

Comparison of attitude to marriage, attitude to life and spiritual attitude in unmarried girls and boys

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Abstract

Introduction: One of the factors that cause differences in people's attitudes towards various issues, including marriage, life and spirituality, is their gender. The present study was conducted with the aim of comparing the attitude towards marriage, attitude towards life and spiritual attitude among unmarried boys and girls in Ardabil city in 2024.

Research method: The research method was descriptive (causal-comparative type). The statistical population of the research included all unmarried boys and girls in Ardabil city, 371 people (203 boys and 168 girls) responded to the questionnaire using convenience sampling method. In order to carry out the current research, three questionnaires of life attitude (LRI), Brateen and Rosen's attitude to marriage (MAS) and Shahidi and Farajnia's spiritual attitude were used. Data analysis was done with descriptive and inferential statistics (independent t-test) using SPSS-26 software.

Findings: The results indicate that boys and girls have significant differences in optimistic and idealistic attitudes towards marriage and attitude towards life. So that the attitude of boys towards marriage is more optimistic and idealistic than the attitude of girls and they have better results than girls in terms of attitude towards life and spirituality.

Conclusion: According to the results of this research, the gender of people has an effect on their attitude towards marriage and life, and the attitude of girls is more pessimistic than boys, so it is suggested that policy makers and cultural officials should improve the attitude of young people towards life and marriage, especially in Girls should be serious.

Keywords: attitude to marriage, attitude to life, spiritual attitude

Received: 9/ May/ 2024

Accepted: 2/ June/ 2024

Citation: Aysham MH. Comparison of attitude to marriage, attitude to life and spiritual attitude in unmarried girls and boys, Family and health, 2024; 14(3): 125-136

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Introduction:

Marriage is the most important and fundamental human relationship because it provides a structure for creating family relationships and educating the next generation (1). In Islam, the marriage bond is also known as a sacred thing, in accordance with the essence and nature of the human being and the factor of the survival of the generation and the stability of the family and society. In Iranian tradition and culture, marriage is considered as a sign of adulthood, identification of a person and his responsibility towards the society, and it is of special importance from the biological and social point of view (2) and has a decisive role in cognitive, emotional and behavioral health (3). Marriage can be seen as one of the most basic choices for every person (4). This choice is considered one of the evolutionary periods of growth, which is important in the evolution of human personality aspects (5). Before marriage, people have ideas about marriage, which are expressed in the form of attitude towards marriage (6) that this attitude is related to the subsequent performance of couples in the family (7). Attitude towards marriage is: the meaning and expectations that each person has towards marriage and their future marital relationship (8) which includes realistic, pessimistic, optimistic and idealistic attitude. Research shows that an optimistic attitude is related to a successful marriage and a pessimistic attitude is related to an unsuccessful marriage (9).

Considering marriage issues in Iran, one of the concerns of young people is marriage and family formation. In other words, in Iran, like in other third world countries, due to the transition from tradition to modernity, extensive cultural changes can be seen in all social phenomena, including marriage and choosing a spouse (10). One of the consequences of modernity is the emergence of different styles in relationships between men and women, including white marriage (11). Family is a biological, emotional, economic, social and protective institution that shapes the values, attitudes and feelings of its members (12). Interactive styles and family experiences play an essential role in creating children's beliefs, views and expectations (13). Studies have shown that various factors have an effect on the tendency to marry, such as people's worldview, religious attitudes (14). Gender, education, and race are also factors that influence young people's attitude towards marriage (5).

Every human being, as a thinking and searching being, has always sought to discover the meaning of life, which has led to the emergence of the term attitude to life among psychological thinkers (15). The desire to get married as an important and fundamental goal in life can be one of the examples of searching for meaning (16). The attitude towards life or the meaning of life is a broad concept that is derived from the cognitive system of a person. The meaning of life is an individual's belief that he has a framework or a goal in life that gives his life a valuable meaning (17). According to Wang, purposefulness and meaning in life refers to a cognitive system based on a person's mind, which affects the choice of activities and goals of the person (18). What is meant by a positive attitude towards life is that, despite the existence of problems and obstacles, a person can put aside the feeling of hopelessness and despair and look at life with a positive view (19). Positive attitude towards life is a useful indicator of mental health aspects. The higher the positive attitude towards life, the more mental happiness and feeling of satisfaction is created (20). The

requirement of a positive attitude towards life is the existence of a safe emotional base from which a person can discover and experience the world, and first of all, a healthy and happy family acts as this safe emotional base in a person's life (21). In recent centuries, we have seen dramatic changes in people's view of life, so that simply preserving life is not considered desirable, but societies are trying to improve the quality of life in many fields. However, different people and cultures do not have the same perception of the quality of life, therefore, several models of the quality of life have been proposed, which, while overlapping, also have differences (22). The studies conducted in the field of resources and dimensions of the meaning of life and gender have obtained contradictory results. Some researchers have found differences in the sources that give meaning to the lives of women and men. On the other hand, in some studies, women and men have not shown a significant difference in terms of sources of meaning. This contradiction can also be seen regarding the dimensions of existence and the search for the meaning of life (23). Considering these contradictions in the research findings, investigating gender differences in attitude to life and the meaning of life can be useful in understanding the meanings of each gender and applying it in education and counseling.

In recent decades, special attention has been paid to spirituality as an important variable in the field of quality of life (24). Religion and spirituality can influence people's attitudes and tendencies and move people's feelings and actions in the direction of religious teachings (25). Most of the psychologists who research in the field of religion prefer to pay attention to their religious orientation in general instead of paying attention to specific religions such as Christianity or Islam, in order to understand the underlying motivation of people's religious behavior (26). In a brief look at the history of humanity, it can be seen that a person has always been looking for meaning in his life, spirituality is related to the valuable outcomes of life that are positive and joyful and strengthens the hope for the future in a person (27). Spirituality is considered to be one of the important factors in dealing with stressful situations in life, and it seems to be a useful strategy in situations that are out of a person's control (28). Researches show that spirituality and spiritual growth is an important factor in the degree of compatibility and marital satisfaction (29). Most of the conducted research shows that women's religiosity is higher than men's and the difference in religiosity between the two genders depends on social factors, living conditions of society, social capital of individuals, personal beliefs and beliefs, dependence on family and gender roles (30). In general, the causes of gender differences in religiosity have been shown in three approaches of different physiology of women and men, social structure and different sociability of women and men (31).

Hazrati and Nouri (32) in their research showed that there is a significant difference between gender and attitude towards marriage and religious orientation. In a research conducted by Nikkhah, Fani and Asgharpour Masuleh (33), they concluded that there is a relationship between gender role stereotypes and the type of attitude towards marriage. Nilfroshan, Navidian and Abedi (34) came to the conclusion that the attitude of girls towards their marriage and their general attitude towards marriage is more negative than that of boys, and girls have a more pessimistic

attitude towards marriage. Mahdinia, Pourebrahim, Sedaqat and Ahmadi Tahor Soltani (35) came to the conclusion that there is no difference between male and female students' attitudes towards marriage and they are almost the same. The results of the research of Gholami Qarashiran, Sanae Zakir, Kyamanesh and Zaharakar (36) showed that the level of pessimistic attitude towards marriage is higher in men than in women. Ahmadi, Heydari, Bagherian and Kashfi (23) in a research came to the conclusion that girls and boys had a significant difference in the meaning of life. Motavallian, Nouri and Hosseini Shervani (37), Mirfardi and Valinejad (38) and Modiri and Azad Armaki (31) showed that the level of religiosity among girls is higher than among boys.

The above contents and review of the background of the research show that gender is one of the influential components in a person's attitude towards marriage, towards life and spirituality, and these attitudes are very important components of success in marriage, life and spirituality, therefore, considering the importance of each of these items It is necessary to investigate the role of gender in people's attitude towards marriage, life and spirituality as much as possible. This research seeks to compare the attitude to marriage, attitude to life and spiritual attitude based on gender in people. Therefore, the question of the current research is whether gender has a role in attitude to marriage, attitude to life and spiritual attitude or not?

Research method:

The current research is quantitative in terms of approach, fundamental in terms of goal, and descriptive in causal-comparative type in terms of method.

The research sample includes unmarried boys and girls in Ardabil city, who were selected using available sampling method and completed the questionnaires. After designing the questionnaires in the virtual space, the link of the questionnaire was made available to the general public of the statistical community on the platform of social networks such as Telegram, Eitaa, Bale, etc. 389 people answered the questionnaire, 18 questionnaires were discarded due to incompleteness and 371 questionnaires remained. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics (independent t-test) using SPSS-26 software. The research tools are:

Attitude towards marriage questionnaire (MAS): This questionnaire was designed and compiled by Brateen and Rosen (1998) in order to measure the attitude towards marriage, and it was validated in Iran by Nilfroshan et al. (2012). This questionnaire has 23 questions and four components: pessimistic attitude toward marriage, optimistic attitude toward marriage, realistic attitude toward marriage, and idealistic attitude toward marriage. Brateen and Rosen (39) reported the reliability of this scale in students with a six-week interval using the retest method as 0.85 and Cronbach's alpha as 0.82. Also, by correlating this scale with similar scales, a high correlation of 0.77 has been reported (39). Cronbach's alpha calculated in this research for this test was 0.706.

Life Attitude Questionnaire (LRI): Life Attitude Questionnaire is a tool prepared by Battista and Almond. This tool was created with the aim of measuring meaning in life and measures people's attitude. This tool is a 28-question scale with two subscales of framework (mental) and completion

(goal). Each scale consists of 14 questions, half of the statements are positive and the other half are negative to control the subject's honesty. This scale was revised by Dias in 1998 and its scoring method was changed to a 3-point Likert scale. The range of scores in this test varies between 14 and 42. A higher score indicates a high personal meaning and a low score indicates a low personal meaning in life. Battista and Almond reported the retest reliability for this index as 0.94. The reliability of the scales of this test for a period of five weeks was obtained for a total score of 0.80, for the framework subscale, 0.78, and for the completion subscale, 0.88. (40) In the present study, the reliability of this test was calculated and Cronbach's alpha was 0.895.

Spiritual Attitude Questionnaire: The Spiritual Attitude and Ability Questionnaire was designed and validated by Shahidi and Farajnia (2013), this questionnaire consists of 43 closed-ended items based on a five-point Likert scale and 2 subscales of spiritual attitude (24 questions) and spiritual ability (16 questions). This tool includes components such as believing in God and understanding his presence, understanding the meaning and purpose of life, forgiveness, striving for perfection and reaching excellence and trusting in God. The face and content validity of the questions was examined by asking the opinions of 19 expert professors, and its reliability was reported as 0.61 in a 5-week interval. The range of the total score of this tool is from 43 to 215 and the average score is 86. Getting more grades is a sign of more spiritual attitude (41). In the present study, the reliability of this test was calculated and Cronbach's alpha was 0.946.

Findings:

Out of the total of 371 research subjects, 203 (54.7%) were boys and 168 (45.3%) were girls. 76 people (20.5 percent) have a diploma or lower education, 32 people (10.5 percent) have a post-graduate degree, 178 people (48 percent) have a bachelor's degree, 65 people (17.5 percent) have a master's degree, and 13 people (3.5 percent) have a PHD's degree.

Table 1. Mean and standard deviation of research variables

Variable	Subscale	Mean	Standard deviation
Attitude towards marriage	pessimistic	21/71	0/167
	optimistic	16/19	0/146
	realistic	17/70	0/177
	Idealistic	9/30	0/111
	Attitude Towards Life	61/15	0/580
	Framework	31/05	0/226

Attitude Towards Life	purpose	30/10	0/383
Spiritual Attitude		155/99	1/40

The mean and standard deviation of the variables measured by the study questionnaires are presented in Table 1.

Table 2. Examining the normal distribution in variables

Variable	Subscale	Skewness	Std. Error	Kurtosis	Std. Error
Attitude towards marriage	pessimistic	0/171	0/127	0/322	0/253
	optimistic	0/544	0/127	0/201	0/253
	realistic	0/140	0/127	-0/396	0/253
	Idealistic	-0/007	0/139	-0/623	0/276
Attitude Towards Life	Attitude Towards Life	-0/370	0/127	-0/871	0/253
	Framework	-0/565	0/127	-0/362	0/253
	purpose	-0/213	0/127	-0/993	0/253
Spiritual Attitude		-0/508	0/127	0/371	0/253

The skewness and kurtosis indices of the variables to check the normality assumption are reported in Table 2. According to the obtained results, all variables follow the normal distribution.

Table 3. Mean and standard deviation of the variables in two groups of unmarried boys and girls

Variable	Subscale		Mean	Standard deviation
pessimistic		Boy	21/990	0/205
		Girl	22/375	0/273
optimistic		Boy	16/468	0/194
		Girl	15/866	0/219
		Boy	17/661	0/228

Attitude towards marriage	realistic	Girl	17/766	0/277
	Idealistic	Boy	9/589	0/155
		Girl	8/971	0/154
Attitude Towards Life		Boy	62/220	0/802
		Girl	59/861	0/832
Spiritual Attitude		Boy	156/687	1/883
		Girl	155/174	2/113

The mean and standard deviation of the variables measured by the study questionnaires are presented in Table 2. As can be seen, the average of all variables in the two groups are different, but the significance of the differences is not clear. Independent t-test was used to check the significance of the differences.

Table 4. The results of the t-test of independent groups of research variables in the studied group

Variable	Subscale		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Attitude towards marriage	pessimistic	Equal variances assumed	1/831	239	0/068	0/614
		Equal variances not assumed	1/798	323/142	0/073	0/614
	optimistic	Equal variances assumed	2/058	369	<u>0/04</u>	0/602
		Equal variances not assumed	2/053	352/849	<u>0/041</u>	0/602
	realistic	Equal variances assumed	-0/293	369	0/769	-0/104
		Equal variances not assumed	-0/291	340/751	0/771	-0/104

Idealistic	Equal variances assumed	2/795	307	<u>0/006</u>	0/617
	Equal variances not assumed	2/819	305/123	<u>0/005</u>	0/617
Attitude Towards Life	Equal variances assumed	2/030	369	<u>0/043</u>	2/359
	Equal variances not assumed	2/041	362/662	<u>0/042</u>	2/359
Spiritual Attitude	Equal variances assumed	0/532	369	0/595	1/504
	Equal variances not assumed	0/531	353/333	0/595	1/504

According to Table 3, there is a significant difference between the amount of optimistic ($T=2/053$ and $P<0.05$), idealistic attitude ($T=2/795$ and $P<0.05$) and attitude towards life ($T=2/030$ and $P<0.05$) in unmarried boys and girls.

Discussion and conclusion:

The present study was conducted with the aim of comparing the attitude to marriage, attitude to life and spiritual attitude in single boys and girls of Ardabil city. The results of this research showed that boys and girls have significant differences in optimistic and idealistic attitudes towards marriage and life. So that the attitude of boys towards marriage is more optimistic and idealistic than the attitude of girls, and they have relatively better results than girls in terms of attitude towards life and spirituality.

These findings are consistent with the results of the researches of Hazrati & Noori (32) under the title "A survey of attitudes toward marriage based on religious attitudes in male and female students", Nikkhah, Fani & Asgharpour (33) with the title "Students' attitude towards marriage and factors affecting it" & Nilforoshan, Navidian & Abedi (34) with the title "Studying the psychometric properties of marital attitude scale" regarding the difference in the attitude of girls and boys towards marriage. And it is inconsistent with the results of Mahdinia, porebramim, sedaghat, ahmadi tahor soltani (35) under the title "Investigating the relationship between career decision making and attitude towards marriage among college students" & Gholami Gherashiran, Sanaeizaker, Kiamanesh & Zahrakar (36) with the title "The role of marriage attitude and

emotional maturity in predicting marriage instability in women and men". The findings on the difference in attitude towards the life of girls and boys are in line with the findings of Ahmadi, Heydari, Bagharian and Kashfi (23). And in the difference of spiritual attitude, it is inconsistent with the research results of Matolian et al (37), Mirfardi & Valinezhad (38) & Modiri & Azadarmaki (31).

In explaining the difference in attitude towards marriage and attitude towards life in boys and girls, it can be said that the difference in cultural and social expectations of each gender causes society, culture, family and parents to have their own expectations of each gender. And these expectations are sometimes associated with restrictions for one gender and freedoms for the opposite gender. And these issues cause the difference in the developmental environment of girls and boys in the developmental stages, which can influence the formation and orientation of their attitudes. Considering the specific marriage laws for each gender, such as the right to divorce or remarriage for men, it can be expected that girls have more doubts about the success and happiness of their marriage. And on the other hand, the high rate of divorce in the society and the disadvantages of being divorced for women, make girls to be influenced by the experiences of divorced women and have a more pessimistic attitude towards marriage. Today, with the development of urbanization and the rise of education and the launch of feminist movements about women's rights, today's girls, like the girls of previous generations, do not see themselves as subject to gender stereotypes that limit themselves to performing certain tasks such as housekeeping, husbandry, childbearing, etc. Rather, nowadays women, like men, seek to be present in society and gain social privileges for self-actualization (33). And this contradiction in women's attitude with legal restrictions can be one of the factors of girls' pessimistic attitude towards marriage and life. Although by further examining women's rights in Islam, we can understand the wisdom of some legal differences between women and men, but the effect of media and book advertisements in directing and shaping the attitudes of women and men should not be ignored.

Some studies show that one of the factors that have caused girls' pessimism towards marriage is girls' mistrust of boys. Due to the difficult economic conditions for marriage and the expansion of premarital sex relationships, some boys satisfy their emotional and sexual needs through these relationships. Therefore, girls realize that a large number of boys in such relationships are not looking for marriage and are only looking to satisfy their emotional and sexual needs (42) and their view of girls is instrumental and their goal is to get close to girls to satisfy their sexual needs. Therefore, a pessimism and mistrust of boys arises, which causes pessimism towards marriage.

In spite of the obtained results, the current research has faced limitations, which can be pointed to the limitation in the available sampling method, therefore, caution should be used in generalizing the results of this research. Based on this, it is suggested to use random sampling method in future researches and be implemented in other communities and samples and compared with the results of this study. Also, the simultaneous implementation of these variables along with other variables can be effective. Using the findings of this research and the results of similar researches, it is suggested that policy makers and cultural officials should pay serious attention to cultural

development in order to improve the attitude of young people towards life and marriage, especially in girls.

Ethical considerations: In the present study, the participation of people was completely voluntary and their privacy was considered.

Financial resources: The financial credit for this research was provided from personal sources.

Acknowledgments: Thank you to all the participants in this research.

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