

Mate Selection Preferences of Turkish University Students

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Suggested Citation:

Keklik, İ. (2011). Mate Selection preferences of Turkish university students. *Eğitim Araştırmaları-Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, 44, 129-148.

Abstract

Problem Statement: The selection of a marital partner has lifelong implications. Therefore, researchers from various cultures and disciplines **have examined individuals' mate selection behaviors with respect to a rich variety of variables.** Literature on mate selection, involves a host of factors, such as gender, religious belief, ethnicity, political orientation and level of education. However, only a few studies with Turkish samples have examined different aspects of mate selection. Political orientation and religious belief are sensitive issues in Turkey. Thus, there is a lack of empirical work on these issues by researchers in the field of psychological counseling and guidance. Individual views and preferences on marital partnership may be significantly influenced by either of these two factors. An examination of mate selection preferences within a Turkish sample will not only contribute to the growing national literature on mate selection, but provide substance for multicultural comparison, as well as insight for counseling practice.

The purpose of the study: This study sought to determine whether senior-year college students' criteria for selecting marital partners varied significantly according to gender, religious belief and political orientation.

Methods: A total of 1,126 senior students attending Hacettepe University were given surveys. Seven-hundred thirty-two (65%) were women, and 394 (35%) were men. **Participants' political orientation was as follows:** 43% (485) identified as left-wing, 23.6% (266) as right-wing and 2% (22) with Islamist politics, whereas 31.4% did not ascribe to any political views. **Students' religious beliefs were as follows:** 80.8% Sunni, 17.1% Alevi and 2.1% other (Christian, Jewish, etc.). All participants were single and were considering marriage in the near future. The study was conducted in three phases. One involved asking a convenient sample of 168 college students

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the open-ended question: "What are the characteristics you look for in a marital partner? Please list your answers." A revision of this list resulted in a new list of 56 attributes with the highest frequencies. The second step involved giving the new list, based on a 10-point Likert type scale (1= Not desirable at all, 10= Very desirable), to 217 students. **Students' responses** were examined with principle component analysis, which resulted in a list of 33 adjectives. The final step of the study involved administering this **new survey, with questions on students' age, gender, political orientation** and religious belief, to a new sample of 1,126 students. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) (with principle components as the factor extraction procedure), ANOVA and Scheffe's test were used for data analysis.

Findings and Results: Analysis yielded four factor asimportant qualities sought in potential marital partners – namely, personality characteristics, family relations, power and attractiveness and similarity/conventionality. Female students scored higher on three of the four factors (personality characteristics, power and attractiveness and similarity/conventionality) than males. Female students placed higher value on almost all characteristics examined, while both males and females had considerably **high scores for each attribute. Students' of rightwing political** orientation scored significantly higher on family relations and similarity/conventionality than their leftwing peers. No differences were found between the group with no political views and those with right- or left-wing views. Students raised in Sunni families scored higher on all four factors than those who grew up in Alevi families. The students with "other belief systems" were excluded from analysis, due to their possible heterogeneity and relatively smaller numbers.

Conclusions and Recommendations: A clear difference between the findings of this study and those of studies of Western cultures is that participants in this study appeared to be more particular about the qualities they sought in marital partners. One limitation of the current study has to do with its reliance on self-report measures. Considering that the study was conducted with senior college students at only one university in Turkey, any generalization of the results should be done with caution. Further work with diverse samples and cross-sectional studies would be helpful in obtaining more inclusive insight into the mate selection preferences of individuals in Turkey. The results of this study could be tentatively taken as an impetus for university counseling centers to tailor interventions **targeting students' idealized views of marital** partners.

Keywords: Mate selection, college students, gender, religious belief, political orientation.

Mate Selection Preferences: Theoretical Review

Partner selection has received remarkable attention in recent decades (Buss, 1994; Geary, 2002; Geary et al., 2004; Low, 2000; Wood & Eagly, 2002). Much of the focus on heterosexual mate selection has been concerned with the debate between the evolutionary perspective (i.e., Buss, 1994) and a standpoint emphasizing the importance of social and environmental influence (i.e., Wood & Eagly, 2002). More specifically, most of the discussion has been over the notion that women are more concerned with the social status and economic resources of potential partners (and **potential partners' willingness to share these**), while males are more concerned with the physical attractiveness of potential female partners (i.e., Buss, 1989, 1998; Franzoi & Herzog 1987). Evolutionary psychologists claim that males prefer certain physical attributes, such as smooth skin, a small waist-to-hip ratio and a youthful appearance, (Buss, 1995) because these attributes are considered signs of fertility. These researchers also assert that females prefer such physical traits as height, muscularity and broad shoulders (Buss, 1994) and personality characteristics such as power, ascendance and dominance (Botwin, Buss, & Shackelford, 1997), because these characteristics are viewed as signs of resourcefulness and indicate a capacity to protect from predators and threats (i.e., other males). Geary and Flinn (2001), indeed, **have confirmed that males' investment in children enhances the survival rates of offspring**. Buss (1989), one of the major proponents of the evolutionary perspective, cautions that these differences are relative and should not be taken in any absolute sense. In other words, the opposite of the above generalization is true, as well; **males pay attention to females' status, just as females show concern for males' physical attractiveness**.

The evolutionary perspective views human mate selection as an adaptive behavior aimed at **optimal reproductive potential, which refers to "the individual's ability to invest in the growth, development, and ... social reproductive competencies of offspring"** (Geary et al., 2004, p. 29). Evolutionary psychologists claim that reproductive success depends on a host of variables, including parental investment (Geary et al., 2004; Trivers, 1985), reproductive characteristics and environmental circumstance. Parental investment rests on the idea that the sex with the least investment in offspring (males) will compete with the same sex for mating privileges with the sex who will have greater investment in offspring (females) (Trivers, 1985). This essential difference in parental investment is considered to be the source of gender differences in mating selectivity.

Reproductive characteristics have to do with the tendency to choose mates with superior genes. Evolutionary researchers argue that individuals tend to select persons whose observable attributes are indicative of greater reproductive capacity. Geary et al. (2004), indeed, have found that observable characteristics deemed attractive are correlated with better health. Environmental circumstances constitute **another set of variables that influence species' mating behaviors**. Changing cultural values in human societies lead to varying preferences in what is deemed attractive. Likewise, when the number of each sex in a given population is not nearly matching, or when resources are scarce, individuals tend to change their mating preferences, to

maximize their reproductive success in the face of such circumstances. For instance, evaluating the mate selection preferences of North American university students between the 1930s and the mid-1990s, Buss et al. (2001) found that both males' and females' emphasis on chastity decreased, while the value they attributed to mutual attraction and love increased over time.

Environmental circumstances have been emphasized by a host of other researchers. For example, Nelson and Morrison (2002) have observed that the desirable characteristics of mates depend on circumstances. These authors maintain that when there is a shortage in nutritional resources, females prefer taller males, compared to when living conditions are richer in nutritional resources. One of the approaches most concerned with circumstance is the feminist perspective, which asserts that the gender differences identified by evolutionary researchers must be due to gender inequality in access to material resources. This point of view hypothesizes that once these differences are alleviated, women's preferences for resourceful males will decline (Eagly & Wood 1999). However, some studies with American samples have shown that women who have attained material resources and higher social status still tend to prefer males of older age and higher status (Townsend 1987). Likewise, working with a Serbian sample, Todosijević et al. (2003) have found that higher status women tend to prefer partners with higher socio-economic status. There have also been studies reporting contrasting results. Working with a sample from the hunter-gatherer Hadza society in Tanzania, Marlowe (2004) found that men placed ample importance on women being hard-working, and women mentioned physical appearance as much as men did. In addition to cultural and environmental variables, similarities between individuals have also received the attention of researchers dealing with partner selection. Studies have shown that similarities in ethnicity, political views, lifestyle values, personality attributes and appearance are of important consideration in mate selection (Botwin et al., 1997). Warren (1999) has indicated that individuals tend to prefer people with similar qualities. Some studies have reported that people seek similarities in age, ethnic origin, race, religion, level of education, socio-economic status, personality, attractiveness, family traditions and intelligence when choosing marital partners (i.e., Hamon & Ingoldsby, 2003). They have further asserted that such similarities between partners are, indeed, necessary for fulfilling marriages (Buss, 1989).

The cultural context in which one makes marital decisions is an essential component that needs to be taken into account while examining mate selection behavior. For example, in societies "where many women do not work outside their homes, marriage is arguably the single most important determinant of a woman's economic future" (Banerjee, Duo, Ghatak & Lafortuney, 2010. p. 1). Again, in patriarchal societal contexts where some degree of dating is only condoned as long as it is experienced as a preparatory experience for marriage (as opposed to dating for the sake of dating – or for recreational purposes), individual perceptions of persons of the opposite sex may differ from those of more egalitarian cultures, due to individual level of experience with the opposite sex. It could even be argued that as degree of gender segregation increases, persons' idealization of marriage and marital partners may increase correspondingly. In short, the literature shows that individual

partner selection preferences vary considerably, according to a host of biological and environmental variables (Buss, 1989; Eagly & Wood 1999; Townsend, 1987; Warren, 1999).

Grounding the Study in the Context of Turkey

Considering the complex nature of human mate selection behavior, satisfactory empirical insight into individual decision-making processes regarding the selection of a marital partner will come about by accumulating empirical evidence from a variety of cultures and populations. Several goals were kept in mind while conducting this study. First, it was intended to **explore Turkish individuals'** preferences in partner selection and to draw comparison with the findings of previous researchers working with both Western and non-Western cultures. In so doing, it was hoped that this unexplored issue would bring greater attention to mate selection in Turkish samples. Second, along with gender, religious belief and political orientation were selected as independent variables, based on the hypothesis that **these shape individuals' value systems and lifestyles and, thus, could** have remarkable influence on the selection of marital partners. The sample was selected based on the idea that graduation from college is commonly considered a step toward the formation of a family in mainstream Turkish culture.

The vast majority of the population in Turkey is made up of two primary Islamic religious groups: Alevis and Sunnis. Estimates of the size of the Alevi (followers of Ali) population range between 10% and 25% of the country's total population (Erman & Göker, 2010). The great majority of the remaining population is made up of Sunnis, who, thus, constitute the mainstream Islamic population in Turkey. Almost every author who has compared these two groups has indicated that Alevis are far more heterodoxical in their belief systems and, thus, lifestyles (i.e., White & Jongerden, 2003).

Turkey has been striving toward Westernization for well over a century. These efforts ripened with its establishment as a nation-state in 1923 and have continued since. At present, Turkey is the only country with a Muslim majority seeking membership in the European Union. Despite all its efforts, Turkey has not accomplished a satisfactory degree of economic, social and cultural change. A great number of persons in rural parts of the country still get married through arranged marriage. Virginity is strictly required of brides. If a bride is not a virgin, she can be sent back to her family in most of rural Turkey. In fact, in some cases, this could cost a woman her life. In other words, a woman who has engaged in premarital sex could be killed by her male relatives (honor killing). News of such events is heard in the Turkish media from time to time. On the other hand, the proportion of persons who get married by their own choice is estimated to be around 40%. According to Yıldırım (1992), as of the early 1990s, 20% of married individuals were married through arranged marriage, 19% of marriages were decided by parents and 19% of couples ran away to get married. The latter group did so primarily because either at least one of the families was against the marriage or because the men could not afford the costs of a wedding. Yıldırım's study (1992), which relied on a sample of

married individuals, provides insight into how individuals get married. In another, more recent study, Yıldırım (2007) explored university students' likes and dislikes in potential marital partners. Comparing female and male students' preferences, the author found that although female students had slightly higher scores, both genders obtained remarkably high scores on desired qualities (i.e, trustworthiness, honesty, loyalty, respectfulness, supportiveness, altruism). On the other hand, female students had significantly higher scores on the first 20 undesired attributes. The only attribute on which males scored higher was smoking. The results, overall, showed that Turkish students place a great deal of value on both desirable and undesirable attributes.

According to data from the State Statistics Institute (DİE), the divorce rate has been increasing in Turkey (DİE, 2004). Further knowledge of how young people choose their partners could shed light on divorce. Part of the rationale for working with university students was that a great number of Turkish university graduates get married within a few years of their graduation (Yavuz, n.d). Although no statistics were found on how soon after graduation marriage occurs, it is commonly known that families expect young people to consider marriage shortly after employment, which comes shortly after graduation.

Working with a sample from two major Turkish universities, Bacanlı (2002) found that "mutual love" and "reliable personality" were the top qualities sought in marital partners. "High income" and "physical attractiveness" were on the bottom of the male and female students' lists, respectively. In their work with a sample of university students, Bugay and Tezer (2008) found that students sought qualities that paralleled traditional gender role socialization. For example, female students were more likely than male students to seek such attributes as similar family background, self-confidence and assertiveness. Özgüven (1994), exploring college students' attitudes toward marital decision making, found that a majority of students (74%) reported that marital decisions should be made "after sufficient length of friendship" and that "family approval should be obtained" (85%). Eighty-one percent of male and 78% of female students noted that "they should have the last say as to whom to marry." Özgüven (1994) also asked students, "Do you find premarital dating appropriate?" Eighty-six percent of males and 77% of females answered "yes." No further studies addressing Turkish populations' desired qualities in marital partners were found in the literature.

Literature on mate selection involves a host of factors, including gender, religious belief, ethnicity, political orientation and level of education (Buunk, Dijkstra, Fetchenhauer & Kenrick, 2002; Demyan, 2005; Hamon & Ingoldsby, 2003; Johnson, 1980). However, no work examining these variables with Turkish samples was found. Considering Turkey's cultural emphasis on marriage, negative views of divorce and deep-rooted patriarchal values, Turkish students might be more meticulous in their partner selection than individuals in Western cultures. The independent variables of gender, religious belief and political orientation were selected for their unique significance in determining individual lifestyles in Turkish culture. Political orientation and religious belief, in particular, are sensitive issues in

Turkey, and, thus, empirical work on these issues is rare. The right-wing spectrum of political orientation ranges from central-right parties to those with nationalist and/or religious sentiments. These parties are typically characterized by varying degrees of conservatism. Left-wing parties range from social-democratic parties to parties with a socialist emphasis. Thus, it is commonly known that those with right-wing and left-wing political orientations, as well as those with Alevi and Sunni beliefs, have ample differences in values and lifestyles. Therefore, individual views and preferences on marital partners might be significantly influenced by either of these two factors. Indeed, Alevi are more likely to affiliate with left-wing politics than are Sunnis (Göner, 2005). Furthermore, religious orientation and political views may also influence individual views on gender. Hence, this study attempted to answer the following question: Do senior-year college students' criteria for selecting marital partners vary significantly according to gender, religious belief and political orientation?

Method

Participants

Participants in this study were volunteer senior-year college students at Hacettepe University, Ankara during the academic year of 2003-2004. They were majoring in health (nursing, physiotherapy and child development), physical sciences (physics engineering, electronic engineering and chemical engineering) and social sciences (economics and public administration, science education, elementary education and psychological counseling). The rationale for selecting seniors was that Turkish mainstream culture views college graduation as a significant step toward marrying and raising a family. A convenient sample of 1,126 students was given the surveys. Seven-hundred thirty-two (65%) were women, and 394 (35%) were men. Their ages ranged from 21 to 28, with a mean of 21.8. All participants were single and were considering marriage in the near future. Forty-three percent (485) identified as left-wing, 23.6% (266) as right-wing and 2% (22) with Islamist politics, whereas 31.4% did not ascribe to any political views. Students' families' distribution of religious beliefs was as follows: 80.8% Sunni, 17.1% Alevi and 2.1% other (Christian, Jewish, etc.).

Materials and Procedures

After departmental permissions were obtained and instructors informed of the study, a convenient sample of 168 college students (counseling and nursing students) was asked open-ended questions ("What are the characteristics you look for in a marital partner? Please list your answers"), to determine preferences in partner selection. The participants could list as many characteristics as they wished. They were asked to list these attributes according to their importance (starting the list with the most important quality they sought in a marital partner). The list of adjectives was organized so as to avoid repetition. In other words, synonymous adjectives were grouped together. The new list's frequencies were calculated. A list of 56 most desirable attributes was selected. The rationale for this selection was that there was a

significant drop between the 56 and 57th adjectives' frequencies. The new list of adjectives, with a 10-point Likert type scale (1= Not desirable at all, 10= Very desirable), was given to a convenient sample of 217 students in psychological counseling, nursing and science education. Responses on desirable attributes were examined with principle component analysis. The results of varimax rotation yielded 33 characteristics with factor loads higher than .40. These 33 characteristics (adjectives) were clustered into four factors. Then, a separate group of 1,126 students was given this list and asked to score each attribute from 1 to 10 (1= Not desirable at all, 10= Very desirable). In addition to this list, the survey also included items seeking sociodemographic information, such as age, gender, political orientation and religious belief. All participants signed an informed consent form prior to completing the surveys.

Data Analysis

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was used to determine the factor structure of **university students' preferences for potential marital partners**. While running the EFA, principle components was selected as the factor extraction procedure. Then, ANOVA was conducted, after homogeneity of the data had been ensured. Finally, to further explore differences between political orientations (left-wing, right-wing, and no political preference), with regard to the factors "family relations" and "similarity", Scheffe's test was used.

Results

The 33 characteristics identified via varimax rotation were gathered into four factors: The first factor, which consisted of ten attributes (*Trustworthy, Honest, Sharing, Loyal, Strong-Willed, Respectful, Understanding, Promise-Keeper, Cultivated and Loving*), was named "personality characteristics". The second factor was named "family relations" and consisted of ten characteristics (*Clean, Tidy, Willing/Able to Participate in Child-Rearing, Parsimonious, Good Conversationalist, Altruistic, Kind, Handy, Similarity of Values and Romantic*). The third factor was named "power and attractiveness" and involved eight characteristics (*Economic Independence, Physically Strong, Energetic, Intelligent, Funny, Wealthy, Similar Level of Education and Attractive*). The fourth item was named "similarity/conventionality" and consisted of five attributes (*Same Religion, Same Ethnicity, Virginity, Similar Political Views and Same Age*). These four factors will be referred to as "partner selection factors" through the remainder of the manuscript. The four factors explained a total of 55.6% of observed variance.

Table 1
 Factor Loadings (> .40) After Varimax Rotation

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
Trustworthy	.785			
Honest	.718			
Sharing	.675			
Loyal	.639			
Strong-willed	.628			
Respectful	.539			
Understanding	.528			
Promise-keeper	.484			
Cultivated	.448			
Loving	.415			
Clean		.606		
Tidy		.597		
Willing/able to Participate in Child-Rearing		.595		
Parsimonious		.553		
Good Conversationalist		.526		
Altruistic		.524		
Kind		.476		
Handy		.461		
Similarity of Values		.451		
Romantic		.439		
Economic Independence			.713	
Physically Strong			.616	
Energetic			.588	
Intelligent			.574	
Funny			.546	
Wealthy			.537	
Similar Level of Education			.510	
Attractive			.411	
Same Religion				.804
Same Ethnicity				.792
Virginity				.524
Similar Political Views				.433
Same Age				.405

To examine whether college seniors' scores on "Personality", "Family Relations", "Power-Attractiveness" and "Similarity/Conventionality" differed significantly according to their "gender", "religious belief" and "political orientation," MANOVA was conducted after homogeneity of the data was ensured.

Table 2

ANOVA Results on Partner Selection Factors and the Independent Variables

Source	Dependent Variable	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Gender	Personality	2849.844	1	2849.844	77.555	.000
	Family Relations	356.768	1	356.768	3.390	.066
	Power/Attract.	15726.269	1	15726.269	209.903	.000
	Similarity/Conv.	838.068	1	838.068	7.796	.005
Religious belief	Personality	547.611	1	547.611	14.903	.000
	Family Relations	1281.706	1	1281.706	12.180	.001
	Power and Attractiveness	1140.962	1	1140.962	15.229	.000
	Similarity/Conv.	722.940	1	722.940	6.725	.010
Political orientation	Personality	23.530	2	11.765	.320	.726
	Family Relations	1106.296	2	553.148	5.257	.005
	Power/Attractive	69.969	2	34.984	.467	.627
	Similarity/Conv.	6936.260	2	3468.130	32.262	.000

As illustrated in Table 2, the means for "Personality", "Power-Attractiveness" and "Similarity/Conventionality" varied significantly according to gender. In other words, female students had higher means than males. However, the F value of "Family Relations" was not significant. The results for religious belief showed that Sunni students had significantly higher scores on all four factors than their Alevi peers. The findings regarding political orientation illustrate that students' scores on "Family Relations" and "Similarity/Conventionality" had significant F values and depended on political orientation. These differences were further explored with Scheffe's test.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics on Mate Selection Preferences, according to Independent Variables

		Personality	Family Relat.	Power-Attr.	Similar/C on.
GENDER					
Female	Mean	96.469	85.654	68.145	28.873
	N	707	703	707	678
	Std. Dev.	4.459	9.266	7.756	10.249
Male	Mean	93.025	84.572	60.028	27.395
	N	386	381	382	384
	Std. Dev.	8.197	11.640	10.414	11.600
RELIGION					
Sunni	Mean	95.687	85.877	65.796	28.922
	N	896	890	892	872
	Std. Dev.	5.503	9.862	9.346	10.869
Alevi	Mean	93.279	82.505	63.045	25.663
	N	197	194	197	190
	Std. Dev.	8.697	11.098	10.370	9.927
POLITICICS					
Left-wing	Mean	95.154	84.104	65.594	25.868
	N	478	471	474	465
	Std. Dev.	5.777	10.610	8.809	9.694
Right-wing	Mean	95.476	86.787	65.220	32.525
	N	277	282	281	274
	Std. Dev.	6.795	9.229	10.224	10.475
No Preference	Mean	94.894	84.858	64.535	27.564
	N	275	269	271	264
	Std. Dev.	6.558	10.416	10.375	11.667

As shown in Table 4, the only significant difference detected in “Family Relations” was that students identifying with the right-wing political orientation had a significantly higher mean than students identifying with the left-wing orientation. No significant differences were found between students with the right-wing orientation and those with “no political preference” or between students with the

“left-wing” orientation and those with “no political preference.” Students identifying with right-wing politics had a significantly higher mean on “Similarity/Conventionality” than did those with “left-wing” politics or “no political preference.” The means for the latter two groups did not differ significantly.

Table 4

Scheffe's Test Results for Family Relations and Similarity/Conventionality according to Political Orientation

		Mean Differ. (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
FAMILY RELAT.				
Left-wing	Right-wing	-2.683	.767	.002
	No Pol. Pref.	-.754	.779	.626
Right-wing	Left-wing	2.683	.767	.002
	No Pol. Pref.	1.928	.868	.086
No Pol. Pref.	Left-wing	.754	.779	.626
	Right-wing	-1.928	.868	.086
SIMILARITY				
Left-wing	Right-wing	-6.656	.796	.000
	No Pol. Pref.	-1.695	.805	.110
Right-wing	Left-wing	6.656	.796	.000
	No Pol. Pref.	4.961	.901	.000
No Pol. Pref.	Left-wing	1.695	.805	.110
	Right-wing	-4.961	.901	.000

Discussion

This study sought to answer the following question: Do senior-year college students' criteria for selecting marital partners vary significantly according to gender, religious belief and political orientation? The results showed that participants attributed a remarkably great degree of value to each desired attribute. Below is a discussion of the results (in relation to the independent variables), the limitations of the study and implications for research and practice.

Female students scored higher than males on three of the four factors. This is consistent with previous research reporting female selectivity, which is attributed to various factors, including females' relatively shorter reproductive span (i.e., Kenrick,

1994; Shoemake, 2007; Townsend, 1987). The finding shows that women in predominantly patriarchal Turkish culture are careful and meticulous when selecting marital partners. Compared to their male peers, females seem more concerned about attributes that foster long-lasting and stable marital relationships (i.e., trustworthiness, loyalty, strong will, understanding, ability to keep promises/reliable, economic independence, wealth, psychical strength, similar religion/ethnicity/age/politics, etc.). This result is consistent with those of Bugay and Tezer (2008) and Yildirim (2007), who have also worked with samples of Turkish university students. It is not surprising that females are more particular about the qualities they seek in marital partners, given that failed marriages have more adverse consequences for them.

The results showed that females scored higher on three factors, but not on the family relations factor (clean, tidy, parsimonious, good conversationist, altruistic, kind, handy, romantic, and similarities in values). A possible explanation for this finding could be that the attributes inherent in this factor are qualities typically expected of females (i.e., tidiness, cleanness and romanticism). Therefore, female students might find it unrealistic to expect such characteristics from males. Also, given that almost all these characteristics are expected and preferred of women in patriarchal value systems, it is particularly likely that males would place a high value on these qualities, as well. Therefore, although females appear to value these qualities to a great degree, males also seem to almost equally value them in their marital partners. The fact that there were no significant gender differences on this factor could also be indicative of an overall complimentary view of male and female participants' gender role socialization (Demyan, 2005). Thus, similar future work should assess individuals' values regarding gender roles.

Students' preferences on two factors varied significantly according to political orientation: family relations and similarity/conventionality. Students identifying with right-wing politics scored higher on these two factors than did those of left-wing political orientation. As in many other countries, right-wing political orientation in Turkey is often viewed as being associated with traditionalism and conservatism. Therefore, this finding is in line with those of Buss and Barnes (1986), who have also found that politically conservative persons seek persons who comply with traditional gender roles and have characteristics that are conventional/similar to their own. Thus, it is not surprising that students of right-wing political orientation seek similarities in religion, ethnicity and age and value virginity and conventional qualities of domesticity in marital partners. On the other hand, similar results would be expected regarding personality characteristics and power/attractiveness. For example, one would expect that students with conservative/traditional values (right-wing) would be more concerned about personality traits that are indicative of modesty/conventionality/stability (trustworthiness, honesty, loyalty, strong will, ability to keep promises). Lack of difference between the left- and right-wing political groups on these factors could be mediated by gender. For example, males with conservative views are typically less likely to expect their partners to have economic independence. That there were no

differences between the left-wing group and those who did not identify with any political orientation is curious. On the other hand, it is difficult to interpret this **finding, since it is not clear what “no political orientation” meant to the participants.** These findings are partially consistent with prior studies reporting differences in the mate selection attitudes of liberal and conservative individuals (Lacey, 1999).

Students raised in Sunni families scored higher on all four factors than those who grew up in Alevi families. Like political orientation, the Sunni belief system is associated with a more orthodox interpretation of the Islamic religion than the Alevi belief system, which, in fact, is often considered a spiritual path, rather than a religious orientation. Therefore, students from Sunni families having more conservative preferences (higher scores) displayed attitudes that were consistent with the common perception that Sunni individuals are often more traditionalist than Alevis. Given the findings on political orientation and religious belief by Levis-Straus (2006) and Maliki (2010), one could infer that religious belief might have a stronger influence on individual lifestyle and values than political orientation, particularly concerning mate selection.

Part of the purpose of this study was to compare its results with those of Western studies. The findings showed that although female students placed higher value on almost all the characteristics examined, both males and females had considerably high scores for each attribute. A clear difference between the findings of this study and those that worked with Western samples is that participants in the current study appeared to be more meticulous about the qualities they sought in marital partners. As indicated above, this could be attributed to a host of factors. In addition to those mentioned, part of the reason individuals obtained noticeably high scores on each characteristic could be idealization of marriage and marital partners. Thus, cross-sectional studies could be undertaken to provide insight on individual preferences before marriage, close to wedding time, a year or two after marriage, at midlife and during late adulthood. Such studies could provide valuable information on individual perceptions of marital partners and experiences with marriage, from a life-span developmental standpoint. Consequently, such empirical insight could have **remarkable implications for counselors’ work with Turkish families and couples.**

Some limitations of this study should be kept in mind when examining its results. One limitation has to do with its sole reliance on self-reported measures. It is worth noting that in Eastern-collectivist cultures, personal matters expressed in public discourse, such as in response to questionnaires, might lead to idealization of the matter at hand. In fact, in cultural environments less encouraging of individual exploration and experimentation with life and romantic relationships, it is likely that individuals base their preferences not on lived experiences, but rather on ideal notions about the given issue at hand. Longitudinal studies could explore individual preferences in mate selection prior to and after actual selection. Likewise, in-depth interviews with an epistemological perspective could be conducted to examine the reasons behind individual preferences. Another significant limitation has to do with **this study’s implied assumption that the individuals recruited all had the liberty to select their marital partners.** On the other hand, regardless of their college education,

it is likely that some of the participants in this study would be introduced to women and men by their extended family members as candidate partners.

Considering that the current sample was a convenient one, composed of senior-year college students at only one university in Turkey, any generalization of the results should be done with caution. Using categorical independent variables might also limit the results. For instance, one could question the homogeneity of the Alevi, left-wing, right-wing, and Sunni groups. Thus, further work could explore the diversity of preferences within each of these groups.

These limitations aside, the study aimed to contribute to mate selection literature in Turkey, which is in its infancy. A unique finding is that participants placed extremely high value on almost all the characteristics listed and, thus, illustrated that they attributed rather idealized notions to their future partners. This, itself, could provide an impetus for university counseling centers to inform young persons about various aspects of marital relationships, so as to contribute to more fulfilling and realistically decided-upon marriages.

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Türk Üniversite Öğrencilerinin Eş Seçme Tercihleri (Özet)

Problem Durumu: Bugüne dek insanlar da dahil birçok canlı türünün eş seçme davranışlarıyla ilgili sayısız araştırma yapılmıştır. Bu çalışmalar evrimsel bakış açısı, sosyal rol kuramı gibi çeşitli kuramsal bakış açılarını ortaya çıkarmıştır. Tıpkı meslek seçimi gibi eş seçimi de bireyin yaşamının geri kalanı üzerinde manidar doğurgulara sahiptir. Türkiye’de eş seçme ile ilgili yapılan çalışmalar, toplumda refah seviyesi ve eğitim düzeyi arttıkça ve geleneksel değerler değiştikçe, bireylerin görücü usulüyle evlenme gibi geleneksel evlenme şekillerinin yerine daha çok bireysel tercihlere dayanan evlilikleri tercih ettiklerini göstermektedir. Her ne kadar önceki zamanlara kıyasla geleneksel evlilikler azalmış olsa da aileler eş seçiminde önemli derecede söz sahibi olmaya devam etmektedirler. Örneğin, evlenip- evlenmeme ve ne zaman evlenilmesi gerektiğine ilişkin kararlarda aileler önemli söz hakkına sahiptirler. Bu çalışmada eş seçme kavramı bireyin evleneceği kişiyi seçmesi anlamında kullanılmaktadır. İnsanlarda eş seçimi, bireyin toplumdaki yerini, yaşantısını ve geleceğini etkileyen önemli ve karmaşık bir süreçtir. Türkiye’de aileler, üniversite eğitimi sonrasında çocuklarının evlenmek üzere eş seçme çabasına girmeleri yönünde beklentilere sahiptirler. Bu nedenle, bu çalışma kapsamına üniversite son sınıf öğrencileri alınmıştır. Üniversite eğitimlerini tamamlamak üzere olan bireylerin eş seçmede önemsedikleri ölçütleri araştırmak Türkiye’de eş seçme davranışına ilişkin literatüre katkı sağlayacaktır. Ayrıca, bu tür çalışmalar eş seçme davranışında kültürlerarası farklılık ve benzerlikleri kıyaslamayı olanaklı kılacaktır. Buna ek olarak, Türkiye’de son yıllarda hızlı bir şekilde gelişmekte olan evlilik ve aile terapisi alanında çalışanlara ışık tutacaktır.

Araştırmanın Amacı: Bu çalışmanın amacı üniversite son sınıf öğrencilerinin evlenmek üzere seçecekleri eşlerinde ne tür özellikleri önemsediklerini öğrencilerin cinsiyeti, dini inançları ve siyasi yönelimleri açısından incelemektir.

Araştırmanın Yöntemi: Çalışmaya toplam 1126 öğrenci katılmıştır. Öğrencilerin 732’si (% 65) kadın, 394’ü (% 35) erkektir. Katılımcılar 21 ile 28 yaş aralığındadır ve yaş ortalamaları 21.8’dir. Bütün katılımcılar bekârdır ve ileride evlenmeyi düşündüklerini belirtmişlerdir. Araştırmada üç katılımcı grupta çalışılmıştır. Birincisi, 168 kişiden oluşmuştur ve bu gruptaki öğrencilere açık uçlu bir soru sorularak, potansiyel bir eşte ne tür özellikleri tercih ettikleri listelemeleri istenmiştir. İkinci çalışma grubu 217 öğrenciden oluşmuştur ve bu gruptan elde edilen veriler ile ilk çalışmada belirlenen sıfatlara ilişkin açıklayıcı faktör analizi yapılmıştır. Buradan elde edilmiş olan 33 özelliğin listesi çalışmanın üçüncü grubunu oluşturan 1126 öğrenciye verilmiştir. Bu öğrencilerden her bir özelliğe atfettikleri önemi 10’lu Likert tipi ölçekle belirtmeleri istenmiştir. Elde edilen veriler ANOVA testi ile incelenmiştir.

Araştırmanın Bulguları: Üniversite öğrencilerinin en çok önemli buldukları 33 özellik, analizler sonrasında dört faktörde toplanmıştır: kişilik özellikleri; aile ilişkileri; güç ve çekicilik ve benzerlik/geleneksellik. Kadın öğrenciler dört faktörden üçünde

erkeklerden daha yüksek puanlar elde etmişlerdir. Ancak, bütün faktörlerde her iki cinsiyet de oldukça yüksek puanlar elde etmişlerdir. Öğrencilerin eş seçme tercihleri aile ilişkileri ve benzerlik/geleneksellik boyutlarında siyasi yönelime göre anlamlı farklılıklar göstermiştir. Sünni ailelerde yetişen öğrenciler Alevi ailelerde yetişenlere kıyasla bütün dört faktörde anlamlı derecede yüksek puanlar elde etmişlerdir.

Araştırmanın Sonucu ve Öneriler: Araştırmanın bulguları Türkiye’de üniversite son sınıf öğrencilerinin eş seçiminde özellikle gelecek vadeden bir evliliği sağlayacak özellikleri partnerlerinde önemsediklerini göstermektedir. Başka bir ifadeyle, öğrenciler kişisel zevk, eğlencelik vb. gibi kişisel zevke hitap eden özellikleri (örn., beraber eğlenebilmek) pek belirtmemişlerdir ve daha çok uzun süre devam edecek-olaysız bir evliliği kolaylaştıracak eş özelliklerini önemsemekle daha “garantici” bir tutum göstermişlerdir. Bütün katılımcıların ileride evleneceklerini belirtmeleri de cinsiyet ilişkilerini yaşamının evlilik içerisinde ele alındığına ilişkin bir bulgu olarak nitelendirilebilir. Bulgular uluslararası literatürde yer alan çalışmalara kıyasla Türkiye’deki öğrencilerin genel olarak evlenecekleri bireylere ilişkin birçok özelliğe daha çok anlam atfettikleri göstermiştir. Başka bir anlatımla, bu çalışmanın katılımcıları Batı kültüründen örneklere kıyasla eş seçiminde daha titiz davranacaklarını ifade etmişlerdir.

Öte yandan, araştırmada sadece üniversite öğrencilerine ve ileride yapacakları seçimlerine ilişkin düşünceleri sorulmuş olması ve sadece kendini rapor etmeye dayalı testler kullanılarak veriler toplanmış olması araştırmanın sınırlılıklarındandır. Bireyler evliliğin oldukça idealize edildiği bir kültürde henüz evlenmemişken eşlerinde aradıkları özellikleri ifade ederken belki de gelecekteki eşlerini idealize ederek betimlemişlerdir. Eş seçme ile ilgili araştırmaların daha bütünsel ampirik bilgiler sağlaması için gelecekte yapılacak çalışmalarda halihazırda evli çiftler, kız-erkek arkadaşlar gibi çeşitli örneklemlerle çalışılabilir. İleride insanların ne tür özellikleri önemseyeceklerini ifade etmeleriyle önemli bilgiler elde edileceği gibi, bu bilgiler ancak halihazırda eş seçmiş olan bireylerin seçimlerinde hangi özellikleri ne derece önemsediklerine ilişkin bilgilerle beraber ele alındıklarında eş seçme davranışına ilişkin daha bütünlüklü bilgi sunacaktır. Benzer şekilde, birçok araştırmacı için ulaşılması daha güç olan toplumsal kesimlerin eş seçme davranışlarının incelenmesi Türkiye’deki eş seçme literatürünü zenginleştirecektir. Ayrıca, araştırmacılar bireylere olası eşlerinde hangi özellikleri önemsediklerini sormanın yanısıra belki belli bir zaman aralığından sonra aynı bireylere ailelerinin kendilerinin potansiyel eşlerinde ne tür özellikleri önemseyecekleri de sorulmalıdır. Böylelikle, bireylerin kendi önemsedikleri özelliklerle ailelerin algılanmış tercihleri arasında kıyaslamalar yapmak mümkün olacaktır. Bu araştırmanın bulgularına bakıldığında katılımcılar, kendilerine verilen listedeki arzu edilir özelliklere uluslararası literatürde rastlanan çalışmaların bulgularında belirtildiğinden çok daha yüksek puanlar atfetmişlerdir.

Bu bulgu belki de üniversite son sınıf öğrencilerinin evlilik ve gelecek eşlerini idealize ettiklerinin göstergesi olarak da yorumlanabilir. Bu nedenle, üniversite

psikolojik danışma merkezlerinde çalışan psikolojik danışmanlar, öğrencilerin evlilik ve romantik ilişkiler konusunda daha gerçekçi algı ve beklentilere sahip olmalarına katkıda bulunacak çalışmalar yapabilirler.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Eş seçimi, üniversite öğrencileri, cinsiyet, dinsel inanç, siyasi yönelim.