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Motivation and Marriage Choice in the Context of Research of Matrimonial Behavior of Student Youth

Abstract

The article presents the results of research aimed at studying the features of the manifestation the matrimonial behavior of student youth. The analysis of the main marriage attitudes of this group (attitude to marriage, divorce, cohabitation; criteria for choosing a marriage partner, motives for marriage) was carried out on the basis of primary data obtained from a survey of students of the Belgorod State National Research University. It was revealed that the majority of BSU students have a traditional view of marriage, have a desire to marry and start a family, an official marriage, which implies traditional family values, is preferable for them. When choosing a marriage partner, most of the young people are guided by the personal characteristics of a person and value orientations. The following marriage attitudes are typical for modern students: an increase in the ideal age for marriage, the emergence of family equality trends and a decrease in the desired number of children in the family.

Keywords: Marriage, marriage choice, factors of marriage choice, motives for marriage, matrimonial behavior, mating behavior, student youth.

Introduction

In the discourse of the transition to a new model of marriage, a new paradigm is being built to strengthen the traditional marriage attitudes of students. Domestic and foreign researchers consider the transformation of matrimonial behavior one of the factors in reducing the birth rate (below the level of simple reproduction).

The dynamics of changes in matrimonial behavior indicates the need to study the peculiarities of its manifestations in different

social groups, as one of the main factors influencing the demographic processes and demographic situation of the region and the country

The study of the matrimonial behavior of youth becomes relevant in this context, it is at this stage of age development that a system of value orientations is formed, the most significant behavioral models, including matrimonial ones. Despite a rather significant share in the population and special significance in the

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process of reproduction, students are not an independent object of demographic policy and are not allocated a separate column for demographic analysis. In the future, the behavior of young people and their values will largely determine the values of the whole society (Kozhurova, 2012).

The authors of the study consider matrimonial behavior as a set of actions based on a person's personal preferences leading to marriage or rejection, as well as the choice of a marriage partner.

Some researchers (Gubernskaya, 2010; Thornton, Freedman, 1982; Mironova, Turnova, 2014; Pelmeneva, 2010; Rostovskaya, 2015) note the transformation of the matrimonial behavior of youth, which is currently characterized by an increase in the age of marriage and the age of birth of the first child, the spread, and sometimes the replacement of official marriage, with the phenomenon of cohabitation (Mironova, Turnova, 2014). With regard to the stability of marriage, a change in social norms continues, expressed in a more loyal attitude towards divorce (Rostovskaya, 2015). The reproductive strategies of modern youth are focused on a small family, voluntary childlessness is also acceptable.

Researchers note that least of all the changes affected such an aspect of matrimonial behavior as the motivation to marry. Young people called non-economic (love, closeness of interests, desire to be with a loved one) as the main motives (Pelmeneva, 2010; Rostovskaya, 2015; Srivastava, 2016).

Publication activity indicates that student youth is of particular research interest, being the most promising group in terms of realizing the demographic potential (Pelmeneva, 2010; Rostovskaya, 2015; Sofronova, 2011; Pavlov ... 2018).

The relevance of studying the stated research problem is due to the need to analyze the regional characteristics of the matrimonial behavior of students, which allows more efficient search for new and optimal ways to correct it.

The aim of the study is to identify the characteristics of student matrimonial behavior (attitudes toward marriage, motives for marriage, criteria for choosing a marriage partner) based on multidimensional and multidisciplinary consideration of the spectrum of problems in the formation of the matrimonial behavior of students, identification of the determinants of student marriage settings, including attitude to marriage, divorce, cohabitation and criteria for choosing a marriage partner.

Material and Methods

Comprehensive multidisciplinary research, on the basis of which it is possible to create conditions at all levels of family and demographic policy, social and psychological work that promote the formation and correction of student behavior in the marriage market, and to develop social projects aimed at constructing a stable registered marriage among students have not been widely disseminated in Russia. The authors of this study relied on the following scientific theories: theories of choice of a marriage partner (Murstein, 1970; Kerckhoff, Davis, 1962; Winch, 1955); research on the motivation for marriage (Kamneva, 2009; Nikulina, 2010; Schneider, 2013; Vasilieva, Yarygina, 2007); theories of psychological readiness for marriage (Andreeva, 2007; Zholudeva, 2008; Nazarova, 2014; Shubovich, Faizova, 2013).

The research involved students from several structural divisions of the Belgorod State National Research University: Institute of Social Sciences and Mass Communications (59.9%), Institute of Economics and Management (7.5%), Pedagogical Institute (14.6%), Institute of Law (7.5%), Institute of Pharmacy Chemistry and Biology (10.5%). Full-time students (61.1%) and part-time students (37.8%). Respondents are represented by three levels of study – bachelors (75.6%), master's degree (7.9%), and specialty (16.5%). The sample was determined by proportional quota sampling ($n = 267$, proportional selection by gender, age, course, level and form of training).

The questionnaire is divided into several blocks that meet the objectives of the study: the study of the features and problems of the formation the matrimonial behavior of students; the identification attitudes of students to formal marriage, the creation of a family; determination of the characteristics of mating behavior and trends in the spread of unregistered marriages, students' attitudes to divorce and re-marriage.

Results and Discussion

The first block of the questionnaire proposed to the respondents (students) required to determine the social and individual significance of marriage.

The overwhelming majority of respondents consider marriage an important component of society and have a positive attitude towards marriage (78.3% and 74.9% respectively) and expressed a desire to marry (77% of them); 13.1% don't consider marriage a social value, while 40.0% of them still have the intention to marry, and 54.3% haven't. 23.6% show a neutral attitude to marriage, and 41.3% of them would like to marry in the future, 55.6% - would not (Table 1).

Table 1.
The significance of marriage

Do you consider marriage an important component of society?	Would you like to get married?			
	Yes	No	Difficult to answer	No answer
Yes	60.3%	9.4%	6.7%	1.9%
No	5.2%	7.1%	0.7%	0.0%
Difficult to answer	4.1%	4.5%	0.0%	0.0%

The next two questions are interrelated and illustrate the experience of premarital or marriage. So 48.4% of male respondents and 54.2% of female respondents have a partner (girl \ boyfriend), 9% (respectively 3.1% of men and 10.8% of women) are officially married, 39.3% respondents are free. At the same time, 14.2% of respondents who are not officially married live together with their partner (9.4% of men and 15.8% of women). This is confirmed by the fact that the delay in registering marriage in the presence of actual marital relations between young people is increasingly becoming a social norm.

The marriage age is one of the characteristics of marriage behavior. That is why the next set of questions reveals the optimal age for marriage, from the point of view of respondents. The students of the National Research University "BSU" consider 26-30 years (63%) and 21-25 years (28.5%) the most optimal age for marriage for men. According to the respondents, the most optimal age for women to marry is 21-25 years old (55.8%) and 26-30 years old (41.2%).

Individual preferences of the respondents coincide with the ideal, from their point of view, age of marriage: 21-25 years old - 49.4%, 26-30 years old – 38.6%. This confirms the conclusions of some researchers that currently not only boys but also girls are focused on creating a family, having reached a certain social maturity and material independence (Malimonov, et al., 2015; Kord, et al, 2017).

The orientation of modern students to independence and autonomy explains that less than a third of respondents consider it possible to marry while studying at a university (28.8%, of which 16.9% are men, 83.1% are women). The remaining respondents answered negatively or found it difficult to answer (36.7% and 34.5%, respectively).

The next set of questions is aimed at identifying motivation and conditions for marriage.

Three types of motivation for matrimonial behavior are distinguished in sociology and psychology (Pelmeneva, 2010; Golod, 1977; Rostovskaya, 2015)

1) the motivation for the fact of marriage: a mutual desire to marry, the presence of the status of "husband / wife";

2) motivation for a certain type of marriage: orientation to a certain type of partner, corresponding to the personal idea of an ideal marriage partner and union (profession, social status, values, interests, etc.);

3) motivation for a specific person: a conscious choice with the aim of accepting a specific person.

In general, the results of the research showed that men most often choose such motives for marriage as a community of views and interests, mutual feelings and expectation of a child. For women mutual feelings, common views and interests, expectation of a child, and confirmation of intentions of seriousness of a partner seem to be more significant motives (Table 2).

Table 2.
The motives for marriage

What is your main motive for marriage?	Distribution of respondents by sex	
	Male	Female
Fear of loneliness	60.0%	40.0%
Expecting a baby	30.3%	69.7%
Common views and interests	21.4%	78.6%
Partner material security	13.3%	86.7%
Parental guidance	44.4%	55.6%
Mutual feelings	24.1%	75.9%
Affirmation of intentions of partner seriousness	17.9%	82.1%

Motives of the third kind (love, mutual feelings) are prevailing among students (86.9%). When distributing indicators by sex, you can see that mutual feelings are more significant for women (75.9%), while among the male respondents this motive was chosen by 24.1%. 47.6% of respondents are characterized by motivation for a particular type of marriage (community of interests, material security of a partner, parental guidance). It is significant that the material factor is chosen mainly by women as one of the leading (86.7%). Motivation for the fact of marriage (expecting a child, confirmation of the partner's intentions) is demonstrated by 58.1% of respondents. It is noteworthy that the expectation of a child as a motive for marriage was noted by 24.7% of respondents (30.3% of them were men and 69.7% were women), which may indicate an understanding of the importance of raising a child in a full family.

The fear of loneliness mentioned as a motive for marriage in numerous studies turned out to be insignificant for the sample "student youth". This answer option was chosen by only 5 people out of 267 respondents (1.8%).

According to students, love (77.9%), respect (59.9%), common views and interests (25.5%) are the favorable conditions for marriage.

So, when determining the motives of matrimonial behavior, youth is guided, first of all, by the personal needs for love, social approval, communication, and common interests. Young people are ready to build a family life even in the event of a lack of material means, provided that they have feelings for the chosen partner.

At the same time, 22.8% and 12.7% of respondents note a stable income and the availability of their own housing as conditions for marriage. This correlates with earlier conclusions about the orientation of a significant part of young people towards creating a family only when a certain material independence is achieved.

The respondents consider partner's deviant behavior (75.3%), lack of mutual feelings (62.5%), mismatch of life values (21.3%) to be the main obstacles to marriage. Least of all students are concerned about the material security of the partner (9.0%), the opinion of

parents (8.6%), the social status of the partner (2.6%), belonging to different social strata (2.2%).

Motivation as a component of matrimonial behavior determines the idea of a potential marriage partner, the subjective preference of the marriage partner is the marriage choice, which represents one of the steps towards creating a marriage, as well as the first element in the structure of matrimonial behavior (Dobrenkov, Kravchenko, 2006).

The next block of questions is aimed at identifying such representations, specifying the preferred personal qualities and social characteristics of a potential marriage partner.

Noting the maximum significance (62.9%) of personal characteristics in the choice of a future spouse, respondents indicated a number of the most important qualities for them, which made it possible to draw up his psychological portrait. Ideal future spouse should be kind (25.1%), honest (22.1%), loving (17.6%), respectful (15.4%), smart (14.2%), supporting (12.7%), reliable and responsible (12.4% each), with a sense of humor (10.5%), goal-oriented (10.1%), optimistic (9%), leading a healthy lifestyle (8.6%), sharing the interests of a spouse (7.9%).

Unfortunately such important characteristics for marriage as trust in a partner (3.7%), industriousness (2.6%), sexual compatibility (2.6%), fidelity (0%) turned out to be unclaimed. This can be partially explained by insufficient social experience, including family relations and the lack of positive examples of the parental family. Also noteworthy is the low percentage of representatives of student youth (the future intellectual elite of society!) choosing such characteristics as the upbringing and education of the potential spouse (6.7% and 6.4%, respectively).

At the same time the respondents attributed his value system (49.8%), lifestyle and desire for self-realization (43.8% each), intelligence level (41.9%), and labor employment (job availability) (30.7%), sexual temperament (32.6%) to the most significant social characteristics of a potential marriage partner regardless of their own choice.

So there is a certain contradiction between the socially determined and individual parameters of the choice of a partner.

The impression of inconsistency and lack of formation of stable ideas about the necessary characteristics of a marriage partner is strengthened when analyzing the answers to the question about the unacceptable qualities of a potential spouse. Thus, uncertainty (23.2%), the presence of bad habits (21%), selfishness (19.5%), deceit (18.4%) are considered to be the most unacceptable qualities. Moreover, such unacceptable manifestations in a marriage as aggressiveness, a tendency to violence, meanness, irresponsibility, and sexism are marked by the smallest number of choices: from 1% to 5.2%, which once again testifies to the preservation of the traditionally tolerant attitude towards the destructive model of family relationships in the public consciousness, including in the consciousness of youth.

The concept of the marriage circle as a combination of marriage partners possible for a given person is inextricably linked with the process of marriage choice. The composition of the marriage circle and its boundaries are determined by the age, sociability of the person, the breadth and intensity of his social contacts, ethnic and religious affiliation, education, social status, the influence of peers already married, the influence of parents, the level of intelligence, and the appearance of the marriage partners.

There are various opportunities for dating as an important stage of matrimonial behavior in the youth environment. An important social factor in marital choice is spatial proximity (neighborhood, study at one educational institution, work in one organization), which increases the chances of meeting a potential partner, who will most likely have similarities in other personal and social characteristics (Koludarova, 2014). On the other hand, the researchers noted the presence of difficulties in the process of finding a partner, the reasons for which are contained both in the specifics of places for dating and in the peculiarities of organizing the life of students (Pelmeneva, 2010).

Therefore, the actual presence of a partner (boyfriend / girl) does not necessarily indicate that he / she is exactly the person the respondent would like to marry. So, 63.8% of our respondents with experience in relationships consider their partner suitable for marriage, and 34% have not yet met such a person.

For the students we interviewed the most popular places of dating are the company of friends (83.1%), place of study (50.6%), work (45.7%), social networks (31.8%), places of recreation (28.1%). We note the relatively high share of online social networks, the possibility that in the context of the choice of marriage

require special attention and more thorough study.

Marriage choice, considered as the choice of a marriage partner within the given marriage circle, and the formed motivation form the readiness for marriage as a system of socio-psychological personality attitudes that determines an emotionally-positive attitude to the family lifestyle, values of matrimony (Pospelova, Trapeznikova, 1996).

According to research (Sofronova, 2011), the rejection of marriage, both registered and unregistered, is explained by the lack of free time, the inability to combine education with the creation of a family (additional earnings, finding housing, etc.), unwillingness to enter into a long relationship.

One third of unmarried respondents (33.6%, among which 70% are women and 30% are men) are ready to do this at the moment (35% and 25% respectively). These data confirm the earlier conclusion that about a third of students consider it possible to marry while studying at a university). 52.8% of respondents (among which 64% are men and 59.3% are women) are not ready for this serious step, 14.6% were at a loss or did not answer the question. At the same time, more than 60% of those who answered the question could not explain their unpreparedness; others noted a young age (34.5%, of which 28.3% were men, 71.7%), lack of financial stability (3.4%, more popular answer among men than women), study (1.5%, this option was chosen only by women) among the reasons for the unpreparedness.

In addition, the unreadiness for marriage can be caused by difficulties arising at the stage of building relationships with a potential partner during the premarital period, which ideally should be sufficient to determine whether partner's qualities and matrimonial behavior style are consistent with expected ones. In this regard, the opinion of respondents about the length of the premarital period seems to be important. Students' answers generally coincide with traditional ideas and the opinion of family psychologists that the optimal period for recognizing each other should last from 1 year to 3 years.

The result of matrimonial behavior can be not only marriage, but also a rejection or parting / divorce. In this regard, in the context of our study, the attitude of students to divorce and remarriage as well as their understanding of the main causes of divorce is interesting.

So, 52% of respondents have a negative attitude to divorce, 13.9% of respondents don't see anything wrong with a divorce, 34.1% believe it is justified in certain circumstances. The vast majority of young people surveyed (96.6%) will not put up with a failed marriage. At

the same time, 93.6% of respondents admit the possibility of concluding a new alliance with another partner, but 95% of them would still prefer to be married once and for all.

The reasons that can lead to divorce / parting are physical (82%) and psychological abuse (39.3%), betrayal (68.2%), deviant behavior (45.3%), loss of feelings (34.8%). Values mismatch (12.7%) and lack of spiritual affinity (6%) are also indicated. Possible reasons for divorce such as infertility, material difficulties, sexual problems were extremely rarely indicated by our respondents either due to insufficient life experience, or due to the fact that such delicate issues are not customary to discuss in our society.

Conclusion

The results of the study led to the following conclusions: student youth has a positive attitude to the formalization of relations, seeks to obtain marriage status; the majority of respondents seek to preserve their marriage, while one can note a neutral and positive (in certain circumstances: violence, betrayal, deviant behavior of the partner) attitude to divorce; the optimal age for marriage is determined to be 26-30 years for a man and 21-25 years for a woman and is associated with young people reaching a certain social maturity; the predominant motives for marriage are mutual feelings, common interests, respect, expectation of a child; when choosing a marriage partner, most respondents are guided by the personal characteristics of the future spouse: kindness, honesty, reliability, responsibility

Thus, a change in marriage behavior raises the question not only of studying these processes at the macro level, from the point of view of classifying various types of marriages, evaluating marital tendencies, but also of research at the micro level, about the need to identify the individual determinants of marriage (or non-marriage) and of choosing marriage partners. Matrimonial behavior as one of the types of social behavior of an individual is determined by the values, motives and orientation of the individual, and, thus, the formation of its new norms is possible, successfully combining both traditional and modern values. The authors believe that the family and family lifestyle remains one of the most important values in society and should be a priority for demographic policy and family law.

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