

Cognitive Schemas of an Ideal Spouse among Young Adults

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The present study investigated the cognitive schemas of an ideal spouse among young adults. The study comprised of two phases the first phase was carried out to gather information about the characteristics that young adults desire to have in a mate. Both boys and girls were asked to list down in order of preference the characteristics of an ideal wife and husband. Descriptive statistics was applied to analyze the data. Findings indicated the characteristics which were highly valued by both girls and boys: loving, caring and understanding. While the second phase of the study comprised of a focus group discussion which was conducted with eight participants' four boys and four girls. Purposive sampling technique was used to draw the data. After applying grounded theory, three staged theory of cognitive schemas of an ideal spouse among young adults emerged. The first stage describes the personal schemas of young adults' while selecting an ideal spouse. The second stage explains the significant others schemas and its influence. The third stage seeks to understand the underlying cultural schemas young adults hold while selecting an ideal spouse. This study has implications for young adults regarding the selection of a mate.

Keywords: gender, ideal spouse, cognitive schema, young adults

Young adults while gearing up for a career also seek to form an intimate relationship and settle down with an ideal person of choice. The decision of getting married and settling down comes about when a young adult either meets the right person of choice or has a clear definition of what marriage implies. Young adults are therefore, capable of developing a specific schema about an ideal husband and wife. A schema is a mental representation of something or someone in particular. It is not necessary that a person's schema match with reality. According to Buss and Barnes (1986), studies in gender differences in reference to mate preference have been found to flourish over the past few years.

Studies indicate that men and women vary in terms of the desired preferences in a mate. Hill (1945) investigated, using an eighteen item mate selection list, that women more than men, felt inclined towards "ambitious, intelligent, and good financial prospects mates." While men preferred, more than women, mates who were seen to be "good housekeepers, pretty, and had a desire for children." Buss (1989) concluded that both genders place great importance on the qualities of "pleasing disposition" as well as "emotional stability".

A study was conducted by Buss and his colleagues (1986) investigating 37 countries which identified men who valued physical attractiveness in potential mates more than women. According to Buss and Barnes (1986) the study comprises of ten most likely preferred characteristics in a mate which include characteristics like; "good companion, honest, considerate, affectionate, dependable, intelligent, kind, understanding, interesting to talk to and loyal." Whereas characteristics not desired in a mate included: "wants a large family, dominant, antagonistic in religious matters, night owl, and early riser, tall and wealthy." Some of the prominent mate selection theories include: Role theory, value

theory and Murstien's Sequential theory. The first Role theory (Eagly & Wood, 1999), believes that couples with similar role definitions or expectations are more likely to marry. Mate selection can also be understood using sociological explanations and theories of mate selection. According to the value theory (Coombs, 1961), people are more likely to marry someone with similar values for example, people with similar backgrounds learn similar values, interacting with people who have values similar to your own is rewarding and enhances communication and, last but not the least, rewarding interaction leads to satisfaction with your partner. On the other hand, Murstien's theory (1970) proposes that people go through three stages that lead to marriage: stimulus stage, value stage and role stage. And at the end they reach the final stage of marriage. Evolutionary theories propose that the reasons to why men and women differ in terms of mate selection are due to the "historically faced different environmental and social pressures" (Eagly and Wood, 1999). According to Trivers (1972), the parental investment model states that for the survival of the species it is important for the two genders of a given species to adopt the mating behaviors. It was seen in human mating, that women were supposed to invest large amounts of physical resources in bringing an offspring into this world. Men, on the other side, seem to invest a smaller amount of "physiological resources beyond the act of conception" however; men do seem to invest more in the outside world to facilitate in rearing children.

Both men and women may have strong cognitive schemas about an ideal spouse but these cognitive schemas may be affected by the society and culture they live in. Women for example, if were to go against the traditional female role, they may be rejected not only by members of the opposite sex but also by other women. Therefore, women have internalized the fact of reality since early adolescence they often reluctantly accept the "female role" imposed by society. Rosen and Aneshensel (1976), have labeled this as "chameleon syndrome" the pretending to be feminine, the willingness, regardless of actual feelings about the traditional female role, to play in order to enjoy the social acceptance of members of both sexes and the comforting to the accepted patterns of the environment. It can be generalized therefore, that men prefer women who are traditional in nature and women prefer men who are "manly" by nature. Marriage is an important ritual in our

culture, however, sadly not many end up being happy. Parents wish for their children the best, however, personal preferences vary among young adults. There is a need to investigate the cognitive schemas about an ideal mate as it has been observed that many young men and women after marriage experience discomfort due to incongruity between their ideal and real mate. This study seeks to comprehend the different cognitive schemas among young adults about an ideal spouse. This study also seeks to understand how these cognitive schemas are formulated.

Objectives

- To investigate the cognitive schemas of an ideal spouse among young adults.
- To develop an indigenous theory of cognitive schemas of an ideal spouse.
- Method

Phase 1

Sample

Sample of the study consisted of 100 undergraduate final year B.A/B.Sc. students which comprised of 50 boys and 50 girls. The age range of the students was from 21-24 years.

Research Tool

Open ended questions were used to find out the preferences about ideal spouse according to girls and boys.

1. List down the characteristics of an ideal husband in order of preference
2. List down the characteristics of an ideal wife in order of preference

Procedure

Data was collected from undergraduate BS Hons final year students of GCU. Purposive sampling technique was used to draw the sample. Survey research design was used. The students were contacted in their respective departments. Verbal consent was taken from the participants. The students were given a structured demographic information questionnaire.

To measure the personal preferences open ended questions were asked to list down the ideal characteristics of an ideal wife and husband in order of preferences. Boys and girls both described their preferences. After collection of data descriptive statistics was used to analyze the information. The subjects cooperated well in the data collection.

Statistical Analysis

In the phase I, descriptive statistics was used to interpret the data about an ideal spouse. Table 1 indicates personal preferences of an ideal spouse by boys and table 2 shows descriptive statistics indicating personal preferences of an ideal spouse by girls.

Table 1.

Descriptive Statistics Indicating Personal Preferences of an Ideal Spouse by Boys (N= 50)

Characteristics	Ideal Husband	Ideal Wife
Loving	17(34%)	19(38%)
Caring	20(40%)	19(38%)
Educated	9(18%)	11(22%)
Honest	8(16%)	9(18%)
Trustworthy	8(16%)	5(10%)

Table 2.

Descriptive Statistics Indicating Personal Preferences of an Ideal Spouse by Girls (N= 50)

Characteristics	Ideal Husband	Ideal Wife
Loving	33(66%)	23(46%)
Caring	40(80%)	35(70%)
Understanding	21(42%)	15(30%)
Responsible	12(24%)	17(34%)
Compromising	2 (4%)	11(22%)

Phase 2

Sample

The sample of the study consisted of eight undergraduate students. The age range of the students was from 21-24 years. Four boys and four girls were chosen from two departments of GCU. Two boys and two girls were chosen from Urdu Department and two boys and two girls were chosen from Psychology Department. Purposive sampling technique was used to collect the sample.

Assessment Tools

Focus group discussion was conducted to investigate the cognitive schemas of an ideal spouse among young adults. The focus group discussion consisted of 8 undergraduate students. The questions were generated keeping in view the previous literature about these cognitive schemas of an ideal spouse among young adults. Some of the focus group discussion questions are as follows:

- How are cognitive schemas of an ideal spouse formulated?
- What are the important personal preferences of an ideal spouse?

Procedure

Students from GCU departments were approached through purposive sampling and were requested to participate in the study. Informed consent was taken from each student. Focus group discussion was held at GCU Psychology Department's library. Eight students participated in the discussion proceeded by a moderator. The whole discussion was audio taped and then transcribed. The duration of focus group discussion was one and a half hour.

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed by using grounded theory method. We begin by assigning codes to the transcribed data and further derive categories from which we then transform these into themes. And through these themes we develop a theory (Smith, 2003)

Table 3
Factors Affecting Cognitive Schemas of an Ideal Wife

Boys	Girls
Physical traits	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fair • smart • young • beautiful • good looking • pretty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pretty eyes • beautiful
Domestic Skills	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cooking • hospitality skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • knows how to manage things
Similarity of background	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • family background • similar in nature • similar lifestyle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • does not influence
Future prospects	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good mother • adaptable • educated • working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • financially stable
Personality traits	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sensitive • polite • understanding • respectful • loving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understanding • trust • faithful • loving • more idealistic • frankness with the husband
Age Disparity	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adaptability increases with young age • reproductive ability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • younger than the husband
Fairytales	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • childhood stories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dependent • helpless
Folklores	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not effected by folklores 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • defined roles as a wife
Parental Perspective	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • effects of parental schemas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parental influence • freedom of selection
Rural Versus Urban Culture	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • custom • all-knowing • environmental role • daughters have to leave parents' house for marriage • looking after the house • raising kids and level of adjustment • lifestyle • flexibility in joint family system • caste systems matter in villages • increased rate in love marriages • co-education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not influence
Friends	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not effected by friends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friends schemas
Media	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no effect of media portrayal of an ideal wife 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Idealizing image of wife on screen • Superficial part of life • T.V. shows become artificial with growing age

Table 4
Factors Affecting Cognitive Schemas of an Ideal Husband

Boys	Girls
Physical traits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tall • a man should look young 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tall • Handsome • older in age than girls • Young
Domestic skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no influence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a know-how about various types of relationships
Similarity of background <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no influence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no influence
Future prospects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has a BMW • maturity level matters in terms of economic status 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good economic status
Personality traits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • honest • caring • faithful • loving • wealthy • a young husband 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • responsible • professional • educated • sincerity • loyalty • wealthy • loving • committed • honest • understanding • communication
Age Disparity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young husbands are easily controlled 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age disparity influences career
Fairytales <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rides a horse • Takes the bride away 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong • Men look after
Folklores <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not affected by it • Parental Perspective • Educated son-in-law • Selection of spouse • Same caste system • Love marriage leads to a reduction in caste system • Out of caste marriages not supported 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defined roles as a husband • Submission to parental decision
Rural Versus Urban Culture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No effect of urban and rural culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal preferences not fulfilled • Idealistic preferences • Priorities matter • Fate plays a role • Thinking varies with generations • Caste differences don't matter • Acceptability for a higher class
Friends <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not affected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friends schemas
Media	

Indigenous Theory of an Ideal Spouse of Young Adults

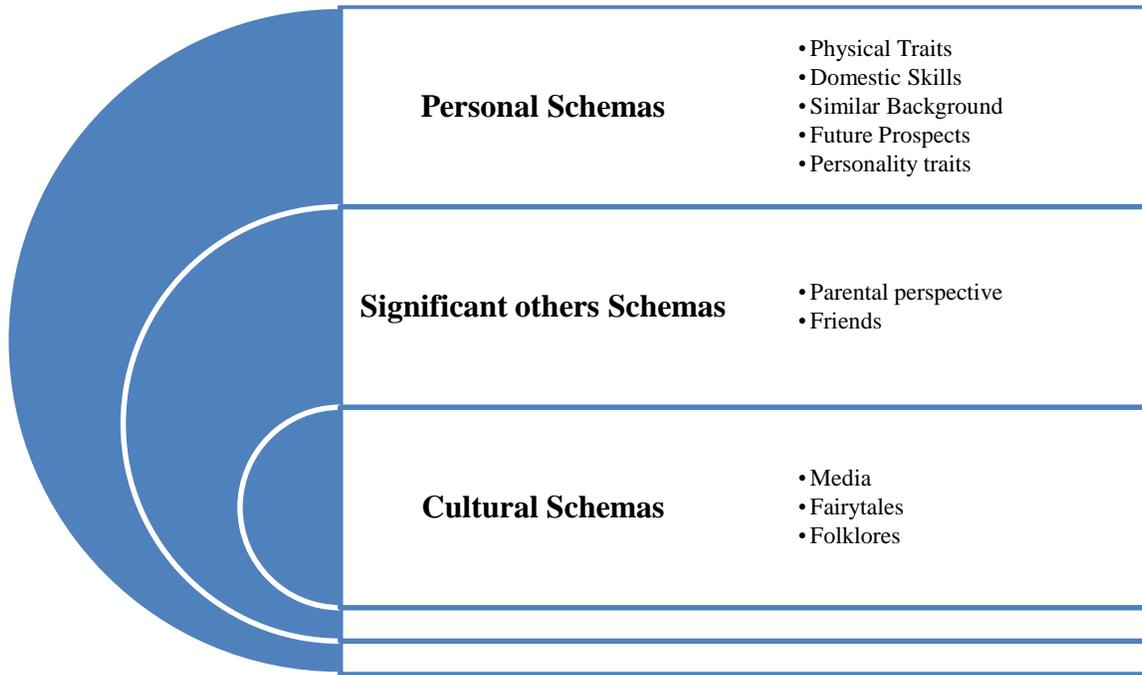
Three Major Themes

Figure 1. The figure indicates the major themes which formulate Pakistani Youth Cognitive Schemas of an Ideal Spouse.

Discussion

The cognitive schema of an ideal spouse among the youth was investigated. The study consisted of two parts, the phase 1 of the study deals with the personal preference of the young boys and girls about an ideal image of a husband and wife. While the second part was conducted using a focus group discussion consisting of eight students with an equal gender distribution and grounded theory was used to evolve an indigenous theory of youth's cognitive schema of an ideal husband and wife.

The first phase of the study concluded that both boys and girls mutually agreed on two specific characteristics they would like to have in an ideal spouse. In terms of an ideal wife in table 1 boys reported that the main characteristics they would prefer in order of preference are: caring (38%), loving (38%), educated (22%), honest (18%) and trustworthy (10%). These characteristics highlight the importance of these characteristics in a Pakistani culture. A married woman is expected to be caring, loving and honest. Boys in a Pakistani society prefer their wife as someone trustworthy who can be relied in times of crisis. These findings also highlight an important fact that a woman in a Pakistani society holds the burden of sharing love and care in the maintenance of a relationship whereas, in table 2 girls reported characteristics like: caring (35%), loving (46%), understanding (30%), responsible (34%) and compromising (22%). The findings conclude that an ideal wife in a Pakistani culture is expected to be caring and loving regardless of

what other characteristics she carries. However, the results also indicated that an ideal wife is also expected to be understanding, responsible and compromising. Women throughout history have always been held responsible for being understanding in every relationship. While in a Pakistani society girls are reared from the beginning to be understanding. At first girls are conditioned to be understanding of her parents decisions for her, sibling rivalry and then later on in her marital life. The concept of responsibility and compromising also seems to go hand in hand. Girls are expected in a Pakistani society to be responsible for her husband's needs as well as her children and in-laws.

In terms of an ideal husband in table 1 boys reported characteristics like: caring (40%), loving (34%), educated (18%), honest (16%) and trustworthy (16%). The findings conclude that boys in a Pakistani society are expected to be educated because education further highlights their future prospects while honesty highlights their innocence and simple nature. Characteristics like love and care are again important elements required for the maintenance of a relationship while in table 2 girls reported characteristics like: loving (66%), caring (80%), understanding (42%), responsible (24%) and compromising (4%). Girls in a Pakistani society hold many expectations regarding an ideal husband and the two most important characteristics are: love and care. Girls are taught to share love and care but what Pakistani girls' desire is the same in return. For girls in a Pakistani culture a good husband is one who gives love and care in return to prove his

faithfulness. The findings also highlight an important finding that girls don't expect much from their husband when it comes to understanding, responsibility and compromising. The findings support the fact that in a Pakistani society it is a woman's duty to be understanding of all household activities, responsible for her children and husband's needs and to be compromising in every situation.

The characteristics extracted from the above study indicate that young adults in a Pakistani society don't give much importance to physical traits as much as they do to personal preferences and characteristics which depict relationship adaptability (Buss & Barnes, 1986).

The cognitive schema of an ideal spouse among adults is very much influenced by the expectations in a Pakistani society. Both genders have certain traits which are necessary in the maintenance of the relationship.

The second phase of the study consisted of a grounded theory which was applied to analyze the focus group data. From the analysis an indigenous theory of youth's cognitive schema of an ideal spouse emerged. The theory of Pakistani youth's cognitive schema consists of three major themes: personal schemas, significant others schemas and cultural schemas.

The theme *personal schemas* include five categories: physical traits, domestic skills, similarity of background, future prospects and personality traits. Most of the male participants expressed that boys are likely to prefer a pretty, smart and a beautiful wife whereas, girls carry a picture of an ideal wife as someone who has pretty eyes and is beautiful. In terms of domestic skills boys idealize girls who know how to cook and have hospitality skills. Whereas, girls believe that a good ideal wife is someone who knows how to manage things and can make the marriage successful at personal and community level. In the category of similarity of background it was found that most boys considered family background, similarity in nature, and similarity in lifestyle as an important factor in the selection of a wife. This finding supports the value theory (Coombs, 1961) which states that young adults are more likely to marry those similar in nature, background and values than those with less similarity. In terms of future prospects boys were likely to prefer an ideal wife who is a good mother, adaptable, educated and professional. Whereas, girls believed that an ideal wife should be financially stable and idealistic. In terms of personality traits, it was seen that boys prefer an ideal wife as polite, understanding, sensitive, respectful and loving whereas, girls were seen to believe that an ideal wife should have qualities like trust, faithful, understanding and loving. An interesting element observed in the focus group discussion was that some boys would like to have a good mother for their children than a good wife whereas girls were likely to prefer a wealthy, trustworthy, faithful, and a loving husband.

Both boys and girls discussed age disparity as an important factor while selecting a mate. According to boys main purpose of marriage is reproduction of the family, young adults in a Pakistani culture are pressurized by family members to select girls' who are young and fertile. Girls, however, believed that age does not influence how an ideal wife should be. The findings in case of boys strongly supports the Buss (1989) study that boys are more likely to prefer a young wife because they were of the view that younger women are also healthy and have reproductive ability.

Regarding the cognitive schemas of an ideal husband most boys reported that an ideal husband should be tall and should look young whereas, girls reported tall, handsome, older in age and looks

young. In terms of domestic skills in an ideal husband boys reported nothing. Boys in a Pakistani society are not expected to take care of household chores or participate in domestic skills in any way. It is considered a woman's responsibility to look after all domestic chores. In a Pakistani society men are expected to take care of external activities and not pay any attention to domestic chores. These domestic chores are seen as low level activities in comparison to external activities. Whereas, women reported that an ideal husband should have knowledge about various types of relationships. In the category of similarity of background both men and women reported no influence. This confirms that in terms of an ideal husband both boys and girls don't give importance to similarity of background. However, these findings seem to contradict with the extensive western culture which reports that similarity in background is seen as an important factor which determines adaptability (Hurlock, 1994). In terms of future prospects it was seen that boys and girls both believed that an ideal husband should be well established in terms of economic status.

These findings report an important fact that previous generations in Pakistan were seen to regard qualities like good housewife skills, young age and good family background as important factors when selecting a spouse. However, young adults today are seen as more materialistic and demanding when it comes to marriage. Boys today prefer an ideal wife to be as established as they are with resources of income and prosperity. The same is expected from an ideal husband. The generation gap has widened Pakistani youth's cognitions regarding marriage prosperity.

In terms of personality traits male participants expressed that most boys preferred an honest, caring, loving, wealthy and a young husband as an ideal. Whereas, girls preferred a responsible, professional, educated, loving, committed husband with good communication skills. An interesting element which emerged from the focus group discussion was that one participant reported that fathers' are idealized by all daughters. And this ideal image of a father is then transformed into a schema of an ideal husband. From an early age daughters are very close to their fathers' and since childhood they perceive their parents relationship as an ideal husband-wife relationship.

Age disparity was found in which it was seen that boys believe that women prefer young husbands because they can easily be controlled. An interesting element which was found in age disparity was that men prefer younger women because of reproductive fertility issue. Boys believed that women have a limited fertile age and so the younger she is the more fertile she will be whereas, girls believed that age influences one's professional career. It was also found that women prefer younger men because they believe a young man is easily controllable as compared to older men.

Focus group discussion also proved Buss's research that the reason to why men prefer younger women is because of their fertility issue. The younger the women are the more fertile they are. Therefore, no cultural difference exists in the thinking pattern of young men regarding young women for marriage. Another interesting factor which emerged from the focus group discussion was that women prefer older men because it takes time for men to become established.

The second theme *significant others schema* includes two categories: parental perspective and friends. It was seen that most boys believed that a cognitive schema of an ideal wife is affected by the socialization of parents whereas, girls believed that parental influence and freedom of selection plays an important role in the development of an ideal wife schema. In terms of friends, it was

seen that boys are not affected by what friends think or say when it comes to selection of an ideal wife. Whereas, girls were likely to be affected by it. Girls form an intimate relationship with friends therefore, are likely to perceive their friends opinions as important. It was extracted from the discussion that young adults believe friends play an important role in their lives because 'friends know you better than you know yourself.'

Regarding the cognitive schemas of an ideal husband most boys expressed that parents want an educated son-in-law with the same caste system in terms of mate selection whereas, girls reported that women submit to their parent's choice. Women in Pakistani society are not given much choice in mate selection. It has been seen in the focus group study that women in urban areas are allowed to get married according to their choice however, in rural areas both men and women are still bound by traditions and authoritarian caste systems. Parents in a Pakistani society are bound by caste systems from traditions because they have adopted and lived through their ancestral decisions. And so it is hard for parents as well to break free from long standing traditions and values. However, some of the participants reported that the decision to marry lies in their family. In a traditional Pakistani society young adults leave the decision to marry on their parents and therefore, are given no choice of their own.

In terms of friends the same result was found as was for cognitive schema of an ideal wife. Friends in a Pakistani society are very close to young adults' hearts. Friends are perceived as family members whose advice is taken as seriously as parents. However, this only implies to young Pakistani girls as they are more likely to share their personal secrets with each other. Boys on the other hand are less likely to share their personal feelings with their friends mostly because of their egoistic personality and upbringing. Young adults in a Pakistani society share a close bondage with friends.

The third theme *cultural influence* includes three categories: media, fairytales and folklores. Most boys reported no effect of media on the selection of ideal wife whereas, girls idealize the wives portrayed by media in dramas and movies. From the focus group discussion it was found that media plays such an important role in young adults' lives that while watching T.V they perceive themselves in their favorite actor/actress role. However, some of the participants thought media played a 'superficial' role in our lives. And that by the time we're about to get married we realize that T.V depicts fantasies and no reality. This maturity and realistic thinking comes with age and experience.

Male participants reported that fairytales play a crucial role in the formation of an ideal wife schema. Whereas, girls reported that fairytales depict women as dependent and helpless beings of society. It was reported by some participants in the study that in a Pakistani society these story books help us in formulating an ideal spouse qualities. For example, girls from a very early age start dreaming of a prince who will come to marry them on a white horse. The expectation of a prince and a horse develops from the story books which children read at a very early age of life. Young adults don't realize the implication of the story books at such an early age but when they decide to form an intimate relationship they rely on these childhood cultural schemas.

Participants reported that story books depict traditional gender roles in which women are seen as helpless and dependent whereas, men are perceived as strong and are supposed to look after their wives.

In terms of folklores most boys reported that they were not affected by folklores. The reason may be because boys, more likely

than girls, seem to be realistic in selection of spouse and are likely to rely on their own individual experiences rather than accepting other's ideologies and experiences. Whereas, girls reported that in a Pakistani society there are specific defined roles for men and women. It was also found from the focus group study that rural versus urban culture plays an important role in the development of cognitive schemas regarding an ideal spouse. Boys reported that major roles of women present herself as a good mother, well mannered, flexible in nature and should know how to look after the house. Another interesting thing which extracted from the focus group discussion was that caste systems are given less importance in urban areas when compared with rural areas of Pakistani society in making marriage decisions.

Some participants reported that folklore stories play a crucial role in a Pakistani society. Pakistani society has a long history of folklore stories like heer ranjha, laila majnu and sassi pannu where certain type of qualities have been admired in both the genders. Women have been portrayed as good loyal wives whereas, men as good care takers of the family. Folklores depict the role of women as submissive and emotional whereas, men are seen as having a strong and a dominant personality. And so these folklores not only represent the admiration of the two genders but also set norms and values a society holds regarding genders.

Regarding the cognitive schema of an ideal husband male participants expressed that media portrays an unrealistic perspective about marital life whereas girls, were unaffected by the portrayal of an ideal husband. In terms of fairytales, it was found that most boys hold the belief that boys are supposed to ride a horse and take the bride away. Boys believe that an ideal husband is portrayed as a charming prince who comes to rescue his bride-to-be from all the worries in the world whereas, girls reported an ideal husband as strong and caring.

It was seen that rural and urban culture plays an important role in the development of our cognitive schemas regarding a spouse. Boys in the focus group study reported no effect of rural versus urban culture whereas, girls reported idealistic preferences, thinking varies with generations, and caste systems don't matter. Another interesting thing which emerged from the focus group study was that cognitive schemas of an ideal spouse among young adults in rural areas in not affected by childhood stories like they are in urban areas. Instead young adults are affected by their parental schemas. In rural areas it is more important as to what one's parents believe and what they have learned from their ancestors.

Participants reported that parents have the responsibility of teaching young adults about the ideal spouse qualities and parents themselves have learned these qualities from their ancestors. This goes generation to generation. However, in the light of the discussion we can say that this process is beginning to change in our society. The present generation is more broad-minded and does not hold caste systems as important factors in marriage. Marriage should be a personal decision and it can be seen people are beginning to accept this fact as love marriages are beginning to rise in a Pakistani society.

The study was done to see how the cognitive schemas of an ideal spouse among young adults develop. It was derived from the first phase of the study that young Pakistani adults prefer certain characteristics in a spouse. It was concluded from the first phase of the study that both boys and girls preferred a loving and a caring spouse. From the focus group discussion it is clear that there are three themes which are important for the development of a cognitive schema among young adults regarding an ideal spouse,

e.g., personal schemas, significant others schemas and cultural influences. Although the above themes are important for the development of a cognitive schema among young adults regarding an ideal spouse they do seem to vary from person to person depending upon their culture and family background they belong to. For example, within Pakistan two cultures exist urban and rural. In urban culture cognitive schemas are not dependent upon social institutions rather on one's own perception and ideology whereas, in rural culture cognitive schemas are dependent upon parental perspective, social institutions and family caste systems. Therefore, it can be seen that culture plays an important role and its influence varies from person to person.

Conclusion

Quantitative and qualitative study indicated that young Pakistani boys and girls have more or less similar cognitive schemas of an ideal husband and wife. We conclude on the basis of qualitative study that personal schemas, significant others schemas and cultural influences our cognitive schemas of an ideal husband and wife.

Limitations

This study deals with youth's perspective of an ideal spouse and future studies should explore the parental schemas of an ideal spouse for their children.

Implications

The study has wide implications for young adults, as they could rate the personal preferences they consider important in mate selection. The study is also beneficial for parents as they can take into consideration the personal preferences their children desire at the time of marriage.

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