

A Study of the Relationship between Family Values and Tendency to Marriage among Female High School Students in Qaemshahr City

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Abstract

The main objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between family values and marital tendency among female high school students in Qaemshahr city. To answer the main research question, five hypotheses with independent variables (rituals and traditions, spouse selection criteria, decision making system, intergenerational gap and also accountability) together with dependent variable of “marriage tendency” have been developed. Based on its objective, the present research is applied and based on its nature and method it is a survey. The population of this study are 1400 female high school students in Qaemshahr city. The sample size is compiled based on the Morgan table of 302 people. The results of the analysis of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Tests and the Pearson correlation coefficient indicated that there is a relationship between family values (rituals and traditions, spouse selection criteria, decision-making system, intergenerational gap and accountability) and marriage tendency in female secondary school students.

Keywords: Family, Family Values, Marriage, Marriage Tendency.

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1. Introduction

Nowadays, values such as Obedience and Conformity of adolescents against parents are diminished and instead, other values become more important such as Independence and Autonomy (Alwin, 1989). However, according to Dalli (2001), due to the unsafe social environment, the need of adolescents and young people to be guided is more than past, and their options are limited (Strom et al., 2002). This issue is more important in the Third World countries including the Middle East, because in these countries due to the lack of division of labor, social institutions are unreliable and the risk of obliquity caused by high anomalies and the significant population of young people, the role of families in education, training and guidance is more important. This role was taken in the traditional systems in a desirable way and there were enough programs for adolescents' education. Today, a free-marriage companion is a feature of the (nuclear) family in modern times, and love or passion has a major role in the development of marriage, nevertheless, the freedom to choose a spouse is conditional according to the type of society and social, economic and biological characteristics including religion, race, ethnicity and class.

In other words, marriage is carried out in accordance with the congruity, and each individual habitually marries someone from his/her class, religion, race, and ethnicity, which makes this marriage a congruent marriage. Marriage among neighbors is usually very common in terms of their similarity in occupation, income, and other similar corporal features. Of course, each family in society reduces the chance of heterogeneous marriage for its children through social relationships and creates the chance of congruent marriage for them (Ezazi, 2003: 96).

The challenges between traditional and modern values, the introduction of technology and its underlying culture, as well as profound and widespread political and economic changes and the emergence of the urban middle class caused the unprecedented increase in the consumption of new goods, the introduction of new communication facilities such as the Internet and satellite networks to the lives of citizens that have led to significant changes in our society (Armaki and Khademi, 2003: 12).

The economic, social and cultural transformation of the country during last decades has led to changes in the family structure and values in the value system of the urban and rural communities of Iran in different dimensions. Family values can be considered in several respects in terms of youth, formation of family, the appropriate age for marriage, the important dimensions of the family, the ideal number of children,

the criteria for choosing a spouse, the decision-making system in the family, the independence of the woman and the family, and the generation gap.

Considering the external factors affecting the family and the increase in the young population and their needs, the Iranian society has faced a generational difference, and the youth are different from the elder citizens as a social group in terms of leisure time, friendship, interests, and needs and values (Armaki, 2001: 69).

In Iran, we see two different generations, one of which has a different historical experiences, including revolution and war, therefore, it is linked with religious values, and the new generation, with different living conditions from the previous generation, in which media advertising has also emphasized material and pleasurable values, has increased desire for material, individualistic, profitable and beneficial values.

The main question of this article is “whether there is a relationship between family values and marital tendency among female high school students in Qaemshahr city?”

2. Review of literature

In their study entitled “The study of the generation regarding change in marriage value in Iran (a case study: women in Zanjan city)”, Saray and Ojaghloo concluded that the difference in mean value of marriage among the generations was significant. Religiosity has a positive and direct relationship and the experience of globalization has a negative and diverse relationship to the value of marriage.

Khodai et al. (2007) in “Parents, teens, family values, preference for obedience or independence (adaptive changes of Middle Eastern countries)” concluded that demographic variables played a more important role in reducing or increasing the likelihood of parenting obedience, while for preferences the variables of socialization were also important. In addition, it has been shown that there are significant differences in the preference for simultaneous adolescent obedience and independence among Middle Eastern countries, but the factors affecting these preferences follow almost the same pattern in most of these countries.

Sadeghi et al. (2007) concluded in a study entitled "Investigation of Marriage Issue and Validation of a Solution" among 6,100 unmarried women aged 15-29 years throughout the country, that about 90 percent of young people believe that the ideal marriage condition for boys is after employment and having a good financial condition. About half of the responsive youth have expressed the most appropriate marital condition for girls is after completion of university education and gaining economic autonomy, which in fact represents a change in the value of society and the emergence of new social roles for women.

Nastizati (2006) concluded in a study entitled "Barriers of Girls' Marriage in Sistan and Baluchestan University" that five factors, namely economic, cultural, social factors, neglect of authorities and the lack of competence of young people are the barriers to girls' marriage, from the viewpoint of respondents.

Nikmanesh and Kazemi (2006) in a study entitled "Causes and Solutions for Youth's Marriage Delay", examined the factors affecting the increase of the marriage age in girls over the age of 25 years and boys over 27 years old living in Zahedan and concluded that marital opportunities for girls with delayed marriage were more likely than boys, and girls identified the most important reason for not marrying as lack of finding "the one" and continuing education. Boys have risen economic and unemployment problems as their lack of tendency to marry. The amount of hope for future marriage is higher in boys than in girls. Girls and boys also consider reducing the expectations of parents as the main solution to facilitate the marriage.

Shahabi (2003) concluded in a study entitled "The Analysis of Factors Affecting the Family Values of the Rural Youth of Isfahan Province" that family values can be considered in several respects in terms of rural youth, family formation, proper age of marriage, family dimensions, ideal number of children, spouse selection criteria, family decision-making system, women's independence in the family, and generational value gap are among the most important ones. Factors that have a direct impact on family values include: life satisfaction, gender, educational level, the use of mass media; and on the other hand, climatic factors such as age, relationship with urban centers, marital status and economic status, indirectly affecting family values.

Robert Schoen & Yen-Hsin Alice Cheny (2006) argue that deviation from marriage is due to factors such as: increased levels of education and the degree of women's independence, lower gender differences in earning salaries, greater inequality among men, and inequality in the economies of racial groups.

Riea and Iza (2003) in their study entitled "Study the Life Purposes in Spain and Delay in Marriage" concluded that the increase in the age of marriage in western northern Europe has expanded to Spain and Italy. Also, changes in living conditions resulting from marriage, such as unfinished education, childbirth, direct spending of material for the study of the child, reduce the inclination to fertility and, as a result, delay the marriage and family formation.

Schoreder (2003) explains in a research entitled "Marriage meaning: Exploratory Study on Why Women are Married" the reasons for the marriage of women participating in research are as follows: the desire for companionship, the desire to

have children and families, having emotional support, interest in marriage celebration, financial support, sexuality and life sense.

Guarino (1992) writes in a study entitled "The desire of young people to marry" that is after completion of education, marriage is the most important decision of every individual in life, and factors such as the amount of divorce in society, the goals of life, and educational interests are factors that affect the person's desire for marriage.

3. Theoretical framework

3.1. Proximity theory

The proximity theory states that the probability of marriage of an individual with a person living near him/her, or works at his or her workplace or studies in same university is greater. The proximity theory denotes the importance of an impersonal factor (geographic or ecological factor) in the process of selecting spouse. Proximity is a mixture of meeting, attraction and similarity. This factor strengthens social relationships by fostering a sense of proximity among people. Proximity often leads to personal attraction. People living in the same neighborhood, working in an office building, shopping from same store, are likely to be friends. Bousard names two types of proximity: the proximity in neighborhood and the proximity in organization. In proximity in neighborhood, people desire to choose a spouse among those who are geographically close to them and accessible to them. In the organizational context, the individuals desire to choose a spouse from among colleagues in organizations, the university, administration, company and everywhere else. One of the assumptions of the proximity theory is that the spatial distance in this way affects the choice of the spouse which allows people to meet and get to know each other.

Waller stated in 1951 that no one chooses his/her spouse from the infinitely possible spouses, but only within the group and among those in contact with them. This theory is merely a clear manifestation of the fact that marriage may take place between those who have the opportunity to meet each other. Nowadays, with the increase of the possibility of mobility and access to means of transport, and as a result, due to geographical mobility, the importance of this factor in the process of reconciliation has diminished.

4. Evolutionary Theory

Evolutionary theory is arguably the strongest set of ideas in the life of science. Generally and broadly, this theory was designed on the basis that humans live in a social group along with other human beings. This kind of perspective can enhance our

understanding of all aspects of personal relationships such as love, independence, social support, parent-child relationships, and family disputes. In fact, an evolutionary perspective can help to see how all aspects of human relationships are related to each other. How these relationships are linked to the body and the brain, and finally, how it relates to the fundamental principles that underlie the creation of the creatures.

5. Complementary Needs Theory

This theory was developed by Robert Winch and his colleagues in 1952. This theory states that humans have a series of needs that are met through social relationships. Needs such as need for emotional support, care, and sexual satisfaction. The main hypothesis of the theory is that, in the context of a set of eligible individuals, those whose patterns of needs are match for mutual satisfaction choose each other as a partner of marriage. People choose their spouses that meet most needs of them. Maximizing needs satisfaction of the individual occurs when more and more male and female needs are complementary rather than similar.

6. Assortative Mating Theory

Assortative Mating Theory states that we usually attract people who are similar in ourselves to certain characteristics, such as age, race, religion, and social class. In answering the question of whether people with similar characteristics are drawn to each other or people with the different characteristics, two different theories have been proposed. Usually, all marriage systems tend to Assortative Mating, and this is the result of a desire for bargaining. It means that usually, depending on the types of profile, the matched persons are married to each other. The Assortative Mating and the similarity between those who eventually choose each other will affect the disqualification of others. On the other hand, it can be said that the phenomenon of Assortative Mating is due to the fact that a person does not have an interest in an unrelated person, not because he has chosen the similar person. It can be said that Assortative Mating is a universal law. Man, consciously or unconsciously, chooses a spouse who has similar traits.

7. The Balance Theory

The fundamental theory of Assortative Mating is the Balance Theory of Heider (1985). In general, this theory points out that if a person chooses a person as a spouse who has the same beliefs, thoughts and feelings about his or her subjects, beliefs and events, then less stress will be created for the individual. People usually feel

comfortable with people who feel and sense like themselves. They can communicate better. There is less debate between them, they are more likely to talk and enjoy together. Of course, it cannot be said that the opinions and feelings of the two people are quite similar, because emotions and ideas of individuals cannot be directly observed. What can be seen directly is the behavior or physical changes of individuals that we believe are resulted from their beliefs and emotions, including what one says, what he/she does and his/her physical movements.

8. The Social Exchange Theory

Social exchange theory states that whenever a person finds out that there is a good exchange between what he offers and what he receives, the likelihood of being absorbed and creating love are more durable. In exchange relationship, members expect to benefit from the benefits they bring. The person who received the benefit is required to return the same benefits. In this type of connection, people are worried about how much they received the benefit and how much interest they would receive in return for the benefit they received. A fair exchange may affect the choice of a spouse, in which case a young man may marry an elderly and wealthy woman or a young woman with an elderly man, who is happy with the marriage, because a good exchange has taken place on both sides. Of course, fairness is based on one's own perceptions of the individual, so some people may be satisfied with their marriages, although the overseer does not consider the marriage fair.

9. Research Hypotheses

9.1. The main hypothesis: There is a relationship between the family values and the tendency toward marriage among secondary school female students.

9.2. Sub-Hypotheses

1. There is a relationship between the family's traditions and the tendency to marry among female students.

2. There is a relationship between the criteria of spouse selection with the tendency to marry among female students.

3. There is a relationship between the decision-making systems in the family with the tendency for marriage among female students.

4. There is a relationship between the generational gap and the tendency to marry among female students.

5. There is a relationship between accountability and tendency for marriage among female students.

10. Research methodology

In terms of its objective, the present study is an applied research, and its purpose is the development of knowledge in a particular context, by which a well-known need will be met. In terms of nature and method is a survey.

10.1. Statistical population

The statistical population of this study are 1,400 high school female students of academic year 2016-17 in Qaemshahr city.

10.2. Statistical sample

Sample size is determined by using Krejcie and Morgan table and 302 persons. Random sampling method is used.

11. Definitions of Terms

11.1. Theoretical definitions

Family: A group of people who have either blood relations or are related through marriage or adoption and are an economic entity and their adult members are responsible for raising children (Sadra Ghanbari, 2008, 25).

Value: In the term of sociological knowledge, there is an idea that individuals or groups of people have about what is desirable, appropriate, good or bad. Different values represent the fundamental aspects of diversity in human culture. Values usually come from habit and norm (Giddens, 2009: 787)

Marriage: Marriage is the process of loving, physical, sexual, and mental attraction, and consequently, the provision of economic, social, scientific, occupational, family, personal of two opposite sexes (women and men or girls and boys) in order to create a shared life with understanding, affection, reproduction, and purposefulness, at the top of it the most influences are received from beliefs and religions on both sides. (Ezazi, 127: 2003).

Intergenerational Gap: it is a concept that highlights the significant difference between mental, social and cultural aspects and significant differences in insight, beliefs, imaginations, expectations, value orientations, and behavioral patterns between two generations in a community"(Tavakol and Ghazinejad, 2006: 86).

Family values: the family values are the rules agreed upon by family members. Adhering to family values will strengthen the foundations of the family and bring trust among members. (Tavakol and Ghazinejad, 2006: 86)

Rituals and traditions: From the point of view of sociology, the common customs can be defined as:

The totality of behaviors that are habituated and those who belong to one class performs the same in such unobvious manner. Violations of common customs is not accepted by public opinion and, in some cases, it will cause prosecution of individuals by virtue of civil law (Sheikhi, 2003, p. 65).

Accountability: Accountability in the general sense means acceptability, responsibility, and taking on what the individual has been asked for. Of course, following this definition, it has been said that this responsibility can be accepted or rejected by one (Azad Armaki, 2010, p. 23).

11.2. Operational Definitions:

Family Values: Family values are the rules that family members have agreed on. In fact, they determine special frameworks for the people of the community to determine which behavior and response are appropriate in each situation. They direct and determine the attitudes (Eric, 2000). In this research, a researcher-made questionnaire with 23 components (traditions, marital selection criteria, decision-making, intergenerational, and accountability) has been used to measure family values.

Marriage tendency: In this study, to assess the marital tendency, we used a questionnaire that was developed by Heydari et al. (2004) and has four subscales (marital feedback, readiness and willingness to marry, attitudes toward marriage outcomes and barriers to marriage).

12. Validity of Questionnaire

The concept of validity answers the question of how much the measuring instrument measures the subject of interest. Without knowing the validity of the questionnaire, the accuracy of the data obtained cannot be assured. To assess the scientific validity of the questionnaires of this research face validity has been used.

13. Reliability of questionnaire

The reliability of the tool is determined by the Cronbach's alpha. In the Cronbach Alpha method each single item is taken with the total score of the instrument or the correlation test, and it is assumed that it is expected that the individuals who get in a given position will do the same in other category. All categories and tool are designed for variables of family values and tendency to marry. First, 30 questionnaires were randomly distributed among the subjects. Then, using the SPSS software the

Cronbach's alpha for the components of the questionnaire is achieved as shown in following table.

Table 1. Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients

Questionnaire	Observations	Cronbach's Alpha
Family Values	30	0.84
Traditions	30	0.78
Spouse Selection Criteria	30	0.82
Decision Making System	30	0.86
Intergenerational Gap	30	0.74
Accountability	30	0.83
Tendency to Marriage	30	0.83

14. Information analysis method

Data analysis was done in two sections: descriptive and inferential statistics.

- Inferential statistics: Pearson correlation coefficient and the Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests were used to determine the relationship between variables and to confirm or reject the hypotheses.

15. Research Findings

15.1. Descriptive Statistics

From 302 respondents, 108 were rural and 194 were urban, 90 were second grade, 102 were third grade and 110 were pre-university students. There are also 196 from public schools and 106 from private schools.

15.2. Examination of Hypotheses

15.2.1. The main hypothesis

- There is a relationship between family values and tendency to marry among secondary school female students.

Table 2. The correlation coefficient

		Tendency to Marriage
Family Values	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	0684**
	Sig	-000
	N	302

According to Table 4, the value of Sig is less than 0.05 which indicates that the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a relationship between family values and the tendency to marriage among female secondary school students.

Sub-hypothesis

- There is a relationship between the family's traditions and the tendency to marry among female students.

Table 3. The Correlation coefficient

		Tendency to Marriage
Family traditions	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	0761**
	Sig	-000
	N	302

According to table 5, the value of Sig is less than 0.05 which indicates that the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a relationship between the family's traditions and the tendency to marry among female students.

- There is a relationship between the criteria of spouse selection with the tendency to marry among female students.

Table 4. The correlation coefficient

		Tendency to Marriage
Criteria of spouse selection	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	0264**
	Sig	-000
	N	302

According to table 6, the value of Sig is less than 0.05 which indicates that the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a relationship between the criteria of spouse selection with the tendency to marry among female students.

- There is a relationship between the decision-making systems in the family with the tendency for marriage among female students.

Table 5. The correlation coefficient

		Tendency to Marriage
Decision-making systems	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	0779**
	Sig	-000
	N	302

According to Table 7, the value of Sig is less than 0.05 which indicates that the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a relationship between the decision-making system in the family and the tendency for marriage among female students.

- There is a relationship between the value generation gap and the tendency to marry among female students.

Table 6. The correlation coefficient

		Tendency to Marriage
Value Generation Gap	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	0603**
	Sig	-000
	N	302

According to Table 8, the value of Sig is less than 0.05 which indicates that the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a relationship between the value generation gap and the tendency to marry among female students.

- There is a relationship between accountability and tendency for marriage among female students.

Table 9. The correlation coefficient

		Tendency to Marriage
Accountability	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	0515**
	Sig	-000
	N	302

According to table 9, the value of Sig is less than 0.05 which indicates that the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a relationship between accountability and tendency for marriage among female students.

16. Conclusions and recommendations

In this study, the relationship between family values and marriage tendency was studied. The results of the study of the values of two generations show that children place the material values in the highest priority.

The results also indicated that children pay more attention to values such as money and enjoyment (consumption, music and marriage based on love, fashion, and parade) than their parents.

On the other hand, parents are more interested in religious and family values. The issue is probably due to the greater emphasis of parents on traditional, religious, and family value.

Finally, it can be said that because of the lack of meeting the basic needs of individuals, the value orientations tend to focus more on material values. The findings showed that the relationship between people and money is the most important component and the society goes toward consumption, consumerism and parade.

These types of values may not be tolerable in terms of old generation or parents and are considered to be counter-worthy. In analyzing the values of both generations

of parents and children, both parents and children have their own values according to the historical and cultural conditions and the historical events.

In the words of Christopher Bales, these historical events and social conditions bring different "generational objects" for both generations. The first generation or the parents, given the experience of events such as revolution and war have some generational objects such as sacrifice, dedication, self-devotion, and construction; and for the new generation, Internet, Bluetooth, reform, social networks and satellite are defined and the generations unconsciously feel "generational solidarity" with these objects.

In the opinion of Bales, every ten years, we provide a new definition of culture, values, attachments, artistic interests, political perspectives and social heroes (as a result of change of the Iranian society from a poor rural economy to a petty rented economy) significant changes are seen in the community value system.

Modernity in Iran did not come as a result of industry entry, but people who experienced a defective modernity achieved the wealth that was brought by the oil economy. The result of this condition was the expansion of educational and job opportunities for various groups of society, especially for women and their entry into universities increased cultural capital, and it seemed that the only way to achieve this was to receive academic degrees.

The consequences of this demand from women was the increase in the age of marriage, the rising expectations of women in relation to having a suitable occupation, traumatic and unbridled personality that is a value conflict between family members: the generation of children and especially women in the competition for identity and increasing social capital (the definition of new social relations), "cultural" (academic degree, skill, and scientific abilities) have entered various social fields which could result in the abandonment of accepted values of generations of their parents and possible conflict with it.

According to Bourdieu's view, the conflict between generations and the conflict of intergenerational values among families are the result of an unbalanced distribution of wealth and power and the monopolization of various material and symbolic resources (i.e. positions, titles, degrees, cultural and moral controls, and so on) in the hands of the current generation. Of course, Bourdieu's structural contradictions are reformist and it can create the peaceful coexistence between generations.

The Iranian family has undergone significant changes during the last several years under the influence of the modernization process and its implications, including the economic transformation and the urbanization prevalence and the migration of rural

families to the city. The modern family reduced the construction and operation of some cultural values, the desire to have similar family characteristics and marriage with relatives, the age of marriage is gradually rising, and the adoption of divorce is easier for individuals. In Iran, during periods of social changes, differences between long-term and short-term responses to cultural norms, such as preferences for marriage with relatives, the choice of spouses based on love and the desirability of marriage have been created. The research results show that the values of the family in the children's generation are more modern than traditional, and vice versa, in their parents, these values are more traditional than modern.

For today's generation, money is of immense value. They determine personality of individuals based on the amount of money they have and treat all human actions based on money and evaluate every kind of service to others with money.

This generation is engaged in economic phase more than the generation of their parents and show "rational goal-oriented action". Parents' generations are also interested in wealth, but consider human standards (not just instrumental and monetary measures) in evaluating other people. Perhaps, according to Englehart theory, this means that their basic needs and economic security are not fully met in order to fully reach "extra material" values.

The findings show that between the two generations, in terms of the "age of marriage", there is a significant difference.

The previous generations are married at an early age and are eager to see their young children are married at an early age. But the new generation, with academic and social differences with the older generation, has a desire to marry at an older age, because they believe early marriage is a loss of opportunity for enjoying life.

Given the above findings, it can be said that the increase in the age of marriage, which has been parallel to the entrance of individuals, especially women, to the universities, has been accepted by the people as a value-added action. Of course, the tragic aspect of increasing the age of marriage reveals itself when it is not associated with the freedom of sexual relations in society.

The result will be the extension of sexual relations to underground and hidden activities and, ultimately, the increase of corruption and prostitution.

Differences and changes can be seen in terms of choosing a spouse between two generations.

Patterns of spouse selection changed between two generations of families which result the formation of a kind of harmful individualism, the consequences of which are

the deprivation of youth from family relationships and living on the basis of fully personalized standards which strengthened the changes of values of two generations.

17. Recommendations

- Due to the rising age of marriage, proper cultural activities shall be done to reduce the effects of delayed marriage and its implications so providing information and education in choosing a spouse can be effective.
- Use of capacities such as audio and visual media, newspapers, journals, publications, etc. to institutionalize the culture of marriage in families.
- Conducting training sessions in provincial and district schools to educate students about the benefits of marriage and family formation.
- Broadcasting the educational programs by media and distributing Islamic culture radio and television to raise awareness among families about marriage and family formation.
- Parents shall spend more time with their children in the open space, so that the children do not feel emotional shortage and do not use the cyberspace to compensate for the problem.
- Designing and compiling part of textbooks, in relation to the acquaintance of students with marriage.
- The use of religious teachings to promote virtue and prevent vice.

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