

A Comparative study of men and women on marital attitude and expectancy

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Abstract

Marital Attitude varies with Gender and has implications on the way an Individual conceptualize the marriage. This is a comparative study of men and women to find the relationship between positive and negatives attitudes embedded about marriage and the significant relationship and behavioural expectations thereon. The MAES is designed to measure intent to marry, general attitudes towards marriage and expectations involved from a marital relationships to ascertain the difference in these dimensions to differentiate between the samples.

Key words: Gender differences, beliefs and Values

Conceptual Background of the study

Marriage is "the state of being united to a person of the opposite sex as husband and wife in a consensual and contractual relationship recognized by law." According to social context "Marriage is a socially supported union involving two or more individuals in what is regarded as a stable, enduring arrangement based at least in part on a sexual bond of some kind"

Glenn and Weaver (1979) defined that the "Marriage is found to be one of the strongest correlates of happiness and well-being".

Argyle and Furnham (1983) defined that "Marriage is the greatest source of social support for most people more than friends or including emotional and marital support and companionship"

Research on marital relationships has examined the role of gender, age, and duration of marriage cohabitation in effecting one's attitudes and expectations toward marriage.

Males with higher levels of expressiveness and more liberal ideals had higher expectations for role sharing in a marriage in comparison to males with lower levels of expressiveness and more conservative ideals (Thorn & Gilbert, 1998). Despite the research

indicating there is an expectation for egalitarian roles in marital relationship (Botkin et al., 2000; Thorn & Gilbert, 1998), an expectation for egalitarian roles is not synonymous with the practice in a marriage. An unequal division of labor may be anticipated, though not desired, by young adults thinking of marital relationships (Erchull, Liss, Axelson, Staebell & Askari, 2010). In terms of division of chores between heterosexual partners, men with more liberal attitudes predicted expecting equal involvement in tasks; however, women allocated more household and child-rearing chores to themselves (Erchull et al., 2010)

Kaufman (2005) indicates that women with more egalitarian or liberal attitudes are significantly less likely to expect to marry than women with more traditional attitudes. If they do expect to marry, it is at a significantly later age than traditionally minded women. In a similar vein, many women with more egalitarian attitudes do not expect to have children, or they desire to have fewer children (Kaufman, 2005). Men with more egalitarian or more traditional attitudes did not show differences relative to one another in expectations to marry nor in desire to have children (Kaufman, 2005).

Age is also a factor involved in the formation of the kinds of expectations one has for a marital relationship. For adults in their early 30's, sexual expectations for marriage (e.g., "normalized sexual life" or "exclusive sexual rights to partner") correlated negatively with items like "jointly raising children" and "happiness from having children" (Slosarz, 2002). For adults in their late 30's, sexual expectations for marriage correlated positively with items like "conceiving children", "sharing a common ideology", and "having a comfortable place to live" (Slosarz, 2002).

Family integration affected marriage attitudes only; subjects from all family types who indicated high family integration had more positive attitudes towards marriage than those reporting moderate or low family integration. Neither family structure, family integration or sex had an influence on marriage role expectations.

Willoughby (2014) noted that the term "marital belief" had been used to denote a wide variety of concepts including, the importance of marriage as a social institution, to the age at which a person plans to marry, to expectations regarding marital happiness such as marital timing. The terms "marital attitude," and "marital belief" will be used interchangeably and will refer to the positive or negative evaluation of the general concept of marriage (Riggio & Weiser, 2008; Willoughby, 2014).

Attitudes vary in strength (i.e., highly negative to highly positive), are dimensional and may change over time. Although attitudes are typically expressed as either negative or positive appraisals, they may sometimes be expressed ambivalence and/or doubt, particularly in cases where an individual holds two conflicting attitudes of similar strength (Hall, 2006).

The Theory of Symbolic Interactionism contends that personal belief systems are shaped and influenced by both micro-level factors (i.e., personality, family dynamics, interpersonal relationships) and macro-level factors (i.e., such as media messages, religious doctrine, cultural mores). The individual, their immediate relational world, and the larger societal institutions, are all involved in the reciprocal and interactive process of collective and personal meaning-making (Hall, 2006). Thus, the meaning and value that an individual assigns to the concept of marriage is shaped by their personal experience, relational experiences and finally by their adherence (or lack thereof) to culture messages (Willoughby et al., 2013).

The possibility that studying attitudes and beliefs about marriage can not only help assess current attitudinal trends but also help researchers predict future marital behavior is an exciting prospect that has not been adequately explored.

Intent to marry describes, as one might assume, an individual's expectation or plan to marry in the future. Despite the growing rates of divorce and decline in marriage rates, research continues to demonstrate that a considerable majority of young adults intend to marry (Johnson, 9 2011; Manning, Longmore & Giordano, 2007; Whitehead & Popenoe, 2001). Studies investigating intentions to marry have documented response style patterns associated with certain demographic and lifestyle variables, specifically age, ethnicity, parental marital status, ethnicity, religiosity and feelings about cohabitation.

Need of the study

This study aims to explicate the changing interest and attitude of marriage among men and women and also aims to find the values and beliefs contemporary young adults of Graduate school hold?

Marriage is delayed until individuals finish college, become employed, and become financially independent, a new developmental stage has been established in the life course: emerging adulthood (Arnett 2000; Carroll, Willoughby, Badger, Nelson, McNamara Barry, and

Madsen 2007; Gassanov, Nicholson, and Kock-Turner 2008; Sassler and Schoen 1999; Willoughby 2010). During this period, emerging adults form attitudes (i.e. about relationships, marriage, fertility, education, and career paths) that guide future decisions (Arnett 2000; Fazio 1986). Attitudes toward, and decisions about relationships, are important because the choice to engage in long-term relationships, particularly marriage, has consequences for one's happiness, life-satisfaction, health, and psychological well-being (Evans and Kelley 2004; Kim and McKenry 2002; Musick and Bumpass 2012; Stack and Eshleman 1998; Umberson, Pudrovska, and Recsek 2010; Vanassche, Swicegood, and Matthijs 2012).

It is imperative to understand the young adults percept of marriage and possible expectations they develop in order to throw light on the psychological constructs in terms of Intention to marry, values and beliefs a person hold on this Institution.

Problem Statement:

This study aims at exploring the gender difference that could exist on marital attitude and expectations among young adults.

Objectives of the study

To assess the marital attitude among young adults

To compare and contrast the differences that could exist on the basis of gender.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are explored in this study:

Gender contributes negatively toward expectation of marriage among both the sex

Women will express more positive attitudes toward marriage than men will.

Methodology**Research Design:**

Ex post- facto survey research method was used to collect the data and convenient sampling technique was used for the purpose.

The data interpreted was computed to an independent t test and the inference was drawn. The technique used is convenient sampling and sample size of 100 adults are used in the study

Criteria for Sample selection**Inclusion Criteria:**

Graduate School students of the age group 20-23 were selected.

Norms and Interpretation:

The Marriage Attitude Scale consists of 38 highly sensitive 'yes'-'no'-'doubtful' type of items constructed by Pramod Kumar. The split-half reliability of the scale, applying the Spearman-Brown formula, is .79 with an index of reliability of .88. Test-retest reliability of the scale is .91. Only highly discriminating items with validity index of .27 or more

Scoring:

The scoring is done using the stencil provided in the manual. Positive scores indicate a favourable attitude and negative scores explain the inverse of it.

Range:

SL.No	Range	Grade	Level of Attitude
1	+2.01 and above	A	Extremely positive
2	+1.26 to +2.00	B	Highly positive
	+0.51 to +1.25	C	Above Average Positive
3	-0.50 to +0.50	D	Average positive
4	-1.25 to -0.51	E	Below Average Positive
5	-2.00 to -1.26	F	Highly Negative
6	-2.00 and below	G	Extremely Negative

Results and Discussion:

Group Statistics

Gender	N	Mean	Std.Deviation	Std.Error Mean
1 – Male	50	82.46	11.782	1.658
2 –Female	50	75.84	11.018	1.558

Independent Samples T test

	Levene's test for equality of variance		T – test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig	t	df	Sig(2-tailed)	Mean Diff	Std error diff	confidence interval of the difference	
								Lower	Upper
V42-Equal Variances assumed	0.98	.755	2.90	98	.005	6.620	2.281	2.093	11.147
Equal Variances not assumed			2.90	97.563	.005	6.620	2.281	2.092	11.148

Table 1:

The study results indicate that there is a significant difference in attitudes towards marriage on the basis of gender. The findings also indicate that the two IV are independent of each other in the dimensions of Intent to marry and overall expectations of marriage as a social institution.

Scope for Future Study:

The results can be further explicated by considering factors like Age , Family size socio-economic factors , sexual orientation by administering to a larger sample to ascertain the attitude of young adults in contemporary society.

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