

Attitudes of Present Generation Towards Marriage with a Socio-cultural Focus

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Abstract

In recent years, the younger generation of the Iranian population has experienced rapid social and cultural changes. One pattern formed because of changing the culture and attitude of the younger generation is white marriage, which is about to become one of the new challenges of Iranian society. The aim of this study was to investigate the socio-cultural factors affecting the change in youth attitudes towards marriage in three cities, including Tehran, Mashhad, and Isfahan. The theoretical framework of this research was interpretative and qualitative methodological framework, along with grounded theory that was used to determine the effective socio-cultural factors on changing young people's attitude towards marriage. The findings indicated that attitude towards marriage was included of two types as follows: the first type were the people who believed that cultural factors and traditional customs are related to the permanent marriage. The second type was those who were affected by some socio-cultural factors such as lack of belief in permanent marriage, the concept, and were ultimately inspired to unlicensed cohabitation or white marriage. It was found that socio-cultural factors such as age, education, employment, acquaintance, duration of acquaintance, violence against women, and family play an important role in the tendency of white marriage among young people. Lack of acceptance from society and family, lack of support and having a secret relationship are some of the limitations of this way of life. The results of the present study, considering the theoretical and experimental background, showed that social changes, transitional culture, defective modernity and socio-cultural factors are involved in determining the phenomenon of cohabitation. This research is published in 2021 by Mehri publication House with open door "A *Comprehensive Research Study on White Marriage (Cohabitation) in Iran*"²

Key words: Marriage, socio-cultural, white marriage, young people, Iran

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Introduction

From a sociological point of view, marriage can be defined as a sexual relationship between two people that is socially acceptable and recognized (Giddens, 1994). In other words, it is considered a unit that is socially recognized, legally approved and consists of a man and a woman. The need for marriage as a certain necessity to turn into a matter of choice has been strengthened due to people's freedom of choice in selecting their own partner and extensive social relations. If we consider the marriage as a connection between two genders based on stable sexual relationships, it requires the conclusion of a social contract that legitimates physical relationships (Sarokhani, 2006). In Mo'in³ Encyclopedic Dictionary, marriage is well-defined as a legal relationship incorporating a specific contract (permanently or for a certain time) between a man and a woman, including the right to a sexual relationship. Some people consider marriage to be a mutual interaction between a man and a woman, a dramatic conflict of culture and nature such as sexual attraction, and a permanent binding between a heterosexual couple who are by this means permitted to engage in sexual relations within a legal and official structure (Razavi, 2002). Nowadays, people's lifestyle and preferences have been changed and the lifestyle has now taken a different shape both from individual and collective points of view. Changes in the attitude and form of marriage have been considered being one of these differences. Change in the pattern of marriage is one of the main characteristics of social and cultural change. If the evidence implies a huge decrease or increase in marriage and divorce statistics, respectively, society will face the collapse of the family and extreme altruism (Azad Armaki, 2007).

Generally, culture is considered as a socially gained factor in the social sciences, which may affect all the aspects of human life, including sexual behaviour and marriage. Sexual behaviour may vary depending on the specific culture, values, and norms of each society. Cultural variation and conflict of values among different communities or even between different generations of a society lead to changes in some values and behaviours. In Western societies, sexual behaviours like premarital sex or common law 'marriage' (cohabitation or domestic partnership) which are currently acceptable conflicted with public values in past decades (Giddens, 2010). In addition, during recent

³ The second biggest Persian language encyclopedia written and integrated by Mohammad Moin

decades, patterns of sexual behaviour have been also changed all over the world. Iranian society has also recently faced significant transformations regarding young people's values and beliefs (Rezaei, 2013). According to a comprehensive study on adolescents aged between 14 to 18 years old in Tehran, between 20 and 60% of them had a sexual relationship with one or more people of the opposite sex. Research revealed that pre-marital sexual contact has a negative relation with conjugal satisfaction and may be followed by many social consequences (Alitabar *et al.*, 2013).

One pattern formed because of changing the culture and attitude of the younger generation is white marriage. The cohabiting without marriage or white marriage is a phenomenon that boys and girls live together as roommates, without a formal link between marriage and the couple's relationship (Robbennolt and Johnson, 1999). White marriage widespread in society experts warning tone because of widespread threats of legal, social and psychological long has it. In general, in the west, since lifestyle changes along with increased economic pressures, tend is formal legal marriage and relationships decreased mainly based on the satisfaction of the instincts and test species is formed. A key factor for this kind of life is lack of responsibility, because in such relationships do not take responsibility for their own performance (Haeri, 2014). Having a relationship with the opposite sex has been frowned upon by both sharia and custom in Iranian society. Facilitation through social media of such a relationship, in the workplace or at university has lead into the prevalence of friendships and cohabiting lifestyles. Studies showed that the relaxed behaviour by parents in response to their children's pre-marital relationships is completely related to their sexual relationships (Khalajabadi and Mehryar, 2010). The partnership of two people without official marriage as white marriage has no political, legal, and religious status in Iran. Given its transitional culture and characteristics, such as individualism, modernity, fluid relationships and moral conflict, cohabitation or white marriage bears scrutiny in Iran. It should be noted that the prevalence of such relational patterns and the authorities' silence or legal and administrative tolerance, this social issue, which has endangered the family institution in Iran, remains unidentified and ambiguous.

Over recent years, some social researchers and pathologists have carried out researches on this phenomenon, but no practical results have been suggested and there are only a few articles at the academic level. Also, the socio-cultural factors affecting young people's attitudes and behaviours toward marriage have not yet been fully explored. So, a comprehensive study of these issues and

the effective factors on them was required. The present study collected too much information and data over more than one year by focusing on field-work and anthropology in three cities, including Tehran, Mashhad, and Isfahan, using standardised interviews and precise analyses. The aim of the current study was to provide a comprehensive study on socio-cultural aspects affecting young people's attitudes toward marriage using a scientific and precise analysis of interviews and data. Finally, the correct legal and practical analysis and solutions to identify this issue and reduce the potential damage caused by it are provided. In the present study, we focus on the transformation of the young people identities and attitudes towards marriage, following the socio-cultural factors including acquaintance, the duration of acquaintance, age, education, employment, violence against women, and family.

Review of literature

One of the important fields of social research is the study of changes in values, attitudes and behaviours of marriage, which because of its two-way relationship with many social, economic and cultural factors in recent years, has been the focus of many social science researchers. The issue of marriage has always been a focus for sociologists, especially in family studies. The pattern of marriage is changing in the society. The age is rising and the causes of marriage are evolving too. The attitude towards marriage is changing. One of the main factors that might increase the age of marriage is education. Young people consider marriage incompatible with education. Higher education for women is important due to the fact that it improves their social status. Women with higher education can usually marry men with a better economic and social status (Bostan, 2010). Azad *et al.* (2011) explicitly addressed the phenomenon of white marriage in academia for the first time. They defined it as a premarital trial prior to documented marriage. Their categorizations of “pre-marital” sexual behaviours in Iran. They reported that two main factors contribute to the emergence and evolution of white marriage: internal factors and external factors (Azad, *et al.*, 2011). According to their result, internal factors consist of a rise in the separation rate, increasing the age of a first marriage, generational gap, women’s increased engagement in social spaces, and decreasing parental control over children in a family. Moreover, they noted three external factors related to the Iranian economy, culture, and modernization pursuits, which have affected the young people’s attitude towards marriage and led to white marriage. These three factors include rethinking traditions based on global western inspirations, job insecurity and neoliberal policies,

and resultant changes in personal value systems, which led to a change in attitude towards marriage. These changes were in several ways, including a change in the method of partner selection from collectivist to individualistic, up-to-date education, a quick development of information technology, urbanization and increasing opportunity for anonymity in metropolitan life. Azad *et al.* (2011) emphasized that information technology has a particular role in providing a private space for young people with minimum parental control. They showed that modern patterns of sexual relationships including white marriage are intensely rooted in discourses of modernity and post modernity, and white marriage can be a threat to the social order.

According to some studies, marriage has been devalued for men and women who suggest open relationships which make possible their sexual fulfilment (Shojaei, 2005). Shojaei, (2005) conducted a study on the problems and obstacles to marriage, especially for young women. Their results revealed that some young people find the satisfaction of their natural instincts only in a relationship with the opposite sex. Therefore, one of the reasons for increasing age of marriage is open relationship between young men and women, and the accompanied sexual advantages outside marriage, somehow shifts the responsibilities of marriage off their shoulders. Ahmady (2010) mentioned that according to modernization theory, which was proposed by William Good, modernization at both individual and social levels is effective at the time of marriage. Improving the educational opportunities, changes in employment patterns, women's occupations, and urbanism can be noted as the most significant factors in modernization. Hence, marriage is postponed in urban regions, compared to rural areas due to different lifestyles and also less social control (Ahmady, 2010).

Moreover, another social factor influencing this attitude is behaviour and problems within the family, which is also related to the culture of the family. The rate of crime and social and family harm like addiction, promiscuity, domestic violence, divorce, cold relationships, interference by other people, etc. has been increased. This has not only resulted in family disintegration but also in young people's distrust of marriage, and made the young generation dismiss marriage as a source of happiness (Rajabi, 2007) and to perceive its potential combination with harm such as addiction as an additional problem for their own normal daily lives. Other people's experience in marital life can either persuade them towards, or dissuade them from marriage. Disappointments, arguments, and disagreements in some families, especially between young couples, can be resulted

in hatred and fear of marriage. On the other hand, good experiences accompanied with sympathy and understanding of people's lives can encourage others, especially the young generation, to form a family (Derakhshan, 2004). Therefore, it can be concluded that the increased rate of divorce in Iran over the past decade leads into scepticism toward marriage in today's youth.

Different types of marriage are formed as a result of changing the attitudes of people influenced by socio-cultural factors. Marriage has been classified into different ways such as marriage by capture, marriage by purchase, temporary marriage, marriage by exchange, marriage by arrangement, white marriage or clandestine, trial marriage, and marriage of comradeship (Sarokhani, 2006). Dixon, an American psychologist, emphasizes the importance of three variables in describing common patterns of marriage and the combined role of factor and structure in how they occur. These three variables moderate the effect of social structure on patterns of marriage. These three variables are: availability, accessibility (feasibility) and desirability. The first variable is determined through the balance of age-sex ratio of people of marriageable age and methods of choosing a partner, including regulated or free choice. According to this theory, when there is a serious imbalance in the age-sex ratio of the population at the age of marriage, some marriages are delayed. Young people who are free to choose a spouse, get married later than those whose parents choose their partner. The second variable (possibility) discusses the necessary socio-economic situation for the couple to form a family. The third variable (tendency) is related to social stress to convince young people to marry. Social rewards of marriage, such as love and affection, sexual gratification, economic support, procreation, lineage, and a sense of well-being during old age sometimes lead to social pressure. In addition, sometimes social pressure is applied through social punishments including isolation, rejection and notoriety due to celibacy, childlessness, etc. from a certain age onwards. Rewards and fear of punishment may encourage people to marry (Karimi, 2009).

For the first time, in 2012, Morteza Talaei, the head of the Cultural and Social Commission of the Tehran Council, announced the formation of houses in the north and south of Tehran in which girls and boys live without formal marriage. According to him, a violent confrontation with this issue will not lead anywhere. But it must be seen as a social problem (Poor Farhadi, 2014). In recent years, the issue has once again been raised in newspapers and the media, with sources reporting an increase in white marriages. However, for social and cultural reasons, no

formal and serious research has been done on this marriage in order to obtain accurate statistics on the amount of this type of marriage and its hidden points. In addition, the people who choose this type of marriage do not all form a particular social class and age. This type of marriage takes place, both among young people and middle-aged people (even without the knowledge of families). For these reasons, rooting out white marriage is not easy. (Aramaki *et al.*, 2012). In the modern world, religious and traditional sensibilities have been marginalized and practically developed during the engagement, time and place, and the bride and groom were no longer in a hurry to get married due to economic problems, employment and education, on the other hand, despite strict commitments. In traditional marriages as well as in legal-civil obligations, the terms of the marriage gradually became longer than usual, so much so that it was very common for the future couple to have children before the formal marriage. The West has its supporters, but it is not recognized in the Islamic society at all, although it has become popular among the youth without any religious or legal support (Ghanbarian, 1396).

A review of the background shows that white marriage is currently expanding in Iran as a foreign phenomenon that has resulted from cultural and social changes during the transition of societies.

Research method

Interpretative and qualitative methodological framework and grounded theory were used in the current study. Because of the cultural sensitivity of the subject under study, non-random was applied. 100 interviews were conducted with participants of white marriage; informational redundancy of the recorded data was also obtained. To ensure the comprehensiveness of the research, more interviews were conducted with the recommendations of qualitative method experts.

In-depth interviewing techniques were used to collect the research data and information. The theoretical coding (open, axial, and selective coding) applied to analyse the recorded data. It should be noted that an informal interviewing method was used to identify important concepts and categories of participants. Theoretical sampling using grounded theory was then used to organize the obtained categories and concepts. In order to make the interview's questions standard, a semi-structured interview method was used at the end of forming the general course of the interviews. This process was continued until reaching an informational redundancy. The major

categories, sub-categories, and concepts were obtained after performing the open coding simultaneously with data collection process.

Findings

Foundation of marriage is considered being an interest in the opposite sex, which depends on biological development. Although adolescence infrequently get married, they are interested in having opposite-sex relationships. Since social legitimacy, supervision and consent of the community on marriage is vitally important, making the jurisprudential aspect of marriage insignificant, the illegality of marriage and as a final point its normal regulations lead to the brittleness of the marital bond (Sarokhani, 2006). The social rules governing marriage lead to the decision to marry or change a person's attitude towards marriage. These changes may lead to different forms of marriage at different ages and times.

The results of the present study, considering the theoretical and experimental background, showed that social changes, transitional culture, defective modernity and socio-cultural factors are involved in determining the phenomenon of cohabitation. In this study, the participants' attitude towards marriage was included of two types as follows: the first type were the people who believed that cultural factors and traditional customs are related to the permanent marriage. The second type was those who were affected by some socio-cultural factors such as lack of belief in permanent marriage, the concept, and were ultimately inspired to unlicensed cohabitation or white marriage.

In total, 203 interviews were carried out in three capital cities including Tehran, Isfahan, and Mashhad with 86, 64, and 53 interviews, respectively. 87 males and 116 females were participated as interviewees. These include both men and women, however women showed higher sympathy and trust. Women also showed more preference to talk about their attitudes towards marriage and relationship. Men, on the other hand, was more introverted.

According to Azad Armaki *et al.* (2007), social relations and friendship have been affected by changing value during the last decade, which led to various results in Iranian society. Lifestyles and values have been varied due to the growth in global communicative media such as satellites and internet. Moreover, new attitudinal and behavioral patterns have been formed among Iranian people, especially the youth, which was due to increasing the age of marriage, forming

general values through innovative communicative means, and increasing the economic issues. One of these changes is premarital relationships, such as cohabitation, which have been expanded through various forms and motives (Azad Armaki *et al.*, 2007). It is important to be noted that in Iranian societies, cohabitation without official and legal registration is definitely considered an illegal and sharia relationship. This type of relationship is the result of changing the attitude of young people affected by various factors, including socio-cultural factors, which has become a new and growing trend, especially in metropolises and immigrant areas in Iran. Based on the data collected at the present study, most acquaintances that led into cohabitation arisen in universities or through social networks on the Internet or in friendly groups. The following is the quotes from some of the interviewees:

Ms. Arsalani, 28 years old from Tehran: *"We were both students in Tabriz and we met because we were members of some women's associations or other active feminist associations. We were close friends for almost three years. But after two years, he rented an apartment and we went out to his house together with our friends on different occasions "*

A 46-year-old man from Tehran: *"I was walking out of the car park at the university when I saw her. I picked her up and took her home. We talked on the way and so our acquaintance began.*

A 31-year-old woman from Tehran: *"I can say that we met somehow. Hussein saw me from a distance and accidentally visited my Facebook profile. He wondered if maybe I was the same person. Then, he asked our common friend and became sure on our first date."*

Friendships and relationships with the opposite sex, which have replaced permanent marriages in many societies today, are part of the complex experiences of adolescence. The culture of each country determines the relationship with the opposite sex, which is realized according to social, jurisprudential and official laws. As in Iranian society, relations between the two opposite sexes are not accepted and allowed in terms of law and sharia and are in conflict with cultural and social beliefs. The results of the present study showed that despite this issue, such relationships are common and the university as a place where girls and boys attend classes, and friendly circles in the university sometimes lead to cohabitation. How participants became acquainted with their partners on the first place is presented in diagram 1. According to the data, 47.3% of interviewees met their cohabiting partners in students' groups, 33.5% in a work

environment, and 19.2% through virtual space. It can be concluded from the diagram that trust is formed after being completely familiarized. In general, people who are tend to cohabitation, find their desired partners in or through circles such as café. Virtual space has been one of the most important factors that provides the means for unlimited relationships. The emergence of social media has created a sudden shift in the dynamics of societal structure. This frequent communication prepares people for close relationships and mutual trust which might lastly lead to arrangements such as white marriage.

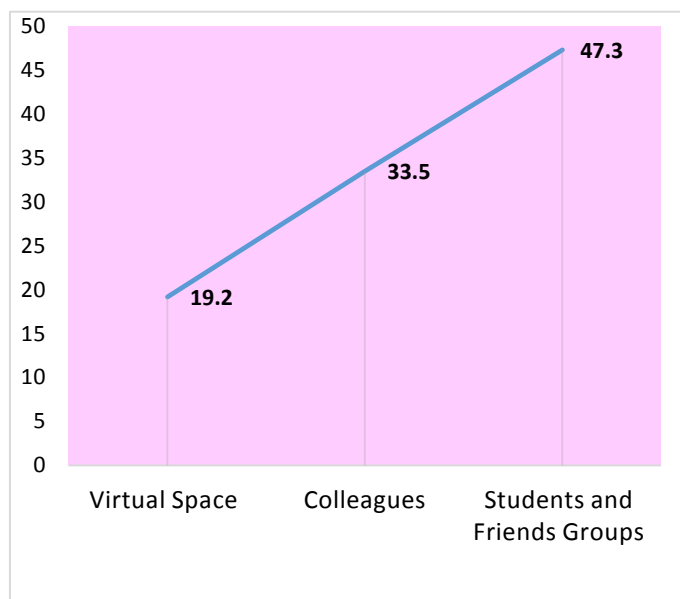


Diagram 1. How participants met their partners

As mentioned earlier, socio-cultural problems lead to delays in permanent marriages and subsequent satisfaction of sexual needs, which may lead to dissatisfaction. Hence, relationships such as white marriage, which make it possible to satisfy sexual needs without pressure, have been increased. According to the recording data, if the existing conditions are in favour of both parties and bring about the satisfaction of both, it will last, otherwise the relationship will end. The quotes from some of the interviewees are presented as following:

A 31-year-old man from Tehran: *"As I said, it was because of financial and sexual needs. Because we could not permanently and forever. And sometimes sexual needs lead us to live together."*

A 30-year-old woman from Tehran: *"As two 30-year-olds living together, we are not in a position to meet the expectations of our families. For example, we cannot afford a wedding. Each of us*

shares whatever s/he has. We live in a small house. We can afford to rent a house and live comfortably, but unfortunately my family does not accept our choice."

A 31-year-old woman from Tehran: *"The advantage that permanent marriage brings to me as a woman in society is that I do not have a secret life. I can travel with my partner or introduce him as the person I live with and we can go anywhere. This kind of life [cohabitation] has a fundamental problem, which is the secrecy and the challenge that you have. You have to lie to everyone, and that puts too much pressure on me."*

The results obtained of the participants revealed that the couple who chose white marriage lived only four years and then separated. The highest rate was 73.9% by cohabitation relationships lasting 1-3 years and other cohabitations usually lasted less than one year (17.3%) and over one year (8.1%). Most participants can be classified to have middle-term and short-term relationships. In fact, post-cohabitation problems, lack of commitment to the partner, tendency to change, domestic violence against women, and social exclusion are the effective factors to stop this kind of relationship. Most of these relationships lasted in three years (diagram 2).

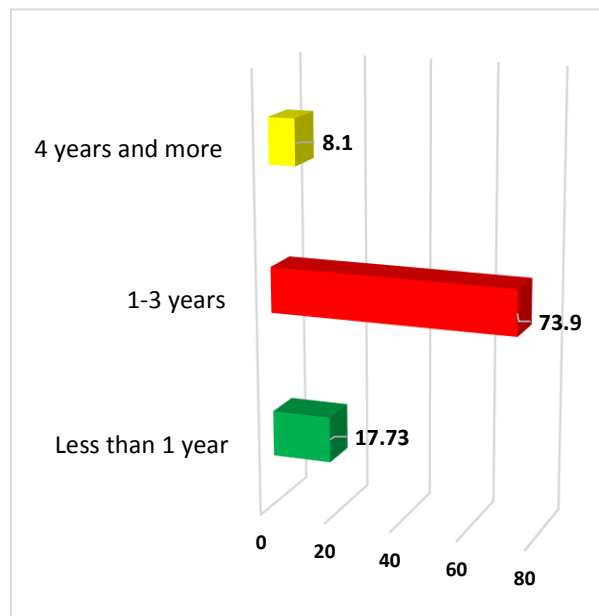


Diagram 2. Distribution of the duration of cohabitation

The results of the questionnaires used in this study showed that social problems including unemployment, family expectations, great inflation and other factors lead to a change in men's

attitudes toward permanent marriage and increase their desire for temporary marriage (white marriage). On the other hand, according to our results, social and cultural conditions, including greater participation of women in environments such as universities, have led to an increase in the age of marriage. Therefore, white marriage is considered as a right and logical choice for young people. In the present study, the relationship between age and white marriage is investigated. Age is one of the most important variables in white marriage'. Conducted interviews and the findings indicate that the lowest rate of 'white marriage' and cohabitation occurs at 37-41 year-old (10.34%) and the highest rate of cohabitation occurs at the age range of 25-30 (45.33%) which is presented in diagram 3.

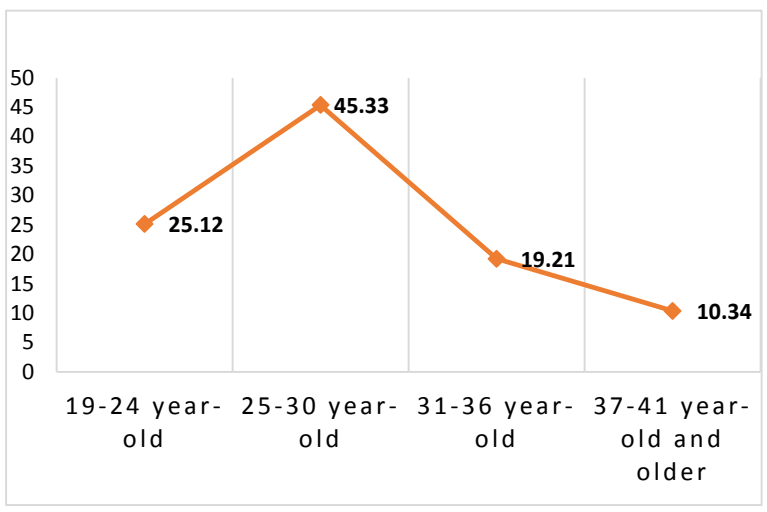


Diagram 3. The age range of interviewees

Considering 'white marriage' as a reasonable choice has been enhanced by the people who are at the right age of marriage but have not married due to economic, cultural, and social conditions. As it is shown in diagram 1, these young people, who are preoccupied with new communicational technologies such as cell-phone, the Internet, virtual space, Instagram, Facebook, and are less concerned with religious issues compared to previous generations, are the most likely to select white marriage as an alternative to permanent marriage.

According to the data of the present study, most of the people who had a cohabiting relationship were graduates (Diagram 4). The recorded data indicates that 62.57 and 23.15% of them had Bachelor and Masters and Ph.D. Degrees, respectively.

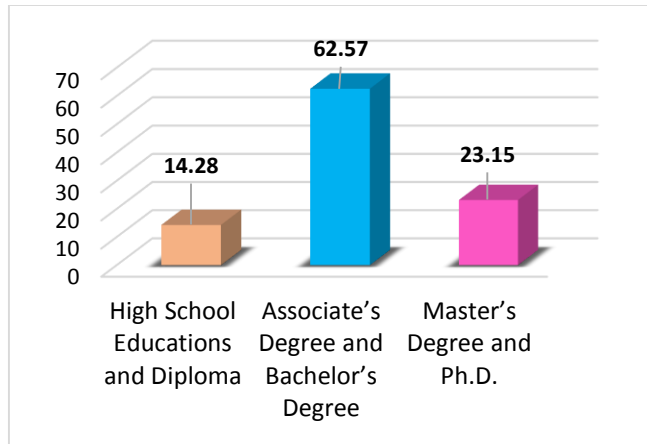


Diagram 4. Frequency of educational degrees of interviewees

The experience of student life, the change of culture towards modernity, and the acquaintance of more people with various intellectual ideas in the university has led to the formation of a new generation that does not require adherence to the cultural and social frameworks and principles of the previous generation. Therefore, these factors have led students to choose white marriage in order to control their sexual needs.

There are some major reasons that educated people usually migrate to capital cities. Some of them are as follows: the high rate of unemployment in small towns, lack of job opportunities, and lack of coordination of educational fields and the free market, and saturation of governmental job positions. The obtained data showed that most of the cohabiting interviewees (46.3%) were employed in private companies or were running freelance businesses (39.5%) (diagram 4). These people could afford to live in a capital city and had more funds to meet the needs of their relationship, which gave them a more powerful status as well (diagram 5).

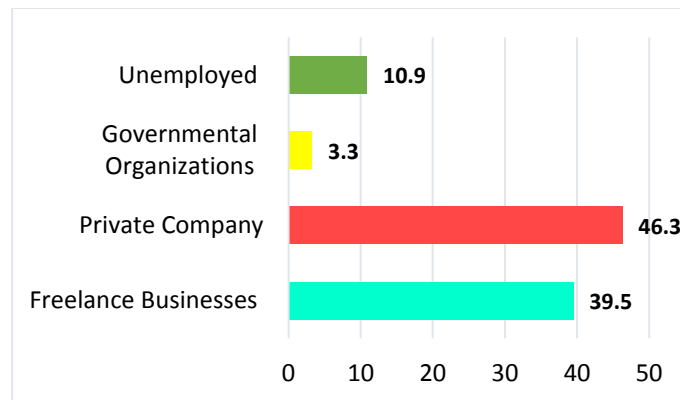


Diagram 5. Types of employment

Many educated but unemployed people migrate to larger cities to find work related to their specialization and knowledge. These people are more likely to choose "white marriage". Public and private organizations must cooperate and provide job security to the people.

Violence against women was investigated to be one of the socio-cultural problems which led to a change in the attitude of people towards marriage. Violence against women is known as any violent action that may lead to physical, sexual, and psychological hurts of women. Based on the recorded data which is presented in diagram 5, 19.82% of female interviewees had experienced domestic violence and 80.18% had relationships without violence (diagram 6). Some interviewees' quotes are presented as following:

A 43-year-old woman from Tehran: *"Yes, we used to hit each other. Then he told me, 'I did not want to lose you and I thought that in this way I could have more control over you.'"*

A 26-year-old boy from Tehran: *"Sometimes we would argue over small things, but I think it was more because of the relationship. For example, we once argued over what he told a friend about us. We had a small discussion about this for a few nights."*

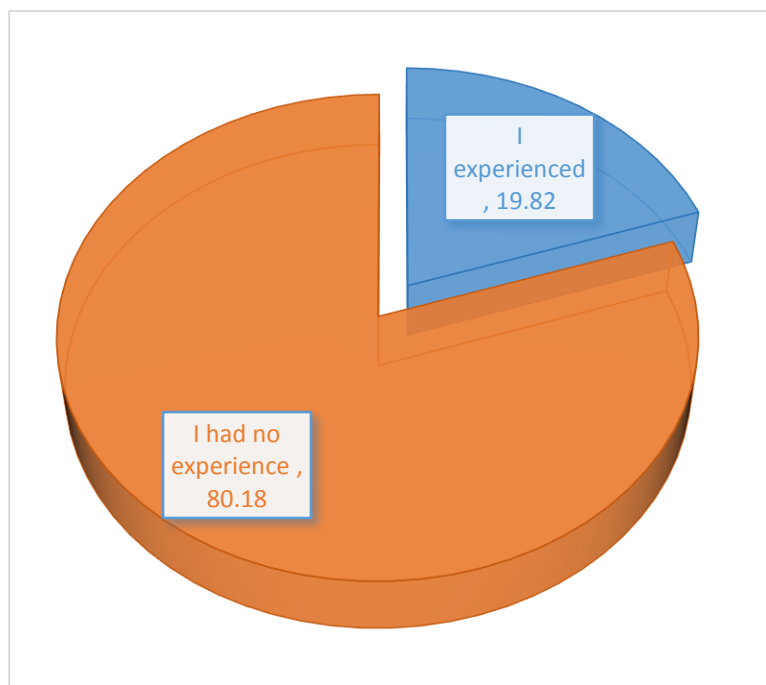


Diagram 6. Incidence of violence among female interviewees

It is believed that the family is one of the most important institutions influencing the transmission of culture and attitudes of society to future generations. Simultaneously with the increase of

modernity and the spread of Western culture in Iran from different cultural aspects, it has changed the attitude of the current generation compared to before. It is shown in diagram 7 that 15.27% of the participants said that their family (parents) was aware of their relationship. 25.61%, 13.3%, and 48.35% of them said that only their siblings, close relatives, and friends knew about their relationships. And 10.34% of the interviewees kept their cohabitation and relationships secret.

A 37-year-old woman from Tehran: *"My mother knew, but she pretended not to know. Everyone knew we were friends, even my brother and father. Not that they knew him personally, but they knew I had a friend. I preferred my relatives and friends. "They did not know about it in small towns. My neighbours and others did not know. I do not communicate with people I do not know, and my communication was not too much and harmful."*

A 26-year-old boy from Tehran: *"Maybe one or two of my friends know about my relationship. In fact, only one of my friends was aware of some of our life together, and one of his friends knew. But my family or close relatives and family "He did not know about our relationship."*

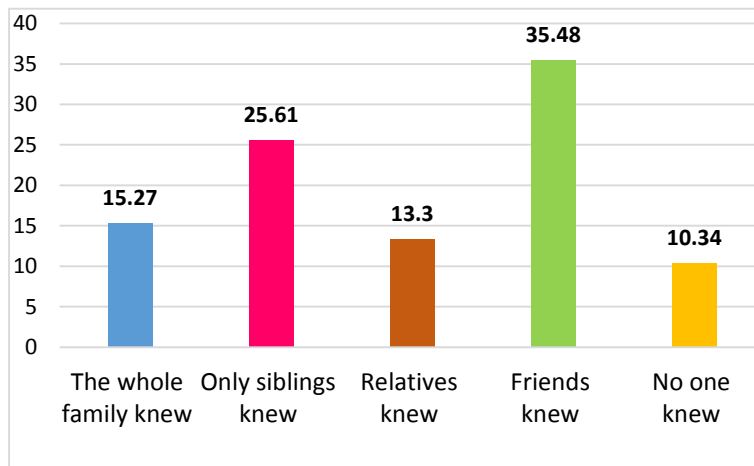


Diagram 7. Extent to which families and friends of interviewees knew about their cohabitation

Conclusion

The phenomenon of “white marriage” among young heterosexual middle class Iranian women and men under the influence of socio-cultural factors was investigated in the present study. While white marriage has taken a lot of media attention within Iran, little is well-known about it outside of the country or in academia. The study findings showed that socio-cultural factors such as family conditions, age, education, etc. were some of the main factors in the changing people’s attitude towards marriage, and increased the tendency towards ‘white marriage’. The main phenomenon which was relieved in the current study was the changes in values, beliefs, and lifestyle of the younger generation. Instability and multiplicity were defined as the strategic actions of the research. Insignificance of cultural principles, freedom of choice, and reluctance to formal marriage were some consequences of this kind of relationship. Karimian and Zarei (2012) carried out a study on women involved in cohabitation and revealed that the 19 women participated in the research showed a low quality and weak mutual commitment, relative gratification. They were also worried of being judged by their family and also society. They didn’t have a formal and legal marriage in the future. The researchers reported that Iranian family has been facing the increased rate of prevalence of cohabitation amount current generation, besides the increased emotional/sexual infidelity in married couples, high rate of divorce, and the popularity of cohabitation (Karimian and Zarei 2012). According to several studies, in the case of Iran as well, changes in sexuality differ in different social classes and rapid changes have been detected in the middle class (Afary, 2009). It should be noted that middle class women and men in white marriage are typically highly educated and are profitably employed (Ghoddosi and Bayat, 2014). This is in line with the results of the present study and confirms the effect of the two factors of education and employment on the change in attitudes and tendencies towards white marriage. White marriage in the middle class has been noted as an individualized decision and this phenomenon is increasing among middle class young women and men (Aghajanian *et.al*, 2018).

In Iran, cultural and value changes have led to the prevalence of this lifestyle, the issues that are on the way to marriage (economic situation, cumbersome customs, costly ceremonies, etc.) lead people to white marriage We now need to focus on solving the socio-cultural problem in our policies. For example, solving the employment problem can solve the marriage problem, when

young people themselves go for marriage, they are told that they should have a good job. As a result, we must strive to address this issue within our own cultural and social contexts.

In the last two decades, socio-cultural changes have proved that the rate of cohabitation or white marriage is increasing. In fact, this kind of marriage cannot be easily identified. Due to its taboo concept and being rejected by the authorities, it is increasing secretly and of course rapidly, and if not studied properly, it can have irreversible consequences for young people, especially women. In order to decrease its consequences, some suggestions have been classified as follows:

- Precise identification of the dimensions, reasons, and consequences of changing young youth's attitudes towards marriage in Iran, according to extensive and independent scientific studies: Allocating more government funding for research studies in this area, pay more attention to university professors and behavioural scientists, continue to study all aspects of "white marriage" and its social consequences can all be helpful.
- Advocate for legal solutions: Since most of the interviewees stated that many Iranian cultures and customs such as dowries, ceremonies, independent housing, gender stereotypes, limitations on women in the marriage contract, such as education, employment, divorce, travel, guardianship, and etc. has prevented them from getting married and made them want to have secret relationships. Government institutions can play a good role in this by promoting easy marriage methods.
- Growing employment, entrepreneurship, and improving economic situations by government and the private zone: Revising policies, entrepreneurship, and creating new job opportunities in people's hometowns may be effective. In addition, banks can help by providing long-term loans and financial facilities. The private sector can also reduce unemployment by developing infrastructure and building homes and workshops in small towns by supporting young people. Charities can also focus on entrepreneurship with government support. Therefore, entrepreneurship in the hometowns of the people and the provision of economic support can eliminate some of the financial worries of young people that lead to a change in their attitude towards marriage.
- Supporting the governmental communities and associations in the term of health and educational consultations and inhibition of social and individual damages: Psychological and even physical injuries are among the complications of these informal events. Because

the partners in this relationship are deprived and rejected by their families. By creating a culture in this field and eliminating the illegality and reducing the fear of "white marriage", the above-mentioned institutions and institutions can prevent the damage caused by it. People who live together can receive health care and support to improve the well-being of both their subscribers and our wider community without fear of prosecution.

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