



TRANSITION IN SPOUSE SELECTION: A STUDY OF PAKISTANI GRADUATES AND THEIR PARENTS

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Abstract- Pakistan has been continuously showing the imperative role of parents in spouse selection. The practice of consanguineous marriages recognized in Pakistani society because of its social, cultural, and economic significance. However, the changing social trends have also been witnessed in Pakistani society. The present study anticipates how social change affects the choice of a life partner, something which ultimately reflects the transition in marriage. This research was carried out with a sample size of 300 that encompassed educated youth (both males and females) and their parents. The research aimed to find out the criteria gap based on higher education and the demand for privacy in social life. The findings demonstrated that educated youth is more concerned for the higher education of potential mates and the need for privacy in their social life after marriage as compared to their parents. The results exhibited the change in the criteria of spouse selection, linked with the prevalence of modern aspects in society. The educated youth according to the findings of the research demanded a life partner with higher educational status as the education enables a spouse to better understand the changing social happenings and give space to each other.

Keywords: Spouse Selection, Transition, Higher Education, Space in Relationship, Privacy for Social Life

I. INTRODUCTION

Historically, in Pakistani society, the people tend to practice consanguineous marriages. Therefore, we can mark consanguineous marriages since the early history of humankind (Iqbal et al: 2020). People still prefer inter-family and inter-ethnic marriages. However, the prevalence of inter-ethnic and endogamous marriages is linked with their sense of social security (Potarca: 2017; Saadat: 2015). It is generally recognized that Pakistani people are more comfortable with the people of the same ethnicity in their family affairs (Clark et al: 2015; Van Zantvliet et al: 2015). Currently, modern ideas and value systems are sweeping across Pakistan, causing a considerable shift in society. The stage of transition can be witnessed in Pakistani Society since the last century as it inclined towards modernization and westernization due to the lingering impacts of social and electronic media. The Pakistani youth appears to be more influenced by modernization that ultimately promulgates the modern culture in society (Sultana & Bukhari: 2020). Giddens (2002) perceived the term of modernity as a manifestation that encapsulates the development of societies from primitive to progressive. A recent study revealed that the transition position brings changes in society and uplift the life of a common man. The change witnessed in the market economy also has an association with the change in other aspects of individuals (Hussain, Iqbal&Chughtai: 2020). Moreover, Metgud, Naik&Mallapur (2012) stated that the family system progresses with the change in society, according to the requirements and needs of the individuals as well as society.

Marriage is considered a sacred agreement between man and woman in different cultures and religions for the formation of the family system (Moshtagh, Teimourpour&Pourshanbaz, 2013). The prevalence of modern values has brought in substantial changes in the Subcontinent, particularly in Pakistan and India. It seems that there is an association between changing trends and transition in life partner choice. However, the social change in society affects the marriage patterns and choice about the life partners that ultimately reflects the transition in marriage (Ghimire et al: 2006). Even though the occurrence of consanguineous marriages somehow diminished with the prevalence of urbanization and nuclear family structure, however, it is still in practice (Metgud, Naik&Mallapur: 2012). The parental generation is seemed to be conscious about their family values and wants to restore their traditional practices (Dubbs, Buunk and Taniguchi: 2013). Possibly, there is also an intergenerational gap at work for bringing about this transition. Therefore, questions that arise at this point are: to what extent higher education and demand for privacy after marriage are reflected in spouse selection by parents and their educated

children? Do these criteria reflect an intergenerational gap in spouse selection? Therefore, the purpose of this study is to highlight the consideration of educated youth and their parents regarding higher education in spouse selection. The researcher further investigates the demand for privacy in social life after marriage behind the intergenerational gap in spouse selection.

Previous studies identified that numerous factors affect the decisions as to whom, when, and how an individual gets married, like, physical appearance (Hynie, Lalonde & Lee, 2006), economic stability (Karbowski, Deja & Zawisza, 2016) and family background (Dunn & Searle, 2010). The present study focuses on parents and their educated children residing in Islamabad, Pakistan, to identify the intergenerational gap in their criteria that encapsulates the demand for higher educational status and privacy in social life after marriage.

The rapid change in society might be creating a generation gap due to the discrepancy that appears in the adaptability of changing trends between two generations. Smetana (2010) argued that the contrast between children and their parent's maturity level is creating an intergenerational gap. These are continuously impacting the social world and the perspectives of the world through their social actions. Furthermore, Silva (2013) illustrates the intergenerational gap by explaining the difference between two generations on the adaptability of changing trends. The young generation has more propensities to adopt the advancements and modernity in life than the parental generation.

The people go through the process of spouse selection before getting into the matrimonial relationship. Over time, it appears that people's preferences for spouses are modified on account of change in their needs. Alavi, Alahdad, and Shafeq (2014) define the formation of relationships especially the marriage relationship based on the needs of individuals. People select a life partner according to their needs and desires by considering numerous significant factors in this regard. This argument supports the concept of pure relationship by Giddens in which he demonstrates that people form a relationship with amenability to their needs and satisfaction (Giddens, 2002).

The perceptions of people for the spouse selection process seem to be influenced by their family structure and the environment in which they socialized. The family structure affects communication and understanding levels between members of the family. The people who live in a nuclear family system have more sharing with family members. Along with this, the children are most probably involved in the decision makings (Bhattacharya & Saha: 2019). The importance of women's position in the family has been somewhat recognized due to their economic empowerment. The working women participate in the decision making of her family. Therefore, it ultimately influenced their involvement to choose a life partner for them as well (Sharma & Kota: 2019). Moreover, family practices that include tradition, religion, and modernity influences on perspectives of the family members, particularly for spouse selection (Unal: 2019).

The criteria for spouses tend to be influenced by the personal choices of the individuals as well as by significant others in one's life. The decision of selecting a life partner in Pakistani society is not performed in a vacuum but is highly contemplated by the values of society, culture, and religion. Moreover, the family members are in a strong position in this regard (Waqar & Gulzar, 2015) as, researchers identify that parents are in a hegemonic position in the decision of spouse selection for their children and other marriage-related affairs (Zantvliet, Kalmijn & Verbakel, 2014; Ogunjuyigbe & Adeyemi, 2003).

There is a strong possibility that modern education increases the chances of educational homogamy and assortative mating in this regard. Wang and Wong (2017) identified the influence of institutional transformation due to the market liberation in the late 1970s, on educational assortative mating. According to the research, human capital and educational assortative mating reach their highest level in China since the late 1990s. This study proved that the institutes are highly affected by the ways of moderation as well as globalization. In the marriage market, educational assortative mating is preferred due to the increase of higher modern education and to some extent to meet the finances of life. Furthermore, Hu and Qian (2016) demonstrated in their research endeavor that the extension of higher education achievement influences educational assortative mating. The findings of the study support the structural transition theory, underlying the importance of growing educational homogamy due to the increasing demand for an educated partner. The availability of highly educated individuals flourishes this demand.

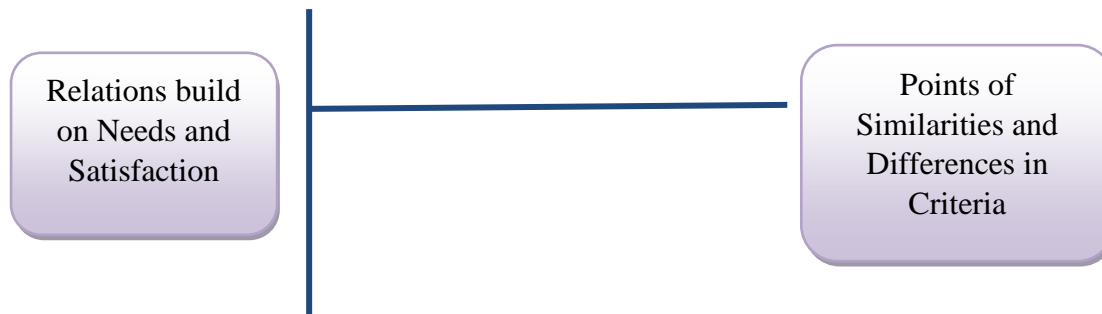
It is generally assumed that there are points of difference between males and females regarding the preferences of the spouse. Fisman et al. (2006) explained that there are gender differences in the criteria of spouse selection because of the variations in the gender roles within society. Likewise, due to the difference in male and female stereotyping roles, there occurs a difference in the preferences for mate selection. Women may keep away from the individuals who are superior to them in female dimensions of the stereotyping roles such as, physical attractiveness and the same is the case with the men in the terms of the male trait of ambition. Society's stereotyping of the role of males as ambitious causes the men to avoid the females in potential mate choice, who are superior to men in their gender roles. Conversely, Enrique, Howk, and Huitt (2007) discussed that in past it was generally accepted that the male prefers the quality of attractiveness in their spouse while deciding on spouse selection. On the other hand, the female has an instrumental approach while looking for the spouse. Because of the popularity and influence of the feminist movement, a change has taken place regarding women's position in the financial matters of the family. This change affects the minds of the males, inclining them to give more importance to the instrumental qualities of the female.

The higher educational status of an individual appears to reflect his or her intelligence level as well as his capacity as a good resource provider. Prokosch et al. (2009) in their research concluded that men's intelligence is a strong factor in women feeling appeal for them. The women's appraisal of a partner's quality includes multifaceted factors but also a contextual dependency process in which the traits of the intelligence and creativity aspect play a constructive part. Women's criterion in spouse selection includes preferable traits of men as good financial providers and their high phenotypic quality, the former trait ensures financial security for a female spouse.

Modernization affects people's perceptions and behavior. Researchers found out that the modern concepts of premarital relationships, internet dating, cohabitation, and hookups influence marriage quality and change the criterion of spouse selection. The individuals who follow the modern aspects of pre-marital affairs of life also want space and privacy for their social life after marriage. Additionally, the transition into marriage affairs results in marriage delays and high divorce rates. Still, it is undeniable that the comings of the modern ideas have resulted in women's empowerment, making them assume more dominant roles in society than before. Women are consequently more educated, having greater awareness about their rights than in the past. Media exposure, education, and adaptability of modern aspects have played major roles in the empowerment of women in Pakistani society. Moreover, it is generally assumed that offsetting trends affect the marital quality in which female's job demands and extended hours of employment lead to marital instability if the mindset of the spouses doesn't compliment each other (Amato, Johnson, Booth&Rogers, 2004; Sassler, 2010).

It can also be argued that access to electronic media and out of family experiences affect the family-related decisions of the individuals. Ghimire et al. (2006) highlight the factors which shape the thinking patterns of the youth in the spouse selection. Researchers have concluded that social change in society affects the choice of the life partner. Media plays a significant part in this respect as the media portrays changing gender positions in the society; it also through its endorsement of modern values leads the youth towards the adaptability of such modern values. The non-family experiences enable the youth of the current times to participate in their marriage decisions. Instead of their parents, they consider it their prerogative to choose their life partners. Additionally, the increasing trends of youth involvement in social gatherings expose the youth to non-family experiences which in turn shape the preferences of youth for a spouse. The youth participation in social groups enlarges their vision and that exposure enables them to calculate their preferences for a good life partner. The participation of youth in their marriage decisions making in a historically arrange marriage society brings in its wake profound changes in family institutions and for the whole society.

Modeling of Pure Relationships by Anthony Giddens on Spouse Selection



1. Youth needs for a spouse
2. Parents needs for a child's spouse
3. Anthony Giddens- Pure Relationships Applies to Spouse Selection

The above figure illustrates the application of pure relationships by Anthony Giddens on the gap in the study of spouse selection. The parents and educated youth have their perspectives an ideal spouse. The needs of parents for their child's spouse and educated youth needs for their life partner make their criteria for spouse selection. The educated youth evaluate the potential mates on their cognitive schemas that are influenced by their needs and satisfaction level with an individual's aptitude and traits.

The waves of modernization bring changes in society which in turn influences the family environment and relationship criterion. As Anthony Giddens illustrates that social change, through modernization, reforms the gender roles and limitations associated with traditional ties. The people, as a result, modify their decision-making behaviors. According to Giddens, in his concept of pure relationship, people choose to get into the relationship with others on the grounds of mutual knowledge and understanding. The relationship builds on the needs of each partner. The people remain in the relationships that are enough to satisfy both individuals (Giddens, 2002).

The theory of pure relationship by Giddens is related to the spouse selection criterion as the decision of spouse selection and marriage builds on the need satisfaction of the individuals. There is a strong possibility that mutual knowledge and understanding among individuals make their spousal relationship strong. It seems that higher educational achievement is the key factor for the fulfillment of needs and satisfaction which is taken under consideration by the majority of the people while deciding on a marriage. A high satisfaction level in a spousal relationship stems from their understanding of the situation at hand. When an individual understands the situation of the other person then the chances of conflict decrease considerably, and spouses feel pleased in their relation. On the other hand, traditional parents give importance to cultural matters as they idealize their norms and family values while making decisions of spouse selection for their children. They prefer to choose the individual who has the same cultural background. It appears that some parents deter their children from making a marriage with people from different caste and ethnicity, as they feel more satisfied with familiar cultural backgrounds when it comes to marriages of their children. The educated youth, on the other hand, feel more comfortable in marrying individuals with similar educational backgrounds.

Hypothesis 1

H₁: The educated youth is more likely to consider higher education as an important factor while selecting their spouses as compared to their parents.

H₀: The educated youth is less likely to consider higher education of spouse as compared to their parents.

Hypothesis 2

H₁: The educated youth is more concerned about space and privacy in social life from their partner as compared to their parents.

H₀: The educated youth is less concerned about space and privacy in social life as compared to their parents.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this research endeavor, the quantitative research methodology was used. The quantitative method of study was selected to draw the frequencies and percentages. The points of similarities and differences between parents and their educated children's criteria of spouse selection were found out with the help of quantitative study, as investigate hypotheses of the study. The study was conducted in Islamabad. The people of Islamabad occupy different professional as well as educational backgrounds; young people of the city get an education in various fields. However, the focus of this study was to find out the criteria of educated youth and their parents. The educated youth and their parents were the target population of the study. The researcher used a probability sampling design with a random sampling technique. The sample size for the study consisted of 300 respondents in which 150 educated youth and 150 parents of educated youth residing in Islamabad were included. The tools used for the data collection were questionnaire and interview schedule. The questionnaire was used to collect the data from youth which reflected the personal preferences of educated youth for spouse selection. The interview schedule was used for the data collection from parents as the researcher herself collected the data from parents. The technique used for the data collection was the survey method. It helped reflect the characteristics of a large population. In the present study, the quantitative data were analyzed with the help of statistical analysis. The tool used for quantitative data analysis was SPSS. The researcher after collecting the data entered it in the data entry software of SPSS and drew the frequencies and percentages of the responses. It helped in understanding and interpreting the findings of the research. Furthermore, it helped to test hypotheses of the study.

Firstly, the respondents were informed about the purpose of the study. Then, the data was collected on the individuals who were conveniently ready to respond. Additionally, the researcher assured the respondents that their identity and information taken will be kept confidential. Furthermore, the researcher kept the information in secret from parents and youth about each other criteria for spouse selection. The questions of the tools were according to the localized context to ensure the validity of the results.

III. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Descriptive Analysis

Table No. 1 Respondent's consideration on higher education of spouse

Categories	Parents		Youth	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
To Great Extent	39	26.0	62	41.3
To Some Extent	75	50.0	65	43.3
Not at all	36	24.0	23	15.3
Total	150	100	150	100

The role of the higher educational status of the potential mate cannot be ignored in the selection process of a life partner. The findings of the study as mentioned in table no.1 illustrate the preference of respondents on the higher educational status of the life partner. 50% of parents said that to some extent they contemplate this criterion. 24% of parents were not interested in the high educational status of their child's spouse. Whereas 43.3% of the youth greatly considered the higher education of their spouse, only 15.3% expressed no such concern.

The table no.1 reflects the point of difference among parents and youth criteria as well. The youth is more conscious about the higher educational achievements and intellectual capabilities of their spouse. The respondents were gaining education from the university, so they desired to marry a person who was also highly qualified. The educational achievements of the individuals seemed to have an influence on their criterion of spouse selection which sounds true as the youth respondents were university students.

Table No. 2 Respondent's opinion about privacy in social life after marriage

Categories	Parents		Youth	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
To Great Extent	38	25.3	74	49.3
To Some Extent	89	59.3	72	48.0
Not at all	23	15.3	4	2.7
Total	150	100	150	100

Currently, it seems that people are becoming conscious about their privacy and want some space in relationships. Table no.2 demonstrates the respondent's opinion about the space and privacy in social life given by the other spouse after marriage. The 59.3% of parents to some extent held the view that the life partners need to give each other some space and privacy. Conversely, 15.3% of parents differed with this line of reasoning. The greater number of 49.3% youth desired that their spouse should give them space for social life. Only 2.7% of youth expressed no concern regarding the matter of privacy.

The findings reflect the changing trends of the society and the novel demands of the spouse. The youth are having pro aptitude on the space and privacy for their social life as compared to their parent. 2.7% of youth can be categorized as a youth group with an anti-modernization approach. It was also observed that the parents wanted their daughters-in-law to give more space to their husbands. The findings of the data reflect the changing trends of society. The reason behind this change might encompass the educational status of parents and prevalence of the nuclear family system as find out from the demographic profiles of the respondents.

Inferential analysis

Table No. 3 Consideration of higher education in spouse selection

Criteria	Mean	SD	CV
Do you consider the high educational status of your child's spouse due to the higher education expansion?	1.98	0.709	35.808
Do you consider the high educational status of your spouse due to the higher education expansion?	1.74	0.709	40.747

It is quite apparent from the findings of the study that the intergenerational gap exists in the criteria of higher education in spouse selection. As mentioned in table no.3, the values of the coefficient of variance of two data sets illustrate that youth are more consistent and emphatic on evaluating the higher educational status of the individual in spouse selection. The above findings second the descriptive analysis in which the data shows the difference in the majority of percentages that demonstrates this gap. 50% of parents consider the higher educational status of the individual as an important factor to some degree. Contrarily, 43.3% of youth to some extent and 41.3% of youth to great extent ruminates on this criterion. Hence, the findings of the data reject the null hypothesis. The findings are linked with the demographic profiles of the respondents that show the graduate and post-graduate educational achievement of the youth. Most youth wants to marry an individual who has the same educational status. Existing literature explains that the females consider the educational achievements and intellectual skills of the male as prime factors in turning him into a good resource provider in the future. Further, males appeared to concur with this argument to some extent provided if female educations go on expanding in society. As the respondents were educated, they considered highly the criterion of higher education while coming to choose their spouse.

Modern education increases the chances of educational homogamy and assortative mating in this regard. Hu and Qian (2016) demonstrated in their research endeavor that the extension of higher education achievement influences educational assortative mating. The findings of that study supported the structural transition theory, demonstrated the growing educational homogamy due to the increasing demand for an educated partner. The availability of highly educated individuals flourishes this demand.

Table No. 4 Concern for space and privacy in social life after marriage

Criteria	Mean	SD	CV
Do you ever think of your child's life partner, giving space and privacy in social life to your child after marriage?	1.90	0.632	33.263
Do you ever think of your spouse, giving you space and privacy in social life?	1.53	0.552	36.078

It is apparently seen from the statistics of table no. 4 that the intergenerational gap exists in the criterion for space and privacy in social life after marriage. The data set of youth with the value of the coefficient of variance that is 36.078 is more than the coefficient value of parental data i.e. 33.263. The findings comply with the descriptive analysis in which the data demonstrates the dissimilarity in the major number of responses of youth and parents that reflects the gap. The greater number of 59.3% of parents to some extent expressed their concern for the space and privacy in the social life of their child after marriage. Conversely, 49.3% of youth to great extent consider this criterion in spouse selection. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected here with the help of the findings of data. The educated youth is more concerned to avail themselves the space and privacy after marriage than their parents. It is generally assumed that factor of education makes the youth demand more space for their social life and their independent views on their matters can be traced back to their broader vision towards life generated by their higher educational levels. The findings show the link between education and demand for space and privacy as the youth respondents are educated. The education brings awareness in the people about their basic right to space and privacy as a human being.

IV. DISCUSSION

The higher educational status of the spouse is highly considered by the youth in their decision of marriage. The respondents are themselves getting an education from the university-level that creates awareness among them and reflects their social exposure. Moreover, as they require more space and privacy in social life hence, they are inclined to think that the educated spouse will give them the same and better understand of social happenings in the surroundings. The youth believe that higher education of the spouse and mental compatibility between them minimizes the matter of conflicts and leads them to live happy lives. Levi-Strauss (2006) came up with the observations that graduates, who marry someone with a lower educational qualification or illiterate ones, feel reluctant to introduce their spouse in public. Their reluctance to attend public events with their spouse leads to conflicts and clashes. When the spouses are not educationally compatible with each other, the level of understanding and sharing is insufficient.

The demographic profiles of the respondents depict the change in the family structure from a joint family system towards a nuclear family system. Further, higher education of youth tends to influence the current demand of the spouse for space and privacy in social life after marriage. Moreover, the findings of the data reflect the intergenerational gap on the criteria of higher education and space for social life. The youth appears to be more concerned about these two criteria as compared to their parents. The minimum percentage of 15.3% youth shows the least interest in spouse's higher academic attainment. Most male respondents didn't stress much on their life partner's higher educational achievements. The female respondents emphasized higher education and intelligence of the potential mates which makes them better resource providers. Additionally, an educated female came to demand privacy and space for their social life which in their view can become a possibility if they have an educated spouse. Only 2.7% of youth didn't wish to have privacy and space for their social life after marriage. It was observed that ideas of women empowerment in the society and awareness of their rights in society proved a decisive factor in

changing the minds of young people when it came to serious matters of making marriages in life. The shift in the perceptions of youth influences their criteria for life partners (Enrique, Howk&Huitt, 2007).

V. CONCLUSION

The prevalence of modern values and ideas has caused a substantial change in Pakistani society. This change in perceptions impacted the choice of a potential spouse in life. The youth of the present age appears to be quite clear in their minds about their demands and decisions regarding personal matters. The results of the study depict supports and endorse the idea that modern education increases the chances of educational homogamy and that educated youth supports educational homogamy. The youth hold on to the view that educated people can better understand the social issues and are more likely to consider the demand of privacy after marriage as the right of the individual. On the other hand, the parental generation appeared more traditional as their thinking process was highly influenced by cultural norms and values. There is a slight intergeneration criteria gap in spouse selection due to the discrepancy in the adoptability of changing trends.

It seems that modernity supports the demands of higher education and privacy in social life after marriage. The whole process is in turn reflected in transition in marriage and society because the youth who get modern education become actively involved in their marriage related affairs. The ongoing change process in family structure is causing the emergence of the nuclear family system. Additionally, these changing trends are also accelerating the demand for privacy in social life after marriage. In a nutshell, changing trends of society have an association with the transition in life partner choice.

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