, Evolutionary psychology which provides a meta-theory to predict when and where gender differences or gender similarities are to be expected (D. M. Buss, 1995) demonstrates that it is expected that women and men differ in domains in which they have encountered periodically different adaptive problems during human evolutionary history. And there are similarities between men and women in all domains in which they have to deal with similar adaptive problems over human evolutionary history (D. Buss & Schmitt, 2011). Therefore, it is expected that women show a greater willingness to start a family.

The second finding of this study indicated that the three main purposes of marriage were emotional, religious, and sexual purposes, respectively. This finding is somewhat consistent with the results of the study of Manap et al. (2013) in Malaysia reporting that religious, biological and socio-psychological purposes were the three basic purposes of marriage. The present findings were somewhat consistent with the results of Cherlin (2004) and Campbell and Wright (2010) study which demonstrated that Americans tend to marry for love. Moreover, results of the current study demonstrated that women ranked the purposes of marriage in order of importance as follow: emotional purposes were first, religious and sexual purposes were second and third, respectively. While sexual and religious purposes were almost at the same level and emotional goals were the next in men.

To explain the observed differences, it can be said that many factors in the society such as divorce, culture, and religion have effects on individuals' attitudes toward marriage (Akers-Woody, 2003). Thus, attitudes and beliefs regarding marriage affect the success or failure of marriage (Campbell & Wright, 2010; Riggio & Weiser, 2008). As a result of this, it is not surprising that attitudes toward marriage can be both positively and negatively dependent on individual experience (Riggio & Weiser, 2008). Furthermore, Evolutionary psychology expresses that sex role which consists of a greater intensity of intra-sexual competition among men, and a greater scrupulousness of mate selection among women have resulted in the evolution of sexual psychological differences concerning mate choice. The psychology of mating, however, is affected by whether an individual is trying to achieve a short-term or long-term mate (Davies & Shackelford, 2008). Regarding the differences found between women and men for purposes of marriage in this study, it can be said that every group and even every person will follow different behavior patterns in Iranian society. This is clearly demonstrated in mate-selection. The Iranian youth is influenced by modernity and the frameworks of the modern world. Due to the impacts of older generations, parents and the cultural, political officials, they consider themselves to be affected by the laws, customs, and practices that emerged from the social and religious traditions and are obliged to observe these norms. On the other hand, through the expansion and influence of Western media such as satellite, internet, cinema and the press, they see themselves in a world which is different from traditions and religious values (Habib-pour Gatabi & Ghafari, 2011; Sarokhani & Mogharebiyan, 2011). In Iran, an increase in the rate of population growth, the role of women in society, and women's tendency to obtain higher education or qualifications like men to get jobs in Iran has profoundly influenced mate selection.

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Due to the impact of enhancing women' education, Iranian women enjoy a greater independence of thought and freedom from others, especially parents. As a result, the formation of marriage has changed from the arranged marriage to marriage based on personal choice (Habib-pour Gatabi & Ghafari, 2011). Undoubtedly, the process of modernism in human societies has imposed values and norms on societies through new mediums such as urbanization, the media, and education, etc. One of the major challenges in family structure is the evolution; transformation and changes that have occurred in attitudes, beliefs, norms, customs and rituals relating to marriage and mate selection (Sarokhani & Mogharebiyan, 2011).

The last finding of the study was concerning the difference between marital expectations of men and women. The results of this study revealed that women got lower scores in GAMS and AMS. Moreover, women had higher intent to marry. Additionally, they look for love in marriage more than men. This is consistent with their purposes of marriage as well because the women reported emotional ties as the first purpose of marriage. One explanation for these findings is that in an era of rapid social developments and rapid cultural changes, intergenerational differences in attitudes cause each generation to have different philosophy and lifestyle (Askari Nodushan et al., 2009). It also appears that the nature of marriage, particularly for women, is changing (Campbell et al., 2012; Cherlin, 2004). It seems that the changes occurring in Western societies are taking place in Iranian society as well so that the values of mate selection of the have changed (Delkhamoosh, 2006)

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