

## A study on effects of pre-marriage relationship on long-term marital status

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### ABSTRACT

Marriage is one of the most important events of people's lives and when it happens, it could have both positive and negative consequences. There are different types of marriage such as traditional and modern ones. In traditional marriage, there are some marriage arrangements where man and woman can meet and talk for a short time and in case both parties are interested, marriage is initiated. There is also another type of marriage where girl and boy meet each other for a while, in some events, they may have some limited or unlimited relationships, and once they are interested in each other, they may marry each other. This relatively new type of marriage is popular in many western countries but it is still a controversial type of marriage in eastern countries. In this paper, we perform an empirical study on the effect of pre-marriage relationship on long-term marital status. The results indicate that pre-marriage relationship can reduce after marriage conflicts. The people who had pre-marriage had less aggressive behavior compared with the people who did not.

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## 1. Introduction

Marriage is one of the most important events among young people in many countries especially those who live in traditional family oriented places and many young people consider a successful marriage as an extreme point of their lives. There are many studies to see whether it is a good idea for young couples to have close pre-marriage limited or unlimited relationships. These kinds of relationships could help young couples learn more about their partners' personal characteristics. However, there are many cases that a pre-marriage relationship could have bad consequences after marriage happens. Many people could hide their bad habits for relatively long time from their partners and when these bad characteristics are disclosed after marriage begins, there will be more severe consequences, which could end up an early divorce. During the past few years, there have been many studies to detect important factors on successful marriage.

Melton et al. (1995) discussed different parameters influencing a successful marriage. Anderson and Hamori (2000) discussed the most important factors signaling good quality marriage. Donnellan et al.

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(2004) discussed some important issues called five big for sustainable marriage. They examined the relationship between the Big Five dimensions of personality and the marital relationships of over 400 couples and reported four major findings. These findings recommended that agreeableness and openness deserve increased attention as significant correlates of close relationships. Guzzo (2006) explained parameters on how marriage market conditions could affect entrance into cohabitation vs. marriage.

There are several studies to investigate whether marriage bring happiness for people or not. Stutzer and Frey (2006) analyzed the causal relationships between marriage and subjective well-being in a longitudinal information set for 17 years. They reported some evidence that happier singles opt more likely for marriage and that there were large differences in the benefits from marriage between couples. Potential, as well as actual, division of labor seems to contribute to spouses' well-being, especially for women and when there is a young family to raise. In contrast, large differences in the partners' educational level have a negative effect on experienced life satisfaction.

Asoodeh et al. (2010) explained factors for successful marriage and identified the factors of successful marriage, which accounts from self-described happy couples. They selected 300 couples from different companies, and the parents of students and performed their analysis using cluster sampling. They reported the most important factors for successful couples as trust and consultation, honesty, believe in God, make decisions together, strong commitment to each other, and friendly relationship. Traditional couples and non-traditional couples differed only in the procedures of family management.

McNulty (2008) studied the role of forgiveness in marriage and reported that people could benefit from forgiveness interventions and thus highlighted the need for further research on the most appropriate targets for such interventions. Hawkins et al. (2008) investigated whether marriage and relationship education work or not. They examined the efficacy of marriage and relationship education (MRE) on two common outcomes: relationship quality and communication skills.

One of the primary issues among young couples is that they may not have good understanding from each other and soon end up having divorce. Waller and Peters (2008) examined how unmarried parents' risk of divorce influences their decision to marry. They performed regression analysis and the results showed that unmarried parents with a high predicted probability of marital dissolution had significantly lower odds of marriage to the father of their child even after controlling for individual characteristics expected to affect marriage transitions. The dissolution propensity performed also included a measure of the local divorce climate. As such, our results provided support for the argument that high rates of divorce in the population have led to a fear of divorce among unmarried parents, which reduces the chance of marriage.

The proposed study of this paper investigates on the effect of pre-marriage relationship on long-term marital status. The organization of this paper first explains details of our study in section 2. Section 3 is devoted to the results of our survey. Finally, concluding remarks are given in the last to summarize the contribution of the paper.

## **2. The proposed study**

The proposed study of this paper considers seven hypotheses associated mainly with the existence of any conflicts between the people who had pre-marriage relationship and those who did not. They are as follows,

1. Is there any meaningful statistics on marital conflicts between the people who had pre-marriage relationship and those who did not?

2. Is there any meaningful statistics on common life cooperation between the people who had pre-marriage relationship and those who did not?
3. Is there any meaningful statistics on reduction of marital affairs between the people who had pre-marriage relationship and those who did not?
4. Is there any meaningful statistics on increase of excitement between the people who had pre-marriage relationship and those who did not?
5. Is there any meaningful statistics on reduction of social relationships between the people who had pre-marriage relationship and those who did not?
6. Is there any meaningful statistics on increase of social relationships with partners' relatives between the people who had pre-marriage relationship and those who did not?
7. Is there any meaningful statistics on separating financial accounts between the people who had pre-marriage relationship and those who did not?

In our survey, we chose 80 couples who lived in governmental university dormitories during the years from 2004 to 2005. The people were asked some questions in two steps, in the first step, we asked them whether they had any pre-marriage relationship or not. In the second step, we asked them some detailed questions to measure marital conflicts. The questionnaire consists of seven factors including reduction in cooperation, reduction in marital affairs, increase in excitement, increase in family support, increase in relationship with relatives, reduction in relationship with partner's friends and relatives and separation in financial accounts. Cronbach Alpha (Cronbach, 1951) was calculated as 0.53 for a group consists of 31 people. In terms of detailed questions the Cronbach Alpha were 0.3 for reduction in cooperation, 0.5 for reduction in marital affairs, 0.73 for increase in excitement, 0.60 for increase in family support, 0.64 for increase in relationship with relatives, 0.64 for reduction in relationship with partner's friends and relatives and 0.51 for separation in financial accounts. The correlation ratios for a group of 35 people for all seven items mentioned are 0.68, 0.62, 0.69, 0.84, 0.62, 0.78 and 0.69, respectively. We distributed 80 questionnaires and we ended up having 11 incomplete and 3 non-filled responses and the rest of them were complete.

### 3. The results

The feedbacks on the questionnaire were divided in two groups, the first one is associated with people who had pre-marriage relationships and the second group is associated with those who did not. Table 1 summarizes the results of our survey for our first question.

**Table 1**

The results of the survey for the first hypothesis

Group	Size	Mean	Standard deviation	Levin test		t-student		
				F	P-value	t-value	df	p-value
With pre-marriage relationship	24	70.16	15.30	0.556	0.05	-3.30	65	0.002
Without pre-marriage relationship	42	85.11	18.92					

As we can observe from the results of Table 1, F statistics is valid when the level of significance is 5% and t-statistic is valid when level of significance is less than 1%, which means there is a meaningful different on marital conflicts between the people who had pre-marriage relationship and those who did not. Similarly, Table 2 summarizes the results of our survey for our second question. As we can observe from the results of Table 2, F statistics is not valid when the level of significance is 5% but t-statistic is valid when level of significance is less than 1%, which means there is meaningful statistics on common life cooperation between the people who had pre-marriage relationship and those who did not.

**Table 2**

The results of the survey for the second hypothesis

Group	Size	Mean	Standard deviation	Levin test		t-student		
				F	P-value	t-value	df	p-value
With pre-marriage relationship	24	7.58	2.08	6.01	0.05	-2.45	65	0.017
Without pre-marriage relationship	43	9.37	3.89					

Table 3 summarizes the results of our survey for our second question. As we can observe from the results of Table 2, F statistics is not valid when the level of significance is 5% but t-statistic is valid when the level of significance is less than 1%, which means there is a meaningful statistics on common life cooperation between the people who had pre-marriage relationship and those who did not.

**Table 3**

The results of the survey for the third hypothesis

Group	Size	Mean	Standard deviation	Levin test		t-student		
				F	P-value	t-value	df	p-value
With pre-marriage relationship	23	8.65	2.99	1.12	0.05	-1.40	64	0.166
Without pre-marriage relationship	43	9.97	3.96					

Based on the results of Table 3, there is no statistical evidence to believe there is a meaningful difference for marital affairs between the people who had pre-marriage relationship and those who did not. Table 4 shows the results of our survey for the fourth question.

**Table 4**

The results of the survey for the fourth hypothesis

Group	Size	Mean	Standard deviation	Levin test		t-student		
				F	P-value	t-value	df	p-value
With pre-marriage relationship	24	13.66	4.07	3.41	0.05	-2.09	65	0.040
Without pre-marriage relationship	43	16.48	5.58					

As we can observe from the results of Table 4, F statistics is valid when the level of significance is 5% and t-statistic is valid when level of significance is less than 1%, which means there is a meaningful statistics to believe there is an increase on excitement between the people who had pre-marriage relationship and those who did not. Table 5 also demonstrates the results of our survey for the fifth question.

**Table 5**

The results of the survey for the fifth hypothesis

Group	Size	Mean	Standard deviation	Levin test		t-student		
				F	P-value	t-value	df	p-value
With pre-marriage relationship	24	9.50	2.70	2.94	0.05	-0.510	65	0.612
Without pre-marriage relationship	43	10.04	4.83					

Based on the results of Table 5, there is no statistical evidence to believe there is a meaningful statistics on reduction of social relationships between the people who had pre-marriage relationship and those who did not. Table 6 shows the results of our survey for the sixth question.

**Table 6**

The results of the survey for the sixth hypothesis

Group	Size	Mean	Standard deviation	Levin test		t-student		
				F	P-value	t-value	df	p-value
With pre-marriage relationship	24	9.16	3.002	2.27	0.05	0.472	65	0.638
Without pre-marriage relationship	43	9.62	4.22					

Based on the results of Table 6, there is no statistical evidence to believe there is an increase of social relationships with partners' relatives for those who had pre-marriage relationship and those who did not. Table 7 shows the results of our survey for the seventh question.

**Table 7**

The results of the survey for the seventh hypothesis

Group	Size	Mean	Standard deviation	Levin test		t-student		
				F	P-value	t-value	df	p-value
With pre-marriage relationship	24	1.45	4.19	0.708	0.05	-3.392	65	0.001
Without pre-marriage relationship	43	19.11	4.25					

As we can observe from the results of Table 7, F statistics is valid when the level of significance is 5% and t-statistic is valid when the level of significance is less than 1%, which means there is a meaningful difference between separation of financial accounts between the people who had pre-marriage relationship and those who did not.

#### 4. Conclusion

In this paper, we have performed an empirical study on the effects of pre-marriage relationship on long-term marital status. The proposed study of this paper setup seven hypothesis consists of various aspects of personal, social and financial differences between the people who had pre-marriage relationship and those who did not. The results indicated that people with pre-marriage relationship had less conflicting issues than those who did not. Note that the survey was conducted in Iranian society where we see an increase on the age of marriage. As a result, older people had more expectations from their partners, which could create possible conflict among them. Any increase consultation on couples prior to marriage could possibly solve many issues.

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