

Marital Adjustment And Life Satisfaction Among Early And Late Marriages

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Abstract

The current research focused on exploring the relationship of marital adjustment and life satisfaction among early and late marriages. Main objective of the study was to find out the effect of age on marital adjustment and life satisfaction among early and late marriages. The Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) Urdu (Spanier, 1976) and Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) (Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985) were used to measure the phenomenon of marital adjustment and life satisfaction. The sample was comprised of (N=160) early and late married, men and women. Early married (n=80) and late married (n=80) selected from different cities of Punjab, Pakistan. Pearson Product Moment Correlation and t-test were used for statistical analysis. Results indicate a significant positive correlation ($r = .33$, significant at $p .01$) in marital adjustment and life satisfaction. On the other hand there is a significant difference (significant at $p .001$) between late marriages and early marriages on marital adjustment. The results also indicate that there is a significant difference (significant at $p .001$) between late marriages and early marriages on life satisfaction.

Key Words: Marital adjustment, life satisfaction, early married, late married

1. Introduction

Marriage is an ancient practice, although its meaning may have changed throughout time and space. The word 'marriage' means only a legal union between one man and one woman as husband and wife, and the word 'spouse' refers only to a person of the opposite sex who is a husband or wife.

According to Vries (2006). Marriage is more than love. Marriage consists of a life of effort and concern, felicitation and melancholy, illness and health. It consists of being young and becoming old, dealing with small and big problems, coping with internal and external hardships and threats. A lot of days, weeks, months, and years are lived jointly. During this lengthy phase, the couple lives together in proximity, which unveils all. It soon become clear that big things can matter very little while small things can become awfully big. Often over a small matter a great dispute arises up. Marriage can explain how any person can be awfully small. Mistakes and shortcomings or deficiencies are visible in marriage. Married couple who live closely together can harm each other horribly through words expressions and actions (Thompson, 1990).

According to Ramcharan (2008) there are two elements in marriage. One is bodily (sexual wish etc) and another is divine (love, respect, adore etc.). Towards the end of life both elements are coming closer and closer and at a particular point of time the later aspect (love, respect, adore etc.) becomes evident. Marriage is purely the highest of all human interaction and therefore must never be entered into carelessly.

Marital adjustment has long been a trendy topic in studies of the family, most likely because the idea is supposed to be narrowly associated to the stability of any marriage.

Marital adjustment is defined as the condition in which there is usually a feeling of pleasure and contentment in husband and wife and with each other. (Hashmi, Khurshid, and Hassan, (2007).

Many studies were conducted on marriage and marital adjustment. Studies constantly proved that age at marriage is affect quality of the marriage itself. Number of investigations conducted at different times has

confirmed that early marriage increases marital instability (Monahan, 1953; Burchinal, 1965; Glick & Norton, 1971; Bumpass And Sweet, 1972; Weed, 1974; Schoen, 1975; Lee, 1977).

Life satisfaction can be explained as a feeling of goodness and may be decide in terms of mood, satisfaction with dealings with others and with self achievements, self-concept, and self supposed capability to deal with every day life (Glossary of Terms, 2003).

Life Satisfaction is the manner a person feels how his or her life has been and how they perceive about where it is going ahead. It is a way to measure of well being. (*en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Life_satisfaction*).

Life satisfaction comes from inside a person himself/herself based on the persons own morals and values and what the person holds essential things. For some people it is there family, for others people it is care and love, and for some others it is wealth or other material things; any way, it is different from every person's point of view, same as life satisfaction looks different from every point of view. (*psychology.wikia.com/wiki/Life_satisfaction*)

There are many factors contributing to success or failure in marriages. Some of these factors are aggression, financial uncertainties, intelligence, religious and personal maturity, level of understanding, independence of thoughts, education, awareness, health, skills to manage family life, stress and strain affects, lack of experience, lake of patience and individual interests.

1.1 Rationale of the study

There is a great need to know the relationship of marital adjustment and life satisfaction in Pakistani culture. This study will help to know the marital adjustment and life satisfaction among early and late marriages. Marital adjustment and life satisfaction has long been the focus of investigation and research in the west and western countries. However in Pakistan this topic is not extensively studied.

The author was interested to know whether there is any relationship exists between marital adjustment and life satisfaction in early marriages in spite of late marriages. It has often been observed that females want early marriages and male prefer late marriages. In late marriages individuals usually become irritable and due to their complexes, attitude and become more rigid and mature as well, so it would be interesting to compare the marital adjustment and life satisfaction from both sides.

History tells us that marriage was always and every where be under discussion. Every religion, every philosopher and practical wisdom has its own point of view. There is no doubt that every type of marriage has some particular factors which affect it such as personal maturity, level of understanding, independence of thoughts, intelligence, education, awareness, health, financial responsibilities, skills to manage family life, stress and strain affects, lack of experience, lake of patience religion, and individual interests. As marriages are necessary for humans, marital adjustment and life satisfaction is equally important.

Successful martial life gives satisfaction of each person. Every person wishes to make his or her martial life successful. The current study was planned bearing in mind to find out the level of marital adjustment and life satisfactions in Pakistani society. This study is an effort to find out that what factors can be responsible for marital adjustment and life satisfaction in the context of early and late marriages.

This study gives us information about causes of marital adjustment and life satisfaction and this study opens new horizons for new researchers. The findings of the research are helpful for the policy makers to introduce some new strategies for the betterment of the society.

1.2 Review Of Related Literature

Rotz, (2011) conducted a research on why have divorce rates fallen? The role of women's age at marriage. In this article, he used four different experimental methods, to show that age at marriage is the major close reason of the decline in divorce for married people. He derived the facts suggesting that the exact, contributory relationship between a woman's age at marriage and her future possibility of divorce cannot be significantly weaker than suggested by uncorrected estimates.

Vaishnavranja, (2010) conducted a research on Presentation on early marriage. The current paper was an effort to get insights on determinants and psychosocial effects of early marriage on the women of rural areas. He took 300 women in his samples that married in their early age and have experience of married life up to 5 to 15 years. It is also derived from the regression analysis that the bad effects of early marriage in earlier ages have more terrible on girl child. Overall dissatisfaction level is high with the respondents who get married at the early age.

Lehrer (2006) conducted a study on Age at Marriage and Marital Instability: Revisiting the Becker-Landes-Michael Hypothesis. The hypothesis stated that marriage in early age has a high risk of failure and break up. Up till now it has been suggested that after attaining a mature age, the relationship between age at marriage and marital instability might become positive, the reason is that as unmarried women become mature mentally and physically, they can choose their partners realistically and in a better way. The result indicated that the relationship between age at marriage and marital instability is strongly negative up to the late twenties, and curve goes down after this age.

Akhani et al. (1999) conducted a research on marital adjustment and life satisfaction among the women of early and late marriage. Their research also wanted to explore the relationship between marital adjustment on life satisfaction. The sample of their study was one hundred married women. The findings of their study proved their hypothesis, that women's age at marriage hold significance in the marital adjustment. The women who marry with an advance age have better marital adjustment than women of early marriage. The research also showed that the financial position of the family played an important part in deciding the level of marital adjustment as the women of high earnings shows more life satisfaction than the women of low earnings.

David et al. (1987) conducted a study on the effects of early marriage on marital dissolution. The focal point of this study was an analysis of a path model which includes the estimated effects of background of early marriage, early marriage and education on the possibility of separation. A result using the General Social Surveys support research that indicates that early marriage is the most significant variable effecting divorce. Further they also concluded and measure through education a small influence of the early marriage.

Bahre et al. (1984) conducted a study on Teenage Marriage and Marital Stability. Theoretically, the marriages which made in earlier age have more possibility to break up, but the cause of this failure is still uncertain. A longitudinal study of a group of two hundred fifty nine married couples indicated that those who made their marriages in later ages and get more education, and did not face any financial uncertainties found more expected to stay in long and stable marriages.

Lee (1977) conducted a study on Age at Marriage and Marital Satisfaction: A Multivariate Analysis with Implications for Marital Stability. He took the sample of seven hundred eighty eight married people. In this study he investigated the relationships between age at marriage, the marital role performance, and marital satisfaction. The purpose of the study was to test the hypotheses related to age at marriage and marital instability which was depicted from a theory. His findings indicated the presence of little positive relations between the constructs.

1.3 Hypotheses of the study

Keeping in view the above mentioned objectives, following hypotheses were formulated.

1. There would be a significant relationship of marital adjustment and life satisfaction.
2. Marital adjustment would be higher in late marriages as compare to early marriages.
3. Life satisfaction would be higher in late marriages as compare to early marriages.

2. Methods

2.1 Participants

The present study was included a sample of 160 early and late married men and women into two category early married men and women (n=80) and late married men and women (n=80) of Punjab Pakistan. The age of early married participants was 20 and below 20 years and the age of late married participants was 35 and above 35 years. The marriage experience of the participants was at least 5 years.

2.2 Sampling technique

Convenience sampling technique was used to select the sample

2.3 Research design

Co relational and between group designs were used for the current study.

2.4 Operational definition of variables

Marital adjustment in current study was operationally defined as the score obtained through Dyadic adjustment Scale by Spanier 1976. Low Scores indicate low level of Marital Adjustment and high scores indicate high level of Marital Adjustment.

Life satisfaction in current study was operationally defined as the score obtained through Life satisfaction scale by Diener 1985. Low Scores indicate low level of Marital Adjustment and high level of scores indicate high level of Life Satisfaction.

2.5 Research Instruments

Following instruments were used to test the hypotheses. The Satisfaction with life Scale (SWLS) developed by Ed Diener and colleagues (Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985) and the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) originally developed by Spanier (1976) The scale was translated and adopted for Pakistani population by Pakistani psychologist Naseer, (2000).

2.6 Procedure of the study

In order to accomplish the requirement of the current research, 160 married early and late men and women were selected by convenience sampling technique. Then informed consent was designed according to ethics of research. The ethical standards of research were considered as the participants were given brief description about the research and insured that information will be kept confidential. All the participants were given appropriate instructions regarding research and questionnaire. Dyadic adjustment Scale by Spanier 1976 and Life satisfaction scale by Diener 1985 Urdu translated were used to measure the marital adjustment and life satisfaction among early and late marriages.

2.7 Statistical Analysis

Pearson Product Moment correlation and t-test were used to find out the statistical significance of the data through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS)

3. Results

Table 1

Correlation between marital adjustment and life satisfaction in early and late marriages. (N=160)

| | Marital Adjustment | P |
|-------------------|--------------------|------|
| Life Satisfaction | .33** | .000 |

**Correlation is significant at p .01 level

The above table shows that Marital Adjustment is positively correlated with Life Satisfaction in early and late marriages. Correlation is significant at p .01 level between marital adjustment and life satisfaction.

Table 2

Difference in marital adjustment among early and late marriages. (N=160)

| Variable | Age | N | M | SD | df | T | P |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------|----|-------|-------|-----|------|------|
| Marital Adjustment | Late (equal to & greater than 35 years) | 80 | 84.99 | 8.95 | 158 | 5.83 | .000 |
| | Early (equal to & less than 20 years) | 80 | 73.69 | 14.83 | | | |

The above table shows that there is significant difference between late marriages and early marriages on Marital Adjustment at $p < 0.01$. t test results show significant difference.

Table 3

Difference in Life satisfaction among early and late marriages. (N=160)

| Variable | Age | N | M | SD | df | t | p |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------------|----|-------|------|-----|------|------|
| Life Satisfaction | Late (equal to & greater than 35 years) | 80 | 24.54 | 3.85 | 158 | 4.87 | .000 |
| | Early (equal to & less than 20 years) | 80 | 20.86 | 5.54 | | | |

The above table shows that there is significant difference between late marriages and early marriages on Life Satisfaction at $p < 0.01$. t test results show significant difference.

4. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to further understand the phenomena of marital adjustment and life satisfaction among early and late marriages. Many studies related to marriage and the marital relationship has

been completed; however, a review of the literature finds few recent studies pertaining to the phenomena of age at marriage, marital adjustment and life satisfaction.

In history there were different experiences of marriages in different times. Some time there was a practice of early marriages and sometimes late marriages. In early times people and their needs were so simple, so they promoted the custom of early marriages. But with the passage of time the needs of the people increases and become more and more and to fulfill these needs people require more achievements. For this purpose they require more education, jobs, and business etc., and consequently comfortable homes, life styles and ideals. To achieve all these objectives people promoted a new trend of late marriages. But can we say that we can get marital adjustment and life satisfaction with these entire fulfillments.

Hypothesis no. 1

This hypothesis is supported by results and is significant at $p < .01$ level. It is clear by table # 1 that there is a positively correlation with marital adjustment and life satisfaction in early and late marriages.

Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to find out the relationship between marital adjustment and life satisfaction among the early and late marriages. [Akhani et al. \(1999\)](#) conducted a research on marital adjustment and life satisfaction among the women of early and late marriage. Their research also wanted to explore the relationship between marital adjustment on life satisfaction. The sample of their study was one hundred married women. The findings of their study proved their hypothesis, that women's age at marriage hold significance in the marital adjustment. The women who marry with an advance age have better marital adjustment than women of early marriage. The research also showed that the financial position of the family played an important part in deciding the level of marital adjustment as the women of high earnings shows more life satisfaction than the women of low earnings.

The study of the literature review also supports the results of the current study. As Hashmi et al. (2007) also derived that marital adjustment is defined as the condition in which there is usually a feeling of pleasure and contentment in husband and wife and with each other.

The study of the literature review also supports the findings of the following researchers who concluded that marital adjustment has long been a trendy topic in studies of the family, most likely because the idea is supposed to be narrowly associated to the stability of any marriage. Well placed, Stable and happy marriages are likely to continue for a lengthy period, while mal adjusted ones finish in divorce. Apparently as it seems, the concept of marital adjustment is complex and not easy to understand and complicated to evaluate through practical research. (Lively 1969; Donohue And Ryder 1982; Trost 1985).

Marriage is the major turning point of every married person's life. If a person wants to lead a happy life, he or she must try to satisfy his or her marital life and to satisfy ones marital life ones must struggle both of them jointly. The most important point to live a happy, satisfied and adjusted life is to see the perception of the spouse about life his or her ideology, expectations, demands, likings and disliking. The marital adjustment leads a satisfaction life as well. Current hypothesis proved the idea that marital adjustment leads a person to a well satisfied life.

Hypothesis no. 2

This hypothesis is supported by results and is significant at $p < 0.01$ level. It is clear by table # 2 that there is significant difference between late marriages and early marriages on Marital Adjustment.

The study of the literature review also supports the results of the current study as David *et al.* (2010) conducted a study on the effects of early marriage on marital dissolution. The main point of this study was an analysis of a path model which includes the estimated effects of background of early marriage, early marriage and education on the possibility of separation. A result using the General Social Surveys support research that indicates that early marriage is the most significant variable effecting divorce. Further they also concluded and measure through education a small influence of the early marriage.

The literature review also supports the findings as Lehrer (2006) conducted a study on Age at Marriage and Marital Instability: Revisiting the Becker-Landes-Michael Hypothesis. The hypothesis stated that marriage

in early age has a high risk of failure and break up. Up till now it has been suggested that after attaining a mature age, the relationship between age at marriage and marital instability might become positive, the reason is that as unmarried women become mature mentally and physically, they can choose their partners realistically and in a better way. The result indicated that the relationship between age at marriage and marital instability is strongly negative up to the late twenties, and curve goes down after this age.

The literature review also supports the conclusion as Bitter, (1986). conducted a study on Late Marriage and Marital Instability: The Effects of Heterogeneity and Inflexibility. He used interview technique and his sample was married people. The study investigated the effects of late marriage on marital instability. To check the level of instability he measured a large range of activities related to failure, divorce and separation. The result showed that people who married in later life were found to be more heterogeneous in their mate selection. When this heterogeneity is controlled, the relationship between age at first marriage and instability is negative and linear. He concluded that No support was found for the hypothesis that late marriage may be associated with marital instability because such spouses are "too set in their ways."

Hypothesis no. 3

The above table shows that there is significant difference between late marriages and early marriages on Life Satisfaction at p 0.001.

In late marriages it is easier to achieve all the primary, financial, emotional and basic needs of married life, but it is not quite possible in early ages. After achieving the primary and secondary needs a person feels physical, psychological, social, and moral satisfaction.

The study of the literature review also supports the hypothesis of the current study as [Goldbeck](#), et al (2007) conducted a research on Life Satisfaction and Age. They investigated twelve hundred seventy four students from age 11 to age 16 to observe how these students felt about life satisfaction in their lives. They concluded that during this age life satisfaction tends to go down. On the whole the scores of these participants were very low.

The study of the literature review also supports the hypothesis of the current study as Lee (1977) conducted a study on Age at Marriage and Marital Satisfaction: A Multivariate Analysis with Implications for Marital Stability. He took the sample of seven hundred eighty eight married people. In this study he investigated the relationships between age at marriage, the marital role performance, and marital satisfaction. The purpose of the study was to test the hypotheses related to age at marriage and marital instability which was depicted from a theory. His findings indicated the presence of little positive relations between the constructs.

A few participants of the study in early marriages group with low income got very high score on Satisfaction with Life Scale which means a high level of life satisfaction. It is different with the results but the analysis of their lives indicates that they are religious, spiritual and contented people. The study of the literature review also supports the view as Stephanie Pappas (2010) derived In her article Why Religion Makes People Happier (Hint: Not God) she suggested that people who are more spiritual and pious lived more happy and contented life as compare to nonreligious people. The people who go to religious gatherings regularly found highly satisfied" with their lives. According to the American Sociological Review, spiritual persons get life satisfaction through societal gatherings which they have in their lives is very thankful to theses religious meetings.

5. Conclusion

The aim of current study was to find out the relationship of marital adjustment and life satisfaction among early and late marriages. This research approved that late marriages have high level of marital adjustment and life satisfaction. The present study included a sample of (N= 160) early and late married men and women into two categories early married men and women (n=80) and late married men and women (n=80). The participants were selected from different areas of Punjab from different socio-economic back grounds. The age of early married participants was below 20 years and the age of late married participants was above 35 years. The marriage experience of the participants was at least 5 years. Pearson Correlation and t-test were used for statistical analysis. The research findings indicate that there is a positive correlation ($r = .33$, significant at $p .01$)

between marital adjustment and Life Satisfaction. The research further shows that there is significant difference (*significant at p .001*) between late marriages and early marriages on marital adjustment. Moreover, the research also indicates that there is significant difference (*significant at p .001*) between late marriages and early marriages on Life Satisfaction. The findings of the research may helpful for the policy makers to introduce some new strategies for the betterment of the society.

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