



INVESTIGATION OF SPOUSE SELECTION CRITERIA AMONG STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BOJNORD: PRIORITY OF THE CRITERIA

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ABSTRACT

With regard to the significance of marriage and spouse selection as one of the most fundamental selections in the youth and respecting the role of spouse selection criteria in determining marriage durability and preventing family burnout, the existence of a set of awareness and information is necessary so as to improve the quality of marriage.

The objective of the present study was to investigate the priority of spouse selection criteria in students and compare these criteria in male and female students, single and married students, different ages, and different faculties at the University of Bojnord. Therefore, 245 students were selected as the sample of the study from the said population and based on the conventional sampling methods. To calculate the research variables indices of central tendency and dispersion, the inferential statistics tests like t-test was used to compare the two independent groups. SPSS 22 software was used to analyze all steps of the research findings.

This study showed that the first priority and the most important criterion among students was family nobility, the second one was belief and faith, and the third one was chastity. Moreover, the least important criteria were beauty and wealth, respectively. There was not a statistically significant difference between male and female students in terms of spouse selection criteria. However, they are different in terms of some of the priorities.

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Introduction

Human is a social creature created with social, physical, and mental needs and his needs change in the process of physical growth. Marriage and family formation is one of the institutions which can be effective in providing emotional and social needs of the human. Family is the best shelter for the human and the most desirable place for representation of solace and confidence. This shows that family is one of the most basic and natural needs of the human. Many of the mental problems caused by tensions of everyday life can be compensated by a healthy normal family. That is why the studies conducted in the area of family issues generally show that, in average, the married people are healthier and happier than the single ones [1]. A healthy society is formed by healthy individuals and families. Spouse selection plays a very important role in the formation of a desirable family and the correct education of the children. Because of its fundamental role in the formation of the family, marriage and success in which as a social, biological, and cultural event is of great importance such that it can be said that family is not an explicitly clear concept without marriage [2]. Therefore, everyone needs to ask themselves what criteria they have in mind for selecting their spouse before marriage so as to build a healthy family.

Marriage is considered to be the first logical and emotional agreement in our life. Furthermore, the spouse selection and marriage agreement represent the maturity and development of the personality. Undoubtedly, the spouse selection is one of the most important decisions we make in our life [3]. The marriage is the first and most important step in the cycle of family life in which the spouse selection is done and the success of the other steps depends to the one of this step

The human being is continuously selecting during his life and predicates some factors in any selection wanted or unwanted and consciously or unconsciously. Some of these factors are special to on individual and some ones are almost common between all members of a group in terms of gender or type [4].

Starting a family and the proper interactions between the individuals would result in the growth and development of the humans that for its keeping, it is necessary that the both parties determine the proper factors for the spouse selection and survey the individual features and their conformity with their own factors [5].

On one side, the absence of human relationships in the families is one of the effective factors in the impermanence of marriage that is created by the reason of absence of recognition before the marriage. It is possible that the spouses do not have enough recognition of each other and consequently, the human relationships between them would be weakened and their life would be decayed [6]. Generally, the absence of personality mutual understanding, cultural and social difference, not being desirable the process of spouse selection, sexual dissatisfaction, absence of training of life skills, incompatibility of interest styles of the spouses, inefficient beliefs and attitudes and non- logical expectations from marriage can be considered as the main reasons for divorce[7].

With regard to the importance of matter of marriage and spouse selection that is one of the most fundamental choices of the youth period and also with regard to the role of spouse selection factors in determining the stability of marriage and inhibiting the burnout of family, the existence of set of some knowledge and information is necessary for promoting the quality of marriage.

The study of parameters of spouse selection and their priority among the students is of special importance for the reason of their special conditions because most of the students are at the age of marriage and spouse selection. So, regarding the matter of marriage and studying the students' attitudes toward this matter can help considerably the reduction of divorce and more attitudes of the youth toward the marriage and their acquaintance with the proper doctrine of spouse selection; because any person, for intimate communication with the other person, should find a partner, create an emotional union and retain it during the time. The intimate spouses visit each other at the places in which the individuals according to their age, relationship, social-economic rank and religion present [8]. When the individuals adjacent to each other, they usually select the spouses who are in common with them in the feedback, value, personality, educational programs, intelligence, physical attraction and even height [9]. So, the present research aims to identify and determine the criteria for spouse selection among the students and compare and prioritize the criteria of spouse selection between the girl and boy, married and single.

Literature Review

The researchers have studied criteria of spouse selection among different strata of the society and have obtained some useful results. The studies show that the criteria of spouse selection have never been global and have differed at different societies and depend hardly to the culture and cultural factors [10, 11]. Although the factors related to the health, age, facial attractiveness, social factors, education, cultural factors such as religion and dress code, psychological factors, genetic factors and job are general criteria in the spouse selection, but the conception of these concepts depends hardly to the culture. For instance, [11] about the criterion of the beauty of spouse revealed that the concept of beauty differs in different cultures. For example, the tall and fat individuals are regarded attractive in the African societies, whereas these kinds of people are considered clumsy and unhealthy in the European and North America societies. In China, being moon-like is desirable, while the thin and taut faces are attractive in North Europe [12]. The criteria for spouse selection even change in a culture from a time to the other time. For example, the facial attractiveness is replaced with the physical health and happiness in the spouse selection [13, 10].

The results of studies done by Hanef et al. (2014) about the criteria of spouse selection in the Pakistani students showed that the beauty and facial attractiveness is the first and most important factor in their spouse selection. The other criteria are as follows: loyalty, truth, having aesthetic tact and physical health.

In a research done by [14] on 104 married individuals and 112 single ones on an Iranian sample, the results showed that the obligation, continence, virtue, and health were recognized as the main criteria for both married and single individuals. Furthermore, the affairs such as experience, the social status of the spouse, her family background, occupy and age are important for the married men and for the married women, the affairs such as social skills, housekeeping, and self-determination are of less importance in comparison with the past.

The results of study done by [15] on the girl and boy students for the comparison of criteria of spouse selection in the Medical Sciences University of Isfahan show that there is a significant difference in the age difference between the spouses, priority of income to the social position of spouse's job and employment condition of the spouse, priority of beauty to wealth and the physical condition to mental growth and the facial similarity of the beloved person with the parents, while there is no significant difference in the regard of the criteria of the occupational position of father of the spouse in comparison to his/her own father, mental agreement, existence of mutual understanding, place of employment and residence, family relation of the spouses, social interactions, level of social growth, quality of decision- making about the life issues, level of egocentricity, observance of hijab and Islamic dress, compatibility with his/her own parents and enjoying the similar attitude toward the role of family.

The study done by [5] about the study of priorities of criteria of spouse selection of the spouses just married in Tehran city shows that the family genuineness, facial non-deformation, truth, sociability, and belief in the equality of men and woman are the first priorities and the number of family members, skin color, non-addiction to cigar, being an employee and being fellow-citizen are the last priorities in the spouse selection. Generally, the sanity of spouse and the cultural- religious condition dominate the first and the last priorities, respectively.

[16] did a comparative study of criteria for spouse selection of young female of Ahvaz city that results reveal the criteria of spouse selection as following: agreement, family, medical, independence of new family and moral and religious features. Also, there is no significant difference between the criteria of spouse selection of young female in the regard of age, mother tongue, birth order, family size and their parents' literacy. There is a significant difference just between the criteria of spouse selection of the female of quadruple educational regions.

[17] studied the factors effective on the criteria of spouse selection among the students of Yazd University. According to the results of this research, the male pay more attention to the facial criteria of the spouse in comparison to the female and the female emphasize the religious criteria in the spouse selection more than the male. The individuals with higher social rank and the individuals with higher age emphasize the facial criteria and the religious criteria, respectively.

[4] in a research among the female and male and different ages of students concluded that there was a significant difference in the regard of physical factors of spouse selection, amount of age difference between the spouses and facial details of face and body. About 73 percent of the male believed in being less the age of the woman while 95 percent of the female preferred their spouses being elder than them.

[18] concluded in his studies that the belief and faith is the first priority in the spouse selection of both sexes. The mental and psychological health is the second priority in the spouse selection from the male' viewpoint, while the female have regarded this criterion at the fifth priority. There is a significant difference between the girl and boy students in the prioritization of criteria of spouse selection.

[19] in a research titled " comparison and ranking priorities of spouse selection among group of girl and boy students and Kurd, Arab and Bakhtiari students of Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz" showed that there is a significant difference between the mean of priorities of spouse selection of the students; in such a way that the higher means are related to the behavioral and religious features and social skills and the lower ones are related to the housekeeping skills. Also, there observed a significant difference between the spouse selection priorities of the female (behavioral features, social- economic situation and religious features) and the male (facial features and housekeeping skills) and between the spouse selection priorities of relationships of Bakhtiari (housekeeping skills), Kurd (facial features) and Arabs (wanting child and being religious).

[20] in a research titled " culture of spouse selection; criteria and priorities", have done a study with the purpose of identification, prioritization, and comparison of criteria of spouse selection among the students of Islamic Azad University and State University of Ghom. The findings revealed that the mental and psychological health is the most prioritized criterion and the political viewpoint is less important in the spouse selection among the students and the modesty and continence, enjoying the gentility and personal chastity, having truth in matrimony life, moral agreement between the spouses, security, and tranquility in life, reliability, sense of high accountability, physical health, educational and cultural agreement between the spouses have been the most important criteria for spouse selection among the students, respectively. The correlation between ranking the students of two universities is significant. The students pay less attention to the material and facial criteria in comparison to the spiritual criteria in selecting spouse that this matter accords more with the Islamic culture and doctrines.

Objectives

The present research is done with the purpose of the study of priority of criteria of spouse selection of the students and the comparison of these criteria among the girl and boy and the married and single students and at different ages. Two hypotheses have been studied in the present research. The first hypothesis is that the female and male apply different criteria in the selection of their future spouses. The second hypothesis is that the religious and moral criteria are the priorities of both two groups in the selection of a spouse.

Method

The present study is a descriptive applied research with a descriptive- surveying method because its purpose is the identification of criteria for spouse selection among the students. All the married and single students of University of Bojnourd in the academic year 2015- 16 are the population of present research. From this population and with regard to the popular methods of sampling, 245 students (200 single and 45 married students) were selected as the sample of this research. The clustering method was used for sampling in such a way that seven classes of the instruction department in the second term of the academic year 2015- 16 were selected randomly and the students of every class filled the questionnaire of the research. For observing the Islamic standards of the research in the regard of the students, it was warranted that their information would be secured and it does not need to write their identity. The inferential statistic tests such as T- test for comparing the two independent groups in addition to the descriptive statistical methods like calculation of frequency, adjustment of tables, calculation of central indexes and dispersion of research variables for the purpose of statistical analysis of the information. All the steps of analyzing the findings of the research were done by the use of the software.

Table 1: form of questionnaire of different criteria

Row	Criteria for spouse selection	Order of priorities
1	Family nobility	
2	Belief and faith	
3	chastity	
4	Age agreement	
5	Wealth	
6	Good temper	
7	Sociability	
8	Beauty	
9	Generosity	
10	Consultation and mutual understanding	

Findings

The 245 students participated in the present research that their demographical features have been presented in Table 2:

Table 2: Study of demographical features of sample group

Variable	group	Frequency	Percentage
Sex	woman	149	60.8
	man	96	39.2
Marital status	single	200	81.6
	married	45	18.4

As is observable in table 2, of all 245 students of the sample group, 149 members (%60/8) are female and 96 members (%39/2) are male. Also, with regard to the marriage condition, 200 members (%81/6) are single and 45 members (%18/4) are married. The mean and standard deviation of the criteria have been presented in terms of 1 to 10 in table 3 respectively from the most important criterion to the less important one in all the students of sample group:

Table 3: priority order of criteria of spouse selection from students' viewpoint (male and female, married and single)

Priority Order	Criterion of spouse selection	mean	Standard deviation
First rank	Family nobility	3.29	2.46
Second rank	Belief and faith	4.01	2.90
Third rank	chastity	4.72	2.97
Fourth rank	Age agreement	5.47	2.98
Fifth rank	Wealth	5.90	2.89
Sixth rank	Consultation and mutual understanding	6.04	1.95
Seventh rank	Generosity	6.29	2.38
Eighth rank	Sociability	6.31	2.63
Ninth rank	Good temper	6.34	2.83
Tenth rank	Beauty	6.50	2.56

With regard to this matter that the lower score is indicative of higher priority and more importance of the criterion of spouse selection and as the results of Table 3 show, the most prioritized criterion from the students' viewpoint if the family nobility, next the belief and faith and then the chastity. Also, the less important criterion is beauty, good temper, and sociability. The mean and standard deviation of the criteria have been presented in terms of 1 to 10 in table 4 respectively from the most important criterion to the less important one in all the girl students of sample group:

Table 4: priority order of criteria of spouse selection from female students' viewpoint

Priority Order	Criterion of spouse selection	Mean	Standard deviation
First rank	Family nobility	3.18	2.40
Second rank	Belief and faith	4.24	2.96
Third rank	chastity	4.71	3.14
Fourth rank	Age agreement	5.26	2.95
Fifth rank	Wealth	6.09	2.90
Sixth rank	Consultation and mutual understanding	6.15	1.94
Seventh rank	Sociability	6.20	2.63
Eighth rank	Good temper	6.36	2.90
Ninth rank	Beauty	6.39	2.46
Tenth rank	Generosity	6.42	2.19

As the results of Table 4 reveal, the family nobility, belief and faith, chastity are the most important criteria for spouse selection from the girl students' viewpoint and the generosity, beauty and good temper have been reported as the less important criteria. The mean and standard deviation of the criteria have been presented in terms of 1 to 10 in table 5 respectively from the most important criterion to the less important one in all the boy students of sample group:

Table 5: priority order of criteria of spouse selection from male students' viewpoint

Priority Order	Criterion of spouse selection	Mean	Standard deviation
First rank	Family nobility	3.45	2.55
Second rank	Belief and faith	3.66	2.78
Third rank	chastity	4.72	2.69
Fourth rank	Wealth	5.60	2.86
Fifth rank	Age agreement	5.80	3.01
Sixth rank	Consultation and mutual understanding	5.85	1.97
Seventh rank	Generosity	6.06	2.67
Eighth rank	Good temper	6.29	2.73
Ninth rank	Sociability	6.49	2.64
Tenth rank	Beauty	6.68	2.73

As the results of Table 5 reveal, the family nobility, belief and faith, chastity are the most important criteria for spouse selection from the male students' viewpoint and the beauty, sociability and good temper have been reported as the less important criteria. The results of the comparison of means of spouse selection criteria of the two genders have been presented in Table 6 to be studied that whether there is a significant statistical difference in the mean of these criteria of two sexes or not. The T- test has been used for the comparison of two independent groups:

Table 6: comparison of criteria for marriage in two genders

Priority Order	Criterion for spouse selection	mean	Standard deviation
First rank	Family nobility	0.83	0.40

Second rank	Belief and faith	1.51	0.13
Third rank	chastity	0.02	0.97
Fourth rank	Age agreement	1.36	0.17
Fifth rank	Wealth	1.29	0.19
Sixth rank	Good temper	0.19	0.84
Seventh rank	Sociability	0.83	0.40
Eighth rank	beauty	0.84	0.39
Ninth rank	Generosity	1.10	0.27
Tenth rank	Consultation and mutual understanding	1.12	0.26

As the results of Table 6 show, there is no significant difference in the marriage criteria of two sexes. It means that although some priorities of spouse selection are different in two genders, there is no significant difference between two sexes in the regard of difference at the level of these criteria.

The mean and standard deviation of the criteria have been presented in terms of 1 to 10 in table 7 respectively from the most important criterion to the less important one in all the married students of sample group:

Table 7: priority order of criteria of spouse selection from viewpoint of married students

Priority Order	Criterion of spouse selection	mean	Standard deviation
First rank	Family nobility	3.0222	2.03926
Second rank	Belief and faith	3.6222	2.92551
Third rank	chastity	3.9556	2.71323
Fourth rank	Age agreement	5.9111	2.67838
Fifth rank	Generosity	6.2889	2.04075
Sixth rank	Consultation and mutual understanding	6.3488	2.10310
Seventh rank	Sociability	6.3556	2.68967
Eighth rank	Good temper	6.4000	2.86356
Ninth rank	Wealth	6.4000	2.79935
Tenth rank	Beauty	6.6222	2.72438

With regard to this matter that the lower score indicates the higher priority and more importance of criterion of spouse selection and also as is observed in table 7, the most prioritized criteria from the viewpoint of the married students are the family nobility, next the belief and faith and then the chastity. Also, the beauty, wealth and good temper are of less importance.

The difference of means of criteria of spouse selection with regard to the marriage condition has been studied in table 8:

Table 8: comparison of marriage criteria with regard to marriage condition

Row	Criterion	T	Sig
1	Family nobility	0.81	0.41
2	Belief and faith	1	0.31
3	chastity	2.05	0.04
4	Age agreement	1.07	0.28
5	Wealth	1.28	0.20
6	Good temper	0.15	0.87
7	Sociability	0.11	0.91
8	beauty	0.34	0.72
9	Generosity	0.01	0.98
10	Consultation and mutual understanding	1.11	0.26

As the results of Table 8 reveal, there is no significant statistical difference in the criteria of marriage except the third criterion with regard to the marriage condition. It means that although some priorities of spouse selection in terms of marriage condition are different, there is no significant statistical difference between the married individuals and the single ones in the regard of difference at the level of these criteria. But in the regard of the third criterion, according to this matter that the lower score is the indicative of more importance of the criterion, the results reveal that this criterion is meaningfully powerful for the married individuals.

Conclusion

With regard to the statistical analysis done by SPSS software and also the results obtained from the statistical data, the study and identification of the relationship between the variables are as following:

This research reveals that the family nobility is the first and most important criterion in the spouse selection among all the students (girl and boy, single and married).

The belief and faith is the second priority and the chastity is third one in the criteria of spouse selection from all students' viewpoint.

The age agreement is the fourth priority in the criteria of spouse selection from all students' viewpoint.

The beauty is the fifth priority in the criteria of spouse selection from all students' viewpoint.

The consultation and mutual understanding is the sixth priority in the criteria of spouse selection from all students' viewpoint.

The generosity is the seventh priority in the criteria of spouse selection from all students' viewpoint.

The sociability is the eighth priority in the criteria of spouse selection from all students' viewpoint.

The good temper is the ninth priority in the criteria of spouse selection from all students' viewpoint.

The beauty is the tenth priority in the criteria of spouse selection from all students' viewpoint.

There is no significant statistical difference between both girl and boy in the priorities of spouse selection, although they are different in some priorities as following:

Among the girl and boy students, the family nobility, belief and faith, chastity are the first, second and third priorities in the criteria of spouse selection, respectively.

The fourth priority for the female is the age agreement, but for the male is the wealth.

The fifth priority for the female is the wealth, but for the male is the age agreement.

The consultation and mutual understanding is the sixth priority among members of both two groups.

The seventh priority for the female is the sociability, but for the male is the generosity.

The good temper is the eighth priority among members of both two groups.

The ninth priority for the female is the beauty, but for the male is the sociability.

The beauty is the tenth priority in the spouse selection from the viewpoint of all students.

There is no statistically significant difference between both girl and boy in the priorities of spouse selection, although they are different in some priorities as following:

Among the girl and boy students, the family nobility, belief and faith, chastity are the first, second and third priorities in the criteria of spouse selection, respectively.

The fourth priority for the female is the age agreement, but for the male is the wealth.

The fifth priority for the female is the beauty, but for the male is the age agreement.

The consultation and mutual understanding is the sixth priority among members of both two groups.

The seventh priority for the female is the sociability, but for the male is the generosity.

The good temper is the eighth priority among members of both two groups.

The ninth priority for the female is the beauty, but for the male is the sociability.

The tenth priority for the female is the generosity, but for the male is the beauty

The other part of research reveals that the most prioritized criteria from the viewpoint of married students are family nobility, belief and faith, chastity. Also, the beauty and then the wealth are the less important criteria.

In the study of the difference between means of criteria of spouse selection in terms of marriage condition, it was revealed that there is no statistically significant difference in the criteria of marriage in terms of marriage condition except the chastity. It means that although some priorities of spouse selection in terms of marriage condition are different, there is no significant statistical difference between the single and married students in the regard of difference at the level of these criteria. But the criterion of chastity is of special importance among the married students and the results indicate that this criterion is meaningfully powerful in the married individuals.

It is necessary to consider the following points:

1- Although the findings of the study of priorities of spouse selection may not be based on our presuppositions, they do not conflict the cultural values and can be derived from the Iranian- Islamic cultural structure because it seems that the foundation of spouse selection is a combination of biological, social and cultural powers.

2- This study indicates that among all the students (girl and boy, single and married), the first and most important criterion for the spouse selection is the family nobility, the second priority is the belief and faith and the third one is the chastity. The tenth (the last) priority among the female is the generosity, but among the male it is beauty. It is necessary to explain that it should be noticed that it does not mean to determine and identify the criteria for the marriage that the reader imagines that the beauty is not the criteria for the marriage! It is indicative of prioritization of some criteria in comparison to the other ones. In other words, the students like to have and beautiful and religious spouse; it means that the beauty is a criterion and important for them but not like continence. So, the beauty is of criteria of spouse selection; but it has been placed at the next priorities.

3- The results of present research accord with the results of the study done on an Iranian sample by [14] and showed that the obligation, continence, virtue, and health are the most important criteria for both the married and single individuals.

Also like the findings of study done by [5] shows that the family nobility is the first priority in the spouse selection and also, it accords with the results of studies of [18] that the belief and faith is the first priority in the criteria of spouse selection of both two sexes.

It also accords with the results of study done by [19] that among the means of priorities of spouse selection of the students, the highest means are related to the behavioral and religious features and the social skills and it also accords with the results of study done by [20] that enjoying the personal and family gentility, having truth in the matrimony life, moral agreement between the spouses, security, and tranquility in the life, reliability, sense of high responsibility, physical health, cultural and educational agreement between the spouses have been of most important criteria of spouse selection among the students, respectively.

The present study has been done just in the regard of the students and its simultaneous execution on all strata of the society was not possible. So, there was a chance to think about the generalization of findings and in spite of all these restrictions, the findings of present research pave the way for doing more studies in the regard of spouse selection.

5- the findings of present research can be applied in the elemental prevention of divorce and social damages. In the education of psychological health of the marriage, it is necessary that the spouse selection indexes be studied in detail so that by these educations, the individuals can choose their future spouse with more knowledge and recognition.

The religious and doctrinal similarities are one of the issues which are emphasized in the matrimony life. It has been advised to the youth in the Islamic texts to regard generally the religious beliefs instead of wealth and physical appearance in selecting spouse; because the beliefs and religious doctrines prevent the individuals from doing many malefactions and the religion is one of the most important spiritual limpid sources of which the human being feeds. So, the proper and appraised culture- based recognition of the spouse selection criteria is effective in strengthening the structure of the family.

7- to execute the workshops and classes for acquainting with the criteria of spouse selection for the students and the increase of their information, in addition to helping the formation of healthy environment in the universities, can cause culture- building with regard to the Islamic criteria and its promotion in the general culture of the society.

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