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What I wanted vs what I have: Impact of pre and post marital expectations on marital satisfaction of married young adults

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to ascertain pre-marital and post-marital expectations, the differences between pre- and post-marital expectations, and the impact of post-marital expectations on current marital satisfaction. This study employs a mixed design with a correlational technique. This study includes 164 married young adults (n=75 males & n=89 females) in Pakistan, all of whom have been married for at least six months and are between the ages of 19 and 40. The sampling technique employed is convenience-based. In this study, the Couples Satisfaction Index (CSI-16) and the Marital Scales are utilised as measures (Pre and Post Forms). The demographic information sheet was presented first, followed by the CSI-16, and then the Marital Scales, with the pre-marital form being presented first and the post-marital form being presented second. According to findings, there is a significant difference between pre- and post-marriage expectations. In addition, post-marriage expectations were found to impact participants' current marital satisfaction. The majority of the participants were female, employed, parents, upper middle class, and part of a joint family. This study contributes to the existing literature on pre-marital and post-marital expectations and marital satisfaction, can be used in marital therapy, can be applied to the culture and context of Pakistan, and offers an explanation of certain marital expectations and their impact on marital satisfaction.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Premarital and postmarital expectations tend to play a significant effect in the marriage life of a person. Once marriage expectations are met, it is recognised that the individual is more likely to enjoy more happiness and marital satisfaction. Particularly, expectations regarding the spouse are regarded as one of the strongest indicators of marital satisfaction (Rios, 2010). Today's generation values companionship, mutual commitment, familial support, sexual needs, and financial independence more than prior generations. Existing research suggests that reciprocal appreciation and cooperation are factors of marital expectations. In addition, other factors influence spousal expectations, such as the spouse's relationship with children and family, professional life, religion, and physical and emotional health (Villa & Prette, 2013).

Coleta (1989) described marital satisfaction as a construct comprised of three primary components: the level of satisfaction with interaction between spouses, how the spouse handles emotions, and the practical aspects

of married life. Another study revealed that the social behaviour of the spouse has a significant impact on marital satisfaction (Villa & Prette, 2013). It is thought to have a positive effect on marital satisfaction if both partners share comparable values and beliefs. Religion, family ethnicity, education, the length of the relationship, and religion all play a significant part in marital adjustment because they influence how an individual forms marital expectations. The majority of our expectations are formed by witnessing the experiences of others and learning from them. Consequently, we may argue that our experience of reality is dependent on our personal observations of our surrounding environment and the individuals in it (Rios, 2010). A person who has only witnessed unhappy marriages may eventually lose faith in the possibility of pleasant relationships. In other words, the things we observe around us shape our expectations for married life, so influencing marital contentment.

Although there is limited literature differentiating between pre-marital and post-marital expectations and the majority of literature focuses on the broad concept of marital expectations, the present study focuses on pre-marital and post-marital expectations as separate variables and examines the effect of post-marital expectations on marital satisfaction among married individuals residing in Pakistan.

Premarital expectations refer to what a person anticipates from married life before to getting married. It is a regular occurrence to sense and anticipate something before really experiencing it. Premarital expectations or wants of a spouse are expected from the other partner and are beyond the individual's control, leaving them feeling vulnerable. In addition, when these expectations are not met, it can be incredibly disheartening and aggravating. Marital contentment is an experience that varies from person to person and can only be measured by the response to the marital satisfaction questionnaire (Deressu & Girma, 2019).

Post-marital expectations refer to the expectations that an individual begins to develop after marriage, focusing on the domains of expectations from the partner, expectations from one's marriage, expectations of and from the partner's family of origin, expectations of the institution of marriage, and the concept of an ideal partner. In addition, these include a set of rules and standards that a person begins to anticipate from their partner after entering the institution of marriage (Bhatti & Juvva, 2006).

These marital expectations play an important part in the lives of married individuals by influencing their marital satisfaction and quality. According to research undertaken by Signorielli (1999), television plays a significant impact in the formation of perceptions and ideas towards marriage and intimate relationships. The media has a strong influence on marriage expectations in Pakistan. Particularly the lower and medium socioeconomic classes have a fascination with soap operas, which causes them to create overly high expectations for the individuals they encounter in real life. Consequently, this leads to a drop in marital satisfaction over time. In addition, because Pakistan is a collectivist society, the families of both spouses contribute significantly in the marital relationship (Segrin & Nabi, 2002).

Prior research indicates that these marital expectations for the partner include communication, sexual satisfaction, affection, and an understanding of one's mate. In addition, the fulfilment of these expectations results in marital satisfaction. One's expectations for their marriage typically include happiness, trust, connection, and respect, which contributes to the maintenance of a happy and satisfied relationship (Litzinger & Gordon, 2005). Expectations from the partner's family include support, care, and non-interference, resulting in a more contented and well-adjusted marriage. In a nutshell, marital satisfaction rises when marital expectations are met (Bhatti & Juvva, 2006). It was seen in a recent study that most individuals' expectations tend to persist in a negative light; they expected that their in-laws might not treat them as a part of family, will not give privacy to the couple and will always interfere and create conflict. Furthermore, it was noted that this negative view came from observations and the western media where nuclear families are much more common and the in-laws are not given an active role (Rahman et al., 2019).

Marital satisfaction can be considered as a mental state that one experiences when he or she tends to perceive the benefits and costs of marriage. Moreover, if there are fewer benefits and more costs, then this would eventually lead to lower marital satisfaction. Similarly, if there are more benefits and fewer costs, then this would lead to greater marital satisfaction. Consequently, marital satisfaction can be defined as an attitude of having a greater or lesser favorability towards one's own marital relationship. Marital satisfaction is a state of contentment, satisfaction and pleasure that can be achieved by the married couple. The concept of marital satisfaction is based on certain factors, such as sexual satisfaction, receiving support from the partner, participation in the decision-making process, relationship with partner's family, and social needs. All these factors tend to have an impact on the psychological wellbeing of an individual as well as on life satisfaction (Gottman & Krokoff, 1989).

Achieving marital satisfaction in marital life is essential for the couple's mental health. Furthermore, the marital quality affects the possibility and likelihood of divorce or separation. Some studies suggest that women experience less marital satisfaction as compared to men. Furthermore, a study conducted by Whisman (1999) proposed that the individual who experiences high levels of marital dissatisfaction are also more prone to mental illnesses (Qadir et al., 2005). In accordance with the concept presented by the *Role Theory*, people are already assigned roles by society that they must perform; marital satisfaction can be attained if there is support for the other partner's role and if common role identities exist (Baldwin et al., 1999).

If we simply consider the divorce rate in Karachi, there were 11,143 divorce filings in 2019 and 14,943 filings in 2020, respectively. Based on these statistics, we can conclude that divorce is a growing social problem in Pakistan, affecting not only the couple but also the community at large. The function of marriage expectations regarding married life and spouse could be a contributing factor to the high divorce rate. In addition, the divorce rate in Pakistan is 0.3 percent per 1000 people, which might be attributed to marital discontent (Khan, 2020). As noted before, there are several variables that have a role in influencing the level of marital satisfaction in married individuals. These variables include the parent-child connection, the individual's environment, religion, education, and ethnicity of the family, among others. In addition, it has been observed that the people of Pakistan are heavily influenced by the media; they are highly attuned to the media's shows and films, which explains why a large number of married individuals tend to form their expectations about marriage and spouse based on what they see and interpret in the media.

1.1 Research objectives

i. To identify the pre-marital and post-marital expectations regarding spouse of married young adults.

ii. To find out the differences in the pre-marital and post-marital expectations regarding spouse of married young adults.

iii. To find out the impact of post-marital expectations regarding spouse on current marital satisfaction of married young adults.

1.2 Research hypotheses

i. There will be a significant difference between pre-marital and post-marital expectations regarding spouse of married young adults.

ii. The post-marital expectations regarding spouse will have an impact on current marital satisfaction of married young adults.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND DEPICTION OF THE PAKISTANI CONTEXT

While the purpose of the current research is to analyse the differences between pre-marital and post-marital expectations, as well as the effect of post-marital expectations on marital satisfaction, there is a paucity of literature on this topic, particularly in the context of Pakistan today. In spite of this, Pakistani society, like all other societies in the world, is continuously modernising and evolving. Consequently, the nature of relationships, particularly marriage ones, has evolved significantly. People build and develop expectations for their relationships, and their level of relationship happiness is based on these expectations. Therefore, analysing these pre- and post-marriage expectations, as well as their impact on marital satisfaction, is essential to comprehending marital relationships in contemporary society.

A study conducted by Bhatti and Juvva (2006), which incorporated this Epigenetic Model, found that the marital expectations that originate from an individual's surrounding environment, beliefs, and experiences can cause severe marital conflict if they are not discussed openly with partners. Not communicating one's marital expectations to one's partner causes the partner to be uninformed of what is expected of them, resulting in distress and frustration. However, this is not the norm in Pakistan's contemporary society. In Pakistani culture, the husband typically gets the upper hand; his preferences are valued even when deciding what type of lady to marry, what kind of cuisine to cook at home, if the wife can work, etc. In addition, couples tend not to discuss such topics with one another, especially when it comes to the expectations they have of their partner, which may ultimately result in a communication gap between them, leading to miscommunication and disappointment. In addition, because living in a joint family is so prevalent in Pakistani society, the couple's parents and other family members may interfere with their communication and expectations by, for example, not giving them their space and privacy and demanding their attention on other matters such as household chores, financial expenses, work, etc. All of these factors can result in the spouses' unsatisfied marital expectations. When these limits are not effectively established or respected, it can result in a negative perception of the in-laws and family members (Rahman et al., 2019).

In an effort to enhance knowledge about marital expectations, researchers studied if the integration of courses on courtship and marriage could reduce university students' unrealistic relationship and romantic ideas. The findings of the study indicate that after receiving the aforementioned course, students exhibited less unrealistic relationship and romantic beliefs. This suggests that such courses can have a positive influence on students' beliefs, resulting in a reduction of unrealistic marriage expectations. The study reveals that courses on courtship and marriage provide and improve understanding of marriage myths, positively influencing the future marriages of students. Once students are made aware of and educated about such false information about marriage, they will have better and healthier marriages as well as greater marital satisfaction, as opposed to dwelling on unfulfilled, unrealistic marital expectations, which can frequently lead to disappointment and frustration (Sharp & Ganong, 2000). However, there is a lack of such courses on marriage and courtship in Pakistan. Therefore, it is not possible to teach the Pakistani youth about the realities of marriage as well as to tackle the myths about marriage that leave most people misinformed, eventually leading to unfulfilled and unrealistic marital expectations. A study conducted by Rahman et al. (2019) reported that unrealistic expectations regarding spouse tend to exist in most relationships. Hence, it is crucial for such courses to be taught to young adults in Pakistani educational institutes in order to address the myths and misinformation by educating and spreading awareness about the realities of marital relationships.

A research study conducted by Murray et al., (2011) reported that marital satisfaction tends to decline over time, on average; however, the findings revealed that marital satisfaction declined more sharply for those who initially has low idealization for their partners while on the other hand, those who has high idealization for their partners did not experience a significant decline. These findings help in explaining that the ability to perceive their partners as a match to their ideals allowed the participants to sustain and maintain their marital satisfaction over time. Those who perceived an imperfect partner as a match to their ideals tended to show considerable resilience in their marriages. This is because believing that a partner reflects one's ideals fosters the optimism needed to behave well and cope effectively with the challenges that arise with interdependence in relationships and marriages. In addition to this, people in relationships tend to redefine their ideals to match the qualities they perceive in their partners, which contributes to their satisfaction despite any disappointments.

In their research study, Deressu and Girma (2019) found a significant positive relationship between premarital expectations, marital communication, and marital satisfaction when premarital expectations are realistic and attainable. When expectations are realistic and discussed with partners, the relationship deepens and satisfaction rises, according to the finding of the study. However, marriage troubles emerge when expectations are unrealistic and not shared with partners. Only through communicating one's expectations with one's partner is it possible to increase marital satisfaction and fulfilment. Unrealistic and high expectations result in a lack of understanding to recognise that the spouse is a person with limitations, that marriage requires effort to grow together, and that love alone is not sufficient to make the marriage work. Such expectations also impede individuals from realising that their partner cannot meet all of their expectations and that their relationship can be damaged if perceived individual differences are not discussed and resolved in a timely manner. As a result of spending more time getting to know one another, couples with lengthier courtships before to marriage have more reasonable and compatible expectations. A significant positive correlation was found between romantic attitudes and the viewing of romantic films, according to a study examining this relationship. Individuals who watch romantic films typically appear to have utopian expectations for romantic relationships based on these films; these individuals expressed a desire to marry and acknowledged to spending the majority of their time thinking about romantic relationships and marriage. This provides support for the notion that the media plays a vital role in promoting and justifying romantic beliefs and expectations. Young adults learn and establish their thoughts and expectations about marriage based on this foundation, as the media tends to present marriages and romantic relationships as ideal without any friction or difficulty, and also endorses the notion that love conquers all. Due to the fact that real-life relationships are comprised of both positive and unpleasant experiences, and do not really support this concept of love triumphing over everything, such persons experience dissatisfaction and disappointment. Thus, such unmet expectations result in low marital satisfaction (Galloway et al., 2015).

Consequently, the majority of previous research indicates that the majority of marital expectations are built on the basis of hopes and imagination, as opposed to being limited to reality. Due to this, the majority of these expectations are not met, since the partner may not be able to meet them or, in other situations, may not even be aware of them. Therefore, these unmet expectations lead to frustration and disappointment, which in turn contribute to marital discontent. Despite the fact that there are inconsistent research findings demonstrating that idealisation and marriage expectations contribute to increased marital happiness, the majority of evidence

indicates otherwise. Due to these discrepancies, there is a need for additional research in this field. In addition, there is a paucity of research on the relationship between pre- and post-marriage expectations and marital satisfaction, as well as on the comparison of pre- and post-marriage expectations, as the vast majority of research focuses on the more general topic of marital expectations. In addition, the majority of these studies are from cultures other than Pakistan, and because these expectations are based on personal values and familial ties, it is vital to undertake similar research studies within the context of Pakistani culture. Therefore, it is proposed and urged that additional research be performed in this area of Pakistani society's interest.

3. PROPOSED THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In light of previous research, the current study has formulated a relationship between pre- and post-marriage expectancies and marital satisfaction. Premarital and postmarital expectations play a role in influencing marital satisfaction, as depicted in Figure 1. Premarital and postmarital expectations each include three components: the intention to marry, general attitudes toward marriage, and aspects of marriage. In pre-marital expectations, intent to marry involves whether the participants have a high or low intent to marry. In post-marital expectations, however, intention to marry includes whether or not participants would encourage and suggest that others get married. In both pre-marital and post-marital expectations, the participants' general attitudes toward marriage reveal whether they have a positive or negative attitude of marriage, whether they see themselves getting married – in pre-marital expectations – and whether they are satisfied with their decision to get married – in post-marital expectations. Trust, respect, communication, physical intimacy, romance, emotional support, and financial stability are components of marriage. These factors of marriage impact a person's marital expectations as well as their perspective on marriage, whether positive or negative.

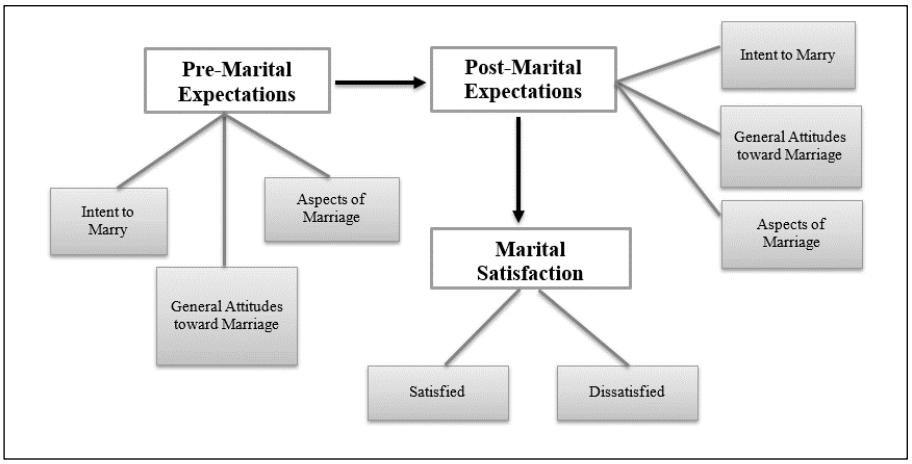

Figure 1: Proposed theoretical framework

We have found from earlier research that, before to marriage, individuals have a primarily idealistic conception of marriage that is mostly based on their hopes. Although some of these expectations may be met, the majority of them are not. These unfulfilled expectations can also contribute to marital discontent as a result of the resulting disappointments and frustrations. In addition, individuals develop post-marriage expectations after getting to know one another and learning how to live and interact with each other after marriage. Unfulfilled premarital expectations can result in postmarital expectations that are extremely low or unrealistic. Once again, if these expectations are not met, marital satisfaction will decrease. This study intends to examine the influence of pre-marriage expectations on post-marital expectations, as well as the relationship between post-marital expectations and marital satisfaction among married individuals.

4. RATIONALE OF THE PROPOSED MODEL

Individuals' marital expectations play a crucial influence in their relationships. The satisfaction of married individuals is also determined by the fulfilment of their expectations. Prior research indicates that women may not achieve marital satisfaction because their marital expectations are based on high standards of intimacy and emotions, and because they have other intimate relationships, such as close friends, with which to compare and evaluate their own marital relationships (Lin & Raghubir, 2005). Understanding the nature of marital expectations enables us to determine whether or not the married relationship is satisfying. Today's marriage expectations are built on love and personal fulfilment, according to Campbell et al. (2012), which has led to increased rates of divorce and infidelity when these expectations are not realised. In Pakistan, the divorce rate

is 0.3 percent per 1000 people and is increasing year after year (Khan, 2020). Consequently, it is crucial to determine which expectations result in unhappiness and how to preserve healthy marriage relationships. Our study intends to determine the types of expectations individuals have, as well as the effect of those expectations on the marital satisfaction of the participants. The study also intends to help individuals enhance their relationship satisfaction and quality, which may contribute to a reduction in the rates of discontent and divorce. Inasmuch as the institution of marriage is fundamental to society, and its improvement will lead to a happy and prosperous society, this research contributes to the determination of better marriage choices. Another study investigates the influence of media portrayal of romantic relationships on an individual's conception of marriage (Galloway et al., 2015). Media portrayal can enhance an individual's romantic standards, resulting in false expectations that are likely to be unfulfilled. Unmet expectations can result in a decrease in marital satisfaction. Prior work is limited to analysing marital expectations as a whole, whereas this study will contribute to such literature by examining pre-marital and post-marital expectations as separate factors. This research attempts to assist newlyweds in comprehending how their expectations might impact their married lives and contribute to marital satisfaction. Couple therapy psychologists will profit from this research. As marriage is an important institution in Pakistan and the achievement of marital satisfaction by individuals is a significant challenge in our society, our study emphasises the significance of marital expectations in married life and on marital satisfaction, and assists individuals in recognising unrealistic marital expectations.

5. METHOD

This research is based on a within-subject, mixed-study design with a correlational approach.

5.1 Participant (Subject) characteristics

Using the method of purposive-convenience sampling, a sample of 164 married individuals (54.3 percent females and 45.7percent males) was selected and surveyed using questionnaires. The participants' ages ranged from 19 to 40 (M=30.73; SD=5.225), and 65.9 percent were employed, 52.4 percent belonged to the upper middle class, 60.9 percent had children, and 58.5 percent lived in joint families. Table 1 provides further information about the individuals.

Table 1: Frequency and percentage of demographic variables (N=164)

Demographic variables		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	75	45.7
	Female	89	54.3
	Total	164	100
Employment Status	Employed	108	65.9
	Unemployed	5	3
	Housewife	31	18.9
	Student	12	7.3
	Other	8	4.9
Socioeconomic	Lower Middle Class	4	2.4
Status	Middle Class	69	42.1
	Upper Middle Class	86	52.4
	Upper Class	5	3.1
Children	Yes	100	60.9
	No	64	39.1
Family System	Nuclear	68	41.5
	Joint	96	58.5
	Extended	0	0

Source: calculated by authors based on empirical data

5.2 Inclusion and exclusion criteria

This study included participants who had been married for at least six months, were between the ages of 19 and 40, did not have a clinically diagnosed psychological disorder, and had attained at least a tenth-grade education. This study did not include individuals who were unmarried or who had been married for less than six months. Additionally, individuals having a clinical diagnosis of any psychological disorder were excluded.

5.3 Measures

5.3.1 Demographic information

The gender, age, age at the time of marriage, degree of education, employment status, number of children, socioeconomic situation, and family structure of the participants were recorded. Questions regarding our inclusion and exclusion criteria, including the duration of the participants' marriages, were also assessed. We also included open-ended questions addressing the participants' premarital and postmarital expectations.

5.3.2 Couples Satisfaction Index-16 (CSI-16)

The Couples Satisfaction Index (CSI) measures an individual's relationship satisfaction while separating out the communication aspect. CSI has a high degree of measurement precision and can discover satisfaction disparities. The scale is appropriate for use with people of any age. . The current study utilised the 16-item modified version of the CSI, although it can also be used as the 32-item original form or reduced to four items, depending on the researcher's needs. The scale is not subdivided further, and the response forms and scales of the items vary. Some items have responses based on a 6-point Likert scale, while others have responses based on a 7-point Likert scale. For scoring, all replies across items are added together. The range of possible values is 0 to 61, with higher scores indicating higher relationship satisfaction. Below 51.5, relationship dissatisfaction is indicated. In the present investigation, the CSI-16 Cronbach's alpha value was 0.981 (Funk & Rogge, 2007).

5.3.3 The Marital Scales

The Marital Scales measures overall attitudes towards marriage, expectations to get married, and expectations for what married life will be like in multiple domains for marital relationships. This is a revised and updated version of the Marital Attitude Scale (MAS) for assessing marital attitudes. This scale has been designed to apply to a wide representation of the population by including those of any age, ethnicity, gender, or marital status. It is the first measure of marital attitudes and expectations to include those of any sexual orientation. The MS contains three different subscales: Intent to Marry Scale (IMS), General Attitudes Toward Marriage Scale (GAMS), and Aspects of Marriage Scale (AMS). The scale was utilized twice – once as a means to measure pre-marital expectations and the second time to measure post-marital expectations. For this reason, the scale was shortened, with permission from its author, and the shortened version was used in the present study – IMS included 3 items, GAMS included 5 items, and AMS included 7 items. For pre-marital expectations, the Cronbach's alpha for the subscales was .785. For post-marital expectations, the Cronbach's alpha for the subscales was .845. Each scale is a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). The scores range from 0-18 for IMS, 0-30 for GAMS, and 0-42 for AMS, where higher scores reflect more positive intent, more positive attitudes, and more positive expectations for marriage. Some items contain reverse scoring (Park & Rosén, 2013).

5.4 Procedure

The scales used in this research were available online and free to use, hence no permission was required to utilize these scales. The participants were informed about the nature and purpose of this study i.e. to see the impact of pre-marital and post-marital expectations regarding spouse on marital satisfaction. Demographic information was taken from each participant and then they were asked to fill out the scales. Firstly, the participants were asked to fill out the CSI-16 to check their marital satisfaction and then they were asked to fill out the Pre-Marital Form of the Marital Scales to find out the participants' pre-marital expectations, after which they were asked to fill the Post-Marital Form of the Marital Scales to find out their post-marital expectations. Part of the data was collected online, through Google Forms, while the rest was collected in-person. After data collection was completed, SPSS was used to calculate the results.

6. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The results of the study were statistically analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 26.0). The T-Test measured the difference between pre and post marital expectations. The correlational analysis table measured the relationship between post-marital expectations and marital satisfaction. The regression analysis table measured the prediction between post-marital expectations and marital satisfaction. The following tables display the obtained results along with their respective interpretations.

6.1 Reliability statistics

Table 2 reports the mean, standard deviation, skewness, kurtosis and Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients. The Cronbach's alpha value for CSI-16 was α = .98. On the Marital Scales, the Cronbach's alpha value for pre-marital expectations was α = .785 and for post-marital expectations was α = .845, respectively. The values of skewness and kurtosis indicate that the data is normally distributed.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics, alpha reliability coefficients, and bivariate normality of study variables (N=164)

Scales	N	Min.	Max.	M	SD	SK	K	α
CS	164	0	81	66.95	16.835	-2.000	4.080	.981
AMS (Pre)	164	20	42	37.18	4.611	-1.587	3.020	.785
AMS (Post)	164	5	42	37.35	5.781	-2.849	11.460	.845
IMS (Pre)	164	0	18	13.30	4.256	-.675	-.071	.785
IMS (Post)	164	0	18	11.90	5.495	-.807	-.290	.845
GAMS (Pre)	164	0	30	20.58	6.703	-.415	-.417	.785
GAMS (Post)	164	2	30	21.64	6.974	-.769	-.115	.845

CS=Couples Satisfaction; AMS=Aspects of Marriage Scale; IMS=Intent to Marry Scale; GAMS=General Attitudes Toward Marriage Scale; M=Mean; SD=Standard Deviation; SK=Skewness; K=Kurtosis.

Source: calculated by authors based on empirical data

6.2 Inferential statistics

Table 3 shows the results of a T-Test of the pre-marital and post-marital expectations on the marital scales. It shows the mean, standard deviation, confidence interval, and the t-value of the pre-marital and post-marital expectations. The table shows a significant difference between the pre and post marital expectations on IMS of the marital scales. In regard to GAMS and AMS, there was no significant difference between pre and post marital expectations.

Table 3: T-test of pre-marital and post-marital expectations (N=164)

Paired differences								
							95% CI	
Scales	M	SD	SEM	t	df	p	LL	UL
IMS (Post) – IMS (Pre)	-1.409	6.607	.516	-2.730	163	.007	-2.427	-.390
GAMS (Post) – GAMS (Pre)	1.061	7.118	.556	1.909	163	.058	-.037	2.159
AMS (Post) –	.171	5.795	.452	.377	163	.706	-.723	1.064

AMS (Pre)	
SEM=Standard Error of Measurement	
Source: calculated by authors based on empirical data	

6.3 Correlational analysis

Table 4 indicates that in post-marital expectations, IMS and AMS have a significant weak positive correlation with CS, while GAMS has a significant moderate positive correlation with CS.

Table 4: Pearson's correlations between post-marital expectations and couples satisfaction (N=164)

Variables	CS	IMS (Post)	GAMS (Post)	AMS (Post)
CS	-	.354**	.605**	.447**
IMS (Post)		-	.400**	.276**
GAMS (Post)			-	.468**
AMS (Post)				-
** = Correlation is significant at the p< 0.01 level (2-tailed)				
Source: calculated by authors based on empirical data				

6.4 Regression analysis

Table 5 shows that the predictor variables – IMS, GAMS, and AMS – would positively influence the level of CS by 40%. Furthermore, the table also indicates that GAMS and AMS statistically significantly contribute to and predict the dependent variable – CS.

Table 5: Regression analysis between post-marital expectations and couples satisfaction (N=164)

Model	R	R2	ΔR2	B	SEM	β	t	p
IMS (Post)	.641a	.411	.400	.345	.204	.113	1.692	.093
GAMS (Post)	.641a	.411	.400	1.130	.175	.468	6.459	.000
AMS (Post)	.641a	.411	.400	.572	.201	.196	2.842	.005
Dependent variable is couples satisfaction								
Source: calculated by authors based on empirical data								

6.5 Additional analysis

Table 6 shows the number of satisfied and dissatisfied participants on the basis of CSI-16 and their scores on the intent to marry sub-scale of post-marital expectations. 23 satisfied participants scored low on IMS and 119 satisfied participants scored high on IMS. 10 dissatisfied participants scored low on IMS and 12 dissatisfied participants scored high on IMS. Higher scores on IMS indicate more positive intent to marry whereas low scores indicate less intent to marry

Table 6: CS and IMS (post) cross tabulation (N=164)

		IMS (Post)		
		Low	High	Total
CS Range	Satisfied	23	119	142
	Dissatisfied	10	12	22
Total		33	131	164

Source: calculated by authors based on empirical data

Table 7: CS and GAMS (Post) Cross Tabulation (N=164)

		GAMS (Post)		
		Low	High	Total
CS Range	Satisfied	15	127	142
	Dissatisfied	8	14	22
Total		23	141	164

Source: calculated by authors based on empirical data

Table 7 shows the number of satisfied and dissatisfied participants on the basis of CSI-16 and their scores on the general attitudes toward marriage sub-scale of post-marital expectations. There are 15 satisfied participants who scored low on GAMS and 127 satisfied participants who scored high on GAMS. 8 dissatisfied participants scored low on GAMS and 14 dissatisfied participants scored high on GAMS. Higher scores on GAMS indicate more positive attitudes toward marriage whereas low scores indicate less positive attitudes toward marriage.

Table 8 shows the number of satisfied and dissatisfied participants on the basis of CSI-16 and their scores on the aspects of marriage sub-scale of post-marital expectations. There are 0 satisfied participants who scored low on AMS and 142 satisfied participants who scored high on AMS. 4 dissatisfied participants scored low on AMS and 18 dissatisfied participants scored high on AMS. Higher scores on AMS indicate a more positive outlook toward marriage whereas low scores indicate a less positive outlook toward marriage.

Table 8: CS and AMS (post) cross tabulation (N=164)

		AMS (Post)		
		Low	High	Total
CS Range	Satisfied	0	142	142
	Dissatisfied	4	18	22
Total		4	160	164

Source: calculated by authors based on empirical data

7. DISCUSSION

The first finding of the study, which is qualitative in nature, discusses what the pre-marital expectations and post-marital expectations were of the married individuals. Most of the participants' pre-marital expectations consisted of having a spouse who is good looking, loving, caring, loyal, trustworthy, faithful, and educated.

The male participants expected their spouses to be good wives and the female participants expected their spouses to be good husbands. Most of the male participants expected their wives to be able to handle the joint family system. Several female participants expected their husbands to allow them to continue working and growing their careers even after marriage. Majority of the participants had expected their lives to be quite adventurous and lively after marriage – they had expectations of having every weekend planned, going on a Pakistan tour, traveling around the world, having a lot of intimacy and romance, etc. They expected their partners to accept them as they are and to make them happy. They expected their relationship to revolve around an "us against the world" frame of mind rather than a "me against you" mind frame. Most of them did not even imagine fighting with their spouses and mostly expected everything to be "lovey dovey" all the time. While most females expected their partners to spend money on them and spoil them, most males expected their spouses to cook good food for them.

Majority of the participants' post-marital expectations consisted of their spouses remaining the same as they were before marriage. However, this expectation was left unfulfilled for a lot of them, as keeping up with life and reality checks did not allow them to remain the same as they used to be before marriage. Some of the female participants, who were educated and had careers of their own, were left stunned after getting married and finding out their husbands and in-laws will not let them continue to work. After getting married, the male participants not only expected their spouses to be good wives but also good mothers, and the female participants expected the same from their husbands. Several responses also consisted of expecting their spouses to be compromising, respectful, loyal, and faithful. They also expected from their partners to communicate efficiently as well as give time and energy to the relationship, as marriage requires hard work and effort, and you only learn as you go. A lot of the female participants expected their husbands to listen to them as well as understand and respect their feelings, while also taking a stand for them in front of their families. They also expected their husbands to become financially stable as soon as possible. This is a huge burden that most men have to face in their marriages – not only do they have no other option other than to work, but they are also expected to be financially stable right off the bat. An expectation of women that is burdensome to them is to accept the in-laws as a family of her own and to instantly adjust to the new home. This is something that requires time, which most women are not given enough of and instead, are expected to adjust and adapt to the new setting and new people with a snap of a finger. Another expectation that most males had was for their wives to share their burden of house chores and responsibilities, so that they can work together as a team. Most participants also expected stability and reliability from their partners. Moreover, many of the female participants expected their husbands to keep the peace between all the members of the family and maintain a peaceful environment. In addition to this, several females wanted and expected their husbands to also act like sons to the wives' parents, as the women are expected to act like daughters to their husbands' parents.

One common theme noticeable in these expectations is that during pre-marital expectations, both genders' expectations were about mostly themselves and what they can offer to each other as partners. However, during post-marital expectations, both genders' expectations evolved into being focused more on the collective rather than individualistic perspective. Before marriage, people usually tend to think about the fantasy of a marital relationship instead of what it actually entails. As the marriage goes on, reality seems to set in, giving the couple a reality check – not only are they a husband and wife to each other, but they also have additional roles of becoming a father, mother, and a son/daughter in-law. Living in the collectivistic culture of Pakistan, a marriage is not just a relation of two individuals, but rather a union of two whole families. Therefore, after getting married, one not only has to cater to their spouse but also to their respective in-laws – majority of the time, as per the norms of Pakistani culture, this consists of the women catering to their in-laws far more than the men catering to theirs. In order to live a life of stability, reliability, and peace, the couples are expected to fulfill and meet each other's expectations, along with giving each other love, care, time, and efficient communication.

In the second finding, the hypothesis was partially proven in that there was a significant difference between the pre-marital and post-marital expectations on IMS but no significant difference on GAMS and AMS, as shown in Table 3. Majority of the participants scored low on IMS in regard to pre-marital expectations. As people generally perceive and expect things before marriage, often these expectations are unrealistic and hard to meet (Deressu & Girma, 2019). Most participants in the current study had individualistic pre-marital expectations; these expectations mostly revolved around themselves rather than the other person, this may normally cause misconceptions regarding marriage. Furthermore, media plays a vital role in shaping people's pre-marital expectations (Segrin & Nabi, 2002). Particularly in Pakistan, people show an interest in soap operas which eventually leads to the development of unrealistic pre-marital expectations that cannot be met by people in real life. Generally, before marriage, there is an innate fear in people surrounding the idea of marriage; there

are hypothetical questions over events that have not yet happened, and those questions incite fear, making people have a low intention to get married. On the other hand, the participants' score on IMS in regard to post-marital expectations was comparatively high. This high score shows that people were satisfied with their relationship and had a more positive perspective of marriage. It was noticed that people after marriage had developed a collectivist mindset – generally after marriage, reality tends to set in, and people slowly get used to their roles as married individuals. Moreover, the culture of Pakistan plays a really important role in the high scores of IMS when it comes to post-marital expectations. Pakistan is a collectivist society; the people are bound by culture, religion, and moral values. The culture of Pakistan suggests that weddings are a blessing; to have a negative outlook on marriage is akin to being ungrateful and deviant. Marriage is considered as a way to solve all problems which is why people choose to stay in a relationship despite any and all conflicts. Thus, in regard to post-marital expectations, IMS was high.

GAMS showed no significant difference between pre and post marital expectations. Participants scored high in regard to both, pre and post marital expectations. This indicates that people's expectations did not change much after marriage; people generally had a positive outlook towards marriage and seldom have had any doubts or fear towards marriage. People develop attitudes through variety of mediums, namely: family, media, spiritual values and the environment (Goslin, 2014). As discussed before, culture plays a vital role in shaping people's outlook towards marriage. The values are shaped in such a way that marriage is considered "obedience to God" or a virtue. Thus, the findings of the study suggest that people had an optimistic mindset towards marriage.

The finding of AMS showed similar results to that of GAMS – there was no significant difference between pre and post marital expectations. Majority of the people scored high in this scale as well; this indicates that people regard trust, respect, communication, sexual intimacy, romance, emotional support, and financial stability as vital components for marriage.

In the third finding, the hypothesis was proven in that post-marital expectations appeared to have an impact on the current marital satisfaction of the married individuals – there was a significant positive correlation between the two variables, as shown in Table 4. In addition to this, with reference to Table 5, the regression analysis revealed that the post-marital expectations positively predict and influence marital satisfaction – GAMS and AMS, in particular, significantly contribute to marital satisfaction. As a study conducted by Johnson (2015) suggests that fulfillment of marital expectations of married individuals has a positive correlation with marital satisfaction, similarly, the results of our study show that the more marital expectations regarding spouse are shared and fulfilled after marriage, the more satisfaction from married life there will be. This indicates that majority of the participants had their post-marital expectations met, which led to high scores in marital satisfaction. A study by Kelley and Burgoon (1991) suggests that the inconsistency between an individual's expectation of their spouse's relational behavior and their perception of their spouse's actual behavior significantly predicts marital satisfaction. If an individual's expectations regarding their spouse's relational behavior are consistent to the spouse's actual behavior in the relationship, this indicates that their expectations are met, which predicts high marital satisfaction. Another reason for obtaining this result could be the factor that most people have realistic post-marital expectations as marriage tends to act like a reality check for individuals whereas their pre-marital expectations were comparatively unrealistic. As suggested by our previous findings, pre-marital expectations of individuals were usually a loving, caring, good-looking spouse who will be able to handle their families and their personal wishes. They expected their relationship to be ideal and free of any argument. Whereas the post-marital expectations, according to our results, are a compromising, respectful, and loyal partner who is able to communicate effectively and give time. There is a greater chance of post-marital expectations being fulfilled as they are more realistic and practical. This is also suggested by a research study that individuals with lower level of irrational beliefs tend to have higher levels of relationship satisfaction (Sullivan & Schwebel, 1995). Another research, by Epstein and Eidelson (1981), suggests that unrealistic beliefs regarding relationships are negatively associated with overall marital satisfaction.

8. CONCLUSION

The current study aimed to identify the pre-marital and post-marital expectations, find out the differences in the pre and post marital expectations, as well as the impact of post-marital expectations on current marital satisfaction. In line with the literature review and prior researches, the findings of this study conclude that expectations, indeed, play a role in the level of satisfaction one feels regarding their marital relationship. The SPSS analysis deduced that there is a significant difference between the pre and post marital expectations on IMS but no significant difference on GAMS and AMS on the Marital Scales. The statistical analysis also inferred a significant positive correlation and prediction between the post-marital expectations and the couples'

satisfaction. This shows that in order to understand an individual's level of marital satisfaction, it is important to also gain awareness about their marital expectations. Once a better understanding is formed regarding individuals' pre and post marital expectations, we may hope to provide some insight to aid social phenomena such as marriage, marital conflicts, divorce, etc. By spreading such knowledge and creating enough awareness, we may be more capable of handling the burdens and responsibilities that come in the giftbox of marriage, in a more adaptable, healthier manner.

9. LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The present study comprised of 54.3 percent females and only 45.7 percent males. This was likely because females were more interested in the topic and were, thus, more open for discussion. As marriage is considered to be a huge part of a female's life in Pakistani culture, this can explain why females were more willing to participate in the study. Males were observed to be quite reluctant, as most of them even remarked this topic to be very personal. As compared to females, males are not as urged to think and fantasize about marriage, which is possibly why they considered this to be a personal matter – females can be found discussing their marital and relationship expectations with each other anywhere and anytime, in any social setting, whereas males will rarely be found to be discussing such a matter. Therefore, keeping the gender gap in mind, it is recommended for future researchers to focus and follow up more on males and their marital expectations.

The Marital Scales used for marital expectations were found to be another limitation in the study. As the scale was developed in the USA, many of its questions did not resonate with the Pakistani participants. The questions were quite broad and thus, were not an efficient way of gathering the marital expectations of Pakistani couples. It is recommended for future researchers to adapt or create a culturally acceptable and appropriate scale for marital expectations to be used on the Pakistani population.

10. IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study are likely to fill the gap and contribute to the contemporary literature surrounding marital expectations in Pakistan, including pre-marital and post-marital expectations, and the resulting relationship with marital satisfaction, as there is limited literature available regarding pre-marital and post-marital expectations. As there is also limited literature regarding pre-marital and post-marital expectations and the impact on marital satisfaction among the Pakistani population of married individuals, this study takes Pakistani culture into account as it focuses on the Pakistani population of married individuals. Additionally, these findings may be utilized in marital and couples' therapy in Pakistan to improve the therapeutic services offered to married couples. Programs for marriage enrichment and education can also be formed to help resolve the community's marital problems. The results of this study can also provide a better understanding about pre-marital and post-marital expectations, as well as the impact of such expectations on marital satisfaction. Since the marriage institution plays such a grand role in Pakistani culture, marital expectations contribute significantly to the marriage itself, as well as the resulting satisfaction of the couples. The institution of marriage has a crucial impact on the upcoming generations as well as future family planning and development, as marriage is the structure and foundation on which the future of our generations is based. Hence, gaining a better understanding about these pre and post marital expectations may also aid in combatting the rising divorce rates and marital problems in Pakistan. As most overseas researches have suggested a positive impact of pre-marital counseling and courses on marital satisfaction, Pakistani society can also learn to adapt such counseling for the younger generation. Instead of idealizing expectations from the media, most of which are unhealthy and unrealistic, these findings can help in teaching the next generation about realistic and healthier expectations. This study provides an in-depth look into the roles that marital expectations play in determining the couples' marital satisfaction, especially pre-marital and post-marital expectations.

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Notes

Disclosure of conflicts of interest

The authors declare that no perceived, potential, or actual conflict of interest exists.

Statement of contribution

No individual contribution statements were provided by any of the authors with the exception of Rameen Fawad, who was listed as the first author, Mahnoor Shahid, Parisey Shamim, and Alishbah Zubair, who were listed as the second, third, and fourth authors, respectively.

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Appendix

A. Informed Consent Form
B. Intrument auxiliaries

A. Informed Consent Form

Please read the following consent form carefully.

We, Rameen Fawad, Mahnoor Shahid, Parisey Shamim, and Alishbah Zubair, final year students of BS Psychology at Institute of Professional Psychology, BUKC, are conducting research on the impact of pre and post marital expectations on marital satisfaction among young adults. This study requires you to fill out some surveys, which may only take 10 minutes of your time. Please fill in these forms if you are in the age group of 19-40 years and have been married for at least 6 months. The research is being conducted under the supervision of Ms. Sehr Sulaiman.

Please note that it is entirely voluntary for you to participate in this research, and you can withdraw at any time without facing any repercussions.

All personal and identifying information gathered through this research will be kept completely confidential and will not be disclosed anywhere, although the results of the study may be used in future research.

For any queries, you can contact us at:

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mahnoorshahidrafique99@gmail.com

pariseyhshamim99@gmail.com

alishbazubair94@yahoo.com

I, _____, consent to participate in this research.

_____

Signature of participant

B. Intrument auxiliaries

Demographic Information Sheet

1. Gender:
o Male
o Female
o Other (specify): _____
2. Age: _____
3. Education: _____
4. What is your marital status?
o Married
o Unmarried
o Divorced
o Other (specify): _____
5. What is your employment status?
o Employed
o Unemployed
o Student
o Housewife
o Other (specify): _____
6. In case of being employed, mention your nature of work _____
7. What is your socioeconomic status?
o Lower class
o Lower middle class
o Middle class
o Upper middle class
o Upper class
8. What was your age at the time of your marriage? _____
9. How long have you been married? _____
10. Do you have children?
o Yes
o No
11. If yes, then how many? _____
12. Mention your children's ages and gender:
_____
13. What is your family system?
o Nuclear
o Joint
o Extended
14. What were your expectations from your spouse before marriage?
_____
15. What are your expectations from your spouse now, after marriage?
_____
16. Have you ever been diagnosed with a psychological disorder in your life?
o Yes
o No

Couples Satisfaction Index

1. Please indicate the degree of happiness, all things considered, of your relationship:

Extremely Unhappy	Fairly Unhappy	A Little Unhappy	Happy	Very Happy	Extremely Happy	Perfect
0	1	2	3	4	5	6

	All the time	Most of the time	More often than not	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
2. In general, how often do you think that things between you and your partner are going well?	5	4	3	2	1	0

	Not at all true	A little true	Somewhat true	Mostly true	Almost completely true	Completely true
3. Our relationship is strong	0	1	2	3	4	5
4. My relationship with my partner makes me happy	0	1	2	3	4	5
5. I have a warm and comfortable relationship with my partner	0	1	2	3	4	5
6. I really feel like part of a team with my partner	0	1	2	3	4	5

	Not at all	A little	Somewhat	Mostly	Almost Completely	Completely
7. How rewarding is your relationship with your partner?	0	1	2	3	4	5
8. How well does your partner meet your needs?	0	1	2	3	4	5
9. To what extent has your relationship met your original expectations?	0	1	2	3	4	5
10. In general, how satisfied are you with your relationship?	0	1	2	3	4	5

For each of the following items, select the answer that best describes how you feel about your relationship. Base your responses on your first impressions and immediate feelings about the item.

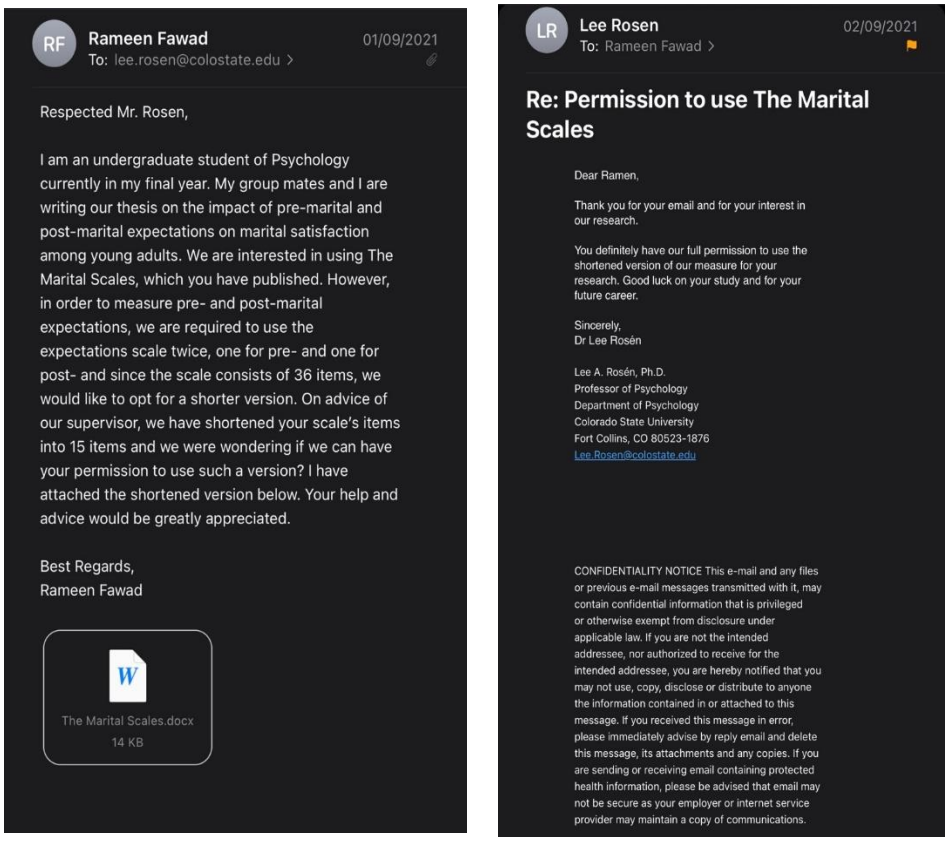
11. INTERESTING	5	4	3	2	1	0	BORING
12. BAD	0	1	2	3	4	5	GOOD
13. FULL	5	4	3	2	1	0	EMPTY
14. STURDY	5	4	3	2	1	0	FRAGILE
15. DISCOURAGING	0	1	2	3	4	5	HOPEFUL
16. ENJOYABLE	5	4	3	2	1	0	MISERABLE

The Marital Scales

Please choose the best response according to what your expectations were before marriage and after marriage. The answers may vary. Read carefully.

	Before Marriage	After Marriage
1. I intend to get married someday.	0 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree 0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
2. I want to marry.	0 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree 0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
3. I do not hope to marry.	0 = strongly agree, 6 = strongly disagree 0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 = strongly agree, 6 = strongly disagree 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
4. Marriage is beneficial.	0 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree 0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
5. I am fearful of marriage.	0 = strongly agree, 6 = strongly disagree 0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 = strongly agree, 6 = strongly disagree 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
6. I have doubts about marriage.	0 = strongly agree, 6 = strongly disagree 0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 = strongly agree, 6 = strongly disagree 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
7. Marriage makes people happy.	0 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree 0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
8. Most marriages are unhappy situations.	0 = strongly agree, 6 = strongly disagree 0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 = strongly agree, 6 = strongly disagree 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
9. Romance is valuable for a healthy marriage.	0 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree 0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
10. Trust is important for a good marriage.	0 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree 0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
11. Sexual intimacy is not valuable for a successful marriage.	0 = strongly agree, 6 = strongly disagree 0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 = strongly agree, 6 = strongly disagree 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
12. Financial stability is important for a good marriage.	0 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree 0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
13. Communication is valuable for a successful marriage.	0 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree 0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
14. Emotional support is important for a healthy marriage.	0 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree 0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
15. Respect between partners is important for a healthy marriage.	0 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree 0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree 0 1 2 3 4 5 6

Permission for use of shortened version of the marital scales



RF Rameen Fawad 01/09/2021
To: lee.rosen@colostate.edu

Respected Mr. Rosen,

I am an undergraduate student of Psychology currently in my final year. My group mates and I are writing our thesis on the impact of pre-marital and post-marital expectations on marital satisfaction among young adults. We are interested in using The Marital Scales, which you have published. However, in order to measure pre- and post-marital expectations, we are required to use the expectations scale twice, one for pre- and one for post- and since the scale consists of 36 items, we would like to opt for a shorter version. On advice of our supervisor, we have shortened your scale's items into 15 items and we were wondering if we can have your permission to use such a version? I have attached the shortened version below. Your help and advice would be greatly appreciated.

Best Regards,
Rameen Fawad

The Marital Scales.docx
14 KB

LR Lee Rosen 02/09/2021
To: Rameen Fawad

Re: Permission to use The Marital Scales

Dear Ramen,

Thank you for your email and for your interest in our research.

You definitely have our full permission to use the shortened version of our measure for your research. Good luck on your study and for your future career.

Sincerely,
Dr Lee Rosén

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