



Media, Love and Marriage: The Relationship between Social/Mass Media, Liquid Love and Attitude toward Marriage

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Extended Abstract

The media, along with the content they distribute, involve particular nature and structures that can transform patterns of thinking, behaviors, and emotions. With the emergence of social media and the increasing rate of human interactions in the virtual world, human emotions (including love) have been re-defined in this new space. This issue has been addressed by renowned theorists such as Giddens and Bauman. The present survey investigated the relationship between social/mass media and (liquid) love and the consequences of this relationship as perceived by Shiraz University students. To gather data, 386 students were selected through stratified, probability sampling and completed the copies of a researcher-made questionnaire. The reliability and validity of the questionnaire were confirmed through Cronbach's alpha and face validity. Results revealed that there was a significant relationship between virtual social networks, domestic and foreign media, and liquid love. Furthermore, the variables of virtual social networks, domestic and foreign media, and liquid love showed a significant relationship to attitude toward marriage. In the structural equation model (processed in Amos), three variables, namely virtual social networks usage, domestic mass media usage, and foreign mass media usage, respectively, left the highest degrees of impact on liquid love. Moreover, three variables, namely domestic mass media usage, foreign mass media usage, and liquid love, significantly affected attitude toward marriage with coefficients of 0.199, -0.113, and -0.414, respectively.

Keywords: liquid love, social media, mass media, attitude to marriage, students

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INTRODUCTION

Societies enjoy different and relatively stable values, attitudes and habits which are not fixed and unchangeable. While traditional values and attitudes are prevalent among older generations of society, younger generations have different values (Inglehart, 2004). One of the important factors influencing the emergence and continuity of these changes is the media technologies. The media can change the intellectual, behavioral and emotional habits of the audience not only by their content but also by their nature and structure. With the advent of social media and expansion of human interactions in cyberspace, human emotions such as love have gained new features in this emerging space. Along with historical developments in the concept and function of love, today, it has become the foundation of marriage and family formation in most societies. Some theorists such as Ulrich Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1995), consider all family transformations, i.e. marriage and divorce, the result of love among men and women. Man marries for the sake of love and go for separation because of love. This is a new manifestation of love called liquid love. New media such as the Internet have provided unlimited possibilities for other people to find, unite and break links, and the spread of the Internet has introduced different styles of intimacy and love and has embraced the traditional and modern boundaries of society. These changes can lead to changes in the concept of love, marriage and romantic relationships.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between social / mass media with the concept of love and the attitude towards marriage among students. In other words, this study attempted to answer the question of how the use of media (social / mass) affects students' concept of love and how such a concept of love can affect their attitudes toward marriage.

METHODOLOGY

In this survey study, all students of Shiraz University in the academic year 2017-18 were considered as the statistical population. Cochran's formula was used to determine the sample size. Therefore, 386 students were selected as the sample using stratified random sampling technique and completed the questionnaire with consent. A questionnaire was used for data collection and the theoretical basis of liquid love was defined based on the Zygmunt Bauman conceptualization. This variable was constructed as a researcher-made 37-item Likert scale. To ensure the validity and reliability of liquid love scales and attitudes to marriage, face validity was investigated and to ensure the reliability, Cronbach's alpha technique was used. Spss22 software was used for initial data analysis and Amoss 22 software was used for structural equation modeling.

RESULT

Table 1 showed that the mean variable of liquid love among students was 10.22 (Minimum: 55, Maximum: 158). The concept of love was largely liquid in only 7.8% of students. On the other hand, the average attitude of students to marriage was 78.72 (Minimum: 35 Maximum: 10) and only 2.8% of students had a negative attitude to marriage.

Table 1. Frequency and Percentage of Liquid Love and Attitude to Marriage among Respondents

Variable	Classes	F	P	M/Min/Max
Liquid love	Low	68	18.90%	M= 102.22
	average	263	73.10%	Min= 55
	high	28	7.80%	Max= 158
Attitude towards marriage	negative	10	2.80%	M= 78.72
	moderate	226	62.80%	Min= 35
	positive	124	34.40%	Max= 106

Table 2 showed that there was a significant correlation between online social networks, national and foreign mass media with liquid love. Moreover, variables of online social networks, national and foreign mass media and liquid love had a significant relationship with attitudes toward marriage. The results of the structural equation modeling analysis also showed that three variables of online social networks, the amount of watching national mass media, and the amount of watching foreign mass media, had the highest impact on the liquid love, respectively. Furthermore, the three variables of national media watching, foreign media watching and liquid love had a significant effect on attitudes towards marriage with correlation coefficients of 0.999, -0.113 and -0.414, respectively.

Table 2: Results of correlation test between independent variables and dependent variables

	Use of online social networks	Use of national mass media	Use of foreign mass media	Liquid love	Attitudes towards marriage
Use of online social networks	1				
Use of national mass media	*0.119	1			
Use of foreign mass media	-0.078	0.086	1		
Liquid love	**0.220	**0.148	**0.120	1	
Attitudes towards marriage	*0.118	**0.145	**0.212	**0.456	1





CONCLUSION

The results suggested that, on the one hand, foreign mass media and online social networks increased liquid love and had a negative impact on attitude towards marriage; on the other hand, national mass media decreased liquid love and had a positive effect on attitude towards marriage. Regarding this finding, one can point to the different discourses and ideologies of these media in their programs. While national media, including Iranian radio and television, observe the discourse of family and marriage consolidation in almost all programs and produce films and serials with such themes, foreign or Persian satellite TV broadcasts of such as Manoto and Farsi Van, Jem TV, etc. propagate different discourses which is the discourse of freedom in relationships and the weakening of family foundations. These two types of discourse, derived from two different theologies and their corresponding applications, can affect the concept of love and attitude towards marriage differently. Among the two variables reinforcing liquid love, the use of online social networks had a stronger negative correlation. These media are interactive and have some implications for the concept of love and attitude to marriage. This finding is in line with Bauman's theory (Bauman, 2000: 6), according to which, in such networked relationships, people tend to have relationships that have features such as simplicity in starting and ending, shallowness, obscurity and anonymity, the links are made available upon request and can be broken as desired (Bauman, 2005: 11). These interactive conditions can make the understanding of love more liquid and construct a negative attitude towards marriage.

NOVELTY

Constructing a Likert scale of liquid love on base of Sigmund Bowman's concept and validating it are among the innovations of this study. In this study, in addition to testing the effect of independent variables on liquid love, it has been attempted to investigate liquid love as a mediating variable in relation to attitude toward marriage.

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