

The Role of Neo-Personality Traits in Predicting Modernity Orientation and Examining the Agency of Gender and Marital Status on Modernity Orientation in Students

Maryam. Pashm Foroush¹, Abolfazl. Karami^{2*}, Shahab. Moradi³, Mastrooeh. Sedaghat⁴

¹ PhD Student of Educational Psychology, Department of Psychology, Semnan Branch, Islamic Azad University, Semnan, Iran

² Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran, Iran

³ Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Semnan Branch, Islamic Azad University, Semnan, Iran

⁴ Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, South Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran

* Corresponding author email address: abolfazlkarami1@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Life, as a process, is a function of the dynamic and complex interplay of social factors such as "modernity." Modernity refers to a new era that, while distinguishing human experiences and values from the past, is also influenced by human agency, including personality traits. The aim of this study was to predict modernity orientation based on Neo-personality traits in students. The research design, based on its objective, was a correlational study using multiple linear regression and MANOVA. The statistical population consisted of students enrolled at Payame Noor University in the Tehran Province during the 2021-2022 academic year. A total of 895 students from Payame Noor University in Tehran were selected using a multistage cluster random sampling method. To collect data, a 43-item researcher-made modernity orientation questionnaire (Pashm Feroz, 2023) and the short-form NEO Personality Inventory (Costa & McCrae, 1989) were used. The results of the multiple linear regression analysis showed that extraversion ($\beta = 0.14, p < 0.001$), openness to new experiences ($\beta = 0.197, p < 0.001$), and agreeableness ($\beta = 0.076, p = 0.035$) significantly predicted modernity orientation. A significant difference in modernity orientation between women and men was found at the 0.05 level ($p < 0.05$), with women showing a stronger orientation toward modernity. Furthermore, the results revealed that single individuals had a greater orientation toward modernity compared to married and divorced individuals at the 0.05 level ($p < 0.05$).

Keywords: Modernity, Personality Traits, Gender, Marital Status, Students.

1. Introduction

Modernity has facilitated the process of intercultural dialogue and globalization. This facilitation occurs through young people who are skilled in navigating the internet, and their engagement with specific virtual resources can be tracked through the methods and times they dedicate to these resources. This allows for the tracing of social orientations, value hierarchies, and activity styles. Furthermore, this necessitates a dynamic redefinition of attitudes, opinions, and individual relationships, which are shaped through personality and social identity (Jaworowska, 2024).

On the other hand, uncertainty, unpredictability, and instability are some of the most challenging aspects of life for an individual in the modern era (Shabanova, 2024). In this era, researchers strive to enhance life expectancy and happiness in society, considering the stressful conditions, through fundamental revisions and the expansion of cultural-social ties and interpersonal relationships. However, as human placement in today's world has become excessively reinforced to the extent that it leads to extreme individualism, and materialism and consumerism in capitalism, as elements of modernity, have weakened social bonds, we are witnessing an increase in existential anxiety and tension among individuals (Kawabata, 2023). In fact, our contemporary world has become a mythical world divided into opposites, where day and night, light and darkness, black and white are in constant conflict (Faal, 2009).

There is an increasing awareness that modernity and modernism are filled with imperialistic and (neo)colonial Western-centered perspectives, which has prompted many scholars to critically examine various views on the boundaries of modernism in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, as well as their cross-cultural, transnational, and planetary aspects. Modernity is a mode or way of life and thinking in contrast to the pre-modern era. It manifests in concepts such as equality, freedom, rationalism, liberalism, individualism, and belief in the unlimited human progress and development. The complete digitization and the reproduction of a mosaic image of the world increasingly directs an individual's life toward virtual reality, limiting full and multidimensional communication. Through this, a vast world of understanding in the infinite nature of humanity opens up, revealing its profound essence (Shabanova, 2024).

The deconstructed modernity (Sorokin & Froumin, 2020) has posed significant challenges to everyday social and

human life by initiating fundamental changes. The origin of these transformations and intellectual leaps can be traced back to the 16th century in Europe (Scheurich, 2023). The continuous progress of modernity led to the development of societies in new "forms" and also triggered intellectual leaps. These intellectual leaps, such as secularism, feminism, pluralism, rationalism, individualism, and others, represented a rebellion against superstitions and irrational thoughts. In Iran, since the Constitutional Revolution, modernity, along with Islamism and Iranian nationalism, has created various movements and discourses, resulting in challenges within society. One example of this challenge is the secular intellectual movement. The views and positions of all three movements—Islamism, modernity, and Iranian nationalism—on the challenge of tradition and modernity emerged during and after the Constitutional Revolution in Iran. It was during this time that innovative and creative figures, such as Malekm Khan and Mirza Hassan Roshdih, emerged, and challenges like criticism, individualism, and profit-seeking became apparent in their work (Mirzaeian et al., 2022).

Modernism, contrary to expectations, has not developed the way human societies initially anticipated. Reviewing the perspectives of various scholars, such as Durkheim, who likened the wave of modernism to anomie, and Max Weber, who referred to it as a crisis, reveals that the modern world has left behind numerous contradictions and dilemmas (Kawabata, 2023).

The classical founders of sociology, including Marx, Weber, Durkheim, Giddens, Simmel, and Ellen Thorn, are theorists of modernity who engaged in discussions about the modern world. Their work illuminated the dark aspects of human history, particularly in cultural activities like literature, poetry, art, and the development of knowledge (Cole, 2022; Formica et al., 2017).

Kaffir and Wensano, in their definition of modernity, consider the main elements of modern society to be "individualism" (the primacy of the individual), "rationality," "contractualism," "secularization," and "the desacralization of affairs." In their view, modernization is a social-psychological process in which individuals acquire modern attitudes, values, and beliefs. Marx provides a unique analysis of individualism, rooted in the structure of modern society (Gioia, 2019).

In a study by Cole (2022), it was concluded that modernity, through increasing rationality in science, has replaced the arbitrary will of gods with rationality, and modern states have replaced absolute monarchs with

bureaucracy (Cole, 2022). Ally (2019), in an article titled "Modernity Defeated Us," writes that the existing order in corporations and large systems, which are products of modernity, has failed to bring justice and security to humanity. On the other hand, one of the gifts of modernity is that we are unable to form emotional connections, which often leads to failure in today's life. We have lost love, and in its place, stress has filled the void. Therefore, it must be accepted that modernity has defeated us (Ally, 2019).

Numerous studies in this field emphasize that lifestyle choices, interpersonal relationships, and the way individuals engage with the traditional and modern worlds are influenced by personality traits. Research indicates that personality traits, such as experientialism, correlate with certain components of modernity, including secularism (Scheurich, 2023). Additionally, extraversion, openness, and experientialism can predict the tendency towards individualism, which is one of the components of modernity (Tychmanowicz et al., 2021).

Allik et al. (2023) note that modernity has intervened in shaping societies and individuals' ways of life. In traditional societies, social changes were characterized by slow rates and intergenerational continuity (Allik et al., 2023). In contrast, modern societies are characterized by rapid social changes and intergenerational discontinuity (Paris, 2020). The impact of these transformations has been particularly evident and intense in young people and students over the past few decades. Therefore, an individual, with their unique personality traits, can be a significant predictor of social well-being and life formation (Yanghang Yu et al., 2021). In fact, personality traits can be the main factor driving the modernization of societies. As Everett Hagen suggests, our world requires an innovative, open, dynamic, creative, risk-taking, and test-seeking personality to transition from a closed, simple traditional society to an industrial and advanced society with economic development. In this regard, Adam Smith argues that the essential principle of modernity is the alignment between ethics, spirituality, and economic growth and development (Burgio, 2023). According to Lerner, the main foundation of social development rests upon the "innovative personality." In fact, the driving force behind modernizing and developing societies is an individual who is ready to accept "change" (Lerner, 1958). Our personality determines our environmental requirements and preferences and influences how we perceive the world (Marzban et al.). Therefore, personality traits can be powerful predictors for examining and identifying the extent of one's inclination toward

modernity. Since personality integrates both physical and intrinsic characteristics, and is capable of guiding interactions with others and shaping behavior (Hanafiah et al., 2024), understanding individual personality traits is crucial in many life situations and opportunities. Personality characteristics, as predictors, allow us to foresee individuals' responses to stressful life events, social harms, and the severity of physical illnesses. Investigating the five major personality traits using the NEO personality inventory can measure an individual's abilities in relation to a modern lifestyle (Darby, 2023).

Many modern and traditional studies in psychology reference the five fundamental dimensions of personality. The five-factor model is a personality trait framework that describes individuals on a spectrum based on traits and is considered a more reliable and evidence-based tool for understanding personality (Truity, 2023). Personality is characterized by thought patterns, feelings, and behaviors. It includes dispositions, attitudes, and beliefs and is clearly expressed in interactions with others. Personality encompasses both inherent and acquired behavioral traits that distinguish one individual from another and can be observed in interactions with the environment and social groups (Holzman, 2023).

According to Inglehart (2021), formative experiences before adulthood shape individuals' tendencies throughout their lives. If younger groups in a specific society have experienced fundamentally different conditions from older generations, significant and persistent differences in core values between younger and older generations will emerge. As younger groups gradually replace older generations, differences in values and collective behaviors within that society will generally be predictable and observable (Inglehart, 2018). Therefore, the values of today's girls differ greatly from those of their mothers. On the other hand, today's world has been able to offer more freedom, independence, and power to women than to men. The desire for power and progress, as one of the essential human needs in the modern world, has been placed in the hands of women and girls. Recent research in human development has shown a strong link between women's education and international development, concluding that women's education is one of the main variables explaining the rate of social and economic development. As noted by prominent economist Lawrence Summers, "Investing in girls' education may have the highest return on investment in the developing world" (Akshatha & Naveen, 2021).

One of the value differences between traditional and modern societies is the contrast between the traditional woman and the modern woman. The traditional woman merely plays a role, while the modern woman, in addition to her roles, pursues her individuality. Individuality is only achievable through education, rationality, employment, and other factors (Farshadi & Vosoughi, 2020). The traditional woman is defined by characteristics such as housework, performing gender roles, passivity towards the patriarchal system, and adherence to customary traditions, while the modern woman is described in terms of employment, asserting women's identity, fighting patriarchy, and rejecting traditional norms. One of the reasons women have embraced modernity more than men seems to stem from the achievements of modernity. However, it must be acknowledged that, more than the achievements of modernity, it was the constraints imposed by traditional society that had kept women in its grip. The fate of women was filled with fatalism, ignorance, and superstition, and their lives were confined to the inner quarters, with their roles limited to being wives and mothers (Mirzaeian et al., 2022). In contrast, modernity has been able to transcend the space, time, and place in which women lived.

In many modern societies today, there is no need for traditional gender roles, as both men and women are capable of performing many of the same essential tasks, thus rendering specific gendered behaviors irrelevant. These stereotypes can be harmful, as they encourage the condemnation and suppression of those who do not conform to traditional gender roles. The degree of equality varies depending on the region of the world, as well as the society, religion, and many other social factors that influence the unequal gender roles in modern society (Akshatha & Naveen, 2021).

In Iranian society, which has been in a transitional phase between tradition and modernity for several decades and has experienced modern values, some traditional elements related to the cultural-social structure have either been transformed or are undergoing transformation. Marriage and family, as part of this structure, have also undergone noticeable and significant changes, including changes in marriage forms and shifts in the agency-based attitudes towards marriage. These changes are generally the result of individualism, modernity, pluralism, and new lifestyles that did not exist in traditional society. In other words, students who prefer an agency-centered approach to marriage generally see themselves as modern subjects who have passed through the value and normative systems of

traditional society. Today, women have more modern ideas and attitudes compared to their mothers (Tayyebnia et al., 2023). Therefore, the aim of this study was to predict the inclination towards modernity based on the neo-personality traits of students.

2. Methods and Materials

2.1. Study Design and Participants

Since the results of the research can help improve current conditions and inform practical decision-making, this study is applied in nature. Due to its effort to explain the relationships between the variables under examination, it is also correlational. The statistical population of this study consists of all students enrolled in the 2021 academic year at Payame Noor universities in Tehran Province. The sample size was determined to be 895 individuals, based on the methodology of structural equation modeling. The sampling method used was multi-stage cluster random sampling. Sampling took place across the Payame Noor universities in Tehran Province.

The implementation process was as follows: before administering the questionnaire, specific classes were randomly selected and coordinated with the respective professors. After explaining the research project and obtaining the students' cooperation, the questionnaires were distributed across the entire class. After completion, 895 completed questionnaires were collected, coded, and the data were prepared for entry into the computer system.

This test is applicable to individuals with typical psychological functioning. Those with disorders such as psychosis and dementia, which could impair their ability to complete the personal report form, should not complete the questionnaire. The questions in this questionnaire can be answered by individuals with at least a basic education level (above elementary school).

2.2. Measures

2.2.1. Personality

The NEO Personality Inventory, designed by McCrae and Costa (1985), measures five factors of personality: extraversion, neuroticism, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. It is available in a short-form version (NEO-FFI), which consists of 60 questions. The responses are based on a Likert scale: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, and Strongly Agree. The scoring for the short form (NEO-FFI) differs in

some items: for some, a score of 4 is given for "Strongly Disagree," 3 for "Disagree," 2 for "Neutral," 1 for "Agree," and 0 for "Strongly Agree." Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the main factors were as follows: Extraversion (0.86), Neuroticism (0.73), Openness to Experience (0.56), Agreeableness (0.68), and Conscientiousness (0.87). To assess the content validity of this test, the correlation between two forms of the report (S) and observer evaluation form (R) was used. The highest correlation was found to be 0.66 for the extraversion factor, and the lowest was 0.45 for the agreeableness factor (Marzban et al., 2021).

2.2.2. Modernity Orientation

The 43-item Modernity Orientation Questionnaire, developed by Pashm-Far (2023), has a reliability coefficient of 0.882, with the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity being significant at $p < 0.001$. Structural equation modeling and confirmatory factor analysis confirmed a six-factor model, explaining 54.1% of the variance in the items. The first factor, with an eigenvalue of 8.39, explained 19.5% of the total variance, while the sixth factor, with an eigenvalue of 2.07, accounted for 4.8% of the variance. The six factors are: Democracy and Freedom, Scientism and Critical Thinking, Profit Seeking, Individualism, Consumerism, and Rationalism, with reliability coefficients of 0.868, 0.848,

0.847, 0.807, 0.801, and 0.745, respectively. The questionnaire uses a Likert scale: Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Neutral (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1).

2.3. Data analysis

This study used correlation, multiple regression, and multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) statistical methods. Descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, were used to examine the demographic variables and research variables. Prior to conducting regression and MANOVA, the assumptions for these analyses were checked. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to assess the normality of the dependent variables. Additionally, the Durbin-Watson test, tolerance, multicollinearity, and the Pillai's Trace effect were utilized to examine the underlying assumptions.

3. Findings and Results

In this study, out of 895 samples, 631 were women (70.5%) and 264 were men (29.5%). Based on marital status, 383 were single, 421 were married, and 91 were divorced. Additionally, the results showed that 30.9% of women were single, and 11.8% of men were single. Furthermore, 31.5% of women were married, while 13.1% of men were married.

Table 1

Statistical Indicators of the Modernity Orientation Questionnaire and its Components

Modernity Components	Mean ± SD	Personality Traits	Mean ± SD
Democracy and Freedom	47.4 ± 6.7	Neuroticism	34.8 ± 3.1
Scientism and Critical Thinking	31.7 ± 4.4	Introversion-Extraversion	36.7 ± 5.5
Profit-Seeking	24.7 ± 3.44	Experientialism	37.8 ± 5.2
Individualism	21.6 ± 2.9	Agreeableness	37.5 ± 5.9
Consumerism	10.4 ± 1.7	Conscientiousness	40.4 ± 5
Rationalism	14.6 ± 2.24	-	-
Modernity	151.5 ± 15.2	-	-

Can modernity orientation be predicted based on personality traits?

To investigate the relationship between modernity orientation and personality traits, Pearson correlation coefficients were used.

Table 2

Correlation Coefficients Between Modernity Orientation and Personality Traits

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Neuroticism	1					
2. Extraversion	0.21*	1				
3. Openness to New Experiences	-0.41**	0.07	1			
4. Agreeableness	0.25**	0.21	0.41**	1		
5. Conscientiousness	0.26**	0.25**	0.25**	0.25**	1	
6. Modernity	-0.16	0.22**	0.18**	0.21**	0.22**	1

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$

Based on the results in Table 2, significant correlations were found between modernity orientation and the following personality traits: extraversion ($r = 0.22, p < 0.01$), openness to new experiences ($r = 0.18, p < 0.01$), agreeableness ($r = 0.21, p < 0.01$), and conscientiousness ($r = 0.22, p < 0.01$). However, no significant correlation was observed with neuroticism ($r = -0.16, p > 0.05$).

To assess the predictive role of personality traits on modernity orientation, multiple linear regression analysis was conducted. Prior to conducting the regression analysis, the normality, independence of errors, and multicollinearity of predictor variables were examined. The results of the

Kolmogorov-Smirnov test indicated that both the criterion variable (modernity orientation) and predictor variables (personality traits) were normally distributed. According to the Durbin-Watson statistic, which falls within the acceptable range of 1.5 to 2.5, the value of 1.99 for the predictor variables indicated the independence of errors. Another assumption of linear regression is the absence of multicollinearity among predictor variables, which was confirmed by the variance inflation factor (VIF). As the VIF values for all predictors were less than 10, multicollinearity was not an issue.

Table 3

Summary of Regression Analysis for Predicting Modernity Orientation Based on Personality Traits (NEO)

Predictor Variable	Unstandardized Coeff. (B)	Standardized Coeff. (β)	t-value	p-value	Adj. R ²
Neuroticism	0.125	0.036	0.8	0.41	0.053
Extraversion	0.46	0.14	3.5	0.001	
Openness to New Experiences	0.69	0.197	4.3	0.001	
Agreeableness	0.208	0.076	2.1	0.035	
Conscientiousness	0.02	0.006	0.12	0.9	

Based on the findings from Table 3, personality traits including extraversion ($\beta = 0.14, p < 0.001$), openness to new experiences ($\beta = 0.197, p < 0.001$), and agreeableness ($\beta = 0.076, p = 0.035$) were significant predictors of modernity orientation. The results suggest that individuals with higher levels of extraversion, openness to new experiences, and agreeableness are more likely to exhibit a greater orientation toward modernity. Neuroticism and

conscientiousness, however, were not significant predictors in this model.

Is there a difference between women and men in terms of their orientation toward modernity?

Table 4 presents the mean and standard deviation of the overall modernity orientation score and its components for both women and men.

Table 4

Mean and Standard Deviation Values for All Variables by Gender

Variable	Mean \pm SD (Women)	Mean \pm SD (Men)
Democracy and Freedom	4.48 \pm 6.6	4.46 \pm 6.9
Scientism and Criticism	3.32 \pm 4.4	3.31 \pm 4.5
Materialism	2.25 \pm 4.3	2.47 \pm 3.5
Individualism	2.21 \pm 2.66	2.45 \pm 2.29

Consumerism	10.4 ± 1.7	10.22 ± 1.8
Rationalism	14.4 ± 2.2	14.6 ± 2.3
Modernity	152.1 ± 19.99	148.73 ± 20.54

To compare the groups, multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted. Before performing the analysis, Levene's test ($p < 0.05$) and Box's M test (Box M = 2.24) were confirmed.

Table 5 presents the results of the multivariate analysis of variance for the overall score and the components of modernity orientation between women and men.

Table 5

The Results of ANOVA for Question 2

Dependent Variable	Mean Squares (MS)	F	p-value
Democracy and Freedom	444.33	9.7	0.002**
Scientism and Criticism	107.32	5.3	0.02*
Materialism	20.77	1.7	0.18
Individualism	7.67	0.88	0.34
Consumerism	13.88	4.2	0.039*
Rationalism	17.87	3.5	0.06
Modernity	2200.65	5.4	0.02*

The analysis of each dependent variable indicates significant differences between women and men in their orientation toward modernity ($F = 5.4, p < 0.05$). Specifically, there were significant differences in the components of democracy and freedom ($F = 9.7, p = 0.001$), scientism and criticism ($F = 5.3, p = 0.05$), and consumerism

($F = 4.2, p = 0.05$). No significant differences were observed in other components.

Is there a significant difference in modernity orientation and its components based on marital status?

Table 6 presents the mean and standard deviation of the overall modernity orientation score and its components based on marital status (single, married, and divorced).

Table 6

Mean and Standard Deviation Values for All Variables by Marriage Status

Variable	Mean ± SD (Single)	Mean ± SD (Married)	Mean ± SD (Divorced)
Democracy and Freedom	4.48 ± 6.4	4.47 ± 7.2	4.47 ± 6.2
Scientism and Criticism	3.22 ± 4.2	3.16 ± 4.6	3.14 ± 4.4
Materialism	2.25 ± 3.3	2.47 ± 3.6	2.47 ± 3.7
Individualism	2.22 ± 2.08	2.21 ± 2.32	2.21 ± 2.66
Consumerism	10.4 ± 1.7	10.2 ± 1.8	10.38 ± 1.8
Rationalism	14.4 ± 2.1	14.6 ± 2.2	14.5 ± 2.3
Modernity	153.19 ± 19.13	149.21 ± 21.17	150.27 ± 19.77

The results in Table 6 show the mean and standard deviation of modernity orientation and its components for three marital statuses: single, married, and divorced. As observed, the mean score of modernity orientation for single individuals was 153.19 ± 19.13 , for married individuals was

149.21 ± 21.17 , and for divorced individuals was 150.27 ± 19.77 .

Table 7 presents the results of the multivariate analysis of variance for the overall score and the components of modernity orientation based on marital status.

Table 7

The Results of ANOVA for Question 3

Dependent Variable	Mean Squares (MS)	F	p-value	Eta-squared
Democracy and Freedom	184.5	4.02	0.018*	0.009
Scientism and Criticism	66.07	3.3	0.036*	0.007

Materialism	49.2	4.1	0.016*	0.009
Individualism	67.0	7.6	0.001**	0.017
Consumerism	10.3	3.2	0.041*	0.004
Rationalism	9.6	1.9	0.14	0.007
Modernity	1519.3	3.7	0.024*	0.008

The analysis of each dependent variable reveals significant differences based on marital status regarding orientation toward modernity. Specifically, there were significant differences in the components of democracy and freedom ($F = 4.02, p = 0.018$), scientism and criticism ($F = 3.3, p = 0.036$), materialism ($F = 4.1, p = 0.016$), individualism ($F = 7.6, p = 0.001$), consumerism ($F = 3.2, p = 0.041$), and modernity ($F = 3.7, p = 0.024$).

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The results obtained align with the prior studies (Ally, 2019; Bartolini et al., 2017; Mathios et al., 2020). Democracy, secularism, and egalitarianism are elements of modernity that individuals with personality traits such as agreeableness and flexibility tend to exhibit a higher inclination toward modernity. Modernity also encompasses elements such as freedom-seeking, critique, and scientific rationalism. Therefore, personalities characterized by traits like agreeableness have greater potential for embracing modernity and the pursuit of freedom. Agreeableness refers to an individual's ability to easily understand and accept the diverse perspectives of others. These personalities seek freedom of thought and action and readily accept opposing viewpoints.

The personality trait of openness to experience is directly correlated with modernity. Individuals who score high in the inclination towards modernity tend to have a strong desire to seek out and experiment with new experiences. According to Chung (2020), the drive for exploration and experience is the most determining characteristic of modernity, as it transcends both time and space. In the pre-modern era, space was simply a region where individuals moved, and time was an experience encountered during that movement. In modernity, social space is no longer confined by boundaries set by the area in which an individual moves. Autonomy allows individuals to explore the world around them in ways that align with their desires (Chung, 2019).

As the results suggest, extroverts tend to perform better in open work environments compared to introverts (Middelthon, 2023). The virtual world and roaming in online groups have provided a space where these individuals can thrive. Given that the personality traits of extroversion and

introversion show a direct and meaningful correlation with the inclination towards modernity, extroverts tend to have a greater desire for interpersonal and social interactions, and the modern world has effectively addressed this need. Extroverts prefer relationships and socializing over isolation and distance from others, and the virtual world offers ample space for these individuals to connect and interact.

Desire for diversity can lead to a stronger inclination toward modern life. One of the key characteristics of modernity is that it allows everyone to "agree" that we must "live and let live," without forcing others to adopt the same worldview. This mindset is a prerequisite for liberal pluralism (Burgio, 2023). Traditionalism, on the other hand, was about stability, persistence, and dogmatism in behavior. Custom and tradition predetermined everything. Modernity disrupted all forms of dogma and stability. Today's human behavior is based on freedom and is outside the realm of custom and tradition. As a result, individuals no longer follow preordained plans, but modernity has also brought rationality, law, and discipline that benefit today's society. These elements foster opportunities, personal gain, and a desire for progress among modern individuals.

These findings align with the prior research (Farshadi & Vosoughi, 2020; Lomazzi, 2020; Mirzaeian et al., 2022).

The inclination of women toward modernity compared to men can be explained for the following reasons:

Dr. William Glasser, the founder of Choice Theory, concluded that humans have five basic needs, and failure to satisfy any of these needs could lead to dissatisfaction (Glasser, 1998). Glasser's five basic needs are more readily fulfilled for women in the modern world than in traditional settings. While the needs for survival and love and belonging could be met in traditional societies, the structure of these societies lacked the capacity and potential to fulfill needs such as "the need for freedom" and "the need for power and progress," especially for women. Additionally, in traditional societies, the "need for recreation" was often trivialized for women. Traditional societies could only meet the "need for survival" and "the need for love and belonging" for women through domestic responsibilities, childbearing, and caring for their husbands, while other needs were neglected or forgotten. However, as observed, today's women show profound differences compared to earlier generations.

Remarkably, these women are witnessing a remarkable gap and transformation in their daughters, and more generally in the new generations entering the social sphere.

The results obtained are consistent with the prior research (Shirkvand et al., 2021; Tayyebnia et al., 2023). In the contemporary world, influenced by the social transformations associated with it, the attitude and inclination towards marriage have undergone significant changes. In other words, in modern and developed societies, the form and structure of marriage have evolved differently compared to the past. In recent decades, we have observed changes in marriage patterns, a declining interest in marriage, delayed marriages, and a general increase in permanent singlehood (Hazrati & Nouri, 2020).

The status and conditions of the transitioning Iranian society are such that, at the same time, we witness various and conflicting attitudes towards marriage among young people, which require a range of distinct actions in line with change. Each type of attitude leads to different behaviors, and policy-making aimed at improving marriage should focus on strengthening functionalist attitudes, viewing marriage as a secure and developmental response to human emotional, sexual, and relational needs. Furthermore, rationalist-oriented approaches, by creating economic, legal, and social grounds, can facilitate marriage, leading to positive marriage behaviors.

Studies have shown that many young people give importance to rational choice when selecting a spouse, and attitudes towards marriage among youth have become increasingly rational (Chung, 2019).

On the other hand, individuals do not marry or form families unless they have a stable and permanent job and the ability to support a family (Karimi, 2021).

In today's world, with the growth of new sexual relationship patterns, as well as the rapid expansion of premarital sexual relations, homosexuality, and new forms of prostitution, which are all products of modern thought (Kaveh Firooz et al., 2021; Kaveh Firooz et al., 2023), new forms of relationships have emerged. Therefore, sexual needs can now be fulfilled in ways other than through formal marriages. Additionally, the need for attachment through fluid and unstable loves has been replaced by a desire for eternal and stable love (Bauman, 2003; Thapa & Kattel, 2019). The need for progress is one that can now be fulfilled through singlehood, and the need for freedom, liberation, and recreation is easily satisfied through new friendships and companionships. Therefore, one of the reasons for the inclination towards modernity in single individuals is that

the modern world provides better conditions for single individuals compared to married or divorced ones in meeting Glasser's needs, compared to the traditional and past world.

A certain type of relationship in the modern world may appeal to today's youth, as it facilitates "individualism" and "freedom-seeking," which are hallmark elements of modernity, and at the same time can fulfill Glasser's basic needs, including "the need for progress and power," "the need for freedom and liberation," and "the need for recreation and leisure."

Some commentators have also attributed singlehood to the result of global culture and cultural integration across the world, rooted in the erosion of traditional frameworks (Francioni, 2020).

The fertility rate has decreased from 7.7 children per woman in 1966 to six children per woman, and unfortunately, this number dropped further to 1.6 children per woman by 2021, with this downward trend continuing to accelerate (Pezhhan, 2023).

Modernity, with its transformation of family structures, has altered marriage and the associated human and ethical concepts. It reduces the communication within extended and joint families, increases geographical migration, and rapidly influences technologies, social systems, and cultural values (Thapa & Kattel, 2019). In fact, no transformation in today's world may be as significant as the changes occurring in personal life, marriage, and family (Brown et al., 2021).

Modernity indicators are more accessible in singlehood conditions than in marriage. It seems that family formation and childbearing belong to the traditional and pre-modern society, and thus modern societies will increasingly move towards individual and single lives at an accelerating pace.

Authors' Contributions

Authors contributed equally to this article.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

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The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants.

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