



Anticipating the Spouse Selection Criteria Based on the Attachment Styles

Mohammad Kazem Parsaei¹, Zhaleh Refahi^{2*}

¹Department of Counseling, Marvdasht Branch, Islamic Azad University. Marvdasht, Iran.

²Department of Counseling, Marvdasht Branch, Islamic Azad University. Marvdasht, Iran.

*. Corresponding Author Email: dr.refahi@miau.ac.ir

Abstract: *The present study aims at anticipating the criteria of spouse selection based on the attachment and love styles. The subjects of the study include 324 university students chosen, through multistage cluster sampling, among 2000 students from Shiraz University. In order to collect the data, we used the questionnaire including 22 items concerning the priorities of mate selection criteria and 8 items concerning adult attachments. To analyze the obtained data, the statistical software SPSS 18 was used. Findings of the research revealed that knowing the attachment styles enables us to anticipate the mate selection criteria.*

Key terms: *spouse selection criteria, attachment styles*

INTRODUCTION

Marriage is one of the most significant events in an individual's life and it is as old as the recorded history or even prehistoric. Although no couples marry aiming at divorce and almost all couples get married hoping to have a long prosperous and peaceful marital life, many of them end at divorce. Based on the documents of Iran's center of statistics, the divorce rate was 94039 a year in 2006 and it increased to 125747 divorces a year in 2009 and to the disturbing number of 150324 at the end of 2012. Looking at these statistics, we discover that divorce rate has grown by 60 percent during the last eight years.

Whitaker Laiss¹ (1977) quoting from Sanizaker (2005) writes "The marriage sometimes ends when some partner has gone crazy or has forced each other to commit suicide. Most regrettably, they turn their spouses who used to be nice and peaceful people into disgusting demons."

But, the introduction to separation of couples is simple conflicts, and it can gradually grow to severe verbal quarrels, beating, and sometimes divorce (Young and Long², 1998, quoted from Refahi, 2008). What happens that the great pre-marriage loves subside so quickly and are replaced by sarcasm, criticism, violent disputes, and abusiveness? What do people neglect before getting married that they have to pay such heavy prices for their fault?

This research focuses on the stage of spouse selection. According to the findings, the key correct reasons to select a spouse are as follows:

1- Personal survival 2- tending to idealism 3-interesting differences 4- invisible sub-structural similarities 5- Projecting the good object to the beloved or opposing the repetition of bed object 6- satisfying sexual demands

¹- Whitaker Laiss

² -Young and Long

7- receiving attention and intimacy 8- need to love and to be loved 9- childbearing and generation survival 10- access to physical, individual, and social peace.

And the incorrect reasons to get married are as follows:

1- Being enforced by external factors such as family pressure and pre-marriage pregnancy 2- escape from a disturbed, exploiting, coercing, or limitative family 3- escape from a crisis (addiction, death of mother or father) 4-giving priority to the socio-economic conditions of the partner 5- getting self-sufficiency because of the partner 6- pity and sympathy for the partner 7- getting accustomed to the partner 8- having the illusion of love 9- having the feelings of sinfulness and depression 10- filling the mental, sentimental, and emotional defects (Dezhkam, 2011).

Bas, in 1989 and through a research including 37 various cultures, made interesting conclusions: Almost all men and women had put characteristics such as kindness, thoughtfulness, and vigilance as their priorities.

Considering three different aspects of family process, family content, and family social content, Samani (2005) defines a comprehensive system called family process and content model. Based on this model, the spouse selection criteria are divided into two groups of process criteria and content criteria. By process criteria, he means action sets that organize the family system. They include actions such as understanding the partner's viewpoint; communicative skills; coping skills; problem-solving skills; flexibility; toleration and assertion. By content criteria, he means personal characteristics such as the demographic individual and family features (age, education, vocation, and income), mental and physical health, ethnicity, and religion.

Therefore, attending the attachment styles, the present study aims at examining the spouse selection criteria. Also through dividing these criteria into two groups of process and content criteria, it tries to know the challenges and problems, of mate selection, in front of the youngsters hoping that the knowledge can be useful for the psychologists and counselors in the pre-marriage training programs.

Questions of the Study

- Is there any significant relation between the attachment styles and the spouse selection criteria?
- Can the attachment styles anticipate the process aspect of the spouse selection criteria?
- Can the attachment styles anticipate the content aspect of the spouse selection criteria?
- Is there any significant difference between girls and boys regarding the studied variables?

Method

This study is descriptive and correlative. The statistical society of the research contains all the students of Shiraz University in the second semester 2012-2013 including 2000 students. The research sample contains 324 Shiraz University students, 180 of whom were females (55 percent) and 144 males (45 percent). To select the subjects, multistage cluster sampling was used. The medium to gather data in this study is questionnaire prepared by Refahi, Sanaee, and Sharifi (2008). It includes 22 items concerning spouse selection. Validity of the whole test was calculated %88; that of the process aspect %85; and that of the content aspect %74. In this research, to specify the stability, Cronbach's alpha method was used and the obtained results of Cronbach's alpha for the total scale was %73; for the process aspect %75; and for the content aspect %74. In this research, the correlation of each aspect's total score with every single question constituting that aspect and the overall

scale score with each question was used. All of the coefficients were significant at the level of 0.01 (Sanaee Zaker, 2008).

Questionnaire of Adults' Attachment Styles

In this study, Koulinzroid's questionnaire of adults' attachment styles (RAAS) (1990) was used. To analyze the data, on the levels of descriptive statistics and inferential statistics, statistical indicators such as T-test and multi-variable regression were simultaneously used in order to approve or reject the research hypotheses.

Findings of the Research

The main purpose of the present research was to anticipate the spouse selection criteria based on the attachment styles. To this end, using the findings of the research and correlation coefficient, the multiple regressions and the independent T were analyzed.

Table 1: The average and standard deviation of the studied variables

Variables	Aspects	Average	Standard deviation
Attachment styles	Safe	15.15	3.22
	Anxious	17.89	4.54
	Avoiding	17.72	3.12
Spouse selection criteria	Content aspect	49.63	8.80
	Process aspect	50.17	13.18

The Correlation Matrix of the Variables

To answer the question that whether or not there is a significant relation between attachment styles and spouse selection criteria, we used the correlation coefficient. The correlation matrixes of the variables are recorded in Table 2.

Table 2: Correlation matrixes of the variables

Variables	Aspects	1	2	3	4	5
Attachment styles	1- Safe	1				
	2- Anxious	0.02	1			
	3- Avoiding	0.04	0.03	1		
Spouse selection	4- Content aspect	0.40**	0.08	0.04	1	

criteria						
	5- Process aspect	0.11	0.45**	0.16**	0.25**	1

0.05) P<(*0.01) P<(**

As it is shown in Table 2, there is a significant correlation between the attachment styles and the process criteria of spouse selection. In addition, the anxious and avoiding attachment styles have a significant relation with the content criteria of spouse selection.

Can the attachment styles anticipate the process aspect of spouse selection criteria?

In order to answer this question "*Can the attachment styles anticipate the process criteria of spouse selection?*" multiple regression analysis was applied. The score of process aspect was considered as the indicator variable and the scores of attachment styles as the predictive variables. The results are recorded in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Results of the multiple regressions in order to anticipate the process aspect

predictive variable	R	R ²	β	t	P<
Safe			0.13	2.12	0.0001

F= 16.60 & P< 0.0001

As it is shown in Table 3, the regression of anticipating the process aspect from the attachment styles is significant and the amount of F equals 16.60. The safe style with β coefficient equaling 0.13 can positively and significantly anticipate the process aspect. Moreover, the amount of R² indicates that a significant part of the process aspect's variance (%26) can be predicted by the safe attachment style.

Can the attachment styles anticipate the content aspect of spouse selection criteria?

In order to answer this question "*Can the attachment styles anticipate the content aspect of spouse selection criteria?*" multiple regression analysis was applied. The score of content aspect was considered as the indicator variable and the scores of attachment styles as the predictive variables. The results are recorded in Table 4 below:

Table 4: Results of the multiple regressions in order to anticipate the content aspect

predictive variable	R	R ²	β	t	P<
			0.37	8.7	0.01

Anxious					
Avoiding			0.15	3.13	0.01

F= 16.87 & P< 0.0001

As it is shown in Table 4, the regression of anticipating the content aspect from the attachment styles is significant and the amount of F equals 16.87. The anxious style with β coefficient equaling 0.37 and the avoiding style with β coefficient equaling 0.15 can significantly anticipate the content aspect. Moreover, the amount of R^2 indicates that a significant part of the content aspect's variance (%30) can be predicted by these attachment styles.

Is there any significant difference between girls and boys regarding the studied variables?

In order to answer this question, the independent T-test was applied to compare the averages. The results are recorded in Table 5 below:

Table 5: Average and standard deviation of the girls' and boys' attachment style scores

Variables	Aspects	Gender	Number	Average	Standard deviation	t	DF	P
Attachment styles	Safe	girl	185	15.15	3.22	0.30	322	N.S
		boy	139	15.32	2.28			
	Anxious	girl	185	17.89	4.54	1.25	322	N.S
		boy	139	16.89	3.70			
	Avoiding	girl	185	17.72	3.12	1.43	322	N.S
		boy	139	18.56	3.01			
Spouse selection criteria	Content aspect	girl	185	49.63	8.80	0.58	322	N.S
		boy	139	48.80	4.68			
	Process aspect	girl	185	50.17	13.18	3.46	322	0.001
		boy	139	42.95	5.72			

As you can see in the table above, there is not a significant difference between the girls' scores and those of the boys in the studied variables. The only significant difference is viewed in the process aspect in which the girls' average is higher than the boys' and it means that compared to the boys, girls pay more attention to the process criteria.

Discussion and Conclusion:

Question 1: Is there any significant relation between the attachment styles and the spouse selection criteria?

As it was shown in Table 2, there is a significant correlation between the safe attachment style and the process criterion of spouse selection. And the anxious and avoiding attachment styles have a significant relation with the content criterion of spouse selection. To explain this finding, we can say attachment styles as a variable have an important role in the individual's kind of reaction to different situations. Thus, affectivity of the aspects of these variables on spouse selection criteria is proved. This finding matches the results of studies done by Samani (2005), Yousefi (2011), and Freedman (2003). These researchers have stated, in their studies, the importance of attachment styles as one of the key effective criteria in mate selection.

Question 2: Can the attachment styles anticipate the process aspect of the spouse selection criteria?

To answer the question "Can the attachment styles anticipate the process aspect of the spouse selection criteria?" multiple regression analysis was applied. The regression of anticipating the process aspect from the attachment styles is significant. The safe style can positively and significantly anticipate the process aspect. These findings match the results of studies done by Shaker, Fathi Ashtiani, and Mahdavian (2011), and Cenzad (2006). These researchers stated that the attachment styles can significantly affect the tendency or lack of tendency to the process criteria.

To explain this finding, we can say these people are highly capable to adapt themselves to the environment and circumstances. A reason for their power of adaptation may be their choosing proper environment. As a result, choosing the process aspect as their common characteristic is also because of the fundamental analysis of their surroundings.

Question 3: Can the attachment styles anticipate the content aspect of the spouse selection criteria?

As it is shown in Table 4, the regression of anticipating the content aspect from the attachment styles is significant. The anxious and avoiding styles can significantly anticipate the content aspect. These findings match the results of studies done by Abedi and Farahbakhsh (2000), Shokri (2008), Najm (2005), and Forkma and Lifebroner (2004). According to these researches, what has been called process aspect in the present study is affected by the attachment styles.

To explain these findings, we can say those with the anxious attachment style have a lower feeling of intrinsic value and to make for this shortage, they sometimes try to attract the perfect mate. Actually, they try to cover their shortcomings and deficiencies through choosing a rich, beautiful, educated ... mate. That's why they pay more attention to these content criteria in their choices.

To explain why agreement is able to predict the content aspect of spouse selection, we can make an interesting point: As it was mentioned before, those who obtain a high score in agreement aspect are highly capable of adapting in their lives. The findings reveal that these people, in order to remain compatible in their marital life, have to attend both content and process criteria of selecting spouse.

Question 4: Is there any significant difference between girls and boys regarding the studied variables?

To answer this question, the independent T-test was applied to compare the averages. The results were presented in Table 5. As it was seen in table 5, there is not a significant difference between the girls' scores and those of the boys in the studied variables. The only significant difference between girls and boys is viewed

in their average scores of process aspect. These findings don't match the results of studies done by Haghshenas and Firoozabadi (2005); Fatehizadeh and Ahmahi (2005); Olson (2000); and Samani (2007). These researchers have stated, in their studies, that boys and girls are different in the spouse selection criteria. The findings, on the other hand, correspond to Scot (2005) who has indicated, in his research, that girl and boys are not significantly different from each other in these variables.

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