FAMILY FORMATION - Choosing a life partner

1. 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
2. Each individual may have different ideas of his/her IDEAL 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

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
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

Basic family tasks:
- Provision of basic needs: shelter, food, clothing, safety etc
- Fulfillment 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)

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

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

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

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

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

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 Q
    - 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 religiosity; 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 fulfillment 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?

**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