

## Frequency Distribution of Divorce Causes in Yazd City

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### ABSTRACT

**Background:** Divorce, as a consequence of family disruption, is a common phenomenon within all communities. Considering the increased frequency of divorce cases in Yazd city during recent years, this study was conducted to investigate the distribution of divorce causes and aimed to design an efficient program to deal with it.

**Methods:** This descriptive cross-sectional analytic study was conducted on the data collected from 118 male and female individuals referring to Yazd courts with divorce requests during 12 months. The participants were randomly selected and asked to complete a researcher-made questionnaire about the divorce. one of which include the participants' general information The second section contain 18 sub-scales and dealt with different causes of divorce. The collected data were analyzed by ANOVA using SPSS version 17.

**Results:** The most effective divorce factor was misunderstanding and disagreement (44.9%), while the least important factor was friends (1.7%). Based on the results, the involvement of friends had the lowest effect on the incidence of divorce (1.7 %), while misunderstanding and disagreement were among the most frequent causes of divorce (44.9 %). Causes of divorce included addiction, unemployment, delinquency and infidelity, mental illness, violence, insults, and immorality. In terms of gender differences and economic conditions, a significant difference was revealed in the divorce rate in this respect, as well as other factors of divorce. The findings also represent a significant difference in the divorce rate with respect to education status ( $p = 0/6$ ).

**Conclusion:** The findings showed that disagreement was the main underlying cause of divorce. Disagreement includes various moral, cultural, and religious aspects. Infidelity was also another most frequent cause of divorce in Iran and other countries. Considering different factors that affect the incidence of divorce, some strategies should be seriously consider before and after marriage to prevent and decrease its frequency within the society.

**Keywords:** Divorce, Infidelity, Social Problems, Moralities

## Introduction

Family, as the most basic and vital social institution, is critical to ensure the health and survival of the society (Riahi et al., 2005). Urban changes and transformations of the family structure have affected the individual's daily life and triggered the families to develop various and unreachable new needs. Furthermore, new technologies, social media, globalization, and intercultural exchanges have changed major problems, such as divorce, into common issues (Eshaghi et al., 2012). Factors such as individual and cultural differences, severe personality and mental problems, lack of emotional and intellectual immaturity, economic problems, addiction, infidelity, family involvement, and lack of communication skills were mentioned as the main reasons for divorce (Honarian & Younesian, 2012). On the one hand, divorce request can initiate different family problems (Fakhrae & Hekmat, 2007).

On the other hand, the mental health of society depends on the families' mental health to a large extent. In other words, damage to the mental health affects the next generations, involves many social organizations, and puts a heavy financial burden on the families and community. Family, as the smallest social unit, can cause positive (peace of mind) as well as negative impacts (social damage) on individuals (Kameli, 2009).

Divorce is to end the marriage under certain legal, religious, and customary circumstances. After divorce, the husband and wife do not have any duty and rights to each other.

Many researchers mentioned negative physical, mental, social, and moral side effects of divorce on man, woman, their children, and the community. These studies included the relationship of divorce with addiction, crime, psychosis, personality traits, educational issues (Table 3), suicide or psychopaths (Riahi et al., 2005).

Since the twentieth century, following the increase of the global population and changes in the cultural and normative system of many

countries, especially the industrialized states, divorce has had an increasing trend (Fakhrae & Hekmat, 2007).

In recent years, Tehran and Kermanshah provinces in Iran had the highest divorce ratio to marriage, followed by Kurdistan, Qom, West Azerbaijan, and Khorasan Razavi. However, Sistan and Baluchistan, Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari, Ilam, and Yazd provinces had the lowest divorce frequency (The Civil Registration, 2013).

Although Yazd province is among the provinces with a relatively low divorce rate, the divorce ratio increased by 4.7%, with a growth of 200% from 2001 to 2007 compared to the average ratio of divorce to marriage in 1990. This increasing trend has continued since 2007 (Tavasoli & Ghiasi Nodoshan, 2012).

The physical, mental, moral, and social causes of divorce should be investigated; therefore, the frequency of divorce causes was investigated in Yazd.

## Methods

The present descriptive-analytical study was conducted using a cross-sectional design. The aim was to determine the frequency of divorce tendency causes based on a questionnaire distributed among 118 divorce applicants referred to the Family Consolidation Center during 12 months.

The sample size was determined based on similar studies in this field and after consultation with the statistical specialist. The participants were randomly selected and asked to complete a researcher-made questionnaire about the divorce. The inclusion criteria were applicants who referred to the family consolidation center for divorce judgment in yazd. Based on the exclusion criteria, those applicants who did not cooperate well to complete the questionnaire did not enter the study. The statistical population included couples who referred to Yazd Family Court Complex to file a divorce petition. The study tool



was a researcher-made questionnaire completed by the study participants. The questionnaire consisted of two parts: The demographic section included the participants' general information such as age, gender (Table 2), education, and economic status. The second section contained 18 sub-scales and dealt with different causes of divorce. The reliability coefficient for the whole questionnaire was 0.71 using Cronbach's alpha, indicating the optimal reliability for the whole scale and each factor.

The collected data were analyzed by ANOVA using SPSS version 17. The  $P < 0.05$  was considered as significant. The interviews were conducted in a separate room by the executive liaisons to identify the study participants. Those early interviewers were placed with those who were willing to fill out a divorce interview and checklist.

## Results

In this study, 118 individuals who referred to the family court with divorce application were investigated. The average age of the applicants was  $29.4 \pm 8.1$  years, ranging from 15 to 58 years. Of the total participants, 32 were male (27.6%), and 84 were female (72.4%). Considering education, nine people were illiterate or had elementary education (7.6%), 30 individuals had secondary and high school education (25.4%), 39 had diploma (33.1%), and 40 had academic education (33.9%). With regard to the financial issues, 38 individuals reported many economic problems (32.2%), 55 had moderate economic problems (46.6%), and 25 people had no economic problems (21.2%). Regarding children,

50 people had no children (42.4%), 43 had one child (36.4%), 20 individuals had two children (16.9%), four people had three children (3.4%), and one person had four children (0.8%). Considering the participants' occupation, 52 individuals were housewives (44.1%), and 13 were employees (11%), nine were workers (7.6%), 32 were self-employed (27.1%), 11 people were students (9.3%), and one person was retired/unemployed (0.8%).

As Table 1 represents, of the total 118 divorce applicants, friends' involvement had the lowest effect on the incidence of divorce (1.7%), while misunderstanding and disagreement were among the most frequent causes of divorce (44.9%).

According to the findings, different education levels did not have any significant effect on divorce request ( $p = 0.6$ ).

Among the proposed causes of divorce, the age difference between spouses, family involvement, infertility, and high expectations had a significant difference with the education level ( $p < 0.01$ ).

According to Table 4, misunderstanding and disagreement was the most frequent cause of divorce in participants. Furthermore, a significant difference was observed between the divorce rate and different economic conditions ( $P = 0.4$ ).

Addiction, delinquency, and infidelity, mental illness, physical illness, differences in culture and beliefs, dissatisfaction with sexual relationships, and violence, as well as insults, were also statistically analyzed by the t-test. The findings represent a significant difference in the rate of divorce with regard to the economic status ( $P < 0.01$ ).

**Table 1.** Frequency distribution of different causes of divorce

Divorce causes	Never		Low		Partly		Moderate		Very much	
	N	F(%)	N	F(%)	N	F(%)	N	F(%)	N	F(%)
Misunderstanding and disagreement	16	13.6	8	6.8	16	13.6	25	12.2	53	44.9
Insulation	29	24.6	16	13.6	11	9.3	25	21.2	37	31.4
Disaffection	47	39.8	15	12.7	12	10.2	14	11.9	30	25.4
The difference in culture and beliefs	33	28	24	3.2	21	8.1	18	3.1	22	18.6
Job type and job problems	61	7.5	6	1.5	19	1.1	10	5.8	22	18.6
Economic problems	46	39	11	3.9	30	4.2	11	3.9	20	16.9
Dissatisfaction with sexual relations	63	4.5	11	3.9	14	9.1	12	2.1	18	15.3
Unemployment	73	9.6	8	8.6	11	3.9	8	8.6	18	15.3
Too many expectations	56	5.4	17	4.1	18	3.1	10	5.8	17	14.4
Delinquency and Infidelity	77	3.6	10	5.8	6	1.5	11	3.9	14	11.9
Addiction	85	72	5	2.4	6	1.5	8	8.6	14	11.9
Family involvement	69	5.5	12	2.1	19	1.1	10	5.8	8	6.8
Psychosis	74	7.6	7	9.5	23	5.1	8	8.6	6	5.1
Sterility	103	3.8	5	2.4	5	2.4	-	-	5	4.2
Age difference	60	8.5	27	9.2	18	3.1	8	8.6	5	4.2
Physical illness	91	1.7	10	5.8	9	6.7	4	4.3	4	3.4
The difference in educational level	74	7.6	25	2.2	9	6.7	6	1.5	4	3.4
Friends interfere with the relationship	100	7.8	9	6.7	6	1.5	1	8	2	1.7

**Table 2.** The severity of the divorce causes in participants based on gender

Causes of divorce request	Men		Female		Total		P
	Average %	SD	Average %	SD	Average %	SD	
Misunderstanding and disagreement	2.8	1.5	2.7	1.4	2.7	1.4	0.77
Violence, insult, immorality	1.6	1.6	2.4	1.5	2.2	1.6	0
The difference in culture and beliefs	1.7	1.4	1.7	1.4	1.7	1.4	0.9
Disaffection	1.7	1.7	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	0.6
Job type and job problems	0.9	1.1	1.7	1.5	1.5	1.5	0
Economic problems	0.7	1.2	1.6	1.6	1.3	1.6	0
Dissatisfaction with sexual relations	1.1	1.3	1.2	1.5	1.2	1.5	0.7
Unemployment	1.1	1.4	1.2	1.4	1.2	1.4	0.7
Too many expectations	0.1	0.4	1.4	1.6	1	1.5	0
Delinquency and Infidelity	0.4	0.9	1.1	1.3	0.9	1.4	0
Addiction	1	1.3	0.8	1.2	0.9	1.2	0.4
Family involvement	0.9	1.4	0.8	1	0.9	1.1	0.7
Psychosis	0.4	0.8	1	1	0.8	1.2	0
Sterility	0.9	0.3	1.1	1.6	0.8	1.4	0
Age difference	0.6	1.1	0.6	1	0.6	1	0.9
Physical illness	0.4	1	0.4	0.8	0.4	1	0.9
The difference in educational level	0.4	1	0.2	1.4	0.3	0.9	0.3
Friends interfere with the relationship	0.3	0.9	0.2	0.6	0.2	0.7	0.5



**Table 3.** The severity of the divorce causes in participants based on education

Education-related causes of divorce request	Illiterate		Secondary school		Diploma		Academic degree		P
	Average%	SD	Average %	SD	Average%	SD	Average %	SD	
The difference in educational level	0.5	0.5	0.8	1	0.4	1	0.7	1.1	0.
Age difference	1.5	1.3	1.3	1.3	0.6	0.9	0.6	1	0
Family involvement	0.8	1.3	1.5	1.4	0.7	1.2	0.7	1.1	0
Friends interfere with the relationship	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.8	0.1	0.4	0.3	0.8	0.5
Addiction	0.8	1.7	1	1.4	0.8	1.5	0.6	1.3	0.6
Job type and Job Problems	1.5	1.5	1.7	1.5	1.2	1.6	1.1	1.6	0.5
Unemployment	1.1	1.7	1.4	1.4	0.9	1.5	0.9	1.4	0.5
Delinquency and Infidelity	0.7	1.5	0.8	1.3	1.1	1.6	0.9	1.4	0.7
Psychosis	1	1.4	1.2	1.3	0.6	1.1	0.7	1.1	0.3
Physical illness	0.4	1	0.7	1.1	0.4	0.9	0.3	0.9	0.5
Sterility	0	0	0.6	1.2	0.2	0.9	0.1	0.4	0
Too many expectations	1.4	1.5	2	1.6	1.1	1.4	1.8	1.1	0
The difference in culture and beliefs	2.3	1.5	1.8	1.3	1.6	1.4	1.7	1.5	0.6
Disaffection	1.7	1.9	1.8	1.7	1.3	1.4	1.9	1.7	0.3
Dissatisfaction with sexual relations	1.8	1.8	1.1	1.4	1.1	1.5	1.4	1.5	0.8
The existence of economic problems	1.7	1.7	1.6	1.3	1.7	1.6	1.3	1.4	0.6
Violence, Insult, Immorality	2	1.7	2.3	1.6	2.4	1.5	1.9	1.6	0.5
Misunderstanding and disagreement	3.7	0.4	2.4	1.4	2.6	1.4	1.9	1.4	0

**Table 4.** The severity of the divorce causes in participants based on economic conditions

Economic Causes of divorce request	Very much		Moderate		No problem		P
	Average%	SD	Average%	SD	Average%	SD	
The difference in educational level	0.6	1.1	0.6	0.9	0.7	1.1	0.8
Age difference	0.9	1	0.7	1.1	1.1	1.3	0.4
Family involvement	0.9	1.1	1.1	1.4	0.6	1.1	0.2
Friends interfere with the relationship	0.1	0.4	0.3	0.7	0.2	1	0.6
Addiction	25	0.6	1.2	1.6	0.7	1.5	0
Job type and job problems	1.1	1.3	1.3	1.7	1.6	1.6	0.4
Unemployment	0.9	1.4	1.2	1.6	0.8	1.5	0.4
Delinquency and Infidelity	0.3	0.8	1.4	1.7	0.7	1.2	0.6
Psychosis	0.4	0.8	1	1.3	1.1	1.3	0
Physical illness	0.1	0.5	0.4	0.8	0.9	1.1	0
Sterility	0.3	0.9	0.1	0.6	0.5	1.1	0.1
Too many expectations	1.1	1.3	1.1	1.4	1.6	1.7	0.2
Difference in culture and beliefs	1.3	1.2	1.6	1.4	2.5	1.5	0
Disaffection	1.4	1.6	1.5	1.5	2.2	1.8	0.1
Dissatisfaction with sexual relations	0.6	1.1	1.3	1.6	1.8	1.5	0
Economic problems	1	1.1	1.8	1.5	1.6	1.5	0
Violence, insult, immorality	1.6	1.4	2.3	1.6	2.6	1.5	0
Misunderstanding and disagreement	2.8	1.4	2.6	1.4	3	1.2	0.4



## Discussion

This study was designed to evaluate the distribution frequency of divorce causes among the divorce applicants who referred to the family court in Yazd City using the searcher-made questionnaires.

Seifolahi conducted a similar study in Tehran to investigate the causes of divorce among couples were lack of moral consensus, family disputes, personality differences, lack of compatibility, substance use, non-compliance, infertility, not having children, and not spending money. The most common cause of divorce was the lack of mutual understanding, which is in accordance with the results of this study.

Although Seifolahi investigated the role of husbands not giving money to his wife as one of the divorce causes, this issue was not examined in detail in the present study, and the financial problems were studied generally (Tavasoli & Ghiasi Nodoshan, 2012).

Another study by Whistle and Lloyd showed that at least one-third of the divorces were due to the fact that one of the couples had an extramarital relationship. Therefore, they reported illegitimacy as the major cause of divorce.

In this study, infidelity was mentioned as the most important divorce factor for 0.4% of the men and 1.16% of the women. These rates are lower than those reported by Whistle and Lloyd (South & Lloyd, 1995). These discrepancies can be due to the differences in studies' sample size and participants' cultural values, and some of them may not mention it due to their lack of credibility and trust. However, due to the culture, religion, and the fear of fame in our country, it may be more difficult to report extramarital relationship. These results were concordance with our results.

Another major reason for divorce is culture and religion. As a result, especially in cultures, divorce is recognized as a special case and as a stigma that brings cultural problems and reduces divorce in some other religious societies.

Rahimi conducted research about the causes of divorce in Khorasan province. The results showed

that moral disagreements, lack of condescension, unemployment, economic and financial problems, drug addiction, others' intervention, different levels of literacy, and age differences were among the most important effective factors of divorce. Among these factors, moral disagreements (23.76%), unemployment (17.46%), and financial problems (16.12%) were among the most frequent divorce causes, respectively (Rahimi, 2000). The findings of Rahimi's research are consistent with the findings of this study because the cities of Khorasan and Yazd are part of the same country and have similar cultural and religious issues.

In a study by Ghotbi et al. divorce status and its affecting factors were studied among the divorced individuals from Tehran, Iran. They conducted interviews with divorced individuals and asked them to complete the related questionnaires. These researchers investigated the effect of the underlying variables on marital life and problems of post-divorce using Kaplan-Meier survival analysis and log-rank test. Among the studied 45 women and 24 men, most participants were in the age range of 26 to 35 years, and their mean duration of marriage was 62 months. The age mean at the time of divorce was 24 years in women and 29 years in men. Survival test analysis showed that the probability of divorce after 100 months of marriage was 99% in individuals who had forced marriage. Therefore, forced marriage is considered an important and significant factor in divorce. Of course, We didn't evaluate this factor, directly.

Another study indicated that the age group, the average age of divorce, the number of children, and the marriage style were considered as the effective underlying factors of divorce. A significant correlation was also observed between forced marriage and mean duration of cohabitation. After the divorce, most women lived with their parents, but men lived alone. In order from highest percentage to lowest percentage Including Lack of mutual understanding, addiction, family's intervention, financial difficulties, and mental diseases were the most



common factors leading to divorce (Ghostbi et al., 2003). In the study mentioned above, the most common cause of divorce was the lack of mutual understanding, which is consistent with the results of this study. However, the present study was superior to the mentioned study regarding its sample size and investigation of divorce causes with regard to different factors of gender, age, and educational level.

The results of an investigation over the counseling services in family courts of Mashhad showed that 54.8% of the individuals who referred to the family courts were in the age range of 20 to 35 years. The most important causes of divorce were the lack of understanding, addiction, and financial problems, respectively. Besides, the average level of education of the couples was junior high school and diploma, which supports our findings. The average cohabitation period of these couples was less than two years; whereas, the average cohabitation period was seven years in the present research (Chlen & Mustaffa, 2008).

Dehghani and Nazari carried out a study on the sociological analysis of factors affecting the tendency toward divorce in Isfahan province. They employed 30 couples who referred to divorce reduction centers, and their divorce filing had not been compromised yet. They found that variables such as families' intervention in the couple's life, the dignity difference between the couples, marital life satisfaction, and positive view to divorce outcomes were among the direct causative factors of divorce (Fatehi Dehghani & Nazari, 2008).

In comparison with the study by Dehghani and Nazari, this study used a larger sample size. However, they examined the participants' marital status and positive point of view to divorce outcomes directly, which was not investigated in our research. On the contrary to the present research, these researchers found that marital satisfaction was the main effective factor in divorce. Meshkietal studied 161 recorded divorces in two years. As they reported, the most effective factors of divorce were the inadequate

knowledge of wife/husband, disagreement, family intervention, unemployment, forced marriage, lack of life skills, addiction, marriage at early ages, urbanization, physical or mental diseases, lack of communication, and lack of sexual skills in marriage (Meshki et al., 2011), which are consistent with this study.

Sadrolashrafi et al. investigated divorce pathology and its prevention strategies. They stated that all personal, financial, cultural, and social factors influence the issue of divorce to a large extent (Sadrolashrafi et al., 2012) that is totally consistent with these results.

The present study had some strengths and limitations. Considering the limitation points, we did not examine all effective divorce factors, such as marital satisfaction and a positive point of view towards the divorce outcomes. The sample size was relatively small, which should be considered by future researchers. Furthermore, the participants' marriage age was not investigated, which could play a role in the couples' life skills and divorce. Concerning the strength points, this research tried to study and review divorce factors from all points of view and provided an appropriate ground for the other scholars interested in this area.

### Conclusion

The findings showed that disagreement was the main factor for divorce in this research. Disagreement includes various moral, cultural, and religious aspects. Infidelity is also one of the other most frequent causes of divorce in Iran and other countries. In this regard, the individuals who want to marry each other are recommended to visit the family counselors before marriage and try to know each other well. Young boys and girls should avoid getting married to those who have different cultures and are from different communities. Moreover, regarding the Islamic rules in Iran, men and women should avoid making friends. In other words, they should try to know each other within the family and use family recommendations to choose a spouse.

### Conflict of interest

No conflict of interest was declared.

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### Authors' Contribution

Conceptualization, G.Kh.; Methodology, S.A.; Investigation, R.B.; Formal analysis, writing primary draft and revise it, A.B.A.; Data Curation, S.A.; Writing – Original Draft, H.Gh.; Writing – Review, revise of manuscript & Editing, Z.Gh.

All authors read and approved the final manuscript and are responsible for any questions related to the article.

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