

**MARITAL ADJUSTMENT OF EDUCATED WORKING AND
EDUCATED NON WORKING WOMEN AS A FACTOR OF
COMMUNICATION STYLE WITH THEIR SPOUSES**

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Abstract

Present study aimed at to explore the relationship between marital adjustment and style of mutual communication amongst the couples. Survey technique was employed for data collection. Two sub-scales 'General Pattern of Adjustment' and 'Communication' of Marital Adjustment Scale-Urdu (MAS-U) (Kazmi & Pervez, 2002) was used personally by the researcher in face to face fashion to collect the data. Convenient sample of 200 married women was taken from Abbottabad (KPK) Pakistan. It was hypothesized that; (1) better communication leads towards marital harmony and (2) the general pattern of marital adjustment is associated with mutual positive communication style. The results reveal that significant positive association exists between the general pattern of adjustment and mutual communication style of the couples ($r = 0.25$; $df = 198$; $p < 0.01$). Study offers various further directions to explore the issue of marital adjustment.

Key Words: Marital adjustment, marital harmony, Married women, Communication, General pattern of adjustment.

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INTRODUCTION

Marital adjustment typically refers to those processes that are presumed necessary to achieve a harmonious and functional marital relationship (Sabatelli, 1988). It is related to mutual understanding, verbal and non-verbal communications (Ahmady, et al., 2009) and is the way in which individuals and couples deal with their differences of opinions (Bradbury, 1995). A well-adjusted relationship is involved frequent interaction between partners' open communication, and the ability to resolve disagreements when conflicts occur (Spanier, 1976). In technical sense communication is the ability to listen and is one of the most important requirements in successful marriage, as poor communication results in increasing anger, tension and frustration (Eddins, 2009).

Marital quality is more or less an objective and dyadic characteristic of the relationship (English, 2002). Margolin has identified ten areas of marital adjustment i.e. communication, values, couple growth conflict resolution, affection, roles, cooperation, sex, money and parenthood (as cited in Hashmi, Khurshid, & Hassan, 2007) Roberts and Price (1989) also has identified communication, parental role as higher marital satisfaction. Study shows that emotional expression, financial management, communication flow and works involvement are significantly correlates and predictors of marital adjustment (Ebenywa-Okoh, 2008). Yelsma (1984) found significant relationship between the conflict management and marital adjustment. Happily married individuals have significantly more congruency between their self-perceptions and their spouse's perceptions of their communication practices (ibid).

Hayens et al. (1992) found that marital satisfaction significantly correlated with perceived spouse behaviors and lack of communication, instability, changing attitude towards sex, changing roles of husband and wife and tensions of fast life, have resulted in the lack of harmony among married couples (Jamwal, 2009). Marital adjustment also has been associated with attainments of values such as; communication, coordination, personal satisfaction, altruistic, emotional values (Skaldeman & Montgomery, 1999). realistic expectations, personality issues, conflict resolution, leisure activity, sexuality and in the overall average couple positive agreement (Fowers & Olson, 1986).

Studies show that verbal / nonverbal communication and marital adjustment are associated (Binvenu, 1970; Tucker & Horowitz 1981; Margolin, John & O'Brien, 1989; Adam & Gingras, 1982; Navran, 2004, Elliott, 2009; Markman, Renick, Floyd, Stanley and Clements, 2004). According to Burleson and Denton (1992) marital adjustment is proponent of social cognition and communication skills of the individuals. Studies conclude that the couples' mutual communication styles have significantly found associated with couple's adjustment (Carr`ere & Gottman, 1999; Gottman & Levenson, 1992; Gottman & Krokoff, 1989; Markman, 1979, 1981; Rogge and Bradbury, 1999; Close, Morris, Dennison, Bayne & Gidron, 2009). Four types of reciprocal patterns of couples' communication characterized; confront-confront, confront-defend, complain-defend, and defend complain (Ting-Toomey, 2006). Study has investigated the motivational aspect of communication in marriages and found that distressed wives predicted their messages to be more negative than distressed husbands (Denton, Burleson & Sprenkle, 1994). Marital communication was found significantly correlated with both; social equality and marital adjustment (Pollock, Die & Marriott, 1990).

Amato and Previti (2003) enlisted the communication as the 6th most frequent cause of divorce. Storaasli and Markman (1990) investigated the long-term effects of communication in early stages of marriage and found that it is helpful in understanding and building new relations. According to Mark (2010) way of communication can increase the decrease the destructive behaviors in a marital relationship. Lee (2010) argued that happily married couples use non-verbal communication more effectively. Cooley has (2006) highlighted the role of emotional communication in marital satisfaction. Park, Harrison and conjugal communication problems has been studied as best predictors of marital satisfaction in Korean immigrants (Bailey, 2000).

Griffin (1993) concluded that there are substantial gender differences in male and female over covariates in marital interaction. Communication was also found to mediate the relationship between marital virtues and relationship adjustment (Veldorale-Brogan, Bradford, & Vail, 2010). According to Jones (2010) marital adjustment problems include the development of communication differences and routine, unrealistic expectations and trust problems.

Conversation quality is reported as a useful tool in improving the marital adjustment by the dual-career couples (Grandon, 1999). Peterson and Urquiza (1993) argued that limited or poor interfamily communication results in marital discord. Gordon, Baucom, Epstein, Burnett and Rankin (1999) found higher correlation with marital adjustment and women with more

relationship-focused standards. Bradbury (2008) stated that communication problem is most prevalent problem for the couples to seek professional help. Ivanov (2010) identified the new dimension in communication i.e. behavioral communication as a psychological construct that addresses people's use of day-to-day behaviors as a form of communication. It refers to people's tendency to express feelings, needs, and thoughts by means of indirect messages and behavioral impacts.

Margolin, John and O'Brien (1989) found that unhappily married spouses exhibit fewer positive communications as compared to happily married spouses. In this regard, spousal communication program has showed healthy results in marital enrichment (Bashford & DeWitt, 1984). marital adjustment has seen associated with more negative perceptions on conflict communication, causal attributions and insecure attachment (Els, Ann, & Paulette, 2007). In marital adjustment it was found that the negative communication of unhappy couples proved to be more direct or intense than those of happy couples (Noller, 1985).

Investigation of chronic pain patients reveals that marital discord increased due to decrease in marital communication (Flor, Turk and Scholz as cited in Geisser, Cano & Leonard, 2005). Matteson (1974) has studied that marital communication is not only associated to the marital satisfaction but also mediate the child self-esteem. Berge, Patterson and Rueter (2006) found that couples having children with chronic health conditions have lower level of marital satisfaction and more communication difficulties. Studies reveal that depressive females have lower level of marital satisfaction and they report more communication difficulties (Heene, Buysse, Van-Oost, 2007). Spouses were more likely to be depressed if they were older, less well educated, less communicative (Lewis, Fletcher, Cochrane, & Fann, 2008). Levels of marital relationship have been found associated with both communication and sexual interaction (Trudel, Fortin, & Matte 1997; Lawrence, 2008; Cupach & Comstock, as cited in Belanger, Laughrea & Lafontaine, 2001).

It is evident that programs intended to improve communication skills in couples, effect the level of marital adjustment (Yalcin & Karahan, 2007). Couples who received the behavioral marital therapy (BMT) improved significantly on overall marital adjustment because of positive communication which they exchange during the therapy (O'Farrell, Cutter, & Floyd, 2006). Rohrllich (2002) investigated the role of self-discloser and decision making power effecting the communication in dual culture marriages and communication aspect of intercultural marriages.

Azrin et al. (1980) studied the effect of reciprocity counseling that provided behavioral contracting, communication training and instruction in mutual reinforcement. Findings indicate that cognition plays an important role in spouses' responses to each other's communication and that perceptions of spouse communication are multidimensional (Epstein, Pretzer, & Fleming, 2006).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Objective of the Study

Present study was aimed at to find out the general pattern of marital adjustment of the educated career and educated non career women with special reference to their communication style with their spouses.

Research design

In this study, cross-sectional survey research designed was applied to explore the association between general pattern of marital adjustment of women and communication style.

Hypotheses

It was hypothesized that (1) "Overall pattern of working married women is better in terms of overall adjustment" and (2) "Working women are better in communicating themselves and thus are more adjusted than non working women".

Sample

Convenient Sample of 200 married non working women was taken from the city area of Abbottabad. Convenient Sample of 200 married non working women was taken from the two cities; Abbottabad and Mansehra, of Hazara Division Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, (KP) province of Paksitan. It is located on Karakoram highway (KKH). Hazara is a region of the KP province of Pakistan. It comprises six districts: Abbottabad District, Battagram District, Haripur District, Kohistan District, Mansehra. District Abbottabad is at an altitude of 1,225 m (4002 ft) above sea level and surrounded by refreshing green hills of Sarban. Abbottabad boasts one of the country's

highest literacy rates with 67% in 2007, ranking first in KP and ninth overall in Pakistan. It is commonly referred to "The City of Schools and Universities", Mansehra District, is very near to Abbottabad city, with a very high rate literacy rate of 35.41%. In comparison. spoken languages in both cities are Hindko Potohari Pashto and Urdu (Wikipedia, 2012).

Research instrument

In the present study 'sub scales 'Communication' and 'General pattern of adjustment' of Marital Adjustment Scale-Urdu (MAS-U) (Pervez & Kazmi, 2002) was used for data collection. MAS-U is an attempt to establish a framework from which marital adjustment can be estimated in Pakistani culture. Other marital scales are in English language and their cultural adaptation is quite laborious phenomenon so were not used. The MAS-U is a standardized instrument in Urdu language and thus is able to evoke real response from the interviewees. MAS-U is a reliable instrument, consisted of 126 items that loaded on five factors to determine the degree of; (1) spouse's interpersonal frustration and dissatisfaction, (2) spouse's capability to express their feelings on various familial issues, (3) spouses' satisfaction within available economic resources, (4) spouse's specific communication style about the routine marital / life issues, (5) spouses' satisfaction within existing family systems (i.e., nuclear and joint family systems). Participants marked their responses on a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 (i.e., strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree). The internal consistency of MAS-U has been reported with a Cronbach alpha of 0.72 .

Procedure of the study

Data was collected through convenient sampling, from the 200 married women (100 workingwomen and 100 non working women) in face to face fashion from two districts of KPK (i.e., Mansehra & Abbottabad). Sample of working women included University teachers, School teachers and from the hospitals. Sample of all working women included from educated house wife from the both cities, it was more difficult, so volunteer students of university (graduate students) assisted to collect the data from their Mohallha / streets of the both cities. Before data collection these students were briefed and trained properly by the researcher. To maintain the validity of data in all the cases, Marital Adjustment Scale (MAS-U) was administered personally

in face to face fashion. Purpose of the study was properly explained to each interviewee and they were requested to give their original response. They were assured that the research was the part of thesis work and the information they were giving would remain confidential.

Analysis and interpretation of the results

The highest score in the scale is the indicative of negative maladjustment between husband and wife and communication style, while the low score refers to better adjustment and harmonious relations. Responses on questionnaire items were coded, statistical analysis was carried out by using SPSS version 17. To evaluate the difference between the communication style of working and non-working married women, *t*-test and linear correlation were applied along with basic statistics. Analysis has been shown in table 1, 2, and 3. Table 1 indicates the reliability statistics for the MAS-U Scale show Cronbach alpha for sub scale "Communication" (i.e. $r = 0.6$). Table 2 shows that the overall marital adjustment score of the MAS-U ranged from 126 to 630, ($M = 247.0$, $SD = 27.2$ for working married women & $M = 272.9$, $SD = 30.24$ for non-working married women & $t = 6.38^{**}$). It shows that the overall pattern of working married women is better in terms of adjustment. Table 3 summarizes total score on communication ranged from 28 to 140 ($M = 73.9$, $SD = 12.4$ for working women, $M = 73.4$, $SD = 11.8$ for non-working married women, $t = 3.103^{**}$). It also shows that working women communicate in a better way on marital issues and thus are more adjusted than non-working women. Table 4 indicates the correlation between the scores on "communication" and the score on overall pattern of adjustment on the scale ($r = 0.25^{**}$).

Discussion

The study specifically concerned with the communication of working married women and non-working married women. Studies prove the hypothesis that working women are better in communicating themselves and thus are more adjusted than non-working women. It indicates that working women have better vision and ability to communicate themselves on various marital issues than the non-working women. It may be due to their confidence due to their earning hand status in the family and certainly their husbands give importance to their opinions and judgments, however it needs further research.

Present study confirms large body of researches which indicate that the quality of communication is significantly related to marital adjustment and stability (e.g., Haynes, Chavez, & Samuel, 1984; Markman, 1979 & 1981; Carr'ere & Gottman, 1999; Chistensen & Shenk, 1991; Levenson, 1988, 1998; Noller, 1988, Spanier & Lewis, 1980). Present results are in accordance with the previous researches conducted by Noller's (1980, 1981), Vincent, Weiss and Birchler (1975), Gottman and Levenson, (1992) and Krokoff, (1989), Die and Marriott (1990). Present finding is consistent to the recent previous research findings which have reported the mutual communication as best predictors of marital happiness and better adjustment (e.g., Rogge & Bradbury, 1999; Gordon, Baucom, Epstein, Burnett & Rankin; 1999; Navran, 2004; Park, Harrison & Bailey, 2000; Doell & Reid's, 2002; Els, Ann, & Paulette, 2007; Eddins, 2009; Ahmady, et al. 2009; Mark, 2010; Lee 2010; & Ivanov, 2010)

CONCLUSION

Study leads us to infer that levels of satisfaction in marriages are dependent on career of educated women and mutual communication even in Pakistani culture. The results conclude that significant positive relationship between the general pattern of adjustment and communication style exists. The potential of healthy way of communication increases the constructive behavior and decrease the destructive behaviors among the couples. It seems that working women have the better insight and potential to communicate themselves on variety of marital conflicts than the non working educated women. It may be due to their self esteem because of their earning hand position in the family and certainly their husbands give importance to their opinions and judgments. However, the issue needs further investigate.

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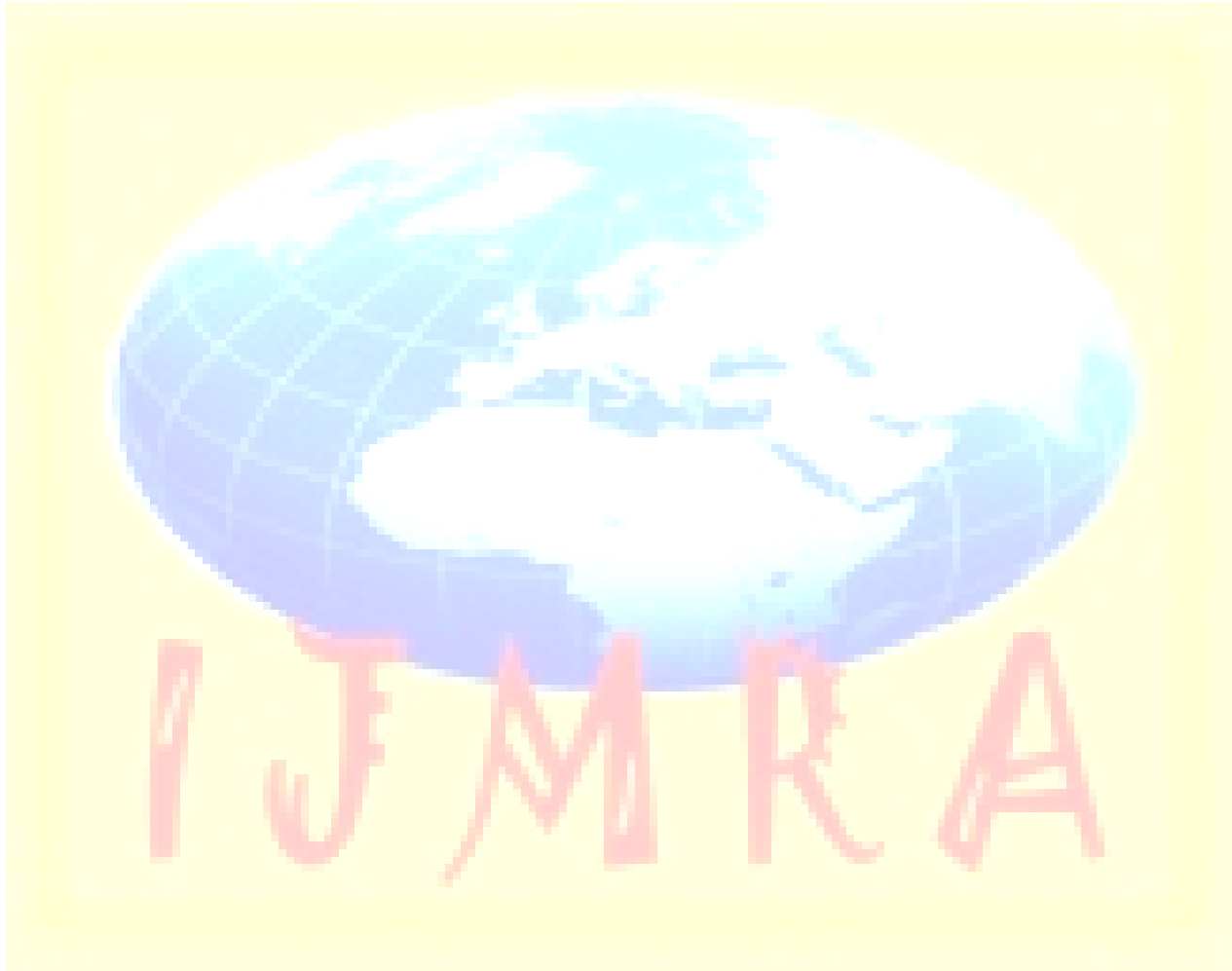
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Tables

Table 1. The reliability statistics for the MAS-U Scale show Cronbach Alpha to be reliable at

Number of items	<i>M</i>	<i>Sd</i>	<i>r</i>
28	75.0	13.5	0.60

Table 2. Mean, standard deviation and t- score of working and non working women on marital adjustment (Overall pattern).

Marital adjustment	Working women (<i>n</i> =100)		Non working women (<i>n</i> =100)		<i>T</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>Sd</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Sd</i>			
	247.0	27.2	272.9	30.24	6.38	98	0.00

Table 3. Difference between the communication style of working and non- working married women.

Marital adjustment	Working women (<i>n</i> =100)		Non working women (<i>n</i> =100)		<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>Sd</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Sd</i>			
	73.4	11.8	76.9	12.4	3.103	198	0.00

Table 4. Association between the communication patterns of general adjustment among the couples

variable	Communication
General adjustment	<i>r</i> .25**

Above table shows significant positive relationship between the scores of married women between their General pattern of behavior and Communication style.