In Islam, marital partner is advised to be chosen based on 4 elements: wealth, beauty, family history/genetic factors, and on top of all: RELIGION.

Each individual may have different ideas of his/her IDEAL partner.
Choosing a life partner

4 basic processes:

1. **Know oneself**
2. **Know one’s potential partner (self observation or middle person)**
3. **Know his/her family background**
4. **Study the effect of the relationship supposed there is going to be a marriage**
Theories related to choosing a life partner

**Homogamy vs. heterogamy**

- People marry those of the same kind (similar characteristics)
- The concept of KAFAAH/kufu (ethnic, SES, religion, values) ➔ Homogamy; more common
- Those who marry “outside” the similar territory or those of opposite characteristics are known as heterogamy; may face greater challenges
- **endogamy**: marrying within one’s own social group vs. **exogamy** – outside the group
- “Complementary” = characteristics that complement each other
Filtering Theory

Filtering process to minimize the size of the ‘pool’ of the potential candidates (Kerckhoff & Davis, 1962)

Filter 1 = propinquity (distance, time factor, physical space; geographic closeness)

Filter 2: Social background (ethnicity; SES)

Filter 3: Attractiveness (similar or more or less about the same)

Filter 4: Matched (personality, interest, values)

Filter 5: “balanced sheet filter” – analyzing benefit & loss; if balance; proceed to commitment stage → marriage
All eligible candidates

Filter 1 – propinquity
All eligible candidates that one knows of

Filter 2 – social background
Candidates that have similar background characteristic

Filter 3: Attractiveness
Partners get attracted to each other

Filter 4: matching
Personality, interest, values

Filter 5: balance sheet
commitment
Marital preparation / readiness

- **Spiritual**
  - Faith, religion as way of life
  - Knowing the rights/wrong; rights & responsibilities
  - A clean start

- **Physical**
  - Healthy: physical, mental, emotions
  - Free from diseases
  - Fertile
  - Sexual
Socio-cultural

The Wedding

Relationships with families of orientations; in-laws; neighbours; friends (yours, mine, ours)

Work & family

Socio-emotional

The importance of being in-love; staying in-love through-out; marital Q

Parenting
Socio-economy

- Nafkah
- Responsibilities towards family of procreation
- Responsibilities towards families of orientation
Family Developmental Tasks

- Basic family tasks; specific for each level of the family life cycle
- Involves responsibly, roles that are shaped and in accord with biological needs, cultural influences, values and family aspirations
- Occur simultaneously and parallel with individual development
Success in fulfilling the tasks:

- satisfaction; happiness; recognition from society; ease the accomplishment of the subsequent tasks

- Failure???
  - May limit growth (various aspects)
  - May interfere with later stages
  - May create conflict
Basic family tasks:

- Provision of basic needs: shelter, food, clothing, safety etc
- Fulfilment of living cost through distribution of resources (time, space, energy); & facilities
- Division of household tasks such as “breadwinner”; “family manager”; maintenance of home & family members
- Ensuring the “success” of the socialization process
- Provision of the “know how” of interactional processes (communication, expression of feelings, sexuality etc)
Give birth, nurture, bring-up the children, launch them

Establishment of good relationships with the outside world (neighbours, friends, school, community, religious institution)

Nurturing value system; morale behaviour, motivations, positive conflict management; strategizing life goals and honesty ("basic life skills")

Every member holds specific tasks pertinent to his/her position in the family (husband/father; wife/mother; siblings; children)
Family tasks according to stages across the family life cycle

**Level I: Early stage**

Newly wed, lasts for 1 – 3 years; high marital Q

**Family life tasks:**

- Forming roles both in marriage and family; discuss expectations; adapt to meet own, partner’s and marital needs; planning for children; parenting
- Provide emotional support for each other (love, emotions, self identity & “married person” identity; sexual responsibilities
- Establish interaction patterns, communication, expression of love & other emotions etc
Personal adaptations – give & take, tolerance of personal habits / likes-dislikes / hobbies

Tolerance of gender role in accord with personalities, skills, needs, interest, justice & fairness

Family first – managing work-family conflict, balancing work/family goals; recognizing unpaid labour; sharing of household tasks

Improve communication skills; sharing of problems

Financial management; short vs. long term goals

Establish & strengthen family relationships

Involvement in neighbourhood activities; mutual friends, own friends

Strengthen religious beliefs; nurturing morale values
Level II: Child bearing / rearing stage

Forming a family; expecting birth of a child; family with 1-2 children; decreased marital Q

Tasks:
- Adaptation of parental roles
- Establish family stability – all members are learning “the new roles”
- Learn about child development – practice smart rearing
- Financial management (current & future)
- Strengthen relationships with extended family members – the grandparents
- Adjust to new roles as couples with children; family routines & rituals, holidays & festivals
Safety first – for the little ones; arrange home furniture accordingly

Family planning

Strengthen religiosity; nurturing morale values

Level III: Family with pre-schooler

Child’s age – 2.5 – 6 yrs. old. Nurturing & subsequent birth; takes about 3 – 4 years

Tasks

Provide enough & suitable space, facilities, other things to fit the expanded family

Prepare for both expected and unexpected cost

More matured ; remain “warm”; Nurture & raise children with love and positive stimulation
Strengthen good relationships with extended families
Identify additional resources from outside
Motivate family members
Strengthen religiosity; nurturing morale values

Level IV: Family with schooling children
First child ages 6-12; takes 6-7 years to complete

Tasks:
- Provide enough & suitable space, facilities & other things for schooling children; maintain couple’s privacy
- Financial management – to meet extra demands
- Expanding family socialization process
- Improving communication Q; Strengthen relationships with outside systems; Strengthen religiosity; nurturing morale values
Level V: Family & Adolescent

1st. Child ages 13-20; takes about 7 years to complete

Tasks:
- Space & facilities
- Financial management
- Sharing of household responsibilities
- Re-focus on marital relationship
- Improve intergeneration communication
- Strengthen relationships with extended families & other systems outside the family
- Involve in the adolescent’s activities
- Strengthen religiosity; morale values; ethics
Level VI: “Launching” stage

1st child leaves home; ends when the youngest child leaves. Takes about 8 yrs. Marital Q has high potential to improve or... fail

Tasks

- Rearrange household arrangement
- Preparing to launch the children
- Transfer some responsibilities to adult children
- Adapt to new roles as parents of the adult children
- Maintain open communication; expand relationships through child’s marriage; Strengthen religiousity; morale values; ethics
Level VII: Middle age Family

Begins when the youngest child leaves home, ends when couples retire – “Empty Nest stage”
or the boomerang generation starts

Tasks

- Prepare facilities for well-being; comfort & health needs
- Distribute resources taking into account retirement plan
- Establish interaction pattern of “mutual fulfilment of needs”; improve marital Q
- Increase meaningful social roles; family relationship
- Religiosity, values, ethics
Level VIII: Family during the golden years

Couples are economically inactive; death of one or both partners

Tasks:

- Arrange for meaningful life
- Adapt financial needs with limited resources
- Set comforting routines; healthcare, strengthen marital relationship
- Increase social role; family relationships
- Religiosity, values, ethics; searching for meaning of life?
Variations in family life cycle

- Family life stages is experienced uniquely by each family; in accord with formation; time; duration; age of first child; subsequent children; family types
- Transitional from one to the next level produce changes that can influence family relationship; adaptation is need
- Various social changes influence the trends / form / functions of the family
- Examples:
  Post-poned marriages; postponed child-bearing, all other stages are being postponed
  Career first?
  Families without children? Adopted children?
Fewer children may shorten the span of life cycle
Birth of special children
Divorced families? Single parent families; step – families? Blended families?
Some singles -- adopted children (trendsetter = artist?)
Pregnancy out of the wedlock; homosexual couples?
The shoot off of the launching stage is debatable
Improved life expectancy – demands for children to provide care for their elderly
Think twice…

He who is unable to live in society or who has no need because he is sufficient for himself, must be either a beast or a god

— Aristotle