Marital Satisfaction in different types of Marriage

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A cross sectional study was conducted to compare marital satisfaction of men and women in different types of marriage. From each couple, data were taken from one individual only. The sample consisted of 75 married individuals with 25 participants (13 men and 12 women) from each marriage type, i.e. arranged marriage, marriage of choice with parental acceptance, and marriage of choice without parental acceptance, with the age range of 21 to 40 years. Purposive sampling technique was used. Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (Schumm, et al., 1986) and Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised Questionnaire (ECR-R; Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000) were used to assess marital satisfaction and attachment styles respectively. Results from 2-way ANCOVA showed that both men and women were more maritally satisfied in arranged marriage and marriage of choice with parental acceptance than individuals in marriage by choice without parental acceptance after controlling for their attachment styles The findings are helpful in understanding the dynamics of marital satisfaction in Pakistani culture and for pre marital counseling.

Key words: self-compassion, marital satisfaction, arranged marriage, marriage of choice,

Among all the interpersonal relations, marriage is the most important one as mostly people get married at least once in their life (Berscheid & Regan, 2005). Marriage is not only a close personal relationship but also a social institution which affects the life of people. It is basis for the formation of a family in terms of producing and raising children (Ponzetti & Mutch, 2006) as it legally allows sexual relations and encourages loyalty between husband and wife (Rao, 2002; Stutzer & Frey, 2006). Marriage starts with the selection of a marriage partner which is one of the most serious decision in the life of an individual (Fisman, Iyengar, Kamenica, & Simonson, 2006). The way of selecting a marriage partner, procedure, rules and criteria vary mostly from culture to culture and from one society to another. Individuals sometimes select their spouse with their own choice and sometimes they are selected by other individuals such as family etc. Hamon and Ingoldsby (2003) described three approaches for mate selection; marriage by capture, arranged marriage and free-choice mate selection. Marriage by capture is not a usual and accepted method as in it men marry the women by force and without women's will. Zadeh (2003) categorized marriages in terms of procedure into totally arranged marriages, partially arranged, partially love marriages and totally love marriages. In the same vein, Arif (2012) observed three ways of marriage in Pakistan i.e arranged marriage, marriage by choice with parental acceptance and marriage by choice without parental acceptance.

Although both arranged and by choice marriages are acceptable in various cultures, they have very different characteristics, results and diverse affects on individuals (Dost, Shafi, Shaheen & Khan, 2011). An arranged marriage involves two individuals who are strangers for each other but their families choose them to be married. Sometimes both individuals have a chance to know about each other before accepting each other as a potential partner. It is

involved. Family members such as parents, siblings or elders and professional match makers select suitable potential partners for mostly done with the consent and permission of the partner's young people. In arranged marriages vocation of the groom rather than love, is an important factor. Caste, class, religion, family reputation, horoscope, age and language etc are the focus of concern in arranged marriages (Stange, Oyster, & Saloan, 2011).

Marriage of choice is commonly referred as love marriage. Love marriages are those in which two people feel love for each other and they wish to share that love for the rest of their life and so they decide to be married (Dost, Shafi, Shaheen, & Khan, 2011). Young men and women are likely to date, court, fall in love, and then decide whether to get married, in accordance with their choice of a potential partner, with or without parental consent. Love marriages are considered to be full of love, emotions and belief of a beautiful loving future but there is no assurance of success (Dost, Shafi, Shaheen, & Khan, 2011).

As we know that the mate selection procedures vary from culture to culture so in individualistic societies mate is selected by the individuals themselves whereas in countries with collectivist orientations, mate is often selected by the family rather than the individuals (Cohen, DeVault, & Strong, 2011). Saroja and Surendra (1991) investigated the endogamous preference of mate selection in postgraduate students of India. The results revealed that 58% of the students preferred arranged marriages whereas 42% of the students preferred to marry for love.

Pakistan is also the country with collectivist orientation and the practice and meaning of marriages in Pakistan reflects a pattern quite different from that of the Western world. In Pakistan, marriage represents the union of two families. Marriage is more a social affair than an individual affair, as it is considered as the union of two families not just two individuals (Sonpar, 2005). Young people are encouraged to marry in order to acquire adult status, to gain some measure of independence from their parents, to produce heirs for their family, to raise children and to continue the family name (Stange, Oyster, & Saloan, 2011). The permanence and stability of a marriage is important not just to the couple, but also to their family and society as a whole (Sonpar, 2005).

In Pakistan, marriages are largely arranged through families, friends, or by a growing sector of matchmakers (Malik, 2006). Arranged marriages are linked with family honor while marriages

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of choice are sometimes supposed to bring disgrace to the family. In case of marriage of choice it is considered that individuals have a certain relationship before marriage and it is supposed to be a threat for the reputation and honor of the family. Mostly marriage of choice or love marriage is not appreciated by parents, other family members, and society (Stange, Oyster, & Saloan, 2011). Very few young men and women have the courage and emotional skills needed for a love marriage (Qadeer, 2006). The personal selection of a mate, often a love match, is facilitated through friends and cousins. Young people meet at college or at someone's wedding. Their courtship starts with meaningful gestures and secret meetings or messages on mobile phones and online until the in-betweens venture in. The children from elite families have more chances of meeting at parties or even while studying abroad. For such individualistic Pakistanis, ethnicity is not an important factor, although religion, education, and profession remain major considerations. Marriage of choice has gained acceptance in a segment of university students, urban professionals, and film and television artistes (Malik, 2006). Levine, Sato, Hashimoto, and Verma, (1995) studied love and arranged marriage in eleven cultures. They observed that love received greatest importance in the Western nations and least importance in the Eastern nations for the decision of marriage. Individualistic cultures assigned greater importance to love in making decision for marriage as opposed to collective cultures, including Pakistan.

The different approaches that are adopted to take a decision about mate selection greatly effect the success of marriage. Marriage success can be measured in terms of marital satisfaction as marriage is expected to be a foundation of pleasure, enjoyment and satisfaction (Hess, 2008; Knox & Schacht, 2012). Marital satisfaction is a comprehensive evaluation of the situation of one's marriage and a clue of marital happiness (Shackelford & Buse, 2000; Larson & Holman, 1994). Hoelter, Axinn, and Ghimire (2004) argued that marital satisfaction can be more or less in different types of marriage. Studies conducted in societies with collectivistic orientations show mixed patterns. Xiaohe and Whyte (1990) observed that Chinese women who got married by their own choice were more satisfied with their marriages than women whose marriages were arranged by their families. Zadeh (2003) conducted a research to investigate the relationship between marriage systems and marital success in Pakistan. The sample was divided in to three categories with reference to the types of their marriages i.e. totally arranged marriages, partially arranged and partially love marriages and totally love marriages. The results indicated that partially arranged and partially love marriages and totally arranged marriages were more successful as compared to totally love marriages. However, Allendorf and Ghimire (2013) in a study conducted in Nepal observed that when spouse was selected by both person and the family or by the person only, satisfaction with marriage was higher than when spouse was selected exclusively by the family. In Ethiopia, Yizengaw, Kibret, Gebersuli and Sewasew (2014) also observed that individuals whose marriages were arranged by their families and those who selected their own spouse were both satisfied with their marriages provided their marriages were age appropriate. Myers, Madathil, and Tingle (2005) did not find any difference in the marital satisfaction of individuals in arranged marriage and marriage of choice. The reason may be that sample for arranged marriage was taken from India while sample for love marriage was taken from America.

Among the various studied factors of marital satisfaction, Attachment style has been considered an important factor which plays role in marital satisfaction. Adult attachment theory (Bowlby, 1980) says that early relations with close ones encourage the individual's potentials and attitude towards relationships of adulthood. Two comparative dimensions of adult attachment define individual differences (Brennan & Shaver, 1995). The first dimension is avoidance. It is the degree of lack of closeness, contentment and emotional intimacy that a person feels in relationships. The second dimension is referred as anxiety. Score on anxiety dimension show the extent to which individuals are anxious and they think that they are unwanted or neglected by their spouse. Individuals who score lower on attachment proportions i.e. avoidance and anxiety are referred as secure one (Hazan & Shaver, 1994). Hollist and Miller (2005) argued that securely attached individuals have better marital relationships. Secure attachment is also predictive of successful conflict resolution, relationship independence, commitment, trust, and positive emotions in marriage. The best predictor of poor marital satisfaction has been reported to be insecure attachment (Bagwell, 2006). Cobb and Bradbury (2001) found that positive perception of partner's security was associated with increased marital satisfaction. In the same vein, Butzer and Campbell (2008) observed attachment style as the strong predictor of marital satisfaction. Individuals who scored higher on anxiety dimension as well as on avoidance dimension reported low level of marital satisfaction. Similar results were obtained by Ikhlas (2008), who found negative association between insecure attachment and marital satisfaction in female teachers. Keeping in view, the literature showing relationship between attachment style and marital satisfaction and differences in marital satisfaction of individuals in different types of marriages, current research work aimed at comparison of marital satisfaction in individuals in different type of marriages after controlling for attachment style. It was hypothesized that there is likely to be differences in marital satisfaction of individuals in different types of marriage.

Method

Sample

The sample consisted of 39 men and 36 women with equal distribution in each type of marriage, i.e., arranged marriage, marriage of choice with parental acceptance and marriage of choice without parental acceptance. The individuals in three groups were matched on gender, age, education, and monthly family income. Individuals who were married for at least 3 years and had at least one child were included. Widows / widowers and divorced were excluded. Men and women who had any psychological disorder or physical disability were also excluded. Age range of the participants was 21 to 40 years (men; $M = 30.87$, $SD = 5.79$ & women; $M = 28.61$, $SD = 4.58$).

Instruments

Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMSS): To assess the marital satisfaction, Kansas marital satisfaction scale (Schumm, et al., 1986) translated in Urdu was used. The KMSS is a short and precise measurement including 3 questions e.g., "How satisfied are you with your marriage"? Each item in KMSS has a possible score ranging from 1 (completely dissatisfied) to 7 (completely satisfied). Cronbach's alpha for the Urdu version of KMSS has been reported as .72 (Arif, 2012). KMSS has been selected for the current study

Table 1
Frequency Distribution of Demographic Characteristics in each Group (n = 25 each)

		Gender							
		Men (n = 13)				Women (n = 12)			
Age (in years)	Education (in years)	Monthly family income (Pakistani rupees in thousands)							
		0-20	21-40	41-60	61-80	0-20	21-40	41-60	61-80
21-30	10-12	2	1	1	0	1	0	1	2
	14-16	0	1	2	0	0	2	1	0
31-40	10-12	1	0	2	0	2	0	1	1
	14-16	0	1	0	2	0	0	1	0

for its brevity and appropriateness for use in Pakistan (Qadir, Silva, Prince & Khan, 2005)

Experience in Close Relationships-Revised (ECR-R) Questionnaire: The 36-item Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised (ECR-R) questionnaire (Fraley, Waller & Brennan, 2000) was used to assess attachment styles. The questionnaire was translated in Urdu. This instrument provides a measure of adult attachment and yields scores on two dimensions, anxiety; the extent to which individuals are anxious and they think that they are unwanted or neglected by their spouse and avoidance; a degree of closeness, contented and emotional intimacy that a person feels in relationships. Anxiety scale had 18 items e.g., "My partner really understands me and my needs", whereas avoidance scale also consisted of 18 items e.g., "I'm afraid that I will lose my partner's love". Each participant had to rate each item on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Cronbach alpha for Urdu version of Anxiety Scale was .81 and for Avoidance Scale, it was .86 (Arif, 2012). For each scale mean scale value was calculated as scale score and high value represented higher level of construct.

Demographic Information sheet: A demographic information sheet was used to gather the personal information about the participants. The demographic information included participant's gender, age (years), education (years), socio economic status (monthly family income), and job status.

Procedure

The data was collected from the Lahore city. First, data were collected from individuals who got married by choice without parental acceptance. Possible participants were contacted through researcher's acquaintances who were informed about the purpose of research i.e., study of feelings and experiences in married life and criteria of selection. Meetings were arranged through phone calls or the researcher's acquaintances at time and place of convenience for both researcher and participant. From each couple data was taken

from one individual only. Those who were willing to participate were given the consent form along with questionnaires. The participants were briefed about the purpose of the research. The questionnaires were administered individually and completed in the researcher's presence. It took each participant 20 to 25 minutes approximately to fill questionnaires. Overall 40 individuals who did marriage of choice without parental acceptance were approached, 5 refused to participate, 10 individuals returned the questionnaires without completing it, thus leaving 25 individuals with a total response rate of 62.5%. Individuals married by choice with parental acceptance and married by arrange marriage system, matched on age, income and gender, were approached similarly. Response rate for individuals who did arrange marriage and marriage of choice with parental acceptance was 100%.

Results

2-way ANCOVA was used to compare the marital satisfaction of men and women in arrange marriage, marriage of choice with parental acceptance and marriage of choice without parental acceptance after controlling for attachment styles.

Results indicate that attachment styles, anxiety and avoidance were not related to marital satisfaction, $F(1, 67) = 0.21$, $p = .65$, $r = .06$, and $F(1, 67) = 0.78$, $p = .38$, $r = .09$, respectively. Marital satisfaction significantly differed with types of marriage after controlling for attachment styles $F(2, 67) = 10.15$, $p = <.001$ Results from bonferroni pair wise comparison of types of marriage showed that marital satisfaction in marriage of choice without parental acceptance ($M = 5.80$), was significantly lower than arranged marriage ($M = 6.31$), $p = .01$ and marriage of choice with parental acceptance ($M = 6.50$), $p = <.001$. But there was no difference between the marital satisfaction of those married by choice with parental acceptance and married by arrange marriage system. Moreover, marital satisfaction did not differ with gender, $F(1, 67) = 2.90$, $p = .09$, and interaction of gender and type of marriage were also not related to marital satisfaction, $F(2, 67) = .43$, $p = .65$. In nut

Table 2
Descriptives of Marital Satisfaction and attachment styles in Relation to Gender and Marriage Type

	Gender					
	Male			Female		
	Marital satisfaction	Avoidance	Anxiety	Marital satisfaction	Avoidance	Anxiety
Variables	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)
Arranged marriage	6.33 (0.53)	1.66 (0.43)	1.69 (0.67)	6.42 (0.64)	2.43 (0.66)	2.77 (0.42)
Marriage of choice with parental acceptance	6.23 (0.37)	3.31(0.92)	2.49 (0.56)	6.61 (0.49)	3.16 (0.82)	3.70 (0.62)
Marriage of choice without parental acceptance	5.72 (0.77)	2.78 (0.88)	2.59 (0.94)	5.89 (0.41)	2.39 (1.25)	2.37 (0.52)

shell, men and women who got married with their parental acceptance whether their own choice was involved or not were found to be more satisfied with their marriage than those who were married by their choice but without parental acceptance.

Discussion

The current research was carried out to investigate the marital satisfaction in relation to the types of marriage. Marriage comes in many different forms which vary across ccultures; accompanied by various customs and procedures through which spouses are selected. In collectivistic culture like Pakistan arranged marriage system has been popular for centuries. As the world is becoming the global village and influences of other cultures through media cannot be avoided, the process of marriage is also changing in Pakistan and hot topic of discussion among the parents and young adults is whether the children should be allowed or not to select their own mate. Current study helped in understanding the experiences of people who get married as a result of different types of procedures. Inclusion of attachment style made it possible to evaluate the differences in three groups after taking into account this covariate that number of researches has shown to effect marital satisfaction.

The results of current study revealed that level of marital satisfaction of individuals differed in different types of marriage. The result of current study is consistent with earlier studies conducted by Xiaohe and Whyte (1990), Zadeh (2003), Yizengaw, Kibret, Gebersuli and Sewasew (2014), who observed that parental approval in selection of spouse plays an important role in later satisfaction with marriage in collectivistic societies. The finding is partially inconsistent with Allendorf and Ghimire (2013) who observed that in Nepal, person's involvement in the decision of mate selection was more important for later marital satisfaction than family's involvement. Difference in the findings may be explained with more social acceptance of marriage by choice in Nepal than in Pakistan. According to Dion (1993), Pakistan is also a collectivistic society where mostly mate selection is characterized by a marriage arranged by the families of the individuals. In Pakistan parental approval for mate selection is a norm and those who deviate from it face social resistance which leads to disruption in marital relationship. Findings of Myers, Madathil and Tingle (2005) also help to explain this phenomenon. They examined the marital satisfaction in arranged marriages in India and marriages of choice in America. The results did not show any difference in their marital satisfaction. The reason may be that both arranged and marriage of choice was taken from those countries where they are norm.

The trend of arrange marriage is changing towards the marriage of choice but still parental acceptance is very important. Parents are the source of social, emotional and sometimes financial support for the married couple to live their life in harmony and this might be the reason that married by choice with parental acceptance are more satisfied with their marriages than married by choice without parental acceptance. In case of parental disapproval the couple is not only deprived of every type of social support from the family, they also face opposition and criticism which hinders them from enjoying their married life. Social pressures sometimes lead them to regret on their decisions.

No gender difference in marital satisfaction of individuals in different types of marriages was observed. The previous researches have yielded mixed results in this regard. Some of them showed significant gender differences (Dillaway & Broman, 2001; Guo and Huang, 2005; Joes & Alfons, 2007; Rehman, 2009) and some other studies, however, did not show any significant gender difference (Dinna, 2005; Myers, Madathil & Tingle, 2005; Wong & Goodwin, 2009). Reasons for differences and no difference still need to be explored in further researches. However, there might be confounding factors like age differences between spouses, which has not been explored in the current study, and the restricted age range of sample, that might be responsible for no gender differences in marital satisfaction in the current study.

Conclusion

It can be concluded from the study that parental involvement in mate selection seems to play major role in marital satisfaction in Pakistan. Collectivistic nature of society may be an important reason for this.

Limitations

The study has limited generalizability in the sense that sample was small and collected from only Lahore. Although, strategy of matching by frequency for four demographic variables limited selection of sample in three groups, it however, also helped in controlling possible confounding variables. Anyway, more representative sample from other cities/villages should be selected for future research, Further; work status of women and duration of marriage should also be included as control variables as they can possibly contribute to marital satisfaction.

Implications

Despite the limitations, findings are beneficial for those who are going to be married and for parents who are going to make decision for their children' marriage, in such a way to provide them insight regarding which type of mate selection may lead to satisfied marriage. The findings are also helpful in understanding the dynamics of marital satisfaction in Pakistani culture and for pre-marital counseling.

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