



Exploring the Impact of Marital Satisfaction on Subjective Well-Being among Married Individuals of Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

This study looks into the increasing challenge of marital satisfaction and its effects on people's well-being in Pakistan. The main goal is to see how satisfaction within marriage can influence a person's well-being, especially subjective well-being. Using a cross-sectional approach, this research gathers data from married individuals across cities of Pakistan through validated questionnaires to ensure a wide range of perspectives. The total sample size was 329. The males were 124 and 205 were females, the Mean age was 33.45 with a standard deviation of 9.10. The instruments used for collecting responses were the Couple Satisfaction Index and SPANE (Scale of Positive and Negative Experience) for Subjective Well-Being Scale. By applying correlation, regression, and independent t-test, it identifies significant links between marital satisfaction, subjective well-being, and demographics. The correlation finding shows that a significant relationship exist between marital satisfaction and the dimensions of subjective well-being as a positive correlation was found between marital satisfaction and Positive Experience, but a significant negative correlation was found between marital satisfaction and Negative Experience. Regression analysis shows that marital satisfaction significantly predicts the dimensions of subjective well-being. The t-test analysis showed that there was no gender difference noted in marital satisfaction and positive experience subscale of SPANE but a significant difference in the negative experience subscale was found between the SPANE measures among both genders. These results emphasize the value of nurturing healthy marriages, which can positively impact individuals and communities. With these insights, the study aims to guide future counseling approaches and policies to support and improve marital relationships and overall well-being in Pakistan.

Introduction

Marital satisfaction has indeed been defined as fulfillment and happiness within a marriage. When persons feel satisfied with their marriages, they possess emotional stability and health that reflects in both personal life and interactions with others. Stanley and Markman (1992) established that commitment in marriage lays a foundation of trust and support upon which couples navigate through the challenges in life. This commitment helps lower stress and builds resilience, making the marriage more fulfilling over time and giving each partner a strong foundation for well-being. So, marital satisfaction isn't just about happiness—it's a crucial source of support that promotes health and stability for the long haul. Marital satisfaction significantly influences different dimensions of well-being, such as physical health, and psychological, social, spiritual and subjective dimensions. Each one reflects an aspect of how people think about and conduct their lives, and positive marital interaction enhances those aspects and gives them a fulfilling supportive foundation on which to grow and lead satisfying lives. These well-being dimensions are closely associated with the quality of the marital relationship. Supportive and gratifying marriages can substantially influence these factors in a positive direction, thereby building a sound foundation for overall good subjective well-being. Such an understanding becomes all the more important within a Pakistani context, in which the marital relationship is integrated into the core of the social arrangement.

Research has shown that marital satisfaction plays an important role in promoting subjective well-being and positive mental health by providing emotional stability and positive experiences. Hsu and Barrett (2020) found that couples express more pleasant feelings and better life satisfaction, indicating that emotional support in marriage enhances mental health. The way people perceive and evaluate their own lives, including their feelings and general level of life satisfaction, is reflected in their subjective well-being. It encompasses both subjective assessments of life and emotional experiences.

Marriage with subjective well-being is considered a vital indicator of general happiness and quality of life since it strikes at the very heart of how individuals will experience and interpret their relationships. Studies have shown that levels of marital satisfaction are positively related to subjective well-being: marital satisfaction experienced at the high levels tends to increase an individual's happiness and life satisfaction. For example, Scorsolini-Comin and dos Santos (2012) observed that mutual satisfaction of Brazilian couples increased the spouses' emotional well-being. In a study among dual-income couples, Evani and Suryadi (2020) reported that support by the spouse in marriage increased satisfaction with life, especially for working husbands, and that the presence of marital harmony is most important for enhancing subjective well-being. These studies suggest that supportive marriages entail favorable emotional situations favorable to personal happiness.

Longitudinal research also deepens this view that a positive effect of marriage is that it brings about long-term subjective well-being. Cao et al. (2015) study indicated that the married participants, who endured chronic health conditions, were more satisfied with their lives than unmarried participants for twenty years. These results showed that stable marriages contribute to long-term happiness because emotional support exists within a long-lasting marriage. It is especially true for the Pakistani society where family ties and durability in marital bonds are emphasized; hence the sustainable support can lead to happiness and strength over time. In addition to that, positive influences of marital satisfaction were reflected across cultures on subjective well-being, thus providing a proof of universal relevance. Diener et al. (2000) found

subjective well-being was positively related to marital satisfaction everywhere thereby establishing the case for marriage as an elixir for happiness. Even when culture change happens Mastekaasa (1993) established that the practice of marriage for welfare is very stable and therefore a good marriage really does enhance life satisfaction irrespective of sociocultural change. Therefore, the central aim of research is to discuss this presently unexplored relationship of marital satisfaction and its impact on subjective well-being among people in Pakistan. Since prior studies point out the significance of marital satisfaction toward overall well-being, yet much remains unknown regarding how this relationship surfaces within the special socio-cultural context of Pakistan. In particular, it would help to understand how the different well-being dimensions depend on marital satisfaction and how these interlink to constitute an individual's quality of life. This, in itself, presents a gap in knowledge about how to effectively frame interventions and support networks aimed at enhancing betterment of well-being through a married life in the context of Pakistan. The research also looks into the correlation of marital satisfaction and dimensions of wellbeing.

Hypotheses

1. Marital satisfaction will be significantly correlated with subjective well-being among married individuals.
2. Marital satisfaction will significantly predict subjective well-being among married individuals.
3. There will be a significant gender difference on marital satisfaction, and subjective well-being among married individuals.

Methodology

Research Design

A cross-sectional design was selected in this study to establish the effect of marital satisfaction on subjective well-being.

Sample Size & Sampling Technique

The sample size was generated by the help of the G*Power software Version 3.1.9.4. After selecting the t test as correlation, effect size was added as medium (.30). Alpha value and power value was added as .05 and .95. The minimum sample size it has given was 111. The sample size of this study was 329. Data was collected using convenience sampling that enables sampling from a population in a simple and convenient manner.

Participants of Study

The respondents were selected to depict the main population of married couples in cities of Pakistan. The respondents were chosen from cities like Sahiwal and Harappa, without any class barriers, thus making sure that it would reflect both the lower and higher classes along with middle levels.

Inclusion & Exclusion Criteria

The married individuals should be aged between 20 years and older, marriage is at least 3 months old, married individuals with or without children, married individuals where one or both partners are employed, married individuals of all cities, towns, and even rural areas, those married individuals staying in nuclear or joint families were included in this study. On the other side the

married individuals younger than 20 years, the divorced or widowed, same-sex couples and married individuals who live in separation were excluded from this study.

Instruments

Demographic sheet

A demographic sheet was drawn to obtain the basic information that includes name, age and gender etc.

Couple Satisfaction Index-16

A better scale developed to evaluate relationship satisfaction in couples is the Couple Satisfaction Index-16 (CSI-16). Being brief and more culturally sensitive, it can be used with various populations. In Pakistan, the author can use it for Pakistani population. Bakhteyar et al. (2023) translated this scale into Urdu language on the basis of its original version by Funk and Rogge (2007). The CSI-16 is a Likert-type scale by which individuals assess the level of which they agree or disagree that mirror their feeling toward relationship satisfaction. The various formats range from a 7-point Likert scale to a 6-point scale. Responses for this scale may include "Extremely Unhappy" to "Perfect." Higher score on the scale indicated higher marital satisfaction. Score below than 51 actually shows that the couple is going through dissatisfaction in their married life. Lowest score score such as 20 and below indicated lowest satisfaction in married life. This scale is non-reversed, and construct validity has been supported through confirmatory factor analysis studies. It also provided high internal consistency: $\alpha = .95$ Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Here, it has emerged as good reliability as well (Bakhteyar et al., 2023).

SPANE (Scale of Positive and Negative Experience) Subjective Well-Being Scale

The SPANE Scale was first developed by Diener in 2009 as a measure of the positive impact and also the negative effects of subjective well-being (Diener et al., 2009). With the aim of showing how people live and the manner in which people experience positive and negative feelings in daily life, the scale has two sub-scales: SPANE-P (Positive) and SPANE-N (Negative). It is composed of six items where the respondent answers how often he or she felt emotions marked as either "joyful" or "happy" in the case of positive emotions and "sad" or "stressed" for negative emotions. Rating is on a scale of 1-5, with varying degrees from very rarely or never to very often or always over a specified period, such as the previous day. Again, scores higher reflect greater occurrences of better or worse feelings. Scores are provided for each sub-scale. The scale for this research is an Urdu translation, which was translated by Aafia Rasool in 2019 in her PhD thesis. The Cronbach's alpha value for the positive scale and the negative scale is reported as .87 and .82 respectively (Rasool & Batool, 2019).

Procedure

The participants, who agreed and participated in the study on their own will. Brief sessions have been taken place to explain briefly to them the nature of the research and its main objectives. Only those participants who agreed to venture there then received a demographic information sheet to fill for the analysis required on their part. A copy went out to every respondent. To gather information regarding the relevant variables of the study, participants were also administered the individual self-report scale. All the scales used in the study were in Urdu. Among these, instruments used were the Couple Satisfaction Index (CSI-16), SPANE for Subjective Well-being

Scale. After all data were collected, each participant was thanked for his or her time and participation. The authors of the scale who developed scoring procedure was followed when doing the scoring after the process of data collection. After finishing data collection, the data was put into an SPSS spread sheet. SPSS was used in analyzing the data, including reversing some of the data points. Inferential statistics were implemented for the entire sample. Results for hypothesis testing and analysis were calculated using Pearson correlation, Regression, and independent t-test.

Ethical Consideration

All precautionary measures the rules of universities require that have to be taken before starting the research in order for conducting the research responsibly were taken before carrying on with the research. Firstly, it received approval from the Research Board of the Psychology Department, Riphah International University Faisalabad followed then by authorization from the BOS and BASR that permitted the research. The study design was structured in a manner that took into account the participant's well-being while still showing respect and dignity. Throughout the study, the rights of participants and their welfare were ensured by the researcher. Participants were informed about the confidentiality of responses given as well as the nature of the overall study. They were also reminded that attendance was strictly voluntary, no payment being anticipated, and that they can leave the questionnaire at their own will at any time. All tests used in this research were authorized by the original creators. Others were openly stated with open permission. Research process was conducted while keeping the right, ethical considerations in place; there was respect for the intellectual property rights.

Results & Discussion

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Research Participants (N=329)

Variables	F	%	M (SD)
Age			33.45 (9.10)
Young adults	264	80.3	
Middle age adults	61	18.5	
Older adults	4	1.2	
Gender			
Male	124	37.7	
Female	205	62.3	

The descriptive statistics of age show that the mean of age was 33.45 with standard deviation 9.10 and most the participants are young adults, whereby 264 individuals constitute 80.3% of the total sample. The middle-aged take up the second biggest number, with 61 participants-at 18.5% of the sample. Conversely, older adults are represented very minimally, as only 4 participants constitute 1.2% of the sample population. Overall, this suggests that the participants are substantially young and middle-aged. The gender distribution shows a higher representation of female participants. In a sample size of 329, there are 124 males, making up 37.7%, and 205 females, accounting for 62.3%.

Table 2: Variables Descriptive Statistics (n=329)

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Marital Satisfaction	62.31	17.77	-1.428	1.801
Subjective well-being				

SPANE Positive	22.96	4.12	-.602	.312
SPANE Negative	15.59	4.19	.428	.364

A mean score of 62.31 on Marital Satisfaction indicates that, overall, the participants report a rather high level of marital satisfaction. The large standard deviation of 17.77 indicates a huge variability within the level of satisfaction among the participants. For Skewness, it takes a negative value -1.428, which states that most of the participants report a higher marital satisfaction and few participants report lower satisfaction. This kurtosis value of 1.801 indicates that in general, distribution is somewhat peaked on the mean, which means most of the participants' satisfaction scores bunch around the average. In Subjective well-being, SPANE Positive has a mean at 22.96 and with standard deviation of 4.12, skewness moderately negative with -.602, and with kurtosis at .312 revealing somewhat pointedly peaked distribution. In contrast, SPANE Negative has a mean at 15.59, with a standard deviation of 4.19, positive skewness at .428, meaning it implies scores concentrated at the lower end, and kurtosis of .364 near to normal distribution.

Table 3: Alpha Reliability Analysis and Ranges of Marital Satisfaction and Subjective Well-Being Scales (N=329)

Variables	Range		Cronbach's α
	Actual	Potential	
Marital satisfaction	2-81	0-96	.96
Subjective well-being			
SPANE positive	10-30	6-30	.83
SPANE negative	6-30	6-30	.80

A Cronbach's alpha of .963 for the Marital Satisfaction Scale suggests outstanding internal consistency; that is, the 16 items correlate very highly and confirm the same construct, marital satisfaction. This very high alpha value is much more than the threshold value of .963 and means that the scale is very reliable, with a very small measurement error, and is hence apt for measuring marital satisfaction within your study. This is of fairly high reliability; thus, further testing may be done without trepidation since a robust, valid result is thus assured. Internal consistency for the positive items of the SPANE with 6 items is very robust, at .834 Cronbach's alpha. A score between .8 and .9 means that items are highly related and they reliably measure a related construct, which in this case is positive emotional experience. This high reliability further tells us that the items do a great job in consistently measuring feelings like happiness, joy, excitement and contentment. So, you can be quite confident using this scale in your research because it does provide a reliable measure of positive experiences. The Cronbach's alpha of .805 for the negative items on the Scale of Positive and Negative Experience (SPANE) with 6 items shows excellent internal consistency. A value of .8-.9 is marked as excellent, implying that the negative items shows strong inter correlation, and therefore negatively affective experience is captured effectively by the questionnaire. This high reliability ensures that items measuring emotions such as sadness, anger, or frustration do reliably pick up the intended feelings. Thus, you can comfortably use the negative sub-scale of the SPANE in your research with much assurance that it indeed offers a reliable assessment of negative experiences.

Table 4: Correlation among Marital Satisfaction and Dimensions of Subjective Well-Being (N = 329)

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3
Marital Satisfaction	62.31	17.77	--		
SPANE Positive	22.96	4.12	.61**	--	
SPANE Negative	15.59	4.19	-.33**	-.47**	--

Note. **p<.01

Analysis related to Marital Satisfaction and Subjective Well-being, assessed by the scale of SPANE (Positive and Negative Experiences), indicate important relationships in both directions: positive and negative. A medium positive significance was found between marital satisfaction and Positive Experience measured by SPANE Positive ($r = .611, p = .01$) - the more satisfied a couple is with marriage, the more positive emotional experiences they had experienced. Conversely, there is a moderate level of negative significant correlation for the relationship between marital satisfaction and Negative Experience (SPANE Negative) ($r = -.336, p = .01$), indicating that as marital satisfaction increases, negative emotional experiences decrease.

Table 5: Marital Satisfaction Predicting Subjective Well-Being Sub Dimensions (N = 329)

Variables	SPANE Positive		SPANE Negative	
	B	SE	B	SE
Marital Satisfaction	.611***	.010	-.336***	.012
R ²	.373		.113	
ΔR ²	.372		.110	

Note. ***p < .001, ΔR² = adjusted R²

In the regression analysis for Marital Satisfaction as a predictor of the Positive Experience Sub-scale of Subjective well-being (measured by SPANE), the model explains 37.3% of the variance in the Positive Experience score: R²= .373, with an adjusted R² value of .372, indicating a substantial effect. The p-value is seen to be highly significant. This confirms that Marital Satisfaction is a highly significant predictor of Positive Experience. The Beta, standardized coefficient is .611, hence a strong positive association. For the regression regarding Marital Satisfaction as a predictor of the Negative Experience Sub-scale of Subjective Well-being as measured by SPANE, the model explained 11.3% variance in the score of Negative Experience, R² = .113, adjusted R² = .110, therefore, moderate effect. The p-value is significant, so Marital Satisfaction is a strong predictor for Negative Experience. A standardized coefficient Beta is -.336, which is moderate negative. Thus, Marital Satisfaction has a negative impact on Negative Experience of Subjective Well-being.

Table 6: Gender-Based Comparisons of Marital Satisfaction and Subjective Well-Being Sub Dimensions of (N=329)

Variables	Male		Female		CI 95%		t(327)	P	Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD	LL	UL			
Marital satisfaction	62.66	17.56	62.10	17.93	-3.42	4.54	.276	.783	.03
SPANE Positive	23.30	3.97	22.75	4.20	-.36	1.47	1.184	.237	.13
SPANE Negative	14.39	4.01	16.31	4.14	-2.83	-1.00	-4.120	.000	-.46

In the independent t test of gender with marital satisfaction, wellbeing dimensions and its sub dimensions revealed that there was no difference on marital satisfaction between male and female. For the male participants (N = 124), mean was 62.66 (SD = 17.56). For the female participants (N = 205), the mean score was 62.10 (SD = 17.93). The result of the t-test stood as evidence that marital satisfaction between males and females was not significantly different because the result equaled .276, $p = .783$. Similarly, in the positive experience subscale of SPANE, males, N = 124, Mean = 23.30, SD = 3.97 and females, N = 205, Mean = 22.75, SD = 4.20 also did not have a significant difference. Moreover, t-test $t = 1.184$, $p = .237$ was not significant. However, a significant difference in the negative experience subscale was found between the SPANE measures. Males, N = 124, Mean = 14.3952, SD = 4.01788, reported lower negative experiences than females, N = 205, Mean = 16.3171, SD = 4.14941. $t = -4.120$, $p = .000$ resulted in a significant difference in which females perceive much greater negative experiences than males.

Discussion

The study was carried out to provide an adequate understanding of marital satisfaction and subjective well-being. The demographic analysis was pretty heterogeneous since it comprised of males and females who were aged between 26 and 35 years. The reliability analyses revealed that scales were reliable. The hypotheses regarding relationship between variables were done by Pearson correlation. Correlation analysis showed that all the dimensions of subjective well-being were correlated with marital satisfaction. By seeing all the results we can say that the literature exists that favor a positive and negative strong relationship between marital satisfaction and different dimensions of well-being. The first hypothesis of this study was “the marital satisfaction will be significantly correlated with subjective well-being among married individuals”. This hypothesis is accepted and also supported by the previous literature as Evani and Suryadi (2020) reported that there is a significant positive correlation exists between the marital satisfaction and subjective well-being of working husbands whose wives are also employed. Subjective well-being was also seen to increase with the greater the marital satisfaction of these husbands. This relationship was statistically significant, indicating that higher levels of marital satisfaction are related to greater subjective well-being. This study corresponds with the results of the present study. In another study the Diener et al. (2000) found subjective well-being was positively related to marital satisfaction everywhere thereby establishing the case for marriage as an elixir for happiness.

The hypothesis regarding the prediction of dependent variable was done through simple linear regression. Regression analysis also showed that subjective well-being can be explained or predicted by marital satisfaction. The second hypothesis of current study was the “marital satisfaction will significantly predict subjective well-being among married individuals”. This hypothesis is accepted and also supported by the previous literature as according to Carr et al. (2014), marital quality is positively associated with the subjective well-being that falls between life satisfaction and happiness. The study they had indicated that marital satisfaction is an important parameter of social well-being, especially in the older age group. Another research has shown that levels of marital satisfaction are positively related to subjective well-being: marital satisfaction experienced at the high levels tends to increase an individual's happiness and life satisfaction (Scorsolini-Comin & dos Santos, 2012; Gulzar et al., 2024). The hypothesis regarding the group differences was done through Independent t tests analysis. The third hypothesis of present was “there will be a significant gender difference on marital satisfaction, and subjective well-being among married individuals. According to the results of this research there was no gender difference noted on marital satisfaction and positive experience subscale of SPANE but a

significant difference in the negative experience subscale was found between the SPANE measures among both genders.

Conclusion

Overall, marital pride seems to play a key role in boosting various aspects of well-being, especially in areas like personal happiness and spiritual fulfillment. Strong results from correlation and regression analysis show that marital satisfaction can be a major factor that promotes overall health. This suggests that efforts to improve marital satisfaction may positively impact one's overall quality of life, particularly enhancing personal and subjective well-being.

Limitations & Recommendations

The specificity of this study is susceptible to one big problem, representativeness of the sample. The derived results will rely on the sample chosen because it might not typically signify the larger population of married people in Pakistan. So the future studies can work in this dimension where the sample can be drawn from the vast sample with variety of representation. Further, these findings offer valuable support for married individuals facing challenges with well-being in different areas of life. This study aims to help people enjoy their married lives more fully by addressing well-being across multiple dimensions. Since convenience sampling was used, future studies could improve the robustness of the findings by exploring different sampling methods. Additionally, this study didn't cover the physical and financial aspects of well-being, which would be useful to include in future research. Most participants in the study were younger adults, so the results may not apply as well to older populations. Another limitation is that this research only discussed the affective domain of subjective well-being and not the cognitive domain. The work on cognitive domain was present in abundance. Also the previous results inclined towards that marriage impacts cognitive domain and is not that impactful on affective domain and more work was needed. One limitation of this study is that self-reported data can sometimes bring in bias. Future research could get around this by using a long-term, or longitudinal, approach and including a wider, more diverse range of participants to capture these relationships more fully. Overall, this study sheds light on just how important marital satisfaction is for enhancing well-being across many areas of life, giving useful insights for researchers, clinicians, and policymakers alike.

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