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Tracing the Determinants of Marital Quality in Pakistani Society through the Lens of How It Happened

Abstract:

The quality of the marriage is assessed by many determinants. Based upon a large number of subjects and determines on the marital quality evaluation, this research explores the factors which are fundamental in maintaining marital quality in the novel How It Happened by Haider (2013). The marital quality in this paper is measured through five dimensions, comprising satisfaction, communication, togetherness, problems and disagreements (Allendorf & Ghimire 2012). Gender, education, spouse choice and marital length arise as the most important determinants of these dimensions of marital quality. The data for the research comprises of the text of How It Happened. The marriage determinants are identified through exploratory factor analysis. The research shows that issues like gender, more schooling, contribution in the choice of one's spouse and being married longer do not basically donate in advanced levels of marital quality. However, while the key determinants of marital quality in this regard are analyzed, the main distinction in marital quality, whether it exists through arranged or love marriages remains inexplicable.

Key Words:

Determinants, Dimensions, Marriages, Marital Quality, Gender

Introduction

Marital quality plays a significant role in establishing family life, health and welfare. Usually, the smallest depression level is linked to the better marital quality (Williams, 2003), with better health (Umberson et al., 2006), numerous extra positive results (Ross et al., 1990) and least physical illness (Wickrama et al., 1997). Together with the standing of marital quality, a great quantity of literature explains the determinants by civilization and gender and accentuating the differences in the concern for marital quality (Amato et al., 2003). It is possible to operationalized and measured marital quality. A communal idea exists that the marital quality is the presence of standing features of marriage and the lack of malicious aspects. However, the difficulty stays the same. It is still to find a way to explore the supposed noble and malevolent aspects. However, some guides like the Quality of Marriage Index (QMI) (Norton, 1983), Marital Adjustment Test (MAT) (Locke and Wallace, 1959) and Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) (Spanier, 1976) are used for this purpose. Further, a range of measures is present that are used in few studies (Johnson et al., 1986). The chief portion of the literature on marital quality is based on Western contexts, likely the United States, as proper studies in the context of Pakistani society based marital quality are meager to befit in the undertaken study.

Literature Review

In the past few years, the awareness of marital quality and its determinants has increased along with the insinuations of a well-off marital vows in the non-Western situations. For instance, the studies investigating marital quality in Cameroon (Gwanfogbe et al., 1997), in Turkey (Fisiloglu & Demir, 2000), in Bolivia (Orgill and Heaton 2005) and in China (Pimentel, 2000) are a few to mention. Though, fresh trials and occasions rouse with adding research on marital quality into non-Western settings. Principally, at various time and space, the idea of marital quality

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deviates with certain particular facets of marital quality which are usable to some places or groups and not to others. For example, the Dyadic Adjustment Scale that was built on an American sample, investigated kissing as an essential portion of marital quality and on the other hand, [Shek and Cheung \(2008\)](#) opined that kissing does not contain a necessary element of marital gratification in China. Alike, [Lee and Ono \(2008\)](#) assert that in Japan, a good marriage is likely to be the one where the husband is working and the wife does not, while, in the United States, the husband's competence to bear his wife is unimportant to construct an honest married couple.

Comparing transversely in various contexts specifies that the various contextual modifications surge to challenge evaluation of steps to marital quality, which might be related to a precise context. A study by Gwanfogbe et al. inspects polygyny as forming marital satisfaction (1997). Likewise, it is examined in China that the influence of choosing one's spouse and parent's approval of spouses guarantees marital quality ([Pimentel, 2000](#)). In addition, non-Western contexts display that determinants of marital quality exhibit change or likeness in more contexts.

This paper is not the first one to examine the determinants of marital quality in South Asian countries. [Hoelter et al. \(2004\)](#) conducted a study in Nepal and discovered non-family experiences and other factors to be effecting marital quality. They used six items to assess marital quality consisted of gestures and indicators of love for the spouse, manifestation of criticism and discrepancies, discussion of childbearing and if the respective spouse ever beat the participants. In the context of Pakistan, [Qadir et al. \(2005\)](#) asserted that the idea of marital satisfaction is a substantial measure of research in the backdrop of marriage and family relations which has not been previously perceived in Pakistan. The studies that inspected psychiatric sickness have wide-opened several marital difficulties and explored that married women under the age of 35 years, have a progressive existence of CMDs than the older married women. The study investigated the concept of marital contentment and the application of marital satisfaction scales which were cultivated in the West. The outcomes specified that opposed to conventional views about marriage, a great amount of women desired satisfaction within marriage. The fear of disappointing their parents clogged women from sharing their choice of husband or dissatisfaction in their marriage. The perception of Pakistani women for marriage is of a societal responsibility that demands from them the adjustment which the man hardly does. In a study by [Batool and Khalid \(2012\)](#) the part of emotional intelligence in the prospect of marital quality in the Pakistani scenario is focused. The scale of Emotional Intelligence, Marital Adjustment Questionnaire, and Conflict Resolution Questionnaire were used. The findings revealed positive relationship between emotional intelligence and pointers of marital quality in marital adjustment and conflict inflexibility. The part of demographic variables, e.g. age, monthly income, family system, duration of the marriage, and type of marriage, was found to play the least role in marital quality. In another study, [Qadir et al. \(2013\)](#) clarify that Marital conditions are risk factors that cause depression and anxiety among Pakistani women. Though, there is no strong indication of how varied components of marital relations correlate and create misery and unease in the lives of Pakistani married women and the social backings in the background of their marriage. Findings of this study suggest the significance of satisfaction, adjustment and hostile communications. The etiological models of depression and anxiety are also presented by the study.

Consequently, several social changes on family life are documented by multiple scholars in their works. The individual choices relevant to marriage behavior, particularly in relevancy to spouse choice, inter-caste marriage, late marriage and divorce, have turned common ([Ghimire et al., 2006](#)). Likewise, the regular age for marriage in Chitwan Valley has raised from 16 years for marriages between 1956 and 1965 to 21 years for marriages between 1996 and 2005 ([Yabiku, 2005](#)). By 20th century, no one partook in selecting one's spouse ([Ghimire et al., 2006](#)). But, thirty years later, about half of the 1986-95 married group partook in selecting their own spouse.

Determinants Of Marital Quality

The research studies on the pertinent subject does not give a strong view on the matter that arranged marriages are integrally improved than self-choice matrimonies or vice versa. Though, it is hypothetical that spouse choice can affect marital worth. Typically in arranged marriages, spouses are selected by family depending on caste, financial position of the spouse's family, and, for brides, their virginity and repute. Further, the bride and groom are typically not familiar before they are engaged and meet each other only a couple of times before they are married. Otherwise, when people pick their spouse, their choice rests on liking and personal compatibility. The couple meets before engagement and to create an association before they get married. The situation apparently suggests that participation in the choice of spouse will lead to greater marital quality than those whose spouses were selected by their families. Yet, marriages where spouses are selected by the families might profit more as approval and support of family members are available ([Chowdhry, 2007](#)). But only few studies depicted the relation amid spouse choice and marital quality. [Pimentel \(2000\)](#) studies that a guide of spouse choice is linked with understanding and less disagreement between spouses in Beijing. Likewise, [Xu and Whyte \(1990\)](#) discover that women who chose spouse are more contented with their marriages as compared to women who are tied in arrange marriage. However, [Hoelter and colleagues \(2004\)](#) found that an arranged marriage was not meaningfully linked to healthy marital associations.

Among the common determinants of marital quality in the Western and non-Western literature, education is linked to better marital quality as education is related to a minimum misery, sophisticated incomes, with better communication aptitudes ([Amato et al., 2003](#)). Though, various American studies do not find important variances in marital quality brought by education ([Umberson et al., 2005](#)). In the non-Western contexts, education exposes young people to Western values and proposes them more freedom outside the family entity ([Ghimire et al., 2006](#)).

Additional determinant of marital quality is the being or absence of children. Many studies depict that children's association with lower marital quality ([Bradbury et al., 2000](#)). Though, other studies expose that having children is extremely cherished and observed as an important portion of marriage ([Bennett, 1983](#)). Additional, it is depicted that childcare is not exclusively the duty of a couple. Young couples often share a similar household with other family members or near other family members who stay involved with child care.

The impact of marital duration on marital quality also functions in varied ways. Various studies discover that marital quality declines with time, as couples turn incompatible or bored with each other over time ([Umberson & Liu, 2005](#)). A Japanese study by [Blood \(1967\)](#) reveals that couple choice marriages begin with extraordinary levels of marital quality and later decline in quality over time. On the other hand, arranged marriages start at a low level of marital quality but progressively improve in quality with time. More recently, [Xu and Whyte \(1990\)](#) find that marital quality fluctuates irregularly over time.

The family support can obfuscate these links too. Arranged marriages might be low in certain magnitudes. Still, they might start remarkable with others, with feeling satisfied with their marriages from the beginning. On the other hand, self-choice marriages might begin with extraordinary levels of love but can fall low with an absence of family support, lessening contentment and increase inconsistencies over time. Thus, the influence of the marital period on marital quality is totally unpredictable ([Umberson & Liu, 2005](#)).

Gender is probable to affect marital quality as well. Many studies depict that mostly women report a low marital quality as compared to men ([Rogers & Amato, 2000](#)). But, [Kurdek \(2005\)](#) opines that gender differences in marital quality in the United States are lesser and that men do not either frequently report a greater marital quality. However, in the non-Western countries, it is found that women report a lower marital quality than men ([Pimentel, 2000](#); [Xu & Lai, 2004](#)). To explain the gender difference, both Western and nonwestern studies focus gendered prospects in marriage ([Xu & Lai, 2004](#)). Wives are generally expected wider contribution to sustain the marriage. In return, with burden of both the emotional and practical work of the marriage, the marital quality of the wives is reduced. [Hoelter et al. \(2004\)](#) report that women have more

differences and less love and childbearing discussions than men. However, these differences were not significant.

Another determinant of marital quality is age at time of marriage. Studies reveal that getting married at younger ages has the lower marital quality and an additional chance of divorce and parting ([Glenn et al., 2010](#)). The youngsters are sensitively and psychologically immature, therefore, unprepared for marriage. Though, these links are normally weak and limit to young people in their teens and early twenties.

The undertaken study will be a fresh attempt, because instead of gathering data from various sections of society, it will draw on various items of marital determinants and uses textual analysis of the novel, *How It Happened*. The study's point of departure is to identify various dimensions of marital quality in the above mentioned debut marriage and matchmaking based novel by Shazaf Fatima Haider, published in 2013, with its setting in a typical Pakistani family of Bandians, discussing a typical marriage opportunities, rituals, traditions and chances.

Objectives of the Study

The study aims to meet the following objectives,

1. To assess various determinants of marital quality.
2. To analyze the determinants of marital quality in Pakistani society.
3. To trace the existence of possible determinants of marital quality in a Pakistani context-based novel, *How It Happened*.

Significance of the Study

The undertaken paper adds to the extension of research on marital quality into non-Western contexts by discovering the determinants of marital quality in Pakistan by probing into the text of *How It Happened*, which depicts the current scenario of a Pakistani family with various social, religious and group conflicts in the settlements of matters regarding matrimony. Actually the Pakistani context offers two contributions to the realm of literature. Firstly, Pakistan has a history of arranged marriages, providing an unusual occasion to examine if the marital quality is molded by spouse choice. Therefore, it is studied if the persons who participated in picking their spouse have better marital quality. Secondly, Pakistan grants a context that is noticeably unlike the United States and other Western states. Thus, it is examined if the well-known determinants of marital quality adapted from the contexts of the West, such as education and gender, have similar effects on marital quality in this non-Western context.

Methodology

The marital quality in this paper is measured through five dimensions, comprising of satisfaction, communication, togetherness, problems and disagreements which are explored and explained by [Allendorf and Ghimire \(2012\)](#). Further many indicators sprout out of these five basic categories, which are: Gender, education, spouse choice and marital duration. The data of the study comprises the text of the novel *How It Happened*, which is contextualized in a typical Pakistani scenario representing the Pakistani culture and traditions.

Data Analysis

Focusing on tracing the elements of determinants of marital quality, the following data is examined for the purpose.

In *How It Happened*, when Zeba goes with her family to visit Omer at his place, "his eyes rested on her and she returned his gaze with a shy smile" (Haider, p. 250). The reaction of the two people here shows the

satisfaction the couple felt at each other's presence before the marriage, which might be the sign of intimate understanding and compatibility.

Marriage is not between two persons only, and it is not only the couple which is indulged in making and strengthening the new ties, but several other persons are also involved in making this new relationship work not only between the couple but also among themselves. *How It Happened* depicts the ardent passion of Saleha and Zeba to welcome Saima (sister-in-law) to the family, and Saleha already considering Saima as her "Apa" (Haider, p. 69). Thus, the involvement of family members towards the success or failure of a marriage can at no account be ignored. Dadi says, "I will pray for my death so that I cause no more misery!" and she in self-pity, curses herself for bringing, "suffering to this family" (p. 215). Haroon affirmed that Gullan "might make someone a good husband, but not Zeba" (p. 186) and would make, "Zeba's life miserable" (p. 187) and advises that Zeba should refuse him.

The mercenary status of the family is considered as more of value than the candidate himself in a conventional Pakistani society. Qurrat's excitement for Naureen's in-laws as being, "very rich" (p. 78) is prominent. Qurrat calls Dadi and boasts about Naureen getting married and, "the boy's family is very rich" (p. 78). Qurrat advises Dadi to provide some professional education to Zeba so, "Perhaps then her future will change" (p. 261). The novel portray the excitement in finding a proper proposal and the expectation to get the female offspring hooked in a much better place to the pride of associating with a rich family and for jealousy for the others.

The involvement of the entire family towards settling the marital affairs of one person is a common sight in Pakistan. *How It Happened* depicts the same practice when the Bandian family had to reject a girl for Haroon, Dadi said, "If you'll ignore them, they'll get the message" (44). On the other hand, Dadi impatiently awaited the response from Amma Rizwi is regarding her decision about Zeba. When Dadi received the call, she, "beamed" (p. 157) on hearing the official proposal being sent by Amma Rizwi.

However, eloping for love marriage is considered more an unpardonable sin than love marriage itself. *How It Happened*, where Dadi quotes the example of Iraj, who eloped with a chowkidar's son and ruined the reputation and respect of her family. "Her mother tried to commit suicide and her father couldn't show his face in public again" (p. 8). Haider (2013) appropriates the situation in accordance to her cultural values.

The duration of marriage or having one or more children play no significant role towards its quality or the compatibility of the couple. *How It Happened* depicts the case of Haseena Phuppo who never talked to her husband and, "shares the same indifference towards him!" (p. 227). Thus, their marriage retains its flickers in Haseena Phuppo deciding to spend the other half of her life with her son away from her husband. Similarly, Haider (2013) depicts Haseena Phupoo's marriage as never, "the model of matrimonial bliss" (p. 227). Dadi's sister who, "married a man who refused to talk to her. They had ten children and were hailed as the ideal couple" (p. 160).

The typical Pakistani modern culture permits the future couple to meet under severe surveillance. *How It Happened* depicts Dadi's un-acceptance when she declared, "What kind of loose woman would want to meet her husband before marriage? Unchaperoned! And talk!" (p. 37). The cultural and ancient definition of eastern modesty does not expect the girls to be betrothed and, "participating in the wedding with the eagerness" and, "brazenly went with her in-laws to choose her own wedding dress?" before her marriage (p. 89). The boys are not supposed to be "visiting or talking to his future wife until the wedding day" (p. 88), in *How It Happened*, it was decided that Zeba should meet Gullan in a hotel. Zeba was accompanied by Saima, Haroon and Saleha and Gullan by his sister and mother.

The textual of the novel shows the resistance girls face while declaring their choice for marriage contrary to the will of their family. The reluctance Zeba feels when she declared to her father and pleaded, "her eyes filling with tears, '...I want a companion. I want love'" (p. 212). Zeba sums up the courage to open hearts before her fathers. She is attached to her fathers and cannot resist his anger and rage. In *How It Happened*, after Abbu

went with Fati Phupps to meet Omer, Zeba, in anxiety, “buried her head in Ammi’s stomach” (p. 234). When Abbu returned and was about to utter the final verdict, Zeba, “stiffened in her seat” (p. 236). Finally, Abbu declared that he met a man who “cared deeply for my daughter” (p. 237). The novels depict the level of nervousness and anxiety while she waited patiently for her father to declare the ultimate judgment. Dadi accuses Saleha after the disclose of Zeba’s love, and Dadi yells out at her, “when are you going to sneak off to meet him? Tonight?” (p. 213). Saleha replies, “Dadi...I...Zeba Baji shouldn’t have...I don’t sneak out with him” (p. 213). The conversation shows that all the wrath of the elders falls upon the youngest, who have to guarantee for their own selves of never to attempt what had been done by their elder sisters.

How It Happened depicts the traditional values which are fanatically passed on to the next generation and the youth are described to be confused in between their reason and logic and the conservative ancient practices and ideas, creating a hybridity of customs. The tradition of arranging marriages is instilled in the minds of the older generations as, “there was greater romance in arranged marriages than in the irrational immortality of love marriages” (p. 7). On Zeba’s asking, “Dadi, surely someone in our family must have married for love?” the reply was, “All good girls marry boys of their mothers’ choice” (p. 7). The conflict between the old and the new generation is one of the highlights of *How It Happened* in terms of marriage. Haider (2013) depicts the contradiction between the love and arranged marriage with the love marriage regarded as “the evil impetuosity” (p. 6). “Dadi believed in few basic things: spices, prayers and arranged marriages” (Haider, 2013, p. 7). Fareed Chaccha, “died because he was about to love-marry” (p. 14) and love led, “to lose a son” (p. 79). Love marriage prognosticated that, “traditions were about to be blemished” (p. 54). *How It Happened* shows that to fall in love was next to committing a crime and Saleha pondered, “To fall in love was immoral. It led to love marriages” (p. 166). Obedience to arranged marriages, even if it was “a death sentence” (p. 196) was rejected by Zeba who had the courage to yell, “one cannot be scolded out of love” (p. 216). But Haider (2013) shows that for the culture and tradition lovers, “There is no such thing as love” (p. 221). Saleha suddenly asks her if Dadi loved Dada and Dadi said, “I was fond of him. That’s all there is, fondness and companionship” (p. 221). Dadi fears that her family will turn into a “laughing stock” as their own daughter is, “marrying for love!” (p. 238).

Haider, however, describes the agony of elders on being ignored and the pain they go through when the young break the long observed tradition of arranged marriages. Dadi, “lay alone on her bed, a tiny little figure” and “she remain in bed all day” (pp. 239, 243). The confinement of the rooms, show their anger and protest and room restriction depicts their boycott from the family into a private sphere they can claim as theirs only.

Religious prejudice and biasness is discussed in various instances help trace the social links and relations judged on religious sects. Dadi rebukes Zeba’s friend Saba as, “Typical Sunni thing...these Sunnis want to sabotage our ways!” (p. 202). Dadi yells at Abbu complaining that, “He’s a Sunni! He has corrupted your daughter!” (p. 237). Dadi adds that, “my own son send her into a Sunni family” (p. 238). The proieratic codes traces the reluctance observed generally in the society which hinders the proposals as a question by Fati Phupps, “are you a Sunni?” gets rid of a woman trying hard to trap Zeba into liking her son for marriage, and who replied later, “you would be mad to think that we would marry into Shias!” (p. 131). Fareed’s being entrapped by, “that horrible Indian Sunni family” (p. 69) is a non-erasable memory for Dadi. Haider (2013) comments on religious solidarity in the matter of marriages as Abbu declares for the solace of Dadi, “in all this time not one Sunni has married into the family” (p. 236), and that Zeba, “embarrassed us all” (p. 231).

Haider (2013) feels comfortable in depicting a divorced woman or a widow as an unavoidable part of the society. When Dadi protests on Haroon’s choice, Zeba interrupts by saying that Haroon could also choose a “divorcee” to which Dadi utters, “why would Haroon want someone used?” (p. 34). Haider’s (2013) contextual rewrite is seen in the depiction of Fati Phupps, a widow and seen by Dadi as, “I told you living alone is not a wise idea women in this country” (p. 225). But her being independent was not enough as Qurrat Dadi suggested to Dadi about her that, “if only she had learnt to control her temper, she would have remarried!” (p. 261). The

misconceptions of the society drags the widows and divorcees away from the newlyweds lest their, “bubonic plague, bad kismats” (p. 116) effect the new bond.

It is the mode of living which suggests a different life style in various geographical parts of the globe. The roles assigned to women are based on social customs and standards. *How It Happened* describes the duties ascribed to a married woman. The married women are not supposed to, “have strong opinion of their own” and admire only their in laws (p. 146). The women’s duty is “to please God and our husbands. That’s it!” (p. 11).

The idea of domestic bliss is the availability of a high tech kitchen where Zeba, “can make meals” for Alam and his family (Haider, p. 106) and with Gullan, the domestic bliss is enhanced to the conceiving of many, “children”, “must give up the idea of working” as “she needed to stay at home to help in the kitchen and have babies” (p. 168). Zeba utters about her phupoo Haseena not uttering her husband’s name as, “never asking his name because he never talks to her!...she shares the same indifference towards him! What a successful marriage!” (p. 227).

In *How It Happened* Ammi and Dadi’s partnership had been a long one and for years, they had been trying hard to compromise, “I did for your wedding and your husband, practically raising your children” (p. 91). On the other side, in relation to Ammi and Saima, and the son becomes “an unwilling rope pulled in all directions in a nasty tug of war” (p. 136). And excitingly, after the intervention of Saima, the two mothers-in-law established, “a new kinship against a common threat” (p. 137). *How It Happened* depicts the bond between families perhaps more than the couple itself.

Getting married at a tender and early age had been the boast of the girl and her family. The rewrite of suitable age for girls to get married had also been the prime concern in *How It Happened*. Dadi, in her youth was marginalized and received remarks, “While most girls at sixteen had already blessed their husbands’ families with at least two or three boys, she remained disgracefully single” (p. 1). Dadi also describes that the families “wanted someone younger” (p. 3). Though, rejected herself on the same criteria, Dadi still preferred some young and immature girl for Haroon as her priority. Dadi’s worries that Zeba had rejected two proposals and, “would one day be too old to receive a decent proposal” (p. 111). Dadi utters about Zeba that, “We need to get Zeba married” and further stresses that, “Plenty of time? PLENTY OF TIME? Zeba is going to turn twenty six next year! Why, when I was twenty three I was the proud mother of five children! Even now, so many girls get married when they are eighteen” (p. 82). Dadi still lamented Naureen’s getting married and not Zeba.

The issue of men’s age is also discussed. Zeba says about Gullan that, “he’s old” (158). The code of semes helps in understanding Dadi’s point of view, that Zeba was lucky to receive proposal of, “the thirty-eight-year-old was still single and eligible” (p. 154).

The age difference between couples is also discussed by Haider when she discusses the age of Dadi’s aunt who was, “a full five years younger,” but, “Proved a good wife”, (p. 36).

Though, Qurrat Dadi adds an accomplishment that, “a well-educated girl will get the most proposals!” (p. 261). Fati Phupps, “a self-proclaimed feminist” (p. 130) who believed, “her husband had done her the favor of dying and leaving her free to live her life the way she wanted to” (p. 72) and she, “refused to accept that there was anything such as sacred tradition”, (p. 73). Zeba proclaims, “Why don’t I have the same right?” and receiving the conventional reply that, “Because you are a girl” (p. 163).

The imperial status long enjoyed by men seems to be challenged by Haider (2013) when Zeba protests are defended by Dadi as the quality of good modest boys (p. 158), pronouncing Gullan as, “eligible bachelor” (p. 185).

On Zeba’s confession that she would marry only for true companionship and love, “...step out of past and pay a little consideration to my happiness...” (p. 212), Dadi out broke with anger and disapproval. Zeba declared that, “She’d known Omer for three months and wanted desperately to marry him. He returned the sentiment. They shared a deep connection” (p. 206).

Discussion and Findings

The data analysis depicts that the Pakistani scenario presents a clear description of gender roles. Though, since one of the determinants elicited to be gratified within marriage was egalitarianism, it might be phrased differently, e.g. I would like my husband to help me with... might be appropriate in the cultural context. Similarly, the data reveals that dealing with fiscal issues is the husband's duty, as he is typically the chief bread earner.

The subjects in this study reflect the Pakistani context of marriage and the notion of the gender disadvantage which women experience ([Papanek, 1990](#)) and the distress of financial burden on her parents, which adds to the circumstances of societal matters. Other allied element might be an imminent disaster like sickness or demise of a parent or her own death ([Qadir et al., 2005](#)) owing to the public stigmatization and embarrassment which occurs if she picks her own partner or if the marriage fails. The marriages in Pakistani society are typically arranged, and the purpose of marriage is the satisfaction of shared and family duties ignoring the singular ones with following love after marriage than a prerequisite ([Triandis, 1995](#)). Consequently, the data analysis exposes that women in arranged marriages received low prospects from love or marriage. Intriguingly, few cases in love marriages depict an advanced level of contentment.

The discussion further leads to the point that in Pakistani context, the women are made aware since their birth of the disadvantages of being a girl and a son is favored by the parents ([Winkvist & Akhtar, 2000](#)). Thus, achieving marital contentment is up to the woman and she must stay satisfied with her conditions and her luck. Women in Pakistan believe that their marriages could not be easy, as it moves from one jointly controlled condition to another. Within their restricted choices and lower station, women develop a sense of powerlessness and retire to accept their fate. Women do not proclaim their rights as result of lifetime training about the maintenance of family integrity. They cannot, at any cost, underestimate societal and family duties ([Hussain 1999](#)).

It is also eminent that along with customary ethos of a conservative civilization, westernized thought is also present amongst the new generation. The wish for picking one's partner is an example. Though gender, education, spouse choice and marital duration appear as the powerful determinants of marital quality, most of the variance in marital quality stays unsolved. Caste and profession also have little to no significance on marital quality. The results show that age at marriage also has no significant importance on marital quality. Typically, women get married at a younger age than men.

The other determinants of interest like a number of children, has little or no link with marital quality. Similarly, the relations of marital length and spouse choice is insignificant for any of the five dimensions of marital quality. Thus, similar to the assertions of [Xu and Whyte \(1990\)](#), the findings reveal that self-choice marriages are normally of higher quality in general, irrespective of time. Though, marital period does not have an important result on closeness or intimacy.

The findings also lead to the social acceptability of choosing one's spouse that is becoming common and recognized over time, and thus, growing the quality of self-selected marriages. Families can accept love marriages and, thus, give greater support to the choice made by the candidates of marriage. Further, as love marriages became acceptable, contact between single men and women might become easier and young people might get better chance to get to know the potential spouses and make better choices. Concurrently, the quality of arranged marriages may fall as those who deal with arranged marriages receive less satisfaction from conforming to expected marriage practices. This results in a larger difference in the quality of the two types of marriages later in time.

Education has a strong and reliable link with marital quality. Education has an important and helpful relationship with fulfillment, communication and closeness. The data also indicated that men equally balancing their wives with their parents is a dimension of marital quality, whereas women were thought to

place their husbands above their own families. Thus, unlike the other dimensions of marital quality, the good dimension of balance varies basically by gender.

Conclusion

Some issues that were highlighted through the data of *How It Happened* as determinants of marriage quality in Pakistani context are: (1) the fear of exasperating parents in choosing a marital partner or expression of sadness with the husband or his family (2) the sturdy faith that a woman finally bestows in her husband's home and the fact that he and the children are the cynosure of her existence (3) the household is indistinguishable to womanhood and surpasses in significance any of her own necessities and longings (4) parent's expectation of tolerance on the part of the woman to the edge of powerlessness is further reinforced by both the family and society (5) divorce is to be avoided and it is better to tolerate a mismatched marriage than chasing divorce and (6) parents understand what is best for children, but some contribution and choice for women could be appreciated. The women in arranged marriages feel that love was supposed to follow marriage and the women in love marriages stated that it was a prerequisite to getting married.

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