



## Prediction of attitude towards marriage based on emotional intelligence in female students

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### ABSTRACT

**Background and Aim:** Today, one of the problems of young people is the lack of self-knowledge, which naturally leads to the lack of knowledge of the criteria and attitude towards marriage. The present study was conducted with the aim of investigating the prediction of attitude towards marriage based on emotional intelligence in female students. **Methods:** This is descriptive correlational research. The statistical population of this research includes unmarried female students of Islamic Azad University, Garmsar branch in the academic year 2022-23, 200 people were selected as the research sample using random cluster sampling. To collect the data, Bratin and Rosen's (1998) marriage attitude questionnaire and Austin et al.'s revised emotional intelligence scale (2004) were used. Data analysis was done using Pearson's correlation coefficient and multiple regression analysis. **Results:** The research results showed that there is a significant relationship between attitude towards marriage and emotional intelligence ( $p=0.01$ ) and emotional intelligence can predict students' attitude towards marriage. **Conclusion:** Therefore, it can be concluded that emotional intelligence can play a role as an effective factor in predicting students' attitude towards marriage.



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## Introduction

Today, one of the problems of young people is the lack of self-knowledge, which naturally leads to the lack of knowledge of the criteria and attitudes towards marriage. Young people like to choose a spouse who will make them mentally and physically needy. The issue of marriage in Iran has its own characteristics; considering the prevailing religious and traditional culture, our country is in the transition stage from tradition and entering modernity and is facing profound social and cultural changes in all social phenomena, including marriage and choosing a spouse (Khojste Mehr et al., 2016).

The structure of attitude toward marriage shows people's feelings and tendencies, prejudices or biases, preconceived notions and fears, and strong opinions about marriage (Momani, Maditi, 2016). Therefore, a person's attitude toward marriage is his way of thinking and feeling about marriage (Momani, Maditi, 2016). Attitude towards marriage plays a key role in decision-making. People's attitudes towards marriage can be constructive or destructive. Attitude is reflected in what a person says and hears and affects his perception of the world around him. Attitude is a major component of marriage and managing married life (Akbarzadeh et al. et al., 2019).

Humans have relatively stable values, attitudes, and habits. As the younger generation replaces the previous generation, the attitudes and values of society change (Johnson, 2020). Young people behave according to the changing social, cultural, political, and economic requirements and conditions, as well as their experiences during the process of socialization, and in recent years, their attitude towards marriage and family formation has become negative, and following this negative attitude, moral, social and economic corruption has become common among them (Johnson, 2020).

The formation of the attitude towards marriage can be justified from two points of view. First, based on the attachment theory, the relationship between parents or primary caregivers (especially mothers) plays a role in creating active internal patterns (Paknejad et al, 2020). Internal active patterns may be one of the mechanisms through which the attitude towards intimacy is transmitted. In attachment theory, the parent-child relationship is important during childhood and adolescence (Mikalinsler &

Shaver, 2017). Second, based on the social learning theory, parents transfer their ideas about the opposite sex to their children through modeling and vicarious learning, and children's attitudes towards intimacy are modeled by observing their parents' behavior and relationships between them. On the other hand, children use the experience of their relationship with their parents as a basis for creating intimacy in relationships. This learning also takes place from other sources, such as the media, school, and friends (Nilfroshan et al., 2013).

Research has shown that the structure and environment of the main family plays a role in the attitude towards marriage and the family life of children. Attitude towards marriage is one of the key mechanisms for predicting actual behavior in marriage, and various factors such as emotional intelligence play an increasing role in attitude towards marriage (Mayer & Salvi, 2004). Emotional intelligence is the best predictor of success in life and marriage. Emotional intelligence is controlling anxious states and reactions (Navabinejad et al., 2023). In general, it can be said that emotional intelligence is a social skill that includes cooperation with other people, the use of emotions in relationships, and the ability to lead other people (Carey, 2006).

Mayer and Salvi (2004) consider emotional intelligence to include the perception, expression, understanding, and control of emotions in oneself and others and the use of emotions in problem-solving. The results of Ali Akbari Dehkordi et al.'s research (2014) showed that there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and attitude toward premarital relationships. This rate shows a strong correlation in the negative direction; in other words, the higher the level of emotional intelligence in a person, the lower his tendency to have sex before marriage and vice versa (Ali Akbari Dehkordi et al., 2014). Because the decision to marry is one of the most important decisions in human life, this research aims to answer whether emotional intelligence and self-separation predict attitudes toward marriage in female students.

## Method

This is a descriptive-correlational study and the relationship between the variables is investigated. In this research, emotional intelligence is a variable (predictor) and attitude

towards marriage is a variable (criterion). The statistical population of this research includes unmarried female students of Islamic Azad University, Garmsar branch in the academic year 2021-2022. Due to the wideness of the statistical population, random cluster sampling method was used in this research. The sample size is based on the determination of the sample size in correlation studies with the purpose of prediction and regression, choosing 15 subjects for each parameter (Gal & Gal, 2014). According to the total of subscales, the sample size is estimated to be 200 people.

**Materials**

**1. Attitude towards marriage questionnaire.**

The marriage attitude scale was created by Brattin and Rosen (1998) and has 23 questions with a 5-point Likert scale (1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree) and measures 4 subscales (pessimistic attitude towards marriage, optimistic attitude towards marriage, realistic attitude towards marriage and idealistic attitude towards marriage). Rosen and Brattin (1998) reported the results of the internal consistency of the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha of 0.84, and the construct validity of the questionnaire was also examined, and the overall results indicate the appropriate validity and reliability of this questionnaire. The reliability of the questionnaire in Sharifzadeh's research (2012) was obtained using Cronbach's alpha of 0.89.

**2. Revised Schutt Emotional Intelligence Scale (MSEIS).** This scale is a 41-question self-assessment questionnaire and was made to measure trait emotional intelligence (Austin et

al., 2004). Subjects answer the questions of this scale based on Likert ratings (1- completely agree to 5- completely disagree). This questionnaire is actually a revised version of the emotional intelligence scale of Shute et al. (1998). The reliability coefficient (internal consistency) of this scale has been reported as 0.85 and it measures three factors: optimism/mood regulation, enjoyment of emotions, and evaluation of emotions. The reliability coefficients of internal consistency for these factors are 0.78, 0.89 and 0.76, respectively. The validity of the test was estimated through its correlation with Bar-an IQ test and its value was reported as 0.67. Bakhshipour Rudsari et al. (2007) investigated the psychometric characteristics of the Revised Shott Emotional Intelligence Scale (MSEIS) in a research. The results of the research showed the relatively appropriate psychometric properties of this questionnaire (Bakhshi Pourrodsari, Zarean, and Asadalepour, 2017).

**Implementation**

To analyze the data, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was first used to check the normality of the data, and the Pearson correlation coefficient and multiple regression were used to check the relationship between the variables.

**Results**

The mean (standard deviation) age of the participants in this study was 22.50 (4.56). The mean and standard deviation of the research variables are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. Mean and standard deviation of research variables**

Variables	Index	
	Mean	SD
<b>Pessimistic attitude towards marriage</b>	21/25	3/56
<b>Optimistic attitude to marriage</b>	18/69	3/10
<b>A realistic attitude to marriage</b>	24/95	4/85
<b>Idealistic attitude to marriage</b>	19/20	3/58
<b>Attitude to marriage</b>	77/67	29/12
<b>Evaluating emotions in oneself and others</b>	44/61	5/28
<b>Regulation of emotions</b>	35/94	13/12
<b>Taking advantage of emotions in solving problems</b>	34/84	6/35
<b>Perception and understanding of emotions</b>	32/15	4/87
<b>Emotional Intelligence</b>	115/44	46/20

Considering the Kolmogorov test value and significance level greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis that all subscales related to the

variables of attitude to marriage and emotional intelligence and general variables are normal is not rejected and it can be concluded that these

variables are normal. In order to check the correlation between the variables, Pearson's

correlation coefficient was used.

**Table 2. Correlation coefficient results between attitude towards marriage and emotional intelligence**

Variables	Attitude towards marriage	
	Pearson	Sig
Evaluating emotions in oneself and others	0/185	0/000
Regulation of emotions	0/202	0/000
Taking advantage of emotions in solving problems	0/108	0/034
Perception and understanding of emotions	0/151	0/003
Emotional Intelligence	0/227	0/000

Based on the results obtained from Table 2, the Pearson correlation coefficient between all subscales related to emotional intelligence and attitude to marriage, respectively, for evaluating emotions in oneself and others is equal to 0.185 with a significance level of zero less than 0.05, for regulating emotions it is equal to 0.202 with a significance level equal to zero less than 0.05, for using emotions in solving problems it is equal to 0.108 with a significance level equal to 0.034 less than 0.05, it is significant for perception and understanding of emotions equal

to 0.151 with a significance level equal to zero less than 0.05 and for total emotional intelligence equal to 0.227 with a significance level equal to zero less than 0.05 and as a result, there is a significant positive relationship between all the subscales of the variable of emotional intelligence and total emotional intelligence with the variable of attitude towards marriage. It can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between attitude towards marriage and emotional intelligence of female students.

**Table 3. Regression table for predicting attitude towards marriage based on emotional intelligence**

Predictor variable	Source	SS	Df	ME	F	Sig	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Durbin-watson
Emotional intelligence	Regression	2391/430	1	2391/430	21/071	0/000	0/520	0/270	1/53
	Residual	44035/145	198	113/493					
	Total	46426/574	199						

According to the results of Table 3, the regression model of the effect of emotional intelligence on the attitude to marriage is significant with the mean square of 2391.430 with F value equal to 21.071 at the  $P < 0.05$  level. This means that emotional intelligence can predict the attitude towards marriage. The coefficient of determination of this model is equal to 0.270, which means that 27% of the variance of attitude towards marriage is explained by emotional intelligence. Also,

according to the value of Durbin-Watson's statistic equal to 1.53, which is more than 1.5, it shows that there is no autocorrelation problem between the residuals in the regression model. (If the Durbin-Watson coefficient is between 1.5 and 2.5, there is no autocorrelation problem between the residuals in the regression model). In Table 4, the non-standard and standard beta coefficients of the model of the effect of emotional intelligence on the attitude towards marriage have been discussed.

**Table 4. Non-standard and standard beta coefficients of the model of the effect of emotional intelligence on attitude towards marriage**

Predictor variable	Beta	Std err.	Standard coefficient	t	Sig
Constant	46/060	5/319		8/660	0/000

<b>Emotional intelligence</b>	0/181	0/039	0/520	4/590	0/000
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According to the results of Table 4, the standard beta coefficient of emotional intelligence is equal to 0.520. This influence coefficient is significant with the value of t equal to 4.590 at the P<0.05 level. In general, according to the obtained results, marriage attitude can be predicted based on emotional intelligence, and emotional intelligence has a positive effect on marriage attitude. This shows that with an increase of one standard deviation in the score of emotional intelligence, the score of attitude towards marriage will increase by 0.52 standard deviation due to the positive coefficient. Multiple regression analysis was used in order to predict the attitude towards marriage by the subscales of emotional intelligence (evaluation

of emotions, regulation of emotions, exploitation of emotions and perception and understanding of emotions). The predictor variables are the subscales of emotional intelligence (evaluation of emotions, regulation of emotions, exploitation of emotions and perception and understanding of emotions) and the criterion variable of attitude towards marriage. In order to increase the accuracy of the regression model and also to be able to arrange the predictive variables in the order of predictive power from the strongest to the weakest significant predictive variable, a step-by-step multiple regression model is used. The results of the regression model are shown in Table 5.

Predictor variable	Steps	Source	SS	Df	ME	F	Sig	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Durbin-Watson
<b>(evaluating emotions, regulating emotions, benefiting from emotions and understanding and understanding emotions)</b>	1	Regression	1886/429	1	1886/429	16/433	0/000	0/511	0/261	----
		Residual	44540/146	198	114/794					
		Total	46426/574	199						
<b>(evaluating emotions, regulating emotions, benefiting from emotions and understanding and understanding emotions)</b>	2	Regression	2629/627	2	1314/814	11/618	0/000	0/532	0/283	1/687
		Residual	43796/947	197	113/170					
		Total	46426/574	199						

According to the results of Table 5, the regression model of the effect of subscales of emotional intelligence on the attitude to marriage was carried out in two steps, the last step (the second step) with the mean of squares of 1314.814 with the F value equal to 11.618 at the P<0.05 level is significant. This means that the subscales of emotional intelligence have been able to predict the attitude towards marriage. The coefficient of determination of this model in the last step (second step) with the highest value is equal to 0.283, which means that 28% of the variance of the attitude towards marriage is explained by the subscales of

emotional intelligence (evaluation of emotions, regulation of emotions, exploitation of emotions and perception and understanding of emotions). Also, according to the value of Durbin-Watson's statistic equal to 1.687, which is more than 1.5, it shows that there is no autocorrelation problem between the residuals in the multiple regression model. In the table below, the non-standard and standard beta coefficients of the emotional intelligence subscales model (evaluation of emotions, regulation of emotions, utilization of emotions and perception and understanding of emotions) on the attitude towards marriage have been discussed in a step-by-step manner.

Step	Predictor variable	Beta	Std err.	Std Coeff.	t	Sig
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1	Constant	55/300	3/752		14/740	0/000
	Emotion regulation	0/434	0/107	0/511	4/054	0/000
2	Constant	48/048	4/678		10/271	0/000
	Emotion Regulation	0/341	0/113	0/281	3/027	0/003
	Emotion evaluation	0/489	0/191	0/242	2/563	0/011

According to the results of Table 6, in the second step, variables that have more power in predicting the dependent variable (attitude towards marriage) are entered into the model. Regulation of emotions with a standard beta coefficient is equal to 0.281. This influencing factor is significant, with a t-value of 3.027 with a significance level of 0.003 at the  $P < 0.05$  level. This shows that with an increase of one standard deviation in the emotion regulation score, the attitude towards marriage score will increase by 0.28 standard deviation due to the positive coefficient. Evaluation of emotions with a standard beta coefficient is equal to 0.242. This influencing factor is significant with a t value of 2.563 with a significance level of 0.011 at the  $P < 0.05$  level. This shows that with an increase of one standard deviation in the evaluation score of emotions, the score of attitude towards marriage will increase by 0.24 standard deviation due to the positivity of the coefficient. In general, it can be concluded that among the subscales of emotional intelligence (evaluation of emotions, regulation of emotions, utilization of emotions and perception and understanding of emotions), regulation of emotions and evaluation of emotions can predict the variable of attitude towards marriage from the highest to the lowest role with positive coefficients.

### Conclusion

This research aimed to predict the attitude towards marriage based on emotional intelligence in female students. The results of the research showed that there is a significant relationship between attitude towards marriage and emotional intelligence of female students. The findings of this research are in line with the findings of Saghezi and Yazdani (2020), Pourafshar (2020), Ebrahimi et al. (2020), Niknam and Taj (2018), Nikkhah et al. (2017), Malouf et al. The results of Ali Akbari Dehkordi et al.'s research (2014) showed that there is a significant relationship between

emotional intelligence and attitude towards premarital relationship. This level shows a strong correlation in the negative direction, in other words, the higher the level of emotional intelligence in a person, the lower his tendency to have sex before marriage and vice versa. Also, the research results of Niknam and Taj (2019) showed that there is a significant and inverse relationship between the dimensions of emotional intelligence and marital instability. Also, the results obtained from the regression analysis also showed that emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence can predict the instability of marriage. The findings of this research support the importance of emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence variables in predicting marriage instability, that is, high emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence can reduce marriage instability.

Emotional intelligence includes a set of interconnected skills for accurate and complete perception of emotions, evaluating and expressing emotions, accessing and creating emotions and feelings in order to facilitate thinking, the ability to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and the ability to control and regulate emotions in order to grow emotionally and rationally. In explaining this research finding, we can say that emotional intelligence means the knowledge of emotions and the ability to manage and use them, which can help to create stability and peace in life; But for people who have emotional intelligence at an average level, the lack of stability in life (economic instability and difficult financial conditions) can affect the application of emotional intelligence skills and these people are not able to use their usual emotional knowledge. In general, people who have high emotional intelligence have the ability to control, recognize and use emotional abilities and can help to increase their adaptability in facing marital events and issues by expanding their scope of insight and creating a positive

attitude about events and using appropriate strategies to deal with problems; Therefore, emotional intelligence can have important applications and effects on family life and positive attitude towards marriage.

Also, the findings of this research showed that emotional intelligence has a significant effect on the variable of attitude towards marriage, so emotional intelligence can predict the attitude towards marriage of female students. The findings of this research are in line with the findings of Naimi et al. (2015), Naqibi and Hamidi (2015) and Talebi and Ghobari Bonab (2012). The results of Talebi and Ghobari Bonab's research (2012) showed that there is a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction. Also, the results of the simultaneous regression test showed that the components of self-differentiation and emotional intelligence explain about 70% of the variance of marital satisfaction. Emotional intelligence is a component that indicates the ability of people to fully understand emotions and thoughts and evaluate issues efficiently; So that people find the ability to deal with stress and challenges. Scott et al. (2002) showed that people with high empathy, self-monitoring and self-control show empathy response, more participation, closer and loving relationships and experience more marital compatibility in their married life. Emotional intelligence creates a balance between emotion and cognition, which leads to adaptive action. Emotional intelligence consists of emotional self-awareness, characteristics and various skills that are inferred from the effective use or regulation of emotions such as appropriate interpersonal relationships, problem solving and stress tolerance. In other words, people with high emotional intelligence have good stress management skills and are able to evaluate, express and manage their emotions. As a result, these factors have a more optimistic attitude towards marriage.

In the end, according to the findings of this research, it can be concluded that various factors play a role in the attitude towards marriage, among which emotional intelligence is one of them. Therefore, paying attention to the results and their application in premarital education programs and developmental and therapeutic interventions can be important. The findings of this research can have important

applications for marriage and pre-marriage counselors and family education teachers. In pre-marital counseling, the positive and negative effects of the attitude towards marriage should be examined as an effective factor, so that the parties, while being aware of these consequences, get the necessary preparation to face the next problems.

#### Conflict of Interest

According to the authors, this article has no financial sponsor or conflict of interest.

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