

## A Study of the Social Factors Related to Divorce among Divorce Applicants in Yazd

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### ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** As a social phenomenon of the present age, Divorce as one of the social phenomena of the present age has many obvious and hidden factors practical and fundamental solutions have been proposed to reduce and deal with this issue by examining and recognizing these factors in each society.

This study was carried out to identify the social factors related to the demand for divorce in Yazd.

**Methods:** The present study was conducted by survey technique. The statistical population included the couples seeking divorce referred to the judiciary of Yazd in the period of 2011-2017, the sample size of 110 people was selected by random sampling method based on Cochran's formula, a researcher-made questionnaire was used as the measurement tool whose validity was measured by Formal validity and reliability by Cronbach's alpha.

**Results:** According to the findings, the respondents believed that the three variables of domestic violence, interference of others and the level of spouses' participation in household work had great roles in the demand for divorce. There is also a significant relationship between age and gender, and variables of domestic violence, spouse's family interference and spouse's participation in household. 18.9% of the variance of the dependent variable (Divorce) is explained by the variables of gender, education, family past.

**Conclusion:** It is necessary to provide life skills training and free counseling to couples and families in this regard in order to prevent failed marriages and marital problems and develop strong relationships. Besides, it is necessary for the mass media to raise awareness, give information to people, and promote rational, spiritual and easy marriages.

**Keywords:** Domestic Violence, Family Involvement, Divorce, Spouse Participation in the Household Work



## Introduction

Divorce is one of types of the family breakdown which can be examined within the context of family sociology; but at the same time, it is a social issue which is clearly reflected in other pathological phenomena. Family disruption can be defined as the family breakdown or the social role disruption due to the failure or inability of one or more family members to perform their roles (Good, 1973: 248).

"Divorce" literally means liberation, release, abandonment, and technically, it means breaking the bond of marriage with a specific word. Thus, it can be said that "divorce is a kind of disruption of the basic foundations of the family, which leads to permanent separation." (Haji Hosseini Shahroudi, 2001: 87).

Divorce brings about negative consequences for the family structure and disrupts the proper family functions. In such a situation, the family becomes incompatible and conflicts arise in their lives. (Aghajani Mersa, 2002: 33).

Divorce is considered as one of the major losses of the affected families, which not only causes crisis for the divorced people, but also harms children in the same way as harmed by the death of a parent. As was evident in the "Life Transformation Scale", divorce, after the death of a spouse, causes the greatest change in readjustment of the affected individuals. First of all, divorce has a significant effect on the psychological balance of not only two people, but also their children, relatives, and friends. Second, it leads to the disintegration of the family as an economic unit. Third, it impacts the population, because it disintegrates the only legitimate unit of reproduction, and finally, divorce is a cultural phenomenon. In general, it can be said that a society in which divorce exceeds the norm will never benefit from health. (Sarukhani, 1997: 1). Numerous studies have been conducted in the field of divorce in different cities of Iran: Rahimi (1999) reported that the most important causes of divorce in Khorasan are, the lack of moral understanding, unemployment, financial and economic problems,

disobedience, addiction, interference of others, age difference, differences in education level and .... (Rahimi, 2000: 100-112). Kaldi and Shabani (2001) in Tabriz have concluded that there was a significant relationship between the interference of others and the demand for divorce. (2004: 119-137 Keldi & Shabani,) Reyhani and Ajam (2002) reported that the most important factor in divorce in Gonabad was the religious-moral factor. (Reyhani & Ajam, 2002: 96-114).

Attari, Shokrkan and Rostami (2003) concluded that the similarities of normal couples in Ahvaz regarding the three attitudes of indifference, Family friendship and education, based on the three political, economic and artistic values were more than the couples seeking divorce in that city. Nasiri (2004) concluded that the ratio of divorced women to divorced men in Tehran is always higher. Also, there was no significant relationship between women's literacy and divorce. The results of this study showed that the ratio of literate divorced women in the northern and central districts of Tehran is higher than its southern districts. Fatehizadeh et al. (2003) concluded that reasons for the low divorce rate in Ardakan, Meybod and Yazd are religious beliefs, intervention of family elders, dependence of husband and wife on one another, mother being a role model for daughter, and lack of emotional and financial support from families in the event of divorce (Fatehizadeh, Behjati Ardakani, Nasrasfahani, 2003).

According to the statistics provided, the divorce rate in the world is increasing, which is mostly related to the developed countries. In the UK, at least one in five young people under 16 has experienced parental separation. In the United States, the figure is close to one in three. (Saulter & Lugaila, 1998; 28).

According to civil registration statistics, the odds of divorce decreases with the age of marriage. About 40% of divorces occur in the first three years of marriage (kafi, 2007; 15). Statistics published by the statistical yearbook of 2006 to

2016 in Yazd showed that the number of divorces registered in the order of the year is as follows: 486 in 2004, 576 in 2005, 569 in 2006, 663 in 2007 795 in 2008 ,and 1638 in 2016. Also, in Yazd, in 2004, about 7.5% of marriages led to divorce, which in 2014 it reached 14.8%.

The increase in divorce rate in Yazd in the 1980s and 1990s raises concerns over the fact that family breakdown and divorce have been dramatically risen in the region. Therefore, identifying the factors related to divorce and appropriate strategies to moderate its demand as the aim of this study, can help reduce the divorce rate and its decline in this city.

One of the theories in the field of divorce is the similar wife theory. According to this theory, the family strength is due to the existence of similar characteristics between husband and wife. Similarity between two people not only attracts them to each other, but also strengthens their relationship. In other words, similarity between two spouses is the source of family conflicts. Hill believes that people want to choose a spouse who is more like them, and if this point is not observed for some reason, the couple is likely to become incompatible with each other and eventually separate.

According to Roseann Bowerman, men, knowingly or unknowingly, seek to choose a spouse with whom they share similar traits. People of all ages can communicate with people who are like themselves in terms of marital status. Locke, Harvey J and Burgess, Ernest W, believe that each person's fortune acts more in the direction of homogeneous marriage than Heterogeneous marriage. Tiger Woods whose work on marriage is from a religious perspective, says that as differences between the two spouses decrease in terms of religion and race, their differences and conflicts increase.

Ting Sheng and Yamamvra believe that as the ethnic and cultural ties between husband and wife is strengthened, the risk of separation becomes much lower among them. In general, the higher the

degree of husband-wife homogeneity the stronger their marriage is (Sarukhani, 1996: 40-66).

According to Network theory, the network analysis investigates the rules about people's beliefs and what they should do. This theory rejects any non-structural theory that considers social processes to arise from a set of individual actors, personal tendencies, and internalized norms. Elizabeth Butt, a well-known scientists in network theory, believes that the degree of separation of male and female roles is correlated with the degree of network density that couples maintain outside home. As their relationship with kinship networks, friends, and neighbors becomes stronger, and the density of these networks increases, the relationship between husband and wife as a married couple becomes more segregated, more subject to hierarchy, and the vice versa. He explains this in the form of cultural pressures. (Segalen, 1991: 254-255). If both spouses belong to a dense network and these networks are active, marriage is forced only on the existing relationship; in this way, the couple is only directed to the authorized activities defined by the network. In this case, inflexible separation of roles becomes possible, because both couples will be able to gain support outside the family environment. Thus, network theory emphasizes the relationship between couples and the network of kinship, and states that as the relationship between the network members weaken, couples perform their duties better. So, if the network is strong, the couple themselves can't make the necessary decisions. This can lead to conflicts in the family, and as a result of the interference of others, the family structure will be weakened (Multafet, 2002: 33-34).The likelihood of people interfering in a married life indicates the influence of older blood relatives and the dominance of the network of relative, which is considered one of the ancient traditions of Eastern societies. This has led to a conflict between the networks of relative and causal relationships, and stereotypes have been put forward about mother-in-law (Piran, 1990: 41).



Sometimes, the theory of power distribution creates a conflict between husband and wife, and each of them intends to dominate the other in order to establish their place and achieve their goals by resorting to financial, cultural and other facilities. Continuation of this situation increases the tension and conflict between couples, and eventually leads to their separation and divorce.

According to Greenberg E.S's Spill – over theory, satisfaction or dissatisfaction with one part of life has a significant effect on satisfaction and dissatisfaction with other parts of life. For example, a person's dissatisfaction with social life can lead to dissatisfaction with family life, or dissatisfaction with one part of life can lead to dissatisfaction with other aspects and leads the couple to divorce.

**Anthropomorphism theory:** This theory refers to a person or people who evaluate another or others based on their own values. This situation is a manifestation of egocentrism and negatively affects people's relationships with others which leads to poor communication, insecurity, social isolation at the level of family and social life. Increasing selfishness and not paying attention to the wishes and needs of the other person in married life can cause differences and conflicts in the family nucleus. Nowadays, with the originality of the "self", divorce figures are increasing. (Kameli, 2008: 185,186).

## Methods

Achieving the goals of science or scientific cognition will not be possible unless it is done with the right methodology. (Khaki, 2003: 155) The present study is a cross-sectional study in terms of time, and a survey study in terms of implementation method. The city of Yazd is the main field of the present study. The reason for choosing this city is that the city of Yazd has several distinctive cultural features in the whole country, which are important for the purposes of

the present study. First, Yazd is a city with a relatively homogeneous population and lacks significant ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity, and is considered as one of the traditional and religious cities of Iran with respect to many cultural elements (Abbasi Shavazi and Askari Nodoshan 2008; Askari Nodoshan, Abbasi Shavazi and Sadeghi2009; Termin 2006).

On the other hand, despite the fact that Yazd is one of the most developed and prosperous regions of the country based on many economic and social indicators, it still retains many of the traditional features of its family and religious culture. It has a unique combination of modern and traditional elements. Yazd has a distinctive appearance due to the existence of special cultural features and elements and a pristine and suitable social context for studying the phenomena related to the sociology of the family such as divorce.

On the other hand, it should be noted that the increase in divorce rates in Yazd, despite its traditional and religious context, raises many concerns about the weakness of the family ties in this community. This study was conducted in 2016, and its statistical population was men and women who applied for divorce referred to the Yazd judiciary in the period of 2016-2017. Their number was about 4500 people the sample size was calculated based on the Cochran's formula, according to which 110 of people were randomly selected who completed the questionnaires. The research questionnaire was made by the researcher and the request to complete the questionnaire was done in person and by phone and it was completely optional, and other alternatives were chosen in case of non-acceptance of the selected individuals, and SPSS software was used to analyze the data. The validity of the questionnaire was measured by face validity (referral to judges) and its reliability by Cronbach's alpha.

Social factors have been examined and how they are measured are listed in the following table:

**Table 1.** Social factors related to divorce

Concept	Dimensions	Items
Social factors related to divorce	Demographic variables	Age, gender, education, income
	Type of marriage and choice of spouse	The type of marriage including traditional or modern, consanguineous or non-familial, Arranged or Forced
	Use of media	Uses of television, radio, Internet, satellite, newspapers and magazines
	The degree of participation in the family	The level of participation in buying home appliances, caring for children, participating in doing household chores, participation in important home decisions, etc.
	Family history (parents)	Parental quarrels and strictness at home, strictness in choosing a spouse, a person's personal past
	The interference of family	The interference of the family in life, their impact on the occurrence of divorce from a responsible point of view, the degree of opposition of the couple's family to their marriage
	Violence	Preventing a woman from going out, wife-beating, using vulgar words, threatening, wife sulking, not using loving words, Not expressing love to your spouse

## Results

In this study, 70% of the respondents (77) were female and 30% (33) were male. Also, 60% of the respondents were in the age group of 15-29, 33.6% 30-45, and only 6.4 of them were over 45 years old. This showed that the applicants were young. Moreover, the average age of the respondents was 31.42, and the average age of their spouses was 29.32. Regarding the education variable, it can be said that the average education of the respondents was 10.77 classes and the average education of their spouses was 9.50 classes, that is, both were educated at the high school level. With respect to the variables of the type of marriage based on ratio (consanguineous/ non-familial), choice (traditional,

modern) and Optional (imposed, optional) 76.2% of the respondents had non-familial marriage, and 21.8% had familial marriage. It seems that the divorce rate is higher among non-familial marriages. 88.9% of the respondents believed that they were married in a traditional style and less than 20% of them believed that they were married in a modern style and were married through their own acquaintance with their spouse. Also, about 28% of the respondents considered their marriage forced, and 71.8% considered it arranged. Furthermore 47.3% of the respondents experienced uncontested divorce, and 52.7% contested type. Among divorce applicants, 65.5% had children and 34.5% of them had no children.

**Table 2.** The average of different variables

Variable name	Average views	Expected average	Min	Max
Violence	23.5	21.5	8	35
Respondent family interference	6.76	8	1	15
Spouse family interference	8.64	8.5	2	15
Use of media	9.30	10.5	2	19
Spouse participation in household work	7.51	9	0	18
Individual's family history	5.52	8.5	2	15





According to the table above, the level of violence and interference of the spouse's family was more than expected among the divorce applicants, and also the level of spouse participation in household work was lower than expected, which according to the respondents,

played the largest role in divorce applications. Based on the results of the study on the relationship between these factors and gender, the level of violence, interference of others and the lack of spouse participation in household work is felt more by women than men.

**Table 3.** Significant test of the difference between the average rate of violence in different types of marriages

Variable type	Dimensions	Average	T	sig
Type of marriage in terms of authority	Forced	26.64	1.15	0.252
	Arranged	23.05		
Type of marriage in terms of how to choose the spouse	Traditional	23.57	0.035	0.972
	Modern	23.52		
Type of marriage in terms of relationship	consanguineous	24	0.422	0.674
	Non-consanguineous	23.36		

According to the results of the table above, the average rate of violence in forced marriages is more than arranged marriages, traditional marriages more than modern ones, and consanguineous marriages more than non-consanguineous ones. But these differences are not statistically significant. As a

result, there is no significant difference between the mean violence between different marriages. There is also a significant difference in violence between women and men. In other words, the rate of violence among women seeking divorce is higher than men seeking divorce.

**Table 4.** Significant test of the difference between the average spouse participation in household work in different types of marriages

Variable type	Dimensions	Average	T	sig
Type of marriage in terms of authority	Forced	8.12	-0.528	0.555
	Arranged	8.67		
Type of marriage in terms of how to choose the spouse	Traditional	8.30	-0.867	0.388
	Modern	9.23		
Type of marriage in terms of relationship	family	6.79	-2.206	0.029
	Non-consanguineous	9.00		

According to the table above, the average rate of spouse participation in household work in self-selected marriages is higher than forced marriages, in modern marriages, higher than traditional marriages, and in non-consanguineous marriages it is higher than consanguineous ones. However, these differences are significant only in

consanguineous and non-consanguineous marriages. Also, there is a significant difference between men and women regarding the lack of spouse participation in household work. In other words, the rate of feeling the spouse non-participation in household work is higher among women seeking divorce than men seeking divorce.

**Table 5.** Significant test of the difference between the average respondent family interference in different types of marriages

Variable type	Respondent's family interference				Spouse's family interference		
	Dimensions	Average	T	sig	Average	T	sig
Type of marriage in terms of authority	Forced	8.74	0.190	0.850	6.19	1.159	0.249
	Arranged	8.060			5.59		
Type of marriage in terms of how to choose the spouse	Traditional	8.60	-0.356	0.7222	5.75	-0.020	0.984
	Modern	8.85			6.12		
Type of marriage in terms of relationship	consanguineous	8.16	-0.798	0.427	6.12	0.819	0.415
	Non-consanguineous	8.77			5.66		

According to table 5, the rate of family interference in forced marriages is higher than arranged ones, and in modern marriages more than traditional and non-consanguineous marriages. But these differences are not statistically significant. Also, there is a significant difference in feeling interference by women and men. In other words, the level of feeling of interference by others is more among women seeking divorce than men seeking divorce.

According to the results of Bivariate analysis through Pearson test, there is a negative correlation between the age of the respondents with the two variables of violence and family interference, and each of these variables decreases with increasing the age of the respondent. But there is a positive and significant correlation between the age of the respondent and the level of spouse participation in household work, and its significance level is 0.001. According to these results, with age, negative factors such as domestic violence and family spouse interference decrease, and the positive factor of spouse participation in household work increases, thus the divorce rate decreases with age. There was also no significant correlation between education and income, and the variables of domestic violence, spouse family interference, and spouse participation at home.

### Multivariate Regression

According to the above discussion, three important factors including the rate of participation in household work, the rate of violence, and the level of spouse family's interference have an impact on the divorce application using multivariate regression to examine the factors associated with each of the following variables. In each analysis, one of these three variables was selected as the dependent variable, and the variables of demographics, age, sex, income, education, ethnicity and place of residence and family history, media use and types of marriage in terms of consanguineous and non-consanguineous, traditional and modern, forced and arranged were included in the regression model as independent variables.

In regression analysis, the rate of violence and spouse participation in home remained the only variable of gender, i.e. gender was the only explanatory factor for these two variables in regression analysis, and had a significant relationship with these two variables. However, in the regression analysis, in which the degree of spouse family interference was a dependent variable, the variables of education, personal history and gender remained in the analysis, the results of which are presented in the table below:

**Table 6.** Regression analysis of the dependent variable of spouse family interference

Variable name	Beta	B	T	Sig
Constant $\alpha$		3.967	26.791	0.009
education	0.301	0.258	2.942	0.004
Family history	0.216	0.266	2.117	0.037
gender	-0.210	-2.99	-2.054	0.043

$$F = 6.225 \text{ sig} = 0.001 \text{ r} = 0.435 \text{ R}^2 = 0.189$$

The above model is statistically significant with respect to the f-statistic and level of significance, and variables of education, family history and gender have a significant effect on the level of the spouse's family interference. According to the coefficient of determination, about 18.9% of the spouse family interference variable is explained by the mentioned variables.

### Discussion

It is never possible to study social pathology and deviations without considering divorce. When the family foundation is weak and unstable, the moral and social foundations of the whole social system are shaken, and society is driven to various crimes. Divorce can increase social harms such as addiction, alcoholism and sexual perversions. On the other hand, divorce can be considered as one of the effective factors in increasing the suicide rate. Divorce is a form of social instability in society, which can lead to decreasing the family values in that community (Azad Armaki, 1998: 203). Nowadays, divorce is considered as one of the social phenomena with which society is very much involved. Divorce is one of the phenomena which imposes a lot of damage on family, the basic unit of the society, and leads to the disruption of families. This inflicts irreparable damage on society. This study was conducted with the aim of investigating the factors related to the couple's request for divorce in Yazd. The method of this study is survey and in terms of time is cross-sectional. The statistical population is men and women seeking divorce referred to the judiciary of Yazd. Random sampling was used to collect data and the sample

with 110 people obtained through the Cochran's formula.

The results of this study show that most of the divorce applicants were female and in the age group of 15 to 29. This is consistent with the research of Kaldi and Shabani (2002) (Keldi & Shabani, 2004). Also, in terms of education, the majority of the respondents had high school and university degrees, which is not consistent with the results of Kaldi and Shabani (2002).

Most of the divorce applicants were those who had at least one child, and according to the respondents, not having children could not be a factor in the separation of the couple.

There was no significant relationship between the type of marriage and the three variables of divorce, and this is consistent with the findings of Aghajani Mersa (2002.)

The level of spouse participation in the family is moderate and low among most applicants, which can be a factor in applying for divorce. This result is consistent with the findings of Aghajani Mersa (2002). The rate of media use was moderately upward among the applicants, which may indicate the influence of the media on the demand for divorce.

Domestic violence and the interference of others were observed among most divorce applicants, and also, there was a significant relationship between these two variables and the gender of the respondents. This result is consistent with the research of Sullivan and Sobel (1995).

### Conclusion

According to the research results some of the social factors related to divorce are the



interference of others in the couple's life, domestic violence and the spouse's non-participation in household affairs. According to the results in order to reduce the divorce rate, it is recommended that couples be given free education and counseling in this regard to diagnose and prevent unsuccessful marriages as well as marital problems, the mass media play an important role in this regard and should raise awareness to promote rational, spiritual and easy marriages, and teach life skills to couples.

Since one of the factors influencing divorce is the interference of others in the couple's life, it is suggested that the necessary context for proper awareness be provided to reduce these problems. Spouse's participation in household work softens the atmosphere of home and increases the strength of the relationship. It is necessary to lay down more appropriate laws and regulations, and necessary training should be done, and sufficient information should be given by the media and society to reduce domestic violence.

### Conflicts of Interest

The authors also have no conflicts of interest and have no involvement that might raise the question of bias in the results reported here.

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### Authors' Contribution

Conceptualization, A.Z.Sh. and F.T.; Methodology Data Curation, F.T.; Writing - Original Draft, A.Z.Sh. and F.T.; Writing - Review & Editing, A.Z.Sh. and F.T.; Visualization, A.Z.Sh.; Supervision, A.Z.Sh.; All authors read and approved the final manuscript and are responsible about any question related to article.

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