



The relationship between identity styles and marriage expectations among students of Azad Science and Research University of Fars

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between identity styles and marriage expectation. This study has a correlational design. For this purpose, 426 students of Azad Science and Research University of Fars are selected and filled marriage expectation scale and Identity Style Inventory of Berzonsky (ISI-6G). The results of the study indicated that there is a significant positive relationship between informational and normative style and marriage expectation and a significant negative relationship between diffuse style and marriage expectation. Also there is a significant difference between informational and diffuse styles. The results showed that different styles of identity in people predicted their marriage expectation. The positive relationship between the identity styles and marriage expectation can be explained by Ericsson theory.

Keywords: marriage expectation, identity styles, students

INTRODUCTION

People usually have their notions and expectations of marriage before getting married that they are not fully aware of them. One of the problems with young couples is caused by their standards and subjective assumptions (Ebrahimi, 2008) therefore one of the variables that can affect the future of marriage is “marriage expectation”. The expectation of marriage is satisfaction or dissatisfaction and the likelihood of divorce predicted by people for their marriage (Steinberg et al., 2006). The variable of marriage expectation can be affected by other factors. According to attachment theory presented by Bowlby, the initial experiences achieved through one’s parents lead to the formation of internal working models that affect one’s attitudes and expectations of the future relationships (Mikulincer and Shaver, 2007).

On the other hand adolescence is a suitable time for the formation of identity (feelings and self-concept). The formation of identity provides grounds for some fundamental challenges in youth years: including intimacy or capacity for mutual openness and participation in bilateral relations. Young people leave behind the following steps to be prepared for this potential advantage: initial relationship with the caregiver(s) (childhood), starting early relationships with peers (during adolescence) and finally entering the adulthood that in the optimal conditions the individuals have the possibility to make long-term intimate relationships based on mutual trust (Chasselton, 1996; quoted in Montgomery, 2005).

So identity can have a direct impact on people's intimacy because in Erikson's theory after identity versus confusion stage, there is intimacy versus isolation that people who have leave behind the last stage successfully can achieve a successful identity and then they can form intimate relationships (Berzonsky and Ferrari, 1996). Ericsson (1982, quoted by Montgomery, 2005) argued that although other forms of intimacy are part of natural growth, only after the consolidation of a sense of identity once can experience a developed and real intimacy with another person because

“One of the basic conditions of close relationship between two people is that first the identity of each of them should be formed”.

So according to Ericsson it can be said that marriage which the establishment of a kind of intimate relationship for individuals could be influenced by the individual's identity formation.

The results of Daneshvarpoor et al (2007) showed that there is a significant positive correlation between scores of social intimacy and informational, normative and committed styles and there is a negative and non-significant relationship between social intimacy and diffuse style in girls and a negative relationship in this regard among boys. Also the variables of gender, educational level and informational, normative and committed styles predicted social intimacy significantly.

Buckler (2005) in a study titled identity and intimacy; the results indicated that intimacy in men is a predictor for identity. However there is no significant correlation between intimacy and identity in women.

These results indicate the effect of identity in creating intimacy. But the fact that identity styles can predict an adolescent's expectation about the intimacy before marriage has not been studied yet.

According to the studies mentioned and also given that research on the relationship between identity styles and their expectations of marriage has not observed by the researcher, this study is an attempt to analyze the relationship between identity of people and their marriage expectations.

EXPERIMENTAL SECTION

The research plan of this study was descriptive and correlational according to the nature of the subject. The population of the study included all students of Azad Science and Research University of Fars in 2012-2013. The sample included 426 (minimum 377) male and female students from different disciplines selected by convenience sampling of Morgan table. All subjects filled marriage expectation scale and Identity Style Inventory of Berzonsky (ISI-6G). At the end the research data were analyzed by SPSS Statistical Package of Social Sciences.

Research Tools

Marriage Expectation Scale (MES): This scale is designed to measure marriage expectation of single students without marriage experience. Its items measure expectations in relation to three areas of marriage i.e. intimacy, equality and compatibility. Marriage expectation scale analyzes the level of pessimistic, realistic and idealistic expectations of marriage (Jones, 1998).

Jones and Nelson (1996) reported a Cronbach's alpha of 0.79- 0.80 for the total scale and Dillon (2005) reported a factor of 0.80. They also presented a significant positive relationship between the scale scores of Dean Romantic scale and Love Attitude Scale as an evidence of convergence validity.

Also in Nilforooshan et al (2011) the internal consistency of this scale using Cronbach's alpha was 0.88 and test-retest coefficient in 3 weeks was obtained as 0.91. The correlation of this scale with attitude to marriage scale was 0.43. Also the results of factor analysis showed that the marriage expectation scale (MES) is a multi dimensional tool with 3 distinct and related factors of realistic, idealistic and pessimistic expectations. In general marriage expectation scale is used as a valid and appropriate tool for evaluating the expectation of marriage.

Berzonsky Identity Style Inventory (ISI-6G)

Berzonsky Identity Style Inventory (1989) was designed in the USA and had 40 questions and three identity styles that measure the commitment of individuals while filling the questionnaire. White et al (1998) revised this test and the revised form (ISI-6G) is used. Berzonsky (2000) reported the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of informational, normative and diffused/ avoidant styles and commitment scale as 0.71, 0.65, 0.75 and 0.78 and has reported the test-retest reliability with an interval of two months between 0.71 and 0.75. Aqajani (2001) during the standardization of the questionnaire obtain the totalm informational, normative, diffused styles and commitment scale as 0.74, 0.67, 0.53, 0.54 and 0.57. Also Khodaei et al (2009) obtained Cronbach's alpha for the questionnaire between 0.53 to 0.72 which indicates an acceptable levels of internal consistency for identity and identity commitment styles.

RESULTS

We first address the descriptive research findings. In order to analyze the descriptive specifications of the subjects the number, mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum indicators are used.

Table 1: Distribution of subjects by age

Index Variable	Number	Mean	The standard deviation	maximum score	minimum score
Age	426	22.04	3.187	37	18

According to the above table the minimum age for participating in the study is 18 and the maximum age is 37 with the mean of 22.04 and standard deviation of 3.187.

Table 2 presents the statistic indices related to the variables.

Table 2: The mean, standard deviation, maximum and minimum of students

Variable	Index	Number	Mean	The standard deviation	maximum score	minimum score
Identity style	Informational	426	41.20	6.146	57	25
	Normative	426	33.69	5.705	56	18
	Diffused	426	27.01	6.922	49	12
Marriage expectation		426	154.32	20.308	192	81

According to Table 2 in identity style the mean and standard deviation of informational, normative and diffused styled are 41.20 and 6.146, 33.69 and 5.705 and 27.01 and 6.922 and in marriage expectation the mean and standard deviation are 154.32 and 20.308.

Based on the presented descriptive data, now the inferential findings of the study are analyzed.

Table 3: correlation coefficients between, identity styles and marriage expectation

Variable Variable	Marriage expectation	Commitment	Diffused	Normative	Informational
Expect from marriage	1	**0.270	**-.0148	**0.208	**0.244
Commitment	-	1	**-.0.244	**0.573	**0.486
Confused	-	-	1	0.006	-0.006
Normative	-	-	-	1	**0.0403
Informational	-	-	-	-	1

* Significant correlation at 0.05

** Significant correlation at 0.01

The results of Table 3 shows that there is a significant positive relationship between informational style and marriage expectation ($r = 0/402$), there is a significant positive relationship between normative style and marriage expectation ($r = 0/313$) and there is a significant negative relationship between diffused style and marriage expectation ($r = -0/162$).

Now, given the correlation between identity and marital expectation variables, using regression test we predict the second variable based on the first variable based on the assumption that the share of each of the styles of identity is different in predicting the expectation of marriage.

Regression test results related to the expectation of marriage are given in Table 4.

Table 4: Regression test results related to the expectation of marriage

The criterion variable	Predictive variable	R	R ²	F	B	Standard regression coefficient (β)	T	P
Marriage expectation	Normative	0/473	0.096	14.923	0/473	0/133	2/625	0/009
	Informational	0/628	0.096	14.923	0/628	0/190	3/761	0.000
	Diffused	-0/432	0.096	14.923	-0/432	-0/147	-3/183	0/002

The results of Table 4 shows that the share of each of identity styles in predicting marriage expectation is different and informational style has the highest coefficient of determination ($\beta = 0/190$), which means it can predict marriage expectation more than the rest of styles.

Results of the independent T test for the marriage expectation and identity styles variables are given in table 5.

Table 5: Distribution of t values of marriage expectation and identity styles based on gender

Variable	Gender Index	mean	standard deviation	t	Degree of freedom	level of significance
Marriage expectation	Girl	154.84	18.576	-0.497	423.899	0.620
	Boy	153.87	21.731			
Informational style	Girl	40.47	5.432	2.304	422.445	0.022
	Boy	41.82	6.652			
Normative style	Girl	33.38	5.249	1.059	423.992	0.290
	Boy	33.96	6.071			
Diffused style	Girl	26.17	7.060	2.332	409.376	0.020
	Boy	27.74	26.731			

As the findings in Table 5 indicate, given that for marriage expectation variable the observed t with degree of freedom 423.899 at $p \leq 0.05$ is equal with -0.497, there is no significant difference between marriage expectation of girls and boys.

In case of the informational style given that the observed t with degree of freedom 422.455 at $p \leq 0.05$ is equal with 2.304m there is a significant difference between informational style of girls and boys. And given that the observed t for normative style with degree of freedom 423.992 at $p \leq 0.05$ is equal with 1.059m there is no significant difference between normative style of girls and boys. And given that the observed t for diffused style with degree of freedom 409.376 at $p \leq 0.05$ is equal with 2.332 there is a significant difference between diffused style of girls and boys.

CONCLUSION

The results show that there is a significant positive relationship between informational style and marriage expectation ($r = 0/402$), there is a significant positive relationship between normative style and marriage expectation ($r = 0/313$) and there is a significant negative relationship between diffused style and marriage expectation ($r = -0/162$). Unfortunately no similar study has been conducted on the relationship between two variables of identity styles and marriage expectations inside and outside the country. But given that intimacy in romantic relationships that comes after identity stage in Ericsson theory is one of the predictors of success in marriage, one might expand the concept of Ericsson's theory to marriage expectation. Based on Erickson (1986) identity formation provides the ground for some major challenges at youth: including intimacy or capacity for mutual openness and participation in bilateral relationships with others. So according to Ericsson it can be said that the establishment of an intimate relationship for married can be affected by an individual's identity formation. Daneshvar et al (2007) in a study that predicted social intimacy based on identity styles and other variables concluded there is a significant positive correlation between scores of social intimacy and informational, normative and committed styles and there is a negative and significant relationship between social intimacy and diffuse style. In addition to the above relationship the share of each identity styles are different in predicting marriage expectation and informational identity style can predict marriage expectation more than other styles. The results of the research are consistent with Daneshvarpour et al (2006). Given that people with normative and informational identity have reached their identity, according to Ericsson theory it is expected that these people have more intimate and optimistic expectations about marriage while people with diffuse identity that have failed to achieve a coherent identity have less intimate relationships and pessimistic expectations of marriage. The results of this study are in line with Erikson's theory.

On the other hand the results showed that there is no significant difference between boys and girls in marriage expectation variable while in case of styles it was determined that there is a significant difference between boys and girls in informational and diffuse styles while no significant difference was observed between boys and girls in normative style. The results of the research are consistent with Merabizadeh Honarmand et al (2006), Gharraee (2005) and Saadati Shamir (2006). Also the results of Nilforooshan (2011) indicate that girls have more pessimistic expectations about marriage which is inconsistent with the results of the present study. This inconsistency can be due to various reasons such as lack of the same subjects or even the wrong implementation of the research. On the other hand the results of the present study are in line with Gharraee et al (2005) who indicate that there is a significant difference between boys and girls in different styles except that no significant difference was observed between boys and girls in normative style while in Gharraee et al (2005) this significant difference was observed in all styles.

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