

Comparing Marital Satisfaction: Insights from South Asian and Middle Eastern Perspectives

Amber Asghar¹, Ruqia Kalsoom², Zubaida Zafar³, Hina Khan^{4*}

^{1,2,3}Virtual University of Pakistan Lahore.

⁴Government College University, Lahore, Pakistan

*Corresponding Author: hinakhan@vcu.edu.pk

Abstract: In the human relationship, marriage becomes the source for healthy and satisfactory life. Marriage satisfaction is a state of happiness and comfort which is being enjoyed and shared by both partners in their marital relationship. For researchers, it seems a complicated and difficult task to understand and predict the status of marriage satisfaction as there is no specific predictor which could assess and calculate the level of satisfaction. The aim of this study is to assess those common factors i.e age, education, gender, marriage duration, number of children and religion which effect the marital satisfaction universally. The study used data from a published data set (Sorokowski, et al. 2017), comprising 7178 married individuals across 33 countries and territories. This current research focuses on South Asian countries (India & Pakistan) and Middle Eastern countries (Iran & Saudi Arabia), with a targeted population of 1234 responses. Religiosity appear as a significant factor in marital satisfaction in both regions specifically in the selected countries. After calculating Spearman's correlation among various variables, positive and negative correlations is identified in relation to marital satisfaction. The Mann-Whitney U test is employed to compare levels of marital satisfaction between South Asian and Middle Eastern countries.

Keywords: *Marriage satisfaction, Religiosity, Marriage predictors*

Introduction

Marriage is the most important relationship of the human society. It has been practicing since the inception of the human society which evolved over the period of time (Balderrama-Durbin et al, 2011). The marriage system witnessed a lot of changes with the evolution of the human society. In the pre-

historic age too, the marriage system existed but the rituals and practices of that time were so different as compared to the contemporary society (Singh & Kanjirathinkal, 1999).

With the advent of education and awareness, the marriage system has been highly changed because it has increased awareness among people, especially women, who have tried to fight for their socioeconomic and matrimonial rights (Boyd & Roach, 1997). In old age, marriage was not a system of mutual understanding and compatibility; it was just assumed to gain more and more children, which largely affected the physical and health conditions of the women. But as society changed, matrimonial practices also changed and marriage became a proper social institution that strives to find compatible partners for both males and females (Siddique, 1983).

This is also education and awareness among the people who introduced new dimensions related to marriage, i.e., marriage satisfaction. Now, a lot of studies are being conducted on the topic of marriage satisfaction across the globe, and especially women are striving to gain inner satisfaction related to different dimensions of marital satisfaction (Fincham & Beach, 2010).

Marital Satisfaction

Marital satisfaction is a state of mind where married couples feel relaxed and satisfied with their matrimonial relationship. Every year, millions of couples get married and give birth to their children, which functions the family system in an appropriate way (Waite, 1995). Marital satisfaction is a pre-requisite for life satisfaction because couples who have compatible partners enjoy their lives with full joy (Holt-Lunstad et al., 2008). Marital satisfaction has an impact on both the physical and mental states of both partners. The partners with marital satisfaction spend quality time together, and they feel their lives are a blessing. They hang out, watch movies, and listen to music together. All of these qualities of married life collectively contribute to their satisfaction with life (Le Poire, 2005). Marital satisfaction not only has positive effects not only on the spouses, but also on the children. The children of such couples also become valuable citizens because their parents have instilled positive attributes in their

socialization (Cummings & Davies, 2010). They did not notice any type of violence or quarreling from their parents, so they also like to be positive and friendly (Hetherington & Kelly, 2002).

Both satisfaction and dissatisfaction with marital life are influenced by various factors. For marital satisfaction, demographic characteristics, i.e., education, age, duration of marriage, and having children, matter a lot (Knox & Schacht, 2002). Couples that have grown up in an educated environment have more chances to adopt a socially acceptable way of life. But if there is no compatibility between husband and wife, it is almost impossible to enjoy marital satisfaction (Jose & Alfons, 2007). According to existing studies, couples with a higher level of education and fewer children are more satisfied with marital life. In such a case, they can give enough time to both work and life. They spend quality time with family and enjoy their married lives (Wendorf et al., 2001).

Gender is another factor that contributes to marital satisfaction. Both males and females are brought up in different sociocultural settings, so their needs and issues also vary. According to the majority of the studies, males are more satisfied with their marital life than females (Mickelson et al., 2006). Females continue to change their minds on minor things, and similarly, they require it from the males' side. The females require the presence of their husbands at home every time, but the males have to deal with their duties, assignments, and business outside the home, which is why they cannot stay longer at home (Jose & Alfons, 2007).

Psychological tensions and stress are prominent factors that contribute to disturbed marital relations. Again, the existing literature reports that females are more occupied by psychological stress. They are irritated even by ordinary actions that affect their marital relationships because, under stressful circumstances, they cannot give proper time to marital values (Gove et al., 1990). Work experience and job pressure are prominent contributors to mental stress. Females with employment have more chances of psychological stress. They are fed up with routine work life (Story & Repetti, 2006). They also want to spend time with family, but due to job requirements, they are unable to do so. So, they remain stressed and have little satisfaction with their overall lives (Roberts & Levenson, 2001). The mental stress leads

to anxiety. Under such a situation, the couples cannot spend joyful time together, and they blame each other for tiny matters. It influences the effective communication and compatibility of the couples and further decreases the quality time they used to spend together (Crouter et al., 2001).

Definition

Marital satisfaction refers to “A genuine feeling of pleasure, satisfaction, and joyfulness experienced by a husband and wife when they consider all aspects of their marriage”.

South Asian Perspective

South Asia is based on mainly developing countries where women are not being given adequate social, economic, physical, and emotional support. They are not given the same social status as the men. In this region, marriage is a strong social institution whose main decisions are taken by the senior citizens who decide marital relations and bonds among different members of society (Lalonde et al., 2004). Males and females try their best to preserve the matrimonial relations because it is due to their elders that they have to prolong their marital status. The traditional practices of marriage are losing their traditional value in South Asia due to the acculturation of western practices. The Muslim countries of this region are bound by religious practices from the perspective of marriage, so they are less motivated to breakdown the religious obligations of marriage (Vaidyanathan & Naidoo, 1991).

On the other side, the marriage pattern among Indians is changing rapidly. The Indians are not as bound by religious practices as the Muslims of Pakistan, so they are highly influenced by European and western culture (Nath & Craig, 1999). The major cause of this change is the showbiz industry, which is showing western trends in India. At the same time, there are studies that report that the majority of Indians are gripped by cultural traditions and practices. They are obeying their parents, which is why the arranged marriage system is chiefly practiced in India. The advanced and western-styled marriage system has been adopted by a tiny proportion, which is related to the well-off class (Wakil et al., 1981).

In the South Asian perspective, marriage is more social than an individual affair. The couples have to maintain cordial relations with each other's in-laws and relatives. There is a scarcity of available data about marriage satisfaction among couples only (Nath & Craig, 1999). This is because most of the studies are conducted while engaging related relationships, i.e., parents, siblings, in-laws, and other close relatives. Hence, the marriage system and its satisfaction are judged on the basis of the relations between two families, not on the compatibility between the husband and wife (Sonpar, 2005).

In the present era, marriage patterns are changing not only from a South Asian perspective but also at the global level. Now the couples of South Asia are placing more emphasis on their personal satisfaction than on the clans' satisfaction (Srivasta & Shukla, 1995). They are breaking down the over-influence of cultural practices because they have to rely more on their well-being and social and sexual satisfaction. They judge their marriage satisfaction on the basis of mutual compatibility, expression of affection, spending leisure time together, companionship, self-disclosure, and interpersonal trust (Desai, 1991).

Apart from the indicators noted in the above studies, there are also many other indicators that strongly bind couples through marital satisfaction. For example, Desai (1991) reported that despite the changing trends of marital relations, the couples of India and Pakistan both give preference to pragmatic aspects, i.e., religiosity, financial security, parental acceptance, the reputation of the family, and socio-cultural background. These indicators are directly linked with the cultural and social setting of society, where couples alone cannot take any decisions; rather, they have to engage themselves with their families (Goodwin & Cramer, 2000).

Emotional intimacy and companionship are two prime concerns related to marital satisfaction. When the couples have time for each other, which they spend together in an atmosphere of companionship, they are more likely to be satisfied with their married life. In the south Asian countries, apart from the traditional practices, the couples try their best to give importance to each other and share quality time (Ahmad, 2006). In such cases, they live a happy life and socialize their children in accordance with a socially approved cultural system. But on the other hand, if the couples fail to do the same and do not

spend time with each other and family, they have a greater chance of having limited satisfaction with their marital life (Ahmad, 2006).

Standpoint from the Middle East

The institution of marriage is considered sacred in Arab culture. All of the Arab countries perceive marriage as a social and religious bond between two or more partners. According to Arabs, marriage is a system that sustains the family and social system and restricts inappropriate sexual practices (Al-Othman, 2012). According to Arab culture, “marriage is defined as a legally and religiously sanctioned relationship involving mutual goals, economic cooperation, intimacy, normative sexual relationships, and childbearing” (Lev-Wiesel & Al-Krenawi, 1999).

Marriage is a familial and religious obligation in the Middle East that unites not only two spouses but also two families. Through marriage, not only are social and cultural values preserved, but it also secures the future generations of a family. It fulfills the sexual needs of both partners in an appropriate way as well (Alqashan, 2008).

The endogamy marriage system is most popular in Middle Eastern countries. Most of the marriages are carried out between close-clan relatives and consanguineous marriages. On the other side, the polygamy marriage system is popularly practiced in the Middle East, which is also supported by religious concerns. The majority of Arabs have more than one wife, which is perceived from the perspective that polygamy protects them from extramarital affairs, which is sin according to the teachings of Islam (Al-Krenawi, 2010). On one side, polygamy protects them from extramarital affairs, but at the same time, it also has negative attributes. All of the wives and children are not happy with such marriage practices, which may lead to dissatisfaction with marriage (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2006). In recent times, the polygamy practice has faced criticism, especially from youngsters due to family issues. A man cannot spend leisure time with all of his wives and children at the same time, so the divorce rate in the Middle East countries, especially the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, is increasing (El Azayem & Hedayat-Diba, 1994).

The increasing divorce rate in the prominent Middle Eastern countries shows that the marriage system is facing troubles. Divorce is only gained when there is dissatisfaction with the spouse and both cannot move forward with married life, so they separate from each other (Al-Krenawi et al., 2011). The marriage system in Middle Eastern countries is affected by the wave of modernization. In the traditional Arab communities, the children were tied the knot at an early age, but now the studies show that such marriage practices are being criticized chiefly by the young community (Rashad et al., 2005). There are reports that the young and educated prefer to live single for more years. The age of thirty years is normal for Arab girls to remain single and enjoy life (Safdar, 2009).

Again, like South Asian countries, the Middle East countries are also lacking regarding studies with a special focus on marriage satisfaction (Alqashan, 2008). The available studies depict that Arab men are more satisfied with their matrimonial relations, but women do not have the same perception. They claim that their husbands do not have enough time for them. They also don't have friendly relations with them, which depicts their dissatisfaction with the marriage system (Balderrama-Durbin, 2011).

Research Question

Is there a significant difference in marital satisfaction based on regional classification?

After a detailed introduction related to the background of the study to introduce the social problems under consideration, the relevant studies in the recent decade (2003–2022) regarding the research questions of this paper are added in the below section entitled literature review.

Literature Review

Marriage is generally considered the source of a happy and satisfied life for the partners. Marital satisfaction is a multifaceted and complex phenomenon in human relationships. A number of variants become indicators of what makes a married life satisfactory, e.g., education, age, religion, compatibility.

There are some particular indicators that result in a high level of satisfaction and pleasure. A critical analysis of the relationship between marital status and satisfaction, especially in the context of education, age, and religion, requires a comprehensive literature review.

[Twenge et al. \(2003\)](#) analyze the marital satisfaction level between parents and non-parents. Parenthood impacts are likely more intense on marital satisfaction and generally more negative among the high economic class. The study also suggests that childbirth reduces the level of satisfaction due to certain conflicts and constraints on freedom.

Stutzer & Frey (2006) stated that negative effects are experienced in married life when there are large differences in the educational level of partners. However, people were assumed to prefer marrying someone from a higher educational class because they usually make more money and have better salaries, which helps them move up their position in society. Couples with a lower level of education, or those with a large degree of educational disparity, are more likely to separate than those with higher levels of education.

Baumeister et al. (2007) stated that a psychological condition that represents people's evaluation of the advantages and disadvantages of a partnership is marital satisfaction.

The study found that partners feel comfort in their marriage when they think that the benefits of matrimony exceed the disadvantages.

David and Stafford (2013) stressed that couples with religious and spiritual bases displayed stronger marital affiliations to each other, which ultimately transformed into strong relationships. By applying a spiritualistic-based model, the study emphasized that the behavior of tolerance as guided by religion becomes the most effective tool for marital satisfaction. In the religion of Islam, marriage is considered an obligatory treaty, and partners become responsible when they marry each other.

Meltzer et al. (2014) presented a meta-analysis to empirically assess the general myth that women are less satisfied in their marital relationship as compared to men. The results of the study statistically indicated a minor gender difference in satisfaction, as wives perceived themselves as less satisfied as compared to their husbands. The analysis of the study was based on clinical and nonclinical samples. Clinical therapy indicates that 51% of married women are less satisfied with their partner as compared to nonclinical therapy, which concludes that there is no gender discrimination in terms of marital satisfaction.

Rostami, Ghazinour, Nygren, and Richter (2014) gave an overview of marital satisfaction in Iran, particularly in the jobholder groups. The study indicates that couples who gain more benefits at low costs are perceived to be more satisfied maritally. Statistically, some indicators like age, education, number of children, and religion are also linked to marital satisfaction. Couples who have a quality education with fewer children are more satisfied and stable in their relationship. Gender is also an important predictor in assessing marriage satisfaction, as women are considered to be deprived of marital satisfaction compared to men. Married women have to play more demanding roles with extra responsibilities and are less rewarding as compared to their husbands.

Aman et al. (2019) conducted a theoretical study to examine the association between religiosity and marital stability in terms of satisfaction. The research also examined the impacts of religion and spirituality on the marital satisfaction of Muslims, particularly Pakistani married couples. The continuous religious practices and commitments not only ensure a happy and satisfied life but also strengthen the marital bond.

Dobrowolska et al. (2020) examined marital satisfaction as a key indicator of a strong relationship and the well-being of both partners. The study conducted a survey to assess the predictors of marital satisfaction, such as age, sex, religiosity, education, economic status, education, and cultural values. It established that income, marriage duration, and the number of children were not found to be

determinants of marital satisfaction. In addition, partners who enjoyed marital satisfaction also reported experiencing few negative experiences, better communication, and a high level of mutual support.

Karney & Bradbury (2020) stated that marriage is a source of satisfaction and does not require any social acceptance for longer periods of time. The research made three assumptions and determinants to analyze the level of stability and satisfaction in married life. The research concludes that in a stable married life, satisfaction does not decline over a long period; it not only continues but rather increases. Secondly, people need a satisfied married life, and they get married at some point in their lives. In the second assumption, the study predicts that the negative or harsh communication between the spouses may become a difficult task to change or most probably spoil the relationship. In the third assumption of the study and analysis, the different environments of the middle class and lower income class also vary in the couples of such families.

Afonso et al. (2022) concluded in the empirical study that couples who live a stable and satisfied life enjoy a happy, healthy, and longer life. Marital satisfaction and dissatisfaction are also influenced by the married life circle and circumstances. The latest evidence proves that marital satisfaction does not decline over a longer time period but rather remains stable or extended. The study also examines how marital satisfaction is integrated with other predictors, e.g., affiliation of the companions, marriage duration, communication, and conflicts, but remains unpredictable.

Tartakovsky (2023) assessed the marital satisfaction among the spouses engaged in domestic labor. The dyadic study tested the level of marriage satisfaction by using a heterosexual sample of laboring couples. Wives who performed less masculine responsibilities with less child care enjoyed more satisfaction, and husbands who performed less feminine jobs were more satisfied. On the other hand, the working couples reported an analogous level of positive marital satisfaction. The Married Life Scale was used to measure the level of marital satisfaction. The most common demographic variables, i.e., age, education, working hours, and the number of children, were used for model analysis.

Methodology

The study used data from a published data set (Sorokowski et al. 2017) comprising 7178 married individuals across 33 countries and territories. These locations include Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Croatia, Estonia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Hong Kong, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Malaysia, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia, South Korea, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and Uganda. The data for the study came from the published dataset, collected in 2012 and 2013. A non-random convenient sampling technique was utilized to collect the data, as all the samples were the acquaintances of the researchers, students, participants in the vocational courses, and residents of the researchers home town.

This current research focuses on South Asian countries (India and Pakistan) and Middle Eastern countries (Iran and Saudi Arabia), with a targeted population of 1234 respondents. The study specifically examined variables such as marital satisfaction, the number of children, marriage duration, religion, and demographic factors (including sex, age, religiosity, and education).

Descriptive Statistics

The demographic variables encompass respondents' gender, age, religiosity, and education. In South Asian countries, a total of 430 respondents were surveyed, with 45% being male and 55% female. Age distribution was categorized into six ranges: (1) 20–29, (2) 30–39, (3) 40–49, (4) 50–59, (5) 60–69, and (6) 70–80. The analysis revealed that 37.20% of respondents were aged 20 to 29, 44.65% were in the 30-39 age bracket, 10.46% were between 40 and 49, 6.2% were between 50 and 59, 1.1% were between 60 and 69, and only 0.23% were over 70 years old. Regarding education, 0.5% had primary

education, 1.9% had secondary education, 6.0% had high school education, and 91.6% had bachelor's or master's degrees.

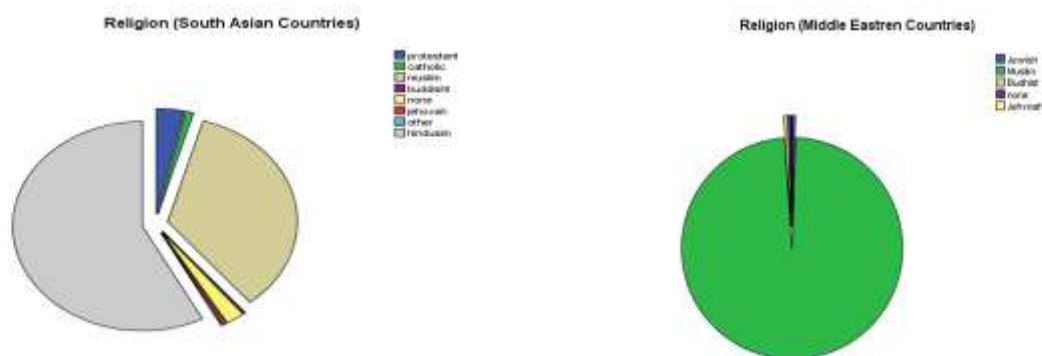
Religiosity appears to be a significant factor in marital satisfaction. The analysis discovered that 8.1% were not at all religious, 1.9% were slightly religious, 3.5% were neutral, 35.8% moderately adopted religion, 18.6% were religious, 15.3% were very religious, and only 16.7% were extremely religious.

In Middle Eastern countries, there were 804 respondents, comprising 43.5% males and 56.5% females. The age distribution reflected South Asian countries, with the following percentages: 21.1% in the 20-29 age range, 38.4% in the 30-39 range, 25.9% in the 40-49 range, 10.9% in the 50-59 range, 3.2% in the 60-69 range, and 0.4% over 70 years old. Education-wise, 3.6% had no education, 9.2% had primary education, 20.1% had secondary education, 27.1% had high school education, and 42.0% had bachelor's or master's degrees.

Similarly, religiosity plays a crucial role in marital satisfaction in Middle Eastern countries. The breakdown revealed that 4.4% were not at all religious, 2.9% were slightly religious, 3.2% were neutral, 5.3% moderately adopted religion, 18.6% were religious, 30.5% were very religious, and 36.9% were extremely religious.

Graphical Presentation

Religious affiliation of the respondents

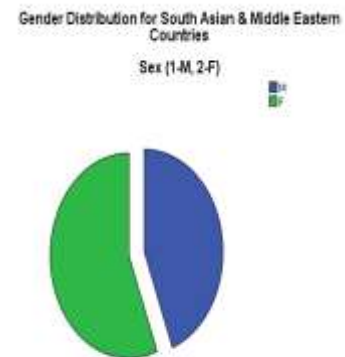


The above chart represents the religious affiliation of South Asian respondents which shows that 34.7% are Muslims and 57.7% are Hindus.

The above chart represents the religious affiliation of Middle Eastern respondents which shows that 98.4% are Muslims and other religion have very less presentation in this study.

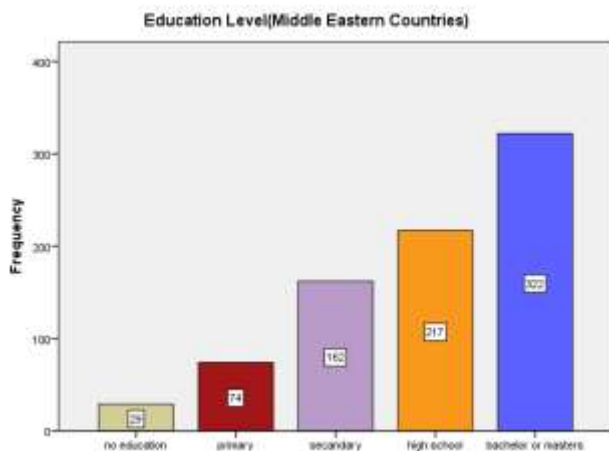
Gender of the respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	M	545	44.2	44.2	44.2
	F	689	55.8	55.8	100.0
	Total	1234	100.0	100.0	

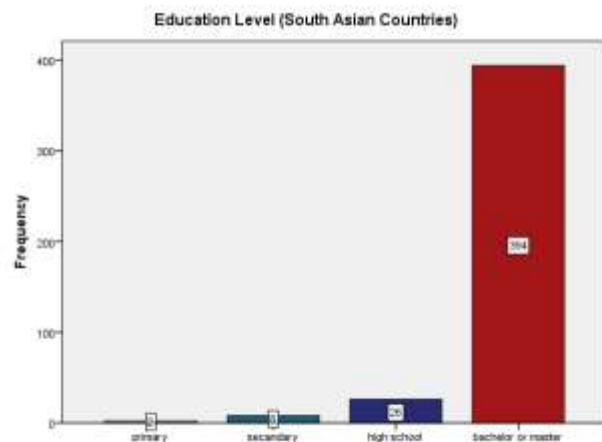


The above chart shows that 44% are Males and 56% are female among India, Pakistan, Iran and Saudi Arabia.

Level Of Education of the Respondents



The provided bar chart illustrates varying levels of literacy among the populations of Middle Eastern countries.



It is also noted that the majority of respondents in South Asian countries hold either bachelor's or master's degrees.

Inferential Analysis

Education and Marital Satisfaction

H0: There is no significance correlation in the education and marital satisfaction.

H1: There is significance correlation in the education and marital satisfaction.

Rank Spearman correlation is calculated by applying the formula;

$$\rho = 1 - \frac{6 \sum d_i^2}{n(n^2 - 1)}$$

with

ρ = Spearman rank correlation value

d = margin of each pair value

n = Spearman rank pair values.

Researchers applied the Spearman correlation as the variables under study are not normally distributed and does not follow the parametric assumptions.

Correlations (South Asian Countries)				
			Education	Marital satisfaction
Spearman's rho	Education	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.028
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.565
		N	430	430
	Marital satisfaction	Correlation Coefficient	-.028	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.565	.
		N	430	430

To examine the relation between education and marital satisfaction in South Asian countries, Spearman correlation analysis was employed. The sign of the Spearman correlation indicates the relation of the analyzed variables. The negative sign indicates the inverse relationship of education and marital satisfaction. Hence, the results shows that the Spearman coefficient (r_s)=-0.28 , which means the negative correlation. The test of relation shows that probability Sig. (2-tailed) is 0.565. This implies that the increasing level of education among South Asian respondents does not increase their marriage satisfaction.

Correlations (Middle Eastern Countries)				
			Education	Marital satisfaction
Spearman's rho	Education	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.078*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.028

The

		N	804	804
	Marital satisfaction	Correlation Coefficient	.078*	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.028	.
		N	804	804
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).				

results show that the Spearman coefficient (r_s) is 0.078. This means a positive correlation. The test of relation shows that the correlation is significant, which implies that there is a significant positive relation between education and marital satisfaction in Middle Eastern countries.

As indicated by the descriptive statistics, South Asian respondents predominantly possess higher levels of education compared to those in Middle Eastern countries. Similarly, the correlations suggest that a higher level of education does not significantly influence marital satisfaction.

Religion and Marital Satisfaction

H0: There is no significance correlation in the religiosity and marital satisfaction.

H1: There is significance correlation in the religiosity and marital satisfaction.

Correlations (South Asian Countries)				
			Marital satisfaction	Religiosity
Spearman's rho	Marital satisfaction	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.116*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.016
		N	430	430
	Religiosity	Correlation Coefficient	.116*	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.016	.
		N	430	430

		N	430	430
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).				

The results shows that the Spearman coefficient (r_s)=0.116. This means the positive correlation and this shows that there is positive relation between the religious values and marital satisfaction. The probability Sig. (2-tailed) is 0.016 which is less than 5% shows the rejection of H_0 that shows the significance correlation in the religiosity and marital satisfaction.

Correlations (Middle Eastern Countries)

			Religiosity	Marital satisfaction
Spearman's rho	Religiosity	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.597**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	804	804
	Marital satisfaction	Correlation Coefficient	.597**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	804	804

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Similarly, the results of Middle Eastern countries shows the positive and strong correlation (r_s)=0.597 than South Asian countries. The probability Sig. (2-tailed) is 0.0000 which is less than 5% and reject the null hypothesis that shows the significance positive correlation in the religiosity and marital satisfaction, means more religious people are more satisfied in their relationships.

Age and Marital Satisfaction

H0: There is no significance correlation in age and marital satisfaction.

H1: There is significance correlation in age and marital satisfaction.

Correlations (South Asian Countries)				
			Marital satisfaction	Age
Spearman's rho	Marital satisfaction	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.101*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.037
		N	430	430
	Age	Correlation Coefficient	-.101*	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.037	.
		N	430	430
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).				

The above table shows that there is a negative correlation between age and marital satisfaction in South Asian countries based, it implies that, on average, as individuals in these countries get older, their reported levels of marital satisfaction tend to decrease.

Correlations (Middle Eastern Countries)				
			Marital satisfaction	Age
Spearman's rho	Marital satisfaction	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.070*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.046

		N	804	804
	Age	Correlation Coefficient	-.070*	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.046	.
		N	804	804
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).				

Similar results we get from the Middle Eastern countries that increase in age impact negatively on marriage satisfaction.

Marriage Duration and Marital Satisfaction

H0: There is no significance correlation in marriage duration and marital satisfaction.

H1: There is significance correlation in marriage duration and marital satisfaction.

Correlations (South Asian Countries)				
			Marital satisfaction	Marriage duration (years)
Spearman's rho	Marital satisfaction	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.118*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.015
		N	430	430
	Marriage duration (years)	Correlation Coefficient	-.118*	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.015	.
		N	430	430

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The table above indicates that the duration of a marriage does not have a positive impact on marital satisfaction. In other words, the passage of time in a marital relationship does not necessarily imply a stronger or more satisfying connection. It is also observed that the correlation is statistically significant.

Correlations (Middle Eastern Countries)				
			Marital satisfaction	Marriage duration (years)
Spearman's rho	Marital satisfaction	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.075*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.034
		N	804	804
	Marriage duration (years)	Correlation Coefficient	-.075*	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.034	.
		N	804	804
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).				

The results shows that the Spearman coefficient (r_s)=-0.075 , which means the negative correlation. The test of relation shows that probability Sig. (2-tailed) is $0.034 < 0.05$. This implies that the increasing number of marriage years among middle eastern respondents does not increase their marriage satisfaction.

Mann Whitney U test

The Mann-Whitney U test, also known as the Wilcoxon rank-sum test, is a non-parametric statistical test used to determine whether there is a difference between two independent groups. This test is often employed in situations where the assumptions of a parametric test, such as the t-test, are not met.

Research Question: Is there a significant difference in marital satisfaction based on regional classification?

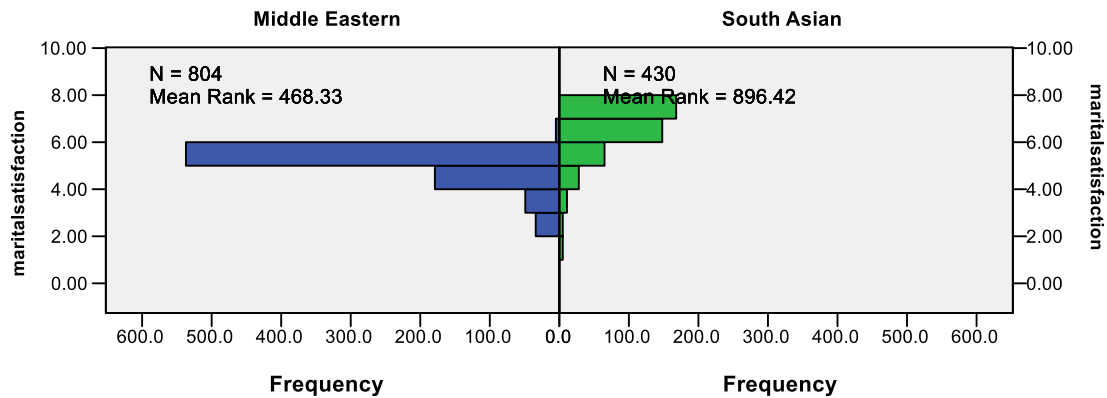
H₀: There is no significant difference in marital satisfaction based on regional classification.

H₁: There is significant difference in marital satisfaction based on regional classification.

Hypothesis Test Summary					
	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision	
I	The distribution of marital satisfaction is the same across categories of South Asian and Middle Eastern.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.	
Asymptotic significance are displayed. The significance level is .05.					

Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test

0-South Asian, 1-Middle Eastern



Total N	1,234
Mann-Whitney U	52,925.500
Wilcoxon W	376,535.500
Test Statistic	52,925.500
Standard Error	5,878.802
Standardized Test Statistic	-20.401
Asymptotic Sig. (2-sided test)	.000

The test provide information on the direction of the difference (which region has higher or lower satisfaction), and it confirms that the distribution of marital satisfaction scores differs significantly between the regions. The rejection of the null hypothesis implies that the data provides enough support to conclude that there is a meaningful distinction in marital satisfaction levels between the two groups and suggests that, on average, South Asian countries (with mean rank= 896.42) tends to have higher levels of marital satisfaction.

Conclusion:

This study is based on the study data set (Sorokowski et al. 2017) comparing marital satisfaction in South Asian (Pakistan and India) and Middle Eastern (Iran and Saudi Arabia) countries. The demographic characteristics of the respondents included in this study show that South Asian respondents were predominantly younger and had a higher level of education as compared to Middle Eastern respondents. Married females from both regions are the majority of the respondents. Religiosity was found to be a significant influential factor on marital satisfaction in both regions. A higher level of marital satisfaction is reported by those respondents who tend to be more religious individuals in both regions. There is a strong correlation between religiosity and marital satisfaction in Middle Eastern countries as compared to South Asian countries. A negative correlation between education level and marital satisfaction suggests that higher education does not necessarily lead to increased marital satisfaction. However, in the case of Middle Eastern studies, a positive correlation was found, indicating that higher education was associated with higher marital satisfaction. The negative correlation between age and marital satisfaction in both regions suggests that with an increase in age group, marital satisfaction levels tend to decrease. The duration of marriage simply does not imply a stronger or more satisfying relationship, according to statistics related to respondents from both regions. The Mann-Whitney test confirmed that there is a significant difference in marriage satisfaction levels between the two regions under study. According to the mean rank, a higher level of satisfaction is found in South Asian countries as compared to Middle Eastern countries. The study highlights the complexity of marital satisfaction and emphasizes the importance of considering cultural, religious, and regional factors when investigating and addressing relationship dynamics. The findings are a theoretical contribution to the existing literature on cross-cultural marital satisfaction.

References

- Abreu-Afonso, J., Ramos, M. M., Queiroz-Garcia, I., & Leal, I. (2022). How couple's relationship lasts over time? A model for marital satisfaction. *Psychological reports*, 125(3), 1601-1627.
- Ahmad, S. (2006). Contextualizing selves of South Asian Canadian couples: A grounded theory analysis. Unpublished master's thesis, York University, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.
- Aman, J., Abbas, J., Nurunnabi, M., & Bano, S. (2019). The relationship of religiosity and marital satisfaction: The role of religious commitment and practices on marital satisfaction among Pakistani respondents. *Behavioral Sciences*, 9(3), 30.
- Al-Krenawi, A. (2010). A study of psychological symptoms, family function, marital and life satisfactions of polygamous and monogamous women: Palestinian case. *International Journal of Social Psychiatry*, 58, 79-86. doi:10.1177/0020764010387063
- Al-Krenawi, A., & Graham, J. R. (2006). A comparison of family functioning, life and marital satisfaction, and mental health of women in polygamous and monogamous marriages. *International Journal of Social Psychiatry*, 52, 5-17. doi:10.1177/00207640060061245
- Al-Krenawi, A., Graham, J. R., & Al Gharaibeh, F. (2011). A comparison study of psychological, family function, marital life and satisfactions of polygamous and monogamous women in Jordan. *Community Mental Health Journal*, 47, 594-602. doi:10.1007/s10597-011-9405-x
- Al-Othman, H. M. (2012). Marital happiness of married couples in the UAE society: A sample from Sharjah. *Journal of Asian Social Science*, 8, 217-224.

- Alqashan, H. (2008). Enrichment training program and successful marriage in Kuwait: A field study on Kuwaiti couples. *Digest of Middle East Studies*, 17(2), 1-16.
- Balderrama-Durbin, C. B., Snyder, D. K., & Semmar, Y. (2011). Assessing Arabic couples: An evidence-based approach. *Family Science*, 2, 24-33.
- Baumeister, R. F., Vohs, K. D., & Tice, D. M. (2007). The strength model of self-control. *Current directions in psychological science*, 16(6), 351-355.
- Boyd, L. A., & Roach, A. J. (1997). Interpersonal communication skills differentiating more satisfying from less satisfying marital satisfaction. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 24, 540-542.
- Bradbury, T., Fincham, F., & Beach, S. (2000). Research on the nature and determinants of marital satisfaction: A decade in review. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 64, 964-980.
- Crouter, A. C., Bumpus, M. F., Head, M. R., & McHale, S. M. (2001). Implication of overwork and overload for the quality of men's family relationships. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 63, 404-416.
- Cummings, E. M., & Davies, P. T. (2010). Marital conflict and children: An emotional security perspective. New York, NY: *Guilford Press*.
- David, P., & Stafford, L. (2013). A relational approach to religion and spirituality in marriage: The role of couples' religious communication in marital satisfaction. *Journal of Family Issues*, 36(2), 232-249.
- Dobrowolska, M., Groyecka-Bernard, A., Sorokowski, P., Randall, A. K., Hilpert, P., Ahmadi, K., & Sorokowska, A. (2020). Global perspective on marital satisfaction. *Sustainability*, 12(21), 8817.
- Desai, M. (1991). Research on families with marital problems: Review and implications. In Desai, M. (Ed.). *Research on families with problems* (pp. 337-573). Bombay: Tata Institute of Social Sciences.

- El Azayem, G. A., & Hedayat-Diba, Z. (1994). The psychological aspects of Islam: Basic principles of Islam and their psychological corollary. *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 4, 41-50.
- Fincham, F. D., & Beach, S. R. (2010). Marriage in the new millennium: A decade in review. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 72, 630-649.
- Goodwin, R., & Cramer, D. (2000). Marriage and social support in a British-Asian community. *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology*, 10, 49-62.
- Gove, W. R., Style, C. B., & Hughes, M. (1990). The effect of marriage on the wellbeing of adults: A theoretical analysis. *Journal of Family Issues*, 11, 4-35.
- Hetherington, E. M., & Kelly, J. (2002). *For better or for worse: Divorce reconsidered*. New York, NY: Norton.
- Holt-Lunstad, J., Birmingham, W., & Jones, B. Q. (2008). Is there something unique about marriage? The relative impact of marital status, relationship quality, and network social support on ambulatory blood pressure and mental health. *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*, 35, 239-244.
- Jackson, J. B., Miller, R. B., Oka, M., & Henry, R. G. (2014). Gender differences in marital satisfaction: A meta-analysis. *Journal of marriage and family*, 76(1), 105-129.
- Jose, O., & Alfons, V. (2007). Do demographics affect marital satisfaction? *Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy*, 33(1), 73-85.
- Karney, B. R., & Bradbury, T. N. (2020). Research on marital satisfaction and stability in the 2010s: Challenging conventional wisdom. *Journal of marriage and family*, 82(1), 100-116.
- Knox, D., & Schacht, C. (2002). *Choices in relationships: An introduction to marriage and the family*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.
- Koc, F. (2016). The Associations of Dyadic Coping and Relationship Satisfaction Vary between and within Nations: A 35-Nation Study.

- Lalonde, R. N., Hynie, M., Pannu, M., & Tatla, S. (2004). The role of culture in interpersonal relationships: Do second generation South Asian Canadians want a traditional partner? *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 35(5), 503-524.
- Le Poire, B. A. (2005). Family communication: Nurturing and control in a changing world. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Lev-Wiesel, R., & Al-Krenawi, A. (1999). Attitudes towards marriage and marital quality: A comparison among Israeli Arabs differentiated by religion. *Family Relations*, 48, 51-56.
- Meltzer, A. L., McNulty, J. K., Jackson, G. L., & Karney, B. R. (2014). Sex differences in the implications of partner physical attractiveness for the trajectory of marital satisfaction. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 106(3), 418.
- Mickelson, K. D., Claffey, S. T., & Williams, S. L. (2006). The moderating role of gender and gender role attitudes on the link between spousal support and marital quality. *Sex Roles*, 55, 73-82.
- Nath, R., & Craig, J. (1999). Practising family therapy in India: How many people are there in a marital subsystem? *Journal of Family Therapy*, 21, 390-406.
- Rashad, H., Osman, M., & Roudi-Fahmi, F. (2005). Marriage in the Arab world. Washington, DC: Population Reference Bureau. Retrieved from http://www.prb.org/pdf05/MarriageInArabWorld_Eng.pdf
- Roberts, N. A., & Levenson, R. W. (2001). The remains of the workday: Impact of job stress and exhaustion on marital interaction in police couples. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 63, 1052-1067.
- Rostami, A., Ghazinour, M., Nygren, L., & Richter, J. (2014). Marital satisfaction with a special focus on gender differences in medical staff in Tehran, Iran. *Journal of Family Issues*, 35(14), 1940-1958.

- Safdar, A. (2009, March 14). Why so many modern marriages end in divorce. The National. Retrieved from www.thenational.ae/news/why-so-many-modernmarriages-end-in-divorce
- Siddique, M. (1983). Changing family patterns: A comparative analysis of immigrant Indian and Pakistani family in Saskatoon, Canada. In G. Kurian & R. Srivstava (Eds.), *Overseas Indians: A study in adaptation* (pp. 100-127). New Delhi: Vikas.
- Singh, R. H., & Kanjirathinkal, M (1999). Levels and styles of commitment in marriage: The case of Asian Indian immigrants. In J. M. Adams & W. H. Jones (Eds.), *Handbook of Interpersonal Commitment and Relationship Stability* (pp. 307 – 322). New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.
- Sonpar, S. (2005). Marriage in India: Clinical issues. *Contemporary Family Therapy*, 2(3), 301-312.
- Sorokowski, P., Randall, A. K., Groyecka, A., Frackowiak, T., Cantarero, K., Hilpert, P., ... & Sorokowska, A. (2017). Marital satisfaction, sex, age, marriage duration, religion, number of children, economic status, education, and collectivistic values: Data from 33 countries. *Frontiers in psychology*, 8, 1199.
- Srivasta, P., & Shukla, A. (1995). Interpersonal compatibility in relation to marital adjustment among single and dual career couples. *Psychological Studies*, 40(3), 132-142.
- Story, L. B., & Repetti, R. (2006). Daily occupational stressors and marital behavior. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 20, 690-700.
- Stutzer, A., & Frey, B. S. (2006). Does marriage make people happy, or do happy people get married?. *The Journal of Socio-Economics*, 35(2), 326-347.
- Tartakovsky, E. (2023). A dyadic study of the spouses' assessment of the division of domestic

labour and marital satisfaction. *Journal of Family Studies*, 1-16.

Twenge, J. M., Campbell, W. K., & Foster, C. A. (2003). Parenthood and marital satisfaction: a meta-analytic review. *Journal of marriage and family*, 65(3), 574-583.

Vaidyanathan, P., & Naidoo, J. (1991). Asian Indians in Western countries: Cultural identity and the arranged marriage. In N. Bleichrodt & Drenth, P. J. D. (Eds.), *Contemporary issues in crosscultural psychology* (pp. 37-49). Amsterdam: Swets and Zeitlinger.

Waite, L. (1995). Does marriage matter? *Demography*, 32, 483-507.

Wakil, S. P., Siddique, C. M., & Wakil, F. A. (1981). Between two culture: A study in socialization of children of immigrants. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 43(4), 929-940.

Wendorf, C. A., Lucas, T., Imamoğlu, E. O., Weisfeld, C. C., & Weisfeld, G. E. (2011). Does the number of children impact marital satisfaction after accounting for other marital demographics? *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 42, 340-354.