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Future Study of Psychological Factors Affecting Youth Marriage in 2040: An Iranian Development Perspective

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to explore the psychological factors affecting youth marriage in the perspective of development of Iran in 2040. The present research is in terms of purpose is an applied and in terms of data collection is a descriptive study using Delphi method. The statistical population included all experts in the field of marriage issues. The mentioned specialists have been experts in the fields of marriage counseling, marriage psychology, divorce counseling, marriage sociology, etc. Based on theoretical and practical considerations, 20 experienced marriage experts were identified and interviewed in different cities of Iran, which theoretical saturation was yielded after 20 interviews. Semi-structured interviews, a researcher made scale based on expert opinions and a questionnaire of basic uncertainties were used to collect data. All three tools have been developed by researchers and its validity and reliability were evaluated and confirmed in the present study. In order to describe the data, descriptive statistics including frequency, central indices and dispersion indices were used and Friedman ranking test was used to examine the research questions. Based on the results and in terms of importance, the individual-psychological components affecting future youth marriage have been as follows: mutual understanding, couple attachment style, cognitive flexibility, parenting style, intellectual maturity, married life knowledge and self-awareness. In general, the findings of the present study can help youth marriage-related institutions in designing future plans.

Keywords: Future study, Psychological factors affecting marriage, youth, Iranian development perspective

Introduction

Young people are the most important group and the most constructive human resources of any society (Hawkins, 2018). Among young people, marriage is the most important and basic choice in their life as well (Qian & Lichter, 2018). However, family is one of the social institutions that have experienced many variations in terms of lifestyle and its consequences throughout history in various societies (Hasheminezhad, Eivazi, Hajiani, & Goljani Amirkhiz, 2018). The speed of changes in the process of life is so overwhelming that it is no longer possible to coping to them with traditional methods. There is nothing certain about the future, but humans can influence the outcome of the future. One of the ways to face these changes is futures studies. Future study is a science that tries to act in a dual way by predicting the causes and effective factors in future changes and manipulating the changes and prepare the society to face these changes. The science of futurology is beyond prediction and does not claim to

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forecast, but tries to shape the future (Slaughter, 1996). The issue of marriage and stablishing a family is not excluded from this rule.

Marriage is a commitment with love and responsibility for peace, happiness and the development of family relationships, and in addition, choosing a partner and entering married life is considered a turning point and personal success (Shahbazi, Koraei, & Kianijam, 2018). In addition, it is necessary to strengthen family life, its stability and durability and the type of attitude and interaction of couples with each other (Akhlaq, Malik, & Khan, 2013). People who have a successful married life are not necessarily smarter, richer or psychologically superior than others, but they have achieved dynamics in their lives that control negative thoughts about their spouse . From Gutman's point of view (Bagheri, Kimiaei, & Kareshki, 2021), a successful married life occurs when a husband and wife can resolve the inevitable conflicts of their relationship that appear throughout life. Many couples think that happiness means no conflict; In such a way that not having fights and conflicts in life is considered as a sign of the health of married life, but from Gutman's point of view, progress in a couple's relationship depends on coping with the differences between spouses (Bagheri et al., 2021).

According to Iranian youth, the main obstacles to marriage are factors such as fear of problems after marriage, lack of job and job stability, housing problem, lack of familiarity before marriage, dependence on family, restriction of individual freedoms, traditional customs, poor skills, social and communication problems, settlement preparation problems, lack of responsibility, lack of possibility of advancement after marriage, lack of freedom in choosing a spouse, possibility of satisfying sexual needs outside the marriage, not trusting the other sex, continuing education, fear of marriage due to unsuccessful experiences of others and not having a *Mandatory Military Service Completion Card* (Khalajinia, Abasi, & Khaki, 2018). Although Wilcox (2010) pointed to the downward trend of marriage among the new generation, he believes that marriage still maintains its importance as an important institution in most societies.

For more than half a century, Iranian society has been struggling with socio-economic changes in the demographic process. The experiences of events such as the Islamic revolution and war, the expansion of communication and information, and changes such as modernity and globalization, have rapidly changed the traditional structures of society (Razeghi Nasrabad & Fallahnezhad, 2017). It is obvious that a society that is in the transition stage has more capacity and readiness to produce generational differences (Saroukhani & Sedaghati Fard, 2010). Currently, in Iranian society, a generation that has experienced war and revolution lives next to a generation that has not experienced these events and this leads to differences in the values, attitudes, behavior patterns and life style between current generation and early generation. In addition to these events, the expansion of the level of public literacy, especially among women, and the increase in university education, urbanization, the expansion of communications, access to wide information through the growth of the media, and the increase in the economic and social participation of women are among the basic processes of social change in Iranian society (Razeghi Nasrabad & Saraei, 2014).

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Khojasteh Mehr, Daniali, and Shirali Nia (2016) in a research examined the lived experiences of marriage readiness among married students. The results identified different factors such as gaining moral, emotional and mental readiness to marriage, gaining emotional and financial independence from family of origin, getting ready to sacrifice, forgiveness and commitment to spouse, accepting the responsibilities and challenges of marital life, acquiring necessary interpersonal skills, considering some criteria for choosing spouse, making acquaintance with the spouse, getting some experiences from marital life of others and student life, age readiness, and others' supports for preparing people for marriage.

In another research, Shahanavaz and Azam Azadeh (2020) have identified the key factors affecting singleness in Iran. In this future study, using the Delphi method, finally 19 effective factors on Singleness in Iran was chosen. These factors were identified by 11 experts. Experts' opinions about the effectiveness and influence of factors in the Cross Impact matrix were introduced. By analyzing the outputs of the MICMAC software, the effectiveness and influence of each of the factors was determined. Factors such as impact of mass media on changing youth's attitudes, socio-economic status of family, inefficiencies in government plans to facilitate marriage, had the greatest impact on singleness in Iran.

Moharrami, Pourmousavi, Khodabakhsh Pirkalani, and Goharipour (2018) investigated the psychological reasons for the delay in the marriage of girls and showed that the reasons for the delay in the marriage of girls include cognitive factors such as initial incompatible schemas, perfectionism, having children, social base and lack of skills. The problems of life are valuation errors and emotional factors such as excessive attachment.

Shakeri, Naghdi, Emamalizadeh, and Rahimi (2018) in the study of the factors affecting the reluctance to marry among the unmarried employees of offices in Hamadan city indicated that insufficient financial accountability variables, in spite of having a job and income, difficulty in getting married, and being subjected to marriage, are difficult to meet in today's society, the couple's concern about having a marriage failed, believing in being the high cost of marriage opportunities, single pleasure, interaction with the opposite sex, having the idealist expectations of marriage, and the type of attitude to marriage are the significant factors associated with employees' singleness.

Hatami Varzaneh, Esmaeily, and Borjali (2017) presented a model of the effective factors in long-term satisfied marriage and indicated that the category of proper marriage formation is one of the causal conditions for a stable and satisfying marriage. Also, efficient attitudes and desirable personality traits, efficient marital, parenting and multi-generational systems, financial and work issues, including mediating factors and forgiveness strategies, problem solving, apologizing, humor, and their families of origin are factors leading to a stable marriage.

Future research is one of the methods that can examine the possible future by examining the changes in the last few decades. Based on this, by examining the process of changes in recent decades and analyzing the family situation in the future and the factors that threaten or strengthen the family structure, it is possible to identify the obstacles ahead and micro and macro policies and planning

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comprehensively benefited from it. Based on this, the purpose of this study was to explore the psychological factors affecting youth marriage in the perspective of development of Iran in 2040.

Material and Methods

The current research is an applied study in term of purpose and a descriptive survey in terms of data collection, which was conducted using the Delphi method. The statistical population of this research included all specialists and experts in the field of marriage issues. The mentioned specialists were experts in the fields of marriage counseling, marriage psychology, divorce counseling, sociology of marriage, etc. In the present study, due to lack of access to the comprehensive information system of marriage counselors and experts, an accurate estimate of the size of the statistical population was not possible. Based on this, 20 experts in the field of marriage were identified and interviewed in different cities of Iran. In order to obtain comprehensive information on the psychological factors that form the basis of marriage, the interviewees were selected from the five geographical regions of North, South, West, East and center of Iran.

The current research was conducted in three stages: 1. In the first stage, information was collected through semi-structured interviews. Due to the conditions of the Covid-19 epidemic, all the interviews were conducted by phone and using virtual applications. 2. In the second stage, the opinions of the experts were gathered, categorized and titled around the basic axes of the research. At this stage, based on the findings, a questionnaire was developed 3. In the third stage, in order to find the basic certainties of the factors affecting the marriage of the future generations of Iran, the indicators of expertise, certainty and importance were examined for each of the basic components of the research.

Instrument

The data of this research was collected by three methods:

Semi-structured interview: The interview questions were asked from experts in the field of marriage. Validity was confirmed based on the opinions of experts in the field of marriage in both content and face. The reliability of the interview tool was tested by test-retest method and the correlation coefficient between two interviews with a short time interval was found to be 0.92.

Researcher-made Questionnaire: This questionnaire was developed based on the components were identified in the semi-structured interview. The face and content validity of this questionnaire was confirmed by experts and its reliability was obtained by the test-retest method of 0.71.

Basic Uncertainty Questionnaire: In the third step, the indicators of expertise, certainty and importance were examined for each of the basic components of the research. The structure of the questions of the third stage questionnaire along with the method of scoring and determining three indicators is as follows:

First question: What is your expertise in answering this question?

A: High B: Average C: Low D: None

Second question: Which of the future states do you agree with?

A: I strongly agree with the first state B: I partially agree with the first state

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A: I strongly agree with the second state. D: I partially agree with the second state
E: I consider both situations to be the same
Third question: To what extent is the discussion about choosing one of the future modes important in the marriage of young people in the future?
A: High B: Average C: Low D: None
The value of the expertise index can be between 0 and 100. The higher this index is and the closer it is to 100, the higher the expertise of the respondents. The certainty index value is between 2 and -2. A value of 2 indicates the agreement of all experts regarding the first state of the subject, zero indicates uncertainty about the subject, and 2 indicate the agreement of all experts regarding the second state of the subject. The value of the importance index can also be between 0 and 100. The higher this index is and the closer it is to 100, the higher the importance of the subject.
The content and face validity of this questionnaire was also confirmed by experts and its reliability was obtained by Cronbach's alpha method of 0.76.

Data analysis

In this research, in order to describe the data and analyze the questionnaire, descriptive statistics including frequency, dispersion indices and central indices have been used. Friedman's ranking test was also used to examine the research questions. Also, to analyze the second part of the questionnaire and calculate the indicators of expertise, importance and certainty, statistical formulas in Microsoft Excel software were used. SPSS-23 and Microsoft Excel software were used for statistical data analysis.

Results

In Table 2, descriptive information about the participants in the research is given based on the variables of gender, education, type of activity and geographical region.

Table 2. Descriptive information of demographic variables

Demographic variable		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	7	35
	Male	13	65
Qualification	MA	3	15
	PhD student	4	20
	PhD	13	65
Activity type	Counsellor	5	25
	Faculty member	6	30
	Invited university lecturer	7	35
	Welfare organization consultant	2	10
Geographical region	North	3	15
	South	6	30
	the West	3	15
	East	3	15
	Center	5	25

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Qualitative findings

The qualitative findings of this research are the indicators of young people's marriage in the future in the individual-psychological field, which were collected from the perspective of marriage experts and through semi-structured interviews. Table 3 shows the results of the initial sentences of the interviewees (extraction of primary indicators).

Table 3. The results of classification the initial sentences of the interviewees

No	Key sentences of the interviewees	Label
1	Young people who have a secure attachment style are more likely to succeed in the process of marriage and eventually married life. These people will not have a problem with long distances and their spouse going to work and being away from him because they have been securely attached to their parents in the past, especially during their childhood.	Secure attachment style and young marriage
2	Young people who have an avoidant attachment style generally do not like to be seen with their spouse in society. Maybe some kind of social shame causes this issue. These people hardly enter the stage of family formation and marriage.	Avoidant attachment style and marriage
3	Young people who have an ambivalent attachment style are very hesitant about marriage. It is very difficult to find stability in the personality of these young people. Choosing a spouse is not based on a precise criterion	Ambivalent attachment style and marriage
4	Young people who are brought up by permissive parents are deprived of education related to the marriage process. Marriage is a normal thing for permissive parents and like other affairs that does not require any planning.	Permissive parenting style and children's marriage in the future
5	Authoritarian parents are close to deeply religious, cultural and traditional parents who want to take over all the matters related to their children's future marriage.	Authoritarian parenting style and children's marriage in the future
6	Young people who grew up under the authoritative parents have a comprehensive personality and probably their life together in the future will not be affected by psychological destructive factors.	Authoritative parenting style and children's marriage in the future
7	How to deal with your wife and children is one of the basic knowledge of married life that must be acquired in the new generation. The absence of optimal education in the field of marriage will endanger the marriage process.	Knowledge of married life
8	Intellectual maturity is directly related to moving towards a healthy marriage. A marriage based on intellectual maturity will be a stable marriage.	Intellectual maturity
9	Psychological flexibility among young people will remove many barriers to marriage in the next generation. Psychological flexibility will have a direct relationship with youth marriage in the future.	Cognitive flexibility
10	Self-awareness can accelerate the process of marriage. Self-awareness is a very effective factor in joint life and it is the background of other-awareness.	Self-awareness
11	Achieving an understanding of the issues will be the basis for the future marriage of young people in the future. Mutual understanding means to understand the spouse psychologically, which is to put ourselves in the place of our spouse and see if his behavior still seems unreasonable? Education in this regard to young people can be the basis for successful marriages in the future.	Mutual understanding

Based on the information in Table 3, the initial labeling of key sentences of the interviewees was done. Among the 40 interview paragraphs, 11 labels (primary components) were extracted. These labels are summarized and categorized in the next stage of study. By categorizing and summarizing the initial labels, 7 main individual-psychological components were extracted as follows; Couple's attachment style, parents' parenting style, knowledge of married life, intellectual maturity, cognitive flexibility, self-awareness and mutual understanding.

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In the next stage, the alternative futures of Iranian young people's marriages in the perspective of 2040 were examined. The description of the alternative futures is based on the opinion of the experts participating in this research and the available theoretical texts:

The preferable (desirable) future of youth marriage in the perspective of 2040: The preferable future is an image of the future that shows the best possible situation of youth marriage based on the qualitative findings of this research. The preferable future of youth marriage will be achieved assuming 70 to 100 percent of marriage indicators. The preferable future of young people's marriage in 2040 is imagined as follows:

Psychologists and counselors have a prominent presence in all scenes of people's personal and social lives. The prominence of counselors and psychologists in important life processes has led to maximum progress in all areas, including marriage. The life expectancy index has reached its highest level in the future, so that Iran is one of the top 10 countries in the world in terms of life expectancy.

The preposterous future of youth marriage in the perspective of 2040: The preposterous future is a picture of the future that, based on the qualitative findings of the current research, shows a weak level of the situation of youth marriage. The preposterous future of youth marriage will be obtained assuming the realization of 0 to 30 percent of marriage indicators. The preposterous future of young people's marriage in 2040 is imagined as follows:

Counselors and psychologists have completely gone to the sidelines and their teachings are not paid attention to in the issue of marriage. Counselors and psychologists who are present on the scene are also more concerned about their financial issues than solving the problems of young marriages. In this way, many psychological problems stand in the way of young people's marriage, which will not be solved for several years. All the parents have made the issue of marriage seem like a ceremonial matter by taking light measures towards child rearing to a very high extent.

The plausible future of youth marriage in the perspective of 2040: The plausible future is a picture of the future that shows the continuation of the current trend in the field of youth marriage based on the qualitative findings of the current research. The plausible future of youth marriage will be obtained assuming that 30 to 70 percent of marriage indicators are fulfilled. The plausible future is the most realistic state of the future, because it imagines the future based on the current situation with a reasonable percentage of optimism. The plausible future of young people's marriage in 2040 is imagined as follows:

Counselors and psychologists have solved the psychological problems of marriage to some extent by proposing challenges related to marriage in universities and psychology centers. Education centers have also been successful in educating students and their parents in the field of marriage by taking advantage of the presence of counselors.

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Quantitative findings

Table 4 presents the descriptive indicators of the individual and psychological factors affecting the marriage of young people in the future generations of Iran in the perspective of 2040, with an emphasis on the model of the Iranian successful family.

Table 4. Descriptive indicators of individual and psychological components affecting young people's marriage

Individual and psychological components	N	Mean	SD	Min.	Max.
Couple's attachment style	20	4.85	0.37	4	5
Parents' parenting style	20	3.85	0.74	3	5
Knowledge of married life	20	3.35	0.59	3	5
Intellectual maturity	20	3.10	1.29	1	5
Cognitive flexibility	20	4.75	0.44	4	5
Self-awareness	20	3	0.97	2	5
Mutual understanding	20	4.95	0.22	4	5

In order to prioritize and determine the significance of the difference between the role of individual and psychological components in the marriage of young people in future generations from the point of view of experts, Friedman's test was performed. The results of Friedman's test to check the significance of the difference between the role of individual and psychological components are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. The results of Friedman's test

Index	Value
x^2	73.38
DF	6
p	0.001

According to the results of Table 5 and considering the value of χ^2 and its significance level, the null hypothesis was rejected and the research hypothesis was confirmed. Based on this, there is a significant difference between the individual and psychological components affecting the marriage of young people in the future generations of Iran in the perspective of 2040 from the experts' point of view.

In order to prioritize the individual and psychological components affecting the marriage of young people, the mean rank index in the Friedman test was used and the results related to this index are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. The results of Friedman's test for prioritizing the individual and psychological components

Priority	Individual and psychological component	Mean rank
1	Mutual understanding	5.85
2	Couple's attachment style	5.65
3	Cognitive flexibility	5.35
4	Parents' parenting style	3.63
5	Intellectual maturity	2.85
6	Knowledge of married life	2.70
7	Self-awareness	2.25

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According to Table 6, among the individual and psychological components affecting young people's marriage in the future, the highest priority was given to the component of mutual understanding. Self-awareness has been the lowest priority among the individual and psychological components.

To determine three indicators of expertise, certainty and importance, it was formulated in Excel software. The results showed that the quantitative index of expertise is 95, the quantitative index of certainty is 1.75, and the quantitative index of importance is 86.25. Based on this, all three indicators of expertise, certainty and importance are at a favorable level. These findings confirm the factors extracted in the interview with the experts.

Discussion

According to the findings of the research, the experts participating in the research have described the individual and psychological factors affecting the marriage of young people in the future generations of Iran in the perspective of 2040, with emphasis on the model of the Iranian successful family, as follows: mutual understanding, style couple attachment, cognitive flexibility, parents' parenting style, intellectual maturity, knowledge of married life, self-awareness. It is noteworthy that the order expressed was based on prioritization, from the point of view of experts.

The our findings is in line with the studies of Khojasteh Mehr et al. (2016), Moharrami et al. (2018), Fathi, Esmaeily, and Farahbakhsh (2015), Hasheminezhad et al. (2018), Razeghi Nasrabad and Saraei (2014), Shahbazi et al. (2018), Akhlaq et al. (2013) and Qian and Lichter (2018).

Mutual understanding is the most important thing to have a peaceful and peaceful life together and away from any conflict. Simply put, mutual understanding means that both men and women see issues and problems from each other's point of view so that they can understand each other better and make better decisions in difficult cases (Balfour, 2018). With the progress and development of psychological science in the future, it can be hoped that the methods of creating mutual understanding will lead young people to the marriage process.

The attachment between mother and child lays the foundation of the child's socialization in the following years. This connection is a serious matter in the healthy growth of the child, and it has a deep and extensive role in his growth. The deep feeling that the child naturally has towards the mother can have a tremendous effect on ensuring his well-being and health (Carr, Hardy, & Fornells-Ambrojo, 2018). According to the attachment theory, the activity of the attachment system is not limited to childhood and remains active throughout life and other emotional bonds, such as friendships, marriages, relatives, etc. (Sutton, 2019). It is very important to look at the attachment style of couples in their joint life.

Cognitive flexibility is appraised as an influential component in young people's marriage. If the couple does not have the desired flexibility, the smallest financial, emotional, social, etc. issues will affect the relationship between them and cause conflict in values and other issues in their life together (Shahabi, Shahabi, & Foroozandeh, 2020).

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The parenting style of parents, which is obtained from the interaction between the two axes of love and responsibility, can to a large extent be the foundation or obstacle to marriage in young people. A child who has faced an authoritarian or permissive parenting style has problems in most psychological variables and will have a conflict to enter a joint life (Besharat, Hooshmand, Rezazadeh, & Gholamali Lavasani, 2021). On the other hand, a child who has been brought up by authoritative parents, while enjoying love, is also aware of his responsibilities and will start a harmonious life together.

Intellectual maturity is considered to be one of the other psychological factors affecting young people's marriage in the future. Intellectual maturity means that a person knows his strengths and weaknesses and has reached a proper understanding of his personality. A person who has reached intellectual maturity has a definite plan in his life and strives to achieve it. He is responsible and committed to his decisions and makes decisions without depending on others (Jamalnik, Falsafinejad, & Khodabakhshi-Koolaee, 2020). Therefore, it seems obvious that the experts participating in the research evaluate this component as one of the psychological components affecting marriage.

The knowledge of married life is not unrelated to the mentioned components, but it has such a wide scope that it can be considered as a separate component. Men and women should know what the purpose of married life is and what stages they are supposed to go through in married life. If the couple has university education, part of this knowledge will be provided, but full possession of this knowledge requires spending more time in this field. Training classes and counseling before marriage can be very effective in this field.

One of the most important aspects of self-awareness in every person's life is self-awareness in marriage (Moodi, Mehrbakhsh, Amtaeh, & Moghasemi, 2022). Many couples experience an unsuccessful and doomed life due to not knowing the different aspects of their personality, interests and desires. People should first know how to love themselves and then look for a life partner. Many regret after marriage, because they believe that if they had more self-awareness, they would have chosen a better spouse. Self- awareness helps a person, in addition to knowing himself, to know others better and to establish quality relationships with them, and accordingly to have a suitable spouse choice.

The above explanations are based on empirical evidence, written knowledge of marriage and the opinion of experts participating in this research. In the following, the obtained individual and psychological components are discussed. The effectiveness of all the mentioned psychological components is summarized in one component and that is compatibility (Shahabi et al., 2020). The satisfaction of the partners increases over time by adapting to the new family model and overcoming certain problems. It seems that at the beginning of marriage, the spouses are not very compatible with the new family model and each tries to impose the original family model. The satisfaction of the partners is not very high at the beginning of the marriage. Marital satisfaction is an individual experience in marriage that people evaluate according to the level of pleasure and happiness in married life. They believe that this depends on the expectations, needs and desires of people in their marriage. Marital satisfaction refers to the level of satisfaction between couples, which means the level of

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satisfaction that couples feel in their relationship. When couples engage in negative interactions, marital satisfaction decreases.

The current research has faced limitations in the method, execution and content that if these limitations are resolved in future researches, it can bring important research results. These limitations were: due to the special conditions of the Covid-19 disease, it was not possible to interview all the experts participating in the research in person. The researcher intended to extract more influential factors in the interviews with experts, but due to the working conditions of the experts participating in the research and their lack of time, it was not possible to ask projective questions. Due to the geographical scope considered in the statistical sample of this research, it was not possible to use the opinions of experts in economic, political and cultural fields. The control of some cultural and social variables in the expression of experts' opinions was beyond the authority of the researcher, and as a result, the interference of cultural, political and social opinions of experts in presenting their opinions was accepted.

According to the results of the current research, the following research suggestions are proposed: Factors affecting young people's marriage in the future should be investigated and explained in other existing fields. In future research, more statistical samples with more geographical diversity should be selected. Based on the components extracted in this research, in the future, quantitative research should be done using different research methods. In future studies, try to ask the opinion of the panel of experts about the relationship of the identified factors to determine the theoretical relationship between the factors influencing young people's marriage in the future.

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