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Effects of demographics on relationship satisfaction

Rubab Bukhari

M.Phil Scholar, Department of Psychology,
Hazara University Mansehra, KP, Pakistan

Email: rubab6073@gmail.com

Dr. Rabia Bashir

Lecturer, Department of Psychology Hazara
University Mansehra, KP, Pakistan

Correspondence: rabiaadeel11617@yahoo.com

Summaira Rehman

Lecturer, Department of Psychology,
Hazara University Mansehra, KP, Pakistan

Email: sumairanaz@hu.edu.pk

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Abstract

This study examines the effects of age, gender, and income on relationship satisfaction among married adults. Demographic factors play a significant role in shaping individual experiences and expectations within relationships. Understanding these influences can help identify key patterns and provide insights into improving relationship satisfaction. Through convenient sampling, 390 married adults were approached in a cross-sectional study from various districts of AJK and KPK. The researchers utilized the Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS) to measure relationship satisfaction in relation to demographics. The findings offer a better understanding of the dynamics of marital relationships in various socio-economic and cultural contexts.

Keywords: Relationship, Satisfaction, Married, Adults, Demographic.



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Introduction

Relationship satisfaction among married couples refers to the overall contentment and fulfillment experienced by individuals within their marital relationships. It is a multidimensional construct that encompasses various aspects of a couple's partnership, including emotional intimacy, communication, trust, shared values, and mutual support. Marriage is a significant commitment, and the quality of the relationship plays a vital role in the well-being of both spouses.

Several factors contribute to relationship satisfaction among married couples. Effective communication is essential, as it fosters understanding, empathy, and the ability to resolve conflicts. Trust and respect form the foundation of a healthy relationship, enabling partners to feel secure and valued. Emotional intimacy, including emotional support, affection, and shared experiences, strengthens the bond between spouses. Shared goals, values, and interests provide a sense of common purpose and alignment, fostering a deeper connection.

Maintaining relationship satisfaction requires ongoing effort and commitment from both partners. It involves prioritizing the relationship, investing time and energy, and being attentive to each other's needs. Regular expressions of love and appreciation, engaging in shared activities, and finding ways to navigate challenges together are crucial for fostering satisfaction.

Relationship satisfaction among couples refers to the overall subjective evaluation of the quality and fulfillment experienced within a relationship. It includes the emotional, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions of a relationship and represents how satisfied, joyful, and fulfilled individuals are within their partnership. Couples who are satisfied in their relationships tend to trust and support each other, feel understood and validated, and have a sense of shared purpose and goals.

Literature Review

Relational satisfaction is characterized as an individual's subjective and comprehensive assessment of their relationship (Funk & Rogge, 2007). It encompasses the concept of overall relationship evaluation and the degree to which the relationship fulfills one's expectations (Gerlach & Driebe, 2018). Relationship satisfaction can be described as the emotional response resulting from a personal assessment of both the favorable and unfavorable aspects of the relationship (Byers & Rehman, 2013).

Relationships constitute an essential element of social existence, often serving as a foundation for support, love, well-being, and health. However, they can also introduce sources of distress in one's life (Røysamb et al., 2014). Relationship satisfaction stands out as the most extensively researched among the various facets explored in the study of couple relationships. In a general context, it involves an individual thorough evaluation of their relationship (Gerlach et al., 2018).

The subjective nature of relationship satisfaction lies in an individual's assessment of their relationship. It doesn't characterize an inherent quality of the relationship itself but rather reflects a subjective viewpoint and sentiment. Consequently, individuals within the same couple may hold varying levels of satisfaction with their relationship (Keizer, 2014). Relationships, including marriages, possess the capacity to offer lifelong companionship, love, support, and a fulfillment of commitment needs (Fincham, 2018).

Relationships constitute a pivotal element in the lives of the majority of individuals. Studies indicate that the satisfaction experienced within relationships significantly contributes to overall well-being, health, and longevity (Robles et al., 2014). Relationship satisfaction has been

associated with a multitude of individual and couple-related outcomes, encompassing physical health, mental well-being, the management of both physical and mental health issues, occupational productivity, and overall life contentment. Kamp et al. (2008) define relationship satisfaction in this study as the comprehensive evaluation of an individual's loving relationship. According to Fincham and Rogge (2010), high relationship satisfaction entails positive emotions and favorable attitudes towards the partner, often indicating that individuals perceive their needs to be fulfilled by their partner.

Demographic Differences in Relationship Satisfaction

A previous study found age and relationship satisfaction is significantly correlated (Kappen et al., 2018). A study reported that women reported higher relationship satisfaction than men (Cole, 2022). Previous research involving married adults has revealed that income differences are linked to variations in relationship satisfaction (Leavitt et al., 2019).

Objective

- i. To study the demographic differences (age, gender, income) on relationship satisfaction.

Research Hypotheses

- i. Age will be positively associated with relationship satisfaction.
- ii. Relationship satisfaction will be high in female adults.
- iii. Significant differences will occur on relationship satisfaction with respect to income levels.

Methodology

Nature

In the current study, the correlational survey research method was employed, utilizing a quantitative research design. Correlational research is valuable for identifying associations between variables by using cross-sectional studies and this can make the results more applicable to everyday life.

Population

A study was conducted on married individuals.

Sample Size

The study comprised a sample of 390 married adults.

Sample Technique

Participants were chosen using a convenient sampling technique, where individuals are selected based on their accessibility and availability.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Participants (N = 390)

Variables	Categories	N	%
Age	18-40 years	390	100%
Gender	Male	186	47%
	Female	204	52%
Income	Low	82	21%
	Average	223	57%
	High	85	21%

Note. Demographic characteristics of the age, gender, and income

Instruments

Relationship Assessment Scale

The Relationship Assessment Scale was developed by Funk and Rogge in 2007 and was designed to measure overall relationship satisfaction. The survey comprises seven items aimed at gauging respondents' satisfaction, with each question rated on a 5-point likert scale ranging from 1 (low) to 5 (high). Among these items, four and seven are reverse scored. Scores range from 7 to 35. A higher score indicates the respondent's level of relationship satisfaction. The Relationship Assessment scale has alpha reliability $\alpha = .86$ (Funk & Rogge, 2007). This scale was available in open access. In this current study, the alpha reliability for the Relationship Assessment scale was $\alpha = .763$.

Procedure of the Study

The researcher collected sample from different districts of Azad Kashmir and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Researcher approached 390 married individuals before collecting data, they were informed about the study, and they were provided with answers to all questions related to the research study.

The data was collected voluntarily from individuals who willingly chose to participate in the study. Those who declined to participate were not forced into becoming part of the study and only their complete questionnaires were incorporated into the study, while incomplete ones were excluded.

The data collection was conducted both via Google Forms and through manually administered questionnaires. Participants were kindly requested to fill out the questionnaires with utmost honesty and integrity.

Data Analysis Technique

The analyses were conducted using the SPSS-25 (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software. Reliability coefficient analysis was employed to assess the internal consistency of the data. Pearson correlation was utilized to study the relationships between age and relationship satisfaction. T-tests were conducted to examine differences in study variable based on gender. ANOVA analysis was carried out to examine differences across various income groups.

Ethical consideration

Participants provided informed consent and were thanked for their contributions. They were assured that their data would be used solely for research purposes, emphasizing the ethical commitment to confidentiality and respect for their participation.

Results

Table 2: Psychometric Characteristics of Relationship Satisfaction ($N = 390$)

Scale	M	SD	Range	Cronbach's α
RS	23.13	4.926	7-35	.763

Note. M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, Relationship Satisfaction.

The results of Table 2 indicated that the Relationship Satisfaction has reliability .763.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Correlation among Age and Relationship Satisfaction ($N = 390$)

Scale	N	M	SD	I
Age	390	31.98	5.458	.079
RS	390	23.13	4.926	-

Note. M = mean, SD = standard deviation, N = number of participants, RS = Relationship Satisfaction.

Age is non-significant negative association with relationship satisfaction ($r = -.079$, $p > .05$, $N = 390$).

Table 4: Mean Differences of Male and Female Adults on Relationship Satisfaction

Variables	Male Adults		Female Adults		$t(388)$	P	Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD			
RS	22.59	5.361	23.62	4.449	-2.074	.039	0.21

Note. $N = 390$; $n = 186$ Male Adults, $n = 204$ Female Adults, M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, RS = Relationship Satisfaction.

$p > .05$, $**p < .01$, $*p < .05$.

Significant gender differences exist on Relationship Satisfaction male mean score is 22.59, and the female mean is 23.62, with a p -value of $< .05$.

Table 5: One-Way Analysis of Variance Concerning Income Level Differences on Relationship Satisfaction. ($N = 390$)

Variables	Low level		Average level		High level		$F_{(2,387)}$	η_p^2
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
RS	22.43	5.48	24.05	4.58	21.39	4.698	10.6***	0.05

Note. M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, Low Level, $n = 82$, Average Level, $n = 223$, High Level, $n = 85$, RS = Relationship Satisfaction

$p > .05$, $***p < .001$.

The study's results revealed significant differences across income levels in relationship satisfaction, $F(2,387) = 10.57, p < .001$. The study's results indicated differences in relationship satisfaction based on income levels, specifically low ($M = 22.43$), average ($M = 24.05$), and high ($M = 21.39$), with a partial eta effect size of 0.05.

Discussion

The main goal of this study is to examine the effect of age, gender, and income on relationship satisfaction within the married adults. The first hypothesis of the current research stated that age will be positively correlated with relationship satisfaction. The study's results indicated a non-significant negative association between age and relationship satisfaction (see table 3). A non-significant association was found between age and relationship satisfaction (Campbell, 2017). The previous study's results aligned with current findings.

The second hypothesis of the research explained that relationship satisfaction will be high in female adults. Relationship satisfaction was high among female adults (see table 4). A study reported that women reported higher relationship satisfaction than men (Cole, 2022). In Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, females scored high on relationship satisfaction because, in addition to meeting the standard expectations for couple bonding, their desired needs are also fulfilled.

The third hypothesis of the research explained that significant differences will occur on relationship satisfaction with respect to income levels. The results revealed significant differences in income on relationship satisfaction. Thus, the findings of the current study support the hypothesis (see table 5). According to prior research on married and cohabiting adults there was significant income differences on relationship satisfaction (Leavitt et al., 2019). The findings from previous study was similar to the present study's findings suggesting significant income differences on relationship satisfaction among married adults.

Conclusion

This study examined the impact of age, gender, and income on relationship satisfaction among married adults. Age showed no significant association with relationship satisfaction. Female adults reported higher levels of relationship satisfaction, particularly in regions where their needs were more effectively met. Income differences revealed a notable influence on relationship satisfaction. These findings emphasize the role of demographic factors in shaping relationship satisfaction among married adults.

Recommendations

Support systems should address income-related challenges by offering financial guidance and resources to low-income families, while relationship education programs should focus on improving communication and mutual understanding between couples.

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