

Impact of Religiosity on Marital Satisfaction in Dual Career Couples: A Case Study in Hazara University Mansehra, Pakistan

Abstract

This study was carried out to find how and to what extent the level of religiosity affects marital satisfaction in dual career couples. A total of 82 dual career spouses were selected through snowball sampling method in Hazara University Mansehra. Marital satisfaction of the study participants was measured with the help of Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) with four components: dyadic consensus, dyadic affectional expression, dyadic satisfaction and dyadic cohesion. Likewise, the respondents were asked to rate their level of religiosity on a statement “rate your religiosity” with five point Likert type scale. Data was analyzed through mean, standard deviation, one way ANOVA, and Pearson correlation. Results of descriptive statistics show that our participants had a higher level of religiosity and marital satisfaction. Furthermore, results of Pearson correlation suggest significant correlations between religiosity and all the components i.e. dyadic consensus, affection, cohesion and dyadic satisfaction. It was further found that all components of dyadic scale were also found in significant correlation with one another. It was concluded from this study that religiosity is a positive predictor of marital satisfaction in dual career couples.

INTRODUCTION

The interrelationships between marriage, family and religion institutions exist in different cultures and societies. Collective religious values, beliefs and practices are considered as integrated forces behind a well-organized and stable family and marriage institutions (Hunler & Genchuz, 2005). Previous studies have found that religiosity, religious belief and

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religious practices are positively connected with marital satisfaction, stability and overall marital quality (Margaret, Dudley, & Konsinski, 1990; Orathinkal & Vansteenwegen, 2006). However, in the context of social transformations and alternative life patterns in the past few decades, couple's relationships and marital satisfaction has become a critical issue (Zadeh & Tabrizi, 2014). The issue of marital satisfaction is becoming more debatable especially among those marital partners who are actively perusing both family and professional career; couples in these relationships are known as dual career couples. It is a form of marital pattern in which both marital partners are also professionals and have careers (Rapoport & Rapoport, 1969). Marital satisfaction is a subjective experience of one's own personal happiness and contentment in marital relationship (Myers, Madathil, & Tingle, 2005). In order to integrate both careers, couples are adopting various coping mechanisms to achieve marital satisfaction (Yinger, 1968). Researchers have discovered that religiosity; spirituality and religious beliefs are the most frequently adopted coping strategies which play an intervening shareholder role in sustaining marital satisfaction in dual career couples (Mahoney, 2010). Religiosity is the practice of religion and the level of behavior relating to religious activity and attachment with supernatural power (Shank, 1997). Studies have established that religiosity is fortifying and supports the spouses' strong relations due to various religious beliefs (Hunler & Genchuz, 2005) and values such as *marriages are made in heaven and celebrated on the earth*. It is inferred that marriage is a religious bond and religious practices may contribute to marital well-being in couples (Brown, Orbuch, & Bauermeister, 2008).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research shows that religiosity has significant and positive correlation with marital satisfaction. Commitment to religious belief has an insightful authority on long-term marital satisfaction and help in the appearance of healthy family relations (Gerlach, 2002). Religious based values make marriage more successful and couples become more satisfied with each other in their conjugal relationships (Filsinger, Wilson, & Margaret, 1984). High levels of religiosity are more convincible for marital satisfaction and stability as compared with those with a lower level of religiosity (Sullivan, 2001). Another study reported that of the different elements of religiosity; going to church has association with marital stability and reduced marital conflict and divorce ratio (Brown, Orbuch, & Bauermeister, 2008). Besides, religion has both direct and indirect relations with marital satisfaction. In direct relation, it increases social support of norms and values of marriage and enhancing behaviors such as partner forgiveness, while increase in mental satisfaction, temperance, and sexual fidelity are the indirect effect (Vaaler, Ellison, & Powers, 2009). A study conducted on Jewish, Christian and Muslim couples reported that religiosity reduced marital conflict and helped the couples in problem prevention, conflict resolution and

reconciliation (Dollahite & Marks, 2009). In a study conducted among Roman Catholic couples, it was reported that religious beliefs help these couples in controlling expressions of anger and undesirable thinking (Marsh & Dallos, 2001). Among the Christian couples, religiosity was found statistically significant with marital happiness and satisfaction (Rayya & Hisham, 2007). Similarly, it was found in a study conducted in California that religiosity proved to be a positive predictor for the couples' relationship during the first year of their marriage (Sullivan, 2001).

From structured interview conducted with the spouses, it was revealed that prayers have significantly increased "couple-God system" which further enhances their level of interaction with each other. Furthermore, it was reported that pray also help the couples in reducing their hostile emotions and increased their problem solving skills (Butler, Gardner & Bird, 1998). Besides, couples having greater devotion to religious beliefs have reported lower level of dissatisfaction and divorce ratio than the couples with lower commitment to religion (Spilka, Hood & Gorsuch, 1985). Religiosity also affects couple's intimacy and predicts that higher religiosity was associated with higher level of intimacy and interaction (Feeney, Noller & Ward, 1997). Relationships between marital happiness and religiosity have been reported as positive predictors for married couples. Therefore, family counselors who engage with marital issues strongly recommend religious orientation to the couple (Mahoney, 2005; Lambert & Dollahite, 2006).

MATERIALS AND METHOD

The population of current research was dual career couples of Hazara University, Mansehra. A total of 82 respondents including 56 male and 26 female were selected through snowball sampling techniques. Individuals having dual career marriage with at least one year spent together after their marriage were included in the study. For the purpose of convenience, both couples as well as single partners were selected as study participants. Structured questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection and data were analyzed by using SPSS version 20. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation were used to describe the demographic information. Relationships between variables were evaluated through Pearson's correlation analysis and (ANOVA) test and inter correlation matrix.

Marital satisfaction was examined using Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS), developed by Spanier (1976). DAS has a total of 32 response items divided across four subscales; dyadic consensus, dyadic affectional expression, dyadic cohesion and dyadic satisfaction scale. All the response items and sub scales were carefully studied and the suitability was examined for this study. Owing to the nature of the study, we adopted all the sub scales although a few response items were eliminated from every

sub scale to address the social desirability and undesirability elements for our study participants. A total of 21 socially viable and culturally accepted items from the scale were adopted through Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to investigate the level of marital satisfaction. The Dyadic Consensus Component was loaded with 6 response items which explains the consensual aspect of marital relations. Likewise, dyadic affectional expression component was loaded with 4 items to ascertain how couples express themselves in their interaction with each other. Furthermore, dyadic cohesion was loaded with the 4 most viable items to explore how couples ensure coherence in their relationships. Likewise, a total of 7 items were loaded to measure satisfaction between the spouses. A 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), high score on the response items suggests greater level of marital satisfaction and lower score indicates low level of marital satisfaction.

Level of Muslim religiosity has been measured by various researchers differently. For instance Stark and Glock (1968) have developed a theoretical model with four components including belief, ritual practice, experience and knowledge which were also adopted by Huber (2003) in his study. However, we examined and considered that the best and simple tool to measure the level of religiosity was the one used by Ahmadi, Azad-Marzabadi, & Ashrafi, (2008) who measured the level of religiosity with a single statement “*Rate your religiosity*” with five points ranging from (1= low, 2= low, 3= average, 4= high, 5 very high). Later we adopted the same to measure the level of religiosity of our respondents.

RESULTS & ANALYSIS

Table 1 *Demographic Information of the Respondents*

Gender	Male		Female		
Frequency/ %	56/68.2		26/31.7		
Age	20-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-70
Frequency/ %	19/23.2	31/37.8	16/19.5	11/13.4	5/6.1
Marriage Duration	1 -5	6-10	11-15	16-20	20+
Frequency/ %	25/30.5	11/13.4	26/31.5	11/13.6	9/11.0
Educational Status	FA/F.Sc	BA/B.Sc	MA/BS	M.Phil/MS	PhD
Frequency/ %	2/2.4	10/12.2	36/43.9	22/26.8	12/14.6
Rate Your Religiosity	Very Low	Low	Average	High	Very High
Frequency/ %	10/12.2	17/20.7	21/25.6	20/24.4	14/17.1

Table 01 shows the demographic information of our study participants with 68.2% male and 31.7% female participants. Majority being 38% participants belonged to the age group 31-40 followed by 23% in the age group of 20-30. Among the total study participants, 31% were living as marital partners for a period of 11-15 years while 30% had marital status for 1-5 years. A minimum number of 15% participants were

living as marital partners for a longer duration of 20 or more years. 44% participants having 16 years of education and 27% were qualified in MPhil/MS. Likewise, 25.6% participants reported average level of religiosity and 24.4% were found to be highly religious while 12.2% respondents reported very low level of religiosity.

Table 2 *Analysis by Mean and Standard Deviation*

S. No	Components of Marital Satisfaction	M	S.D
Dyadic Consensus			
1	I have a strong connection with my partner	3.78	1.176
2	I enjoy my spouse's company	3.88	1.318
3	We make major decisions unanimously	3.43	1.423
4	We have a very sound marital relationship	4.15	1.177
5	I have strong agreement with my spouse on family finances	2.12	1.180
6	I do not think about an end to our marriage	3.72	1.317
Affectional Expression			
1	My spouse is a perfect romantic partner	3.87	1.331
2	We regularly demonstrate affection to each other	4.11	1.197
3	We exchange our ideas in a friendly manner	3.34	1.549
4	I never bore from partner	3.02	1.388
Dyadic Cohesion			
1	I do not look for someone else	4.05	1.266
2	We spent free time together	3.61	1.274
3	We do housework together	3.95	1.256
4	We laugh together	3.90	1.454
Dyadic Satisfaction			
1	My partner makes me happy	4.10	1.140
2	Things between me and my partner are going well	3.68	1.246
3	I do not regret that I married to this partner	3.87	1.194
4	I do not think for separation/ divorce	4.65	1.047
5	I confide in my partner regarding everything	3.41	1.448
6	We do not quarrel	3.89	1.267
7	We conciliate quickly	3.87	1.312
Rate your religiosity		3.13	1.274

Table-02 shows detailed descriptive statistics of the selected items of all major components of marital satisfaction. Data indicates that almost all the response items loaded on dyadic consensus component got higher mean values; for instance, connection between spouses (M=3.78, S.D=1.17), enjoying spousal company (M=3.88, S.D=1.31), unanimous decision making (M=3.42, S.D=1.42), spending time together (M=3.61, S.D=1.27), agreement on family finances (M=2.12, S.D=1.18), and do not think an end to marriage (M=3.72, S.D=1.31). The table

further shows statistical values about dyadic affectional expression like my spouse is a perfect romantic partner (M=3.87, S.D=1.31), demonstration of affection (M=4.11, S.D=1.19), sound marital relations (M=4.15, S.D=1.77), and never bored with the spouse (M=3.02, S.D=1.38). The table further indicates higher mean values on dyadic consensus components such as do not look for another partner (M=4.05, S.D=1.2), friendly exchange of ideas (M=3.34, S.D=1.54), do housework together, (M=3.95, S.D=1.25) and have a laugh together (M=3.90, S.D=1.45). All the items loaded on dyadic satisfaction also got higher scores like my partner makes me happy (M=4.40, S.D=1.40), things going well (M=3.68, S.D=1.24), no regret of marriage (M=3.87, S.D=1.19), not thinking about divorce (M=4.65, S.D=1.04), confide in the partner (M=3.41, S.D=1.44), do not quarrel (M=3.89, S.D=1.26), and reconcile quickly (M=3.87, S.D=1.31). Likewise, a higher value was also obtained regarding level of religiosity (M=3.13, S.D=1.27).

Table 3 *Cumulative Mean and Standard Deviation of Major Components of Marital Satisfaction and Estimated Level of Religiosity*

S. No	Major Components of DAS	Mean	St. Deviation
1	Dyadic Consensus	3.42	1.281
2	Dyadic Affectional Expression	3.78	1.27
3	Dyadic Cohesion	3.81	1.38
4	Dyadic Satisfaction	3.92	1.23
5	Level of Religiosity	3.13	1.27

Table-03 shows cumulative descriptive values of major components of marital satisfaction and level of religiosity of the respondents. A higher score for dyadic consensus (M=3.42, S.D=1.281) shows a higher level of consensus in marital relations among the respondents. Likewise, higher values were also obtained for dyadic affectional expression (M=3.78, S.D=1.27), dyadic cohesion (M=3.81, S.D=1.38) and dyadic satisfaction (M=3.92, S.D=1.23). Similarly, the level of religiosity was also calculated as being higher (M=3.13, S.D=1.27).

Table 4 *Reliability and Scale Statistic*

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha	No of Items	Mean	Variance	Std. Dev
Dyadic Adjustment	0.959	21	63.39	400.685	20.017

A reliability test of the selected 21 items from DAS was primarily conducted and presented in table-03 in order to show its level of reliability and internal consistency. Cronbach's Alpha value was obtained at 0.959 which is >0.9 and found that the scale is highly reliable and consistent.

Table 5 *Analysis of Variance Results of Marital Satisfaction in Groups*

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	54.835	4	13.709	2 5.099	0 .000
Within Groups	42.055	77	0 .546		
Total	96.890	81			

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) test was conducted to examine differences in the relationships between religiosity and marital satisfaction across five groups of our respondents i.e. very low, low, average, high and very high level of religiosity. The Inferential statistics in the table show that these differences exist at a highly significant level ($p < 0.001$) across five groups of the respondents having various level of religiosity.

Table 6 *Pearson Correlation Matrix for Marital Satisfaction Components*

S. No	DAS Components	1	2	3	4	5
1	Dyadic Consensus	1				
2	Dyadic Affectional Expression	0.80**	1			
3	Dyadic Cohesion	0.74**	0.71**	1		
4	Dyadic Satisfaction	0.77**	0.72**	0.76**	1	
5	Level of Religiosity	0.82**	0.79**	0.77**	0.87**	1

Table-06 shows inter-correlations between components of marital satisfaction and religiosity level of our study participants. The data suggest that all components are strongly correlated with one another and also correlated with the level of religiosity of the respondents. The highest level of correlation was found between the level of religiosity and dyadic satisfaction (0.87). The next high correlations were found between religiosity and dyadic consensus (0.82) which is followed by correlation between dyadic affectional expression and dyadic consensus (0.80). The majority of correlations were found in the range of (0.70) as religiosity has correlation of (0.79) with dyadic affectional expression, and (0.77) with dyadic cohesion. Furthermore, comparatively fewer correlations were obtained between dyadic cohesion and dyadic consensus (0.71). Considering the model as a whole, it was discovered that religiosity was found in the highest correlations with all components. Religion plays a very important role in the personal and collective life of an individual since people refer to religion in times of trouble to get psychological comfort and support. Dual career couples are actively engaged in occupational role and family responsibilities and as a result they are unable to strike a successful balance between these roles. For the most part of their lives, dual career couples are juggling between family and workplace responsibilities and are thereby unable to maintain working relationships within their familial sphere. However, spouses in dual career marriages refer to adopting certain

coping mechanisms to overcome the negative impact of multiple role performances. For instance, they bring about their emotional intelligence, negotiation skills and personality attributes like spirituality, religiosity and religious beliefs to achieve a level of competence in their marital life.

The findings of this study reveal that our study participants have a higher level of religiosity and marital satisfaction as shown in table-02. Specifically, the responses on the loaded items on every component suggest that our respondents have a higher degree of marital consensus, affectional expression, cohesion and satisfaction. The majority being 26% of our study participants have reported a higher level of religiosity ($M=3.13$, $S.D=1.27$) which suggests their higher level of emotional attachment with religion. Likewise, cumulative mean and standard deviation values given in table-03 show that our respondents have higher dyadic consensus ($M=3.42$, $S.D=1.28$), dyadic affectional expression (3.78 , $SD=1.27$), dyadic cohesion ($M=3.81$, $S.D=1.38$) dyadic satisfaction (3.92 , $S.D=1.23$) and over all marital satisfaction ($M=3.73$, $S.D=1.29$). It is deduced from these descriptive statistics that our study participants have a high level of religiosity and a higher level of overall marital satisfaction.

Similarly, inferential statistics obtained from ANOVA given in table-05 indicates positive and significant relations between level of religiosity and marital satisfaction in dual career couples. The findings suggest that overall marital satisfaction increases as the level of religiosity of the respondents has increased. It is deduced from the findings that religious values, attitudes and practices strengthen marital ties and enhance family relations. A higher level of spiritual and religious beliefs creates positive personality attributes such as consensus, forgiveness, trust, and patience are considered as necessary elements for successful marital life. Moreover, religious values and practices turn away certain negative personality traits such as stress, anxiety, hopelessness and regret. When an individual is able to overcome the negative emotions, it certainly reduces the chances of distractions, overlooking, neglecting and feeling of separation from a marital partner.

Certain collectivistic habits such as spending more time together, consulting the life partner in major decisions, having fun and laughing together are mostly attributable to religious injunctions and also manage to avoid long standing stressed relations by turning to quick reconciliation and consensus to protect marital life from disintegration and disorganization. The findings of our study are in congruence with the findings of the previous studies conducted by Naderi & Roushani (2011), Fabricatore, Handal, & Fenzel, (2000) and Starks & Hughey (2003). Statistical values obtained from the Pearson correlation model given in table-05 further confirm findings obtained from other models by indicating that religiosity was found to be

highly correlated with all the components of marital quality especially with dyadic consensus and satisfaction. Likewise, correlations between religiosity with dyadic affectional expression and cohesion were also found in significant and positive correlations. It is inferred from the findings of this study that marital satisfaction increases with increase in the religious level of dual career couples. Result obtained from the correlations statistics of this study are consistent with the prior findings of Margaret, Dudley, & Konsinski (1990), Call & Heiton (1997), Sullivan (2001), Hanler & Genchuz (2005), Orathinkal & Vansteenwegen (2006) and Fard, Saeid, & Zardkhaneh, (2013) who reported similar findings.

CONCLUSION

In this study, we examined the influence of religiosity on the overall marital satisfaction in dual career couples. We found that a high level of religiosity is a positive and significant predictor of marital satisfaction in dual career couples in Hazara University Mansehra. It may therefore be concluded that a higher level of religiosity has a strong and favorable impact on dyadic consensus and affectional expression by maintaining and strengthening marital relations among dual career couples. Religion serves as a primary vehicle for providing meaning, a sense of belonging, and comfort, as well as control functions to promote trust, hope, reconciliation and consultation. Moreover, the study also concludes that a high level of religiosity avoids negative feelings such as divorce, regret and ending of marital life. Couples in Hazara University Mansehra with a high level of religiosity are better able to manage their marital life by strengthening consensus and satisfaction through effectual expressions of feelings, thoughts and ideas.

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