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## Original Article

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### Temporary marriage: Iranian girls and boys attitudes towards mate selection

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#### Abstract

**Introduction:** This paper compares preferences in mate selection criteria for permanent marriage and temporary marriage.

**Methods:** The research population participants consisted of single persons in Tehran who were in the age range between "22 - 40" and being educated and having at least Diploma. In addition, they have not been diagnosed any of psychological problems. The samples available and interested in participating in the study included 122 (61 girls and 61 boys). The researcher set up a program that mate choice is a computer program written in the C programming language and is comprised of two parts; 1) Demographic characteristics of participants 2) Testing mate selection Inventory. Measures of central tendency and parameters of dispersion were used to describe the data. Binomial test, correlation test, the median difference distribution, Mann-Whitney U and Kruskal-Wallis test were used for inferred statistical.

**Results:** The results showed that only 23% of participants (12% women and 45% men), agree with temporary marriage. The criteria of "education" and "loyalty" were more important in permanent marriage than the temporary marriage with amount of 0.551 and 0.912, respectively. "Pleasant mood" and "being obedient" had higher priority in temporary marriage than the permanent marriage.

**Conclusion:** Our study showed that criteria for permanent and temporary marriage differ based on their relation's duration and its expectations. In fact, understanding of reasons for agreement and disagreement regarding temporary marriage, can provide a more accurate and expertise reference for reading possible in the Muslim world.

**Declaration of Interest:** None.

**Key words:** Mate Selection Criteria, Short Term Mates, Marriage, Muslim Culture.

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#### Introdoction

Marriage is still an important goal for many people, and among the researches results (1); (2) sociological and psychological privileges of marriage are insisted on by most of experts against the anti-marriage views (3) this happens in spite of consequent reports of decrease in marriage rate as well as increase in marriage age, lowering

of marriage stability and new preferences for mate selection in most of industrial countries of the world till the end of the first decade of the third millennium (4); (5) and discussions over change and variety in path of marriage and new patterns of relationships in common life (Cohabitation, Homosexual Marriage).

Despite the importance of social and cultural dimensions of the phenomenon of temporary marriage, little scientific research has been done in this field, and most research that has been performed have had religious or legal point of view (6); (7); (8); (9); (10) while the psychological significance of this phenomenon is underestimated and has not been considered. Factors af-

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fecting the attitudes towards temporary marriage can be shown in the form of figure 1. According to the results of the researches conducted by Ahmadi and colleagues (11) perhaps that is why temporary marriage tends to have positive attitude among men than the women. It can be said that the existing situation of temporary marriage more favors men to satisfy their sexual desire diversity or in case of having high sexual desire and their sex partners are not responsive to the needs, to meet their needs or when the husbands are away from their spouse, on a mission, to prevent sexual misconduct and to gratify their sexual needs in legitimate and legal way (12). On the other hand objections have been made towards the existential philosophy of temporary marriage, its fairness, and conceivability, individual, familial, social, and cultural negative consequences. The opponents of the temporary marriage believe that temporary marriage in Islam was a warrant out urgent and cannot be used as a permanent solution. Because it promotes prostitution of libertinism, debauchery and sensuality in society (13), such marriages actually by capping the lead to illicit relationships cause abuse of married men with intention of sexual gratification and reduces motivation of constant marriage among the youth. The violation of the rights of women and their exclusion from the legal protections, coupled with the legal, ethical, social problems of the children of the temporary marriage, are among other reasons, of opposing this phenomenon (14).

Men compared to the women, employed compared to un-employed, and those having higher incomes compared to low-income owners are more willing to have temporary marriage (14). The results of the researches conducted by Sadeghi and colleagues (15) show that 82% of young boys and girls were against temporary marriage and from their point of view temporary marriage was considered as an act of counter value and ineffective. After realizing the complexity of the process of selecting spouse, Psychologists began to study the preference criteria in the short-term and long-term relationships. For example, Kenrick, Sadalla, Groth and Trost (16) asked the individuals to rank 24 criteria of supposed spouse in four levels of relation: only for once, sexual relation, lasting relationship and marriage. Re-

sults showed in general more women than men in most criteria except for the apparent attractiveness, act according to choice. Kenrick, Groth, Trost, and Sadalla (17) planned the second study which added another level called one night stay, that at this new level also, women were more selective than men and paid attention to more criteria. Li, Kenrick, Bailey and Linsenmeier (18) found that in short-term relationships, attractive appearance is of high important for both genders, though, with the increase of the facilities both women and men look for the partner with more personality stability (19). Li and colleagues (18) announced the cause of these contradictions in findings on the basis of differences of the researches models. They found that the spouse selection processes had better be regulated via expanding the evolutionary and social approaches, so that the economical principle of exchanging profit against loss is the main principle of these approaches. The selector has enough time to survey other desirable features of the potential spouse, in case that there are sufficient degree of attractiveness in females, and salary in males. Li (18) stated that it will be identified which criteria is necessarily important and plays the key role in selecting the spouse if for every level we put the individuals in the conditions to select the spouse with minimum of criteria.

It is surprising that there are little research on the issue of priority selection criteria of short-term and long-term relationships, and in Iran as well has not been investigated yet. Thus conducting research in the field of preference selection criteria of temporary and permanent marriage with objective methods to evaluate the process of choosing a spouse is a new field of psychology that can provide useful information to researchers, counselors, psychologists, sociologists, youth centers, major decision making centers for youth and can provide a deeper understanding of the selection criteria at different levels of relationship in Iran. This study can be considered to be among the first to fill gaps in the field of psychological research and investigation and comparison of the criteria for the selection of temporary and permanent marriages. Hence the main research questions are: What is the attitude of people towards temporary marriage? What is the tendency for temporary marriage? Who is more

inclined to have a temporary marriage? Is the acceptance of temporary marriage between men and women are different? Does the rate acceptance of temporary marriage according to gender, age, income, education and other characteristics differ? Does the temporary or permanent marriage is different of priorities selection marriage? This research as an exploratory study may help to plan issue and to attract the attention of other researchers in the fields of humanities and social sciences and lead the way to further research.

## Methods

The present research is a descriptive study, and given that the main objective of the research is to realize the preferred partner selection criteria. The study population consisted of individuals aged between 22 and 40 living in Tehran who were educated and had at least diploma. They have not been reported with any particular psychological problem, this was one of the first questions in personal characteristics part. The sample consisted of 122 subjects (male and female) which as an accessible and purposive sampling it was tried that the people from different job possibilities and different educational degree (diploma, bachelor, master, associate and doctoral) be placed in the sample. There was an ethical form which contained satisfaction for their participations in the research. The inclusion criteria were included being single and having at least diploma and the exclusion criteria were diagnosed psychological disorders and right now psychiatry drugs consumption.

**Cyberspace Mate selection:** The mate selection program, is a computer program which is written in C programming language and consists of two parts: 1) individual characteristics of the participants, 2) Mate selection test. The existing options were determined based on a survey conducted by the expert groups, initial interviews with different people and a Preliminary Study. The study was performed in an individual manner and the Place of Performance was where the participants were present as their living places or work places.

**The Individual characteristics of the participants:** before the run, participants were given a complete description of the subjects and were as-

sured that their responses would be confidential. First, the person would be asked to answer the questions about the individual characteristics in the computing environment and choose an option about each of the questions. The Questions include: gender, age, occupation, education, religious beliefs and financial status.

**The mate selection Test:** The existing options were determined based on a survey conducted by the expert groups included five persons<sup>1</sup>, initial interviews with different people and a pilot study included 20 participants. In this regard, in order to establish content validity, the built instrument was presented to the experts in the field and were discussed and reviewed in a group of 5 persons and they were asked to evaluate the usefulness of the tool for the purpose of focusing on mate selection criteria. Finally, based on preliminary studies and asking the expert's opinion again, 22 criteria were selected for the final study. The criteria were: mutual attraction and love, independent personality, emotional stability and maturity, genial and pleasant disposition, adaptability, good health, education, intelligence, and the adequacy of intellectual, being social, interest in the home and children, loving the family, friendship, honest and frank man, being submissive, being handsome, ambition and being diligent, good cooking and housekeeping, solid financial future, loyalty, status and social desirability Rank, not having sex earlier, the same religion background, the same political context, fertility. The Participant based on one's personal preference, clicked on the desired criteria. It was declared to the participant: "imagine you want to select a person for a temporary marriage. What are your priorities according to the order?" Then, the same procedure was applied to permanent marriage. Finally, the order of priorities chosen by the subjects in the data was provided to us. Survey variables do not need to validation assessment, because they are not latent variables. Their assessment were done just by consideration of desired preferences for marriage, it means that people choose their criteria based on their own priorities.

Binomial test, Correlation analysis, Mann-Whitney and Kruskal-Wallis test were used.

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## Results

The first question: "What is the individual's attitude towards temporary marriage?" To answer the question mentioned above, first the descriptive status of the data was analyzed. The table 1 shows the frequencies of responses related to individuals' attitudes toward temporary marriage. In this table, the number and proportion of respondents are shown and is included of: The very opposed, disagree, agree and the highly agree with the temporary marriage in all of the data and also in the separation of men and women.

Second question: "What is the attitude of Iranian boys and girls towards temporary marriage?" The data suggest that opposing the temporary marriage has been much more than agreeing with it.

Third question: "Is there a relationship between the criteria of permanent marriage and temporary marriage?" In the following to review the status of the criteria's ranking of the permanent marriage

and the temporary marriage are discussed from two aspects. The Information shows that except for "being ambitious and diligent" all of the other cases, have a statistically significant correlations. The factors with the strong correlation (more than 7.0) respectively, are such as the "political context" and

Table1. People attitudes toward temporary marriage

Attitudes	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree		
Female	44	7.53
Male	12	30
Disagree		
Female	28	34.1
Male	10	25
Agree		
Female	10	12.2
Male	14	35
Strongly agree		
Female	0	0
Male	4	10

Table 2. Difference between the temporary and permanent marriage about Criteria's ranking

priorities	Correlation	P	higher priority in temporary marriage	temporary	permanent
mutual attraction and love	0.46	0.179	-	0.211	0.568
independent personality	0.60	0.258	+	0.014	0
emotional stability and maturity	0.66	0.529	+	0.972	0.024
genial and pleasant disposition	0.38	0.042	+	0.794	0.046
Adaptability	0.35	0.947	-	0.544	0.043
good health	0.51	0.001	+	0.716	0.631
Education	0.41	0.027	-	0.194	0.551
intelligence, and the adequacy of intellectual	0.58	0.011	+	0.035	0.051
being social	0.39	0.076	+	0.305	0.151
interest in the home and children, loving the family	0.40	0.047	+	0.273	0.279
Honest and straight man	0.38	0.012	+	0.921	0.154
being submissive	0.40	0.039	+	0.873	0.733
being handsome	0.63	0.066	+	0	0
ambition and being diligent	-0.09	0.090	+	0.074	0.081
good cooking and housekeeping	0.52	0.674	-	0.016	0.003
solid financial future	0.65	0.516	+	0	0
loyalty	0.39	0.001	-	0.947	0.912
status and Social desirability Rank	0.31	0.220	+	0.486	0.229
not having sex earlier	0.71	0.003	-	0	0.001
the same religion background	0.69	0.779	+	0.219	0.394
the same political context	0.82	0.058	-	0.042	0.011
Fertility	-	0.18	-	1	0.437



"no prior sexual activity" and the factors with the moderate correlation (greater than 5.0), respectively, are "religious background" "the stability and emotional maturity", "suitable financial future," "being handsome", "independent character", "intelligence and intellectual competence," "desirable Cooking and Housekeeping" and "good health". The other criteria are poorly correlated.

Fourth question: "What are differences between the selection criteria of permanent and temporary marriage?" The information shows that the criteria of "genial and pleasant disposition", "good health", "intelligence and intellectual competence", "interest in the household and kids, family-friendly," "honest and frank man" and "being obedient" have less priority in the permanent marriage than the temporary marriage ( $p = 0.05$ ). It is however that, on the basis of "education", "loyalty" and "having no earlier sexual relation" is opposite, that is there is a statistically significant difference, but the prioritization about temporary marriage, is less than the permanent marriage. In the other criteria there is no statistically significant difference between the two levels of the relation.

Fifth question: "Are the standards of the temporary and permanent marriage different in men and women?" There are a statistically significant difference between women and men, women pay more attention to the "independent character" than men. Regarding the third factor: "emotional stability and maturity," the fourth "genial and pleasant disposition" and fifth the "adaptation" there is no difference in the temporary marriage, but regarding the permanent marriage there is significant difference between the two groups. So that the two factors that are third and fourth are more important for the women and the fifth factor is more important for the men. Regarding the eighth factor: "Intelligence and the rational adequacy," the women had significantly higher ratings than the men. The factors fifteenth: "Good Cooking and Housekeeping" and the nineteenth: "Not having a previous sexual relationship" both in the temporary and permanent marriages are more important for the men than the women, and factors sixteenth: "a good financial future" and twenty first: "similar political context both in the temporary and permanent marriages are more important for the women than the men.

## Conclusion

The first result of the research showed that only 23% of the individuals agree with the temporary marriage. This finding is compatible with the other researches in Iran. The study conducted by Ahmadi, Barari and seyedesmaeili (12) also demonstrated that 25 percent of the studied population tended to have a temporary marriage. The results of Sadeghi and colleagues' research (15) also showed that 82% of the young boys and girls were against temporary marriage and from their point of view it is an act of counter value and is considered inefficient. The Results of the study conducted by Riahi (14) suggests a general tendency toward refusal of the phenomenon of temporary marriage and only about a tenth of the respondents were in favor of promoting temporary marriage in the society. The findings of Riahi's research (14) indicated that temporary marriage might be mostly used by the married men and lead to its ill-usage by men and, violation of the women's rights, loosening of the foundations of the family and to promote and intensify sexual immorality. Bozorgian (20) in his study concluded that temporary marriage can also weaken the family institution in the society. In general, based on what was mentioned results indicate that the temporary marriage has no social acceptance. With all stated in the above, temporary marriage should be in a form that have no destructive effects on family and community.

In the present study 12% of the women and 45% of the men stated that they agreed with the temporary marriage. This finding is consistent with results of Riahi's study (14) that was based on the greater proportion of men than women agreement to promote temporary marriage. According to FathiAsh-tiani and Ahmadi (21), this type of marriage is generally done in secret and cultural and familial obstacles have been expressed by about 70% of the community. Kleine (22) argues that the more liberal individual, there would have virtual attitudes about extramarital relationships and will be more willing to participate in it. In Fathi and colleagues research (23) married men, do not realize the extramarital relationships, as marital infidelity and in such cases come to explain it through religious justification. On the other hand, the society reacts to faithlessness of men and women differently: men's infidelity is more acceptable, however, women

topics in this regard is completely different and in such deviations the levels of formal and informal penalties for women is much more than men (12).

In this study, the mutual attraction and love, is the first criterion for both types of relationships. However, in the Buss' study of intercultural (24) this criterion won the third place for both sexes in Iran, though in the whole sample of the Buss the above criteria were considered as the prime criteria. For many Americans and Europeans mutual love is seen as a prerequisite for the marriage. This means it can be said that the search for the ideal partner for most Americans and Europeans is a matter of finding a sweetheart (25); (26). Researchers (27); (28); (29); (30) also in a half-century developments found that in both sexes the value of the criterion of mutual love is increased. Thus it might be said that these findings while supporting the evolutionary approach, backs the Iranian cultural change too, so that in the present sample, the mutual attraction and love were considered the first priority.

Another finding of the present study is that the educational criteria, in permanent marriage is more important than temporary marriage. Fisman et al. (31) showed in their study that men do not choose their wives from lower class than the class they themselves belong to and the girls also the higher education they have, the later and more difficult their choice will be. Fidelity criterion is another feature which is more important priority in permanent marriage than in temporary marriage. Mather (32) also concluded that the individuals pay more attention to the fidelity of their potential spouses of long-term relationships than the short-term relationships. These results are also consistent with the findings of the researches conducted by Haidari et al. (33) and Khallad (34). The other findings of the research have shown that having no previous sexual relation is more important in permanent marriage than temporary marriage. In the study by Jebreili et al. (35) it is indicated that having no previous sexual relation, for both sexes, includes the criteria that have a high degree of predictability for mate choice based on cultural values. This criterion in the present study in both temporary and permanent marriage is more important for men than for women. According to evolutionary theory, the choice is made by the men (24), so they tend to choose a spouse who has not already been in rela-

tion with the other person and to sense that he had a successful compete and achieve an ideal spouse. Sepehri (37) has concluded that in all groups of school boys premarital relation was the first criterion that has the right of veto.

Chang et al. (38) in their study stated that in both sexes, the importance of being a virgin has fallen sharply and financial outlook have increased. Despite many changes created in the recent years in the relations between male and female and the prevalence of the phenomena of common household and cohabitation without marriage, but the virginity of girls is considered as a value that is itself dishonesty. The transition from tradition to modernity something happens which we observe today, the acts of power of tradition in one hand (virginity), and on the other hand to circumvent this tradition by surgery. What makes the maidenhead questionable is not its philosophy of existence, but is the use that "patriarchal system" by aiming the "ownership of the female body" employs. In permanent marriage Pleasant mood is more important for women than men. Good Cooking and Housekeeping in both temporary and permanent married are more important for men than women. Over time, the criteria of cooking and housekeeping were more important for men than women (27). Prakash (37) also in intergenerational analysis confirmed that the new generation of men appreciate housekeeping skills of their potential spouse's more than the older generation of the men. This finding in consistence with the previous researches supports the evolutionary approach.

The "solid financial future" is considered more important for the women than the men in both the permanent marriage and the temporary marriage. In the majority of the researches, the criteria of social status and financial prospect were more appreciated by women than men (39) (38). Sepehri (37) believes that the financial status cannot be explained only by an evolutionary perspective and there exists the other aspect which is related to the social prestige that incidentally is a major key and crucial one. The researches which have been carried out till now are in favor of the evolutionary approach and the data suggests the validity of this approach (40). At the end of the twentieth century studies (18); (16); (17) show that although both sexes still differ in mate preferences, but the mate

preferences of men and women have become more similar (38); (29).

Realization of the consents and objections in respect to the temporary marriage can provide an expertise and more accurate base for the possible studies in the Islamic world. In the present study the "independent character" has a higher priority in both of the relationships and the "Sustainability and emotional maturity" and "pleasing disposition" in the permanent marriage is counted as a more important criterion. This finding is in correspondence with the results of the research done by (27) Buss et al. which suggests that over time women pay more values to independent personality, stability and emotional maturity criteria. Independent character, emotional stability and pleasant mood of man can bring peace and security to women and men and be considered as a strong and stable base to rely on. Compatibility in permanent marriage had more importance for men than the women which is completely explainable from the psychological point of view. Compatibility in marriage means flexibility, Proper performance in negative emotional experiences and tolerance in stressful events with appropriate capability when facing them that causes man performs the external affairs owing to the confidence in the spouse's adaption.

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