

## Ideal Partner Criteria: Perspective of Islamic Youth in Makassar City

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### Abstract

*Preference for choosing a ideal partner since adolescence is the beginning of an individual in determining whether his partner can be a partner to become the parent of his children. This study aims to find out the description of the criteria for a life partner in adolescence. The type of research used is descriptive quantitative. The data collection method used a survey method which was carried out by distributing online questionnaires. The number of respondents who filled out the questionnaire were 872 teenagers in Makassar and were Muslim consisting of 651 young women and 221 young men, with an age range of 14-19 years. The results showed that there were five factors that were used by adolescents as criteria in choosing a partner, namely partner characteristics, religion, occupation, physical appearance, and regional origin/domicile. Of the five factors, religion is the factor that has the largest percentage in choosing a partner, which is 78.5% and the lowest percentage factor is regional origin/domicile, which is 6.9%. When viewed from the gender aspect, adolescent girls and boys have different criteria in choosing a partner, namely male adolescents are more likely to choose a partner with the main criteria on physical appearance, while female adolescents state that the characteristics of a partner are the main factors in choosing a partner. The implication of this research is to provide knowledge and understanding regarding the determining factors in determining a life partner as well as an overview of the ideal partner expected by a teenager when entering domestic life. In addition, this study also has implications for premarital counselors in providing an overview of the differences in the criteria for the ideal partner expected by women and men.*

### Keywords

ideal partner; Islam youth;  
Makassar



## I. Introduction

Adolescence is a period of transition from childhood to adulthood which is marked by an acceleration of development in terms of physical, cognitive, social and emotional aspects. The search and formation of identity is stronger at this time, although the seeds of identity formation have been planted since childhood. The search and formation of identity according to Erikson (Santrok, 2011) is characterized by a teenager's understanding of who they are, what they value and the direction they will choose in life. The formation of this identity continues to be perfected by individuals until they enter the adult phase. According to Kroger (Berk, 2012) identity formation in adolescents is an exploratory process followed by commitment, in this case adolescents collect important information about themselves and their environment to make decisions about the future.

Socially, the adolescent phase is a period in which individuals prepare to become adults, including in building relationships with the opposite sex. Although building relationships is a developmental task in early adulthood, however, the characteristics and

criteria for potential partners should be understood and known by an individual from a young age. According to Cox (Aguswianti, Tambunan, and Retnaningsi, 2015) there are many factors that make an individual fail to build an intimate relationship in adulthood. These factors include past experiences, anxiety about self-identity, carrying past grudges to the present, unresolved childhood conflicts, and the quality of attachment formed in childhood. The same thing is also explained by Berk (2012) that a successful relationship in adulthood does not happen instantly, exploration during adolescence in finding one's identity contributes to determining the quality of intimate relationships in adulthood.

Based on the findings of Cox (Agusdwitanti et al, 2015) which states that one of the factors causing the inability of individuals to build intimate relationships is the inability to achieve self-identity in adolescence. In line with this, Erikson (Papalia, 2004) states that entering an intimate relationship in adulthood requires a romantic experience during adolescence. Based on this, it is clear that the readiness of an individual to enter an intimate relationship in adulthood needs to be prepared since adolescence. Because failure to build intimate relationships in adulthood often leads to divorce when an individual enters the marriage phase.

Marriage is the process by which two people make their relationship public, official, and permanent. It is the joining of two people in a bond that putatively lasts until death, but in practice is increasingly cut short by divorce. Over the course of a relationship that can last as many as seven or eight decades, a lot happens. Personalities change, bodies age, and romantic love waxes and wanes. And no marriage is free of conflict. What enables a couple to endure is how they handle that conflict (Jamaluddin, 2018). The existence of guardians in the implementation of marriage contract has been explained in Islamic law in a clear and detailed manner. Guardian for a woman becomes one of pillar in the implementation of the marriage contract, and has a systematic sequence that starts from the main one and moves sequentially to the one after, if the one above is considered 'uzur'.

Getting married is one phase of life that is commonly done by every adult human, ready physically and mentally, and has a sense of responsibility in building a household. Every person who has fulfilled these requirements is recommended to set his feet to the level of marriage. It is this level that marks a phase of life that is very important for one's survival in the future. Compared to living alone, family life has many challenges and also contains a number of positive expectations. No doubt in marriage there are many benefits if you can manage it well (Surya et al, 2019).

Data from the Religious Courts of the Supreme Court in 2020, divorce cases in Indonesia reached 306,688 cases, this number has continued to increase every year since 2015 which means that the number of divorces in Indonesia on average reaches a quarter of the two million marriages in a year (Merdeka.com). Based on these data, it can be seen that divorce cases in Indonesia are one of the most serious problems. In several divorce cases, it was found that married couples failed to build intimacy (Berk, 2014). In fact, according to Agustin, Ilyas and Idil (2018), the intimacy that is built in a marriage is the part that encourages individuals to be more intimate, respect and trust each other as well as the emotional closeness to a partner so that it is very necessary in a marriage (Imran et al, 2019).

Based on research conducted by Indriastuti and Nawangsari (2014) there are differences in intimacy in married couples in terms of length of marriage. It was found that the level of love (intimacy, passion, commitment) for working wives whose marriage age was short was higher than the level of love (intimacy, passion, commitment) of working wives with long marriages. Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that the longer the marriage, the lower the level of intimacy of marriage. In fact, according to

Mathew (Carter, 2014) that one of the most important aspects of marriage is intimacy, in this case intimacy becomes a cornerstone for every couple, especially in middle adulthood where sexual activity has begun to decline because intimacy in a marriage will make individuals become someone who is not selfish. Pourmousa, Mohammadifar, Pesand and Rezaei (2018) also found that intimacy is a determining factor in increasing self-satisfaction which is a component of happiness, the higher the level of intimacy of a couple, the happier the marriage.

Based on several previous research results, it can be seen that intimacy in a marriage is an important factor in the happiness of a married couple. Therefore, it is important to investigate further regarding adolescent preferences regarding life partners because this contributes to identity in adolescents which according to experts contributes to determining the quality of intimate relationships in adulthood.

## **II. Research Methods**

Respondents in this study were teenage girls and boys and not married. The number of respondents who filled out the questionnaire was 872 people consisting of 651 young women and 221 young men, with an age range of 14-19 years. The data was collected using a questionnaire method containing 13 items by spreading it through social media and using the google form. The distribution of the questionnaires was carried out for a week, from October 28 to November 5, 2020. The items in this questionnaire were based on the pair selection scale and also contained questions to explore factual information from respondents such as education level, ethnicity, religion, parental education level, and number of people siblings. The data is analyzed by identifying emerging categories, then the researcher tries to see the relationships between the most basic categories, systematically, and finally the researcher selects the most basic categories, systematically and relates them to other categories and validates the relationship.

## **III. Results and Discussion**

Based on the results of data analysis, it was found that the number of male adolescent respondents was 25.5% and female adolescents were 74.7%. When viewed from the level of education, the percentage of students and high school students is the same, namely 45.5%. And 10% are junior high school students. Therefore, 90% of the respondents are in the mid-late adolescence phase. This is also in accordance with the response regarding the presence or absence of close friends/girlfriends. That is 75.85 respondents answered that they had a lover or boyfriend, and 24.9% answered that they did not have a lover or girlfriend. This indicates that when entering adolescence the individual has begun to build an intimate relationship with the opposite sex. This is in accordance with the results of Rubin's research (Monsour, 2002) that in late adolescence or young adulthood an individual begins to enter the stage of intimacy conflict. In this case, individuals in this phase begin to fuse their identity with others without fear of losing their identity, therefore gradually begin to build intimate relationships with the opposite sex. However, even though at this age the individual has started to build an intimate relationship with the opposite sex, in general, teenagers are still not ready to enter the marriage stage. This is in accordance with the results of this study, namely 65.7% of adolescents stated that they were not ready to get married, 23.5% said they were not ready, and 12.5% said they were ready to get married.

Based on the criteria in determining a partner, it was found that there were seven criteria mentioned by the respondents in choosing a partner, namely the characteristics of the partner (68.35%), religion (78.5%), occupation (38.3%), physical appearance (37.1%), and area of origin (10.1%). This is in accordance with the theory of Havighurst (Daryo, 2008) which suggests that an individual in looking for their life partner will try to find a life partner by determining criteria such as age, education, occupation, ethnicity to be a prerequisite for their future life partner. From these results it can also be concluded that the main criterion and the most chosen by respondents in determining a life partner is the religious factor. This is in accordance with previous research conducted by Azmi and Hoesni (2019) which found that the preference for partner selection in the most chosen was the preference for partner religiosity. The interesting finding from this study is that a teenager before entering a marriage phase will prepare himself from three aspects, namely financial maturity, education and religion, and these three aspects are the same for young women and young men. This is in accordance with the results of research conducted by Rangkuti and Fajri (2015) that a young adult will prepare himself before entering the marriage stage from various aspects including education, work, and religion.

When viewed from the gender aspect, adolescent girls and boys have different criteria in choosing a partner, namely male adolescents are more likely to choose a partner with the main criteria on physical appearance, while female adolescents state that the characteristics of a partner are the main factors in choosing a partner. This is in accordance with research conducted by Chang, Wang, Shackelford, and Buss (2010) that there are differences in terms of gender in determining partner selection preferences. furthermore, it was found that there are specific criteria for men and women in having a partner, in this case men are more likely to choose a partner who has physical attractiveness, while women choose a partner who has financial potential and has a bachelor's degree.

#### IV. Conclusion

Overall, it can be concluded that there are five criteria considered by a teenager in choosing a life partner, namely, religion, partner characteristics (personality), occupation, physical appearance and regional origin. Preferences for choosing a partner between teenage boys and girls are very different. Adolescent boys choose partners based on physical aspects while girls from psychological aspects (character, and behavior).

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