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 (Chasselson, 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.