

# MARITAL QUALITY AND FAMILY TYPOLOGY: EFFECTS ON PAKISTANI ADOLESCENT'S MENTAL HEALTH

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## Abstract

The present study investigated the influence of quality of marital life and family patterns with adolescents mental health status. The data for the present study was comprised of (n=100) Adolescent and (n = 100) parental couples. The participants belonged to different socioeconomic status with the age range 17 to 19 years. The data was collected from Forman Christian college university, Beaconhouse National University, Hajvery University and university of South Asia through purposive sampling technique. Mental health of adolescents was measured by the mental health inventory and parental marital satisfaction was assessed by Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale along with Demographic form stating name, age, gender, educational level. Independent t test was employed to analyze results. The findings of the present study showed that there is a significant relationship between parental Marital Satisfaction and Mental health of adolescent. The results also showed that there is a significant difference in mental health of adolescents among joint and nucleus families. Moreover, it was concluded that parental marital satisfaction is better in joint family as compare to nucleus family system.

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**Keywords:** Family typology, marital satisfaction, marital quality

## Introduction

The focus of present study was aimed to find out the relationship between parental marital satisfaction, family structure and adolescents' mental health status. Satisfaction is the person's state whose inclination has accomplished their aims; it is a condition of a people who achieve their needs. Marital satisfaction is an individual's personal impression of explicit mechanism within their marital relationship. According to Bifulco *et al.*(2004) marital satisfaction is a universal evaluation which is the expression of individual's marital pleasure and gratification. Marriage refers to union of a man and a woman which is legally approved by society that represents the sign of being adult. It symbolizes the institution of new home and foundation of new family. Marriage is also a tradition to which involves love, friendship, emotional maturity. According to evolutionary viewpoint, marital satisfaction is a mental state that scrutinizes the costs and benefits of a marriage to a couple. Marital satisfaction research has resulted in the identification of a huge number of factors that contribute to a satisfactory marital union. The researches on the marital satisfaction have shown that there is large quantity of aspects that leads a marital relation to satisfaction. The features of marital satisfaction involves sensations of love, trust, admiration by the partner, respect and faithfulness by the partner, social support, dedication, equality of the tasks, gender roles and sexual relations . The family structure refers to type of family which includes nucleus and joint family system. The nuclear family system comprise of a husband, wife, father or mother and at least a single child. The nuclear family can be of any size only if the parents and children are present and the family can support itself. On the other hand joint family refers to the family system in which parents and children live with other group of grandparents, uncles,

aunts, nephews and nieces .Christine (2001). Adolescence is a phase when a child shifts from his early years to teen age. Being adolescent brings a lot of physical, emotional and psychological changes in the individual, also there are a lot of demands and pressure that an individual face from the society and family. Mental health in adolescents can be explained as the ability to attain and sustain the most favorable work that is related with the psychological and social function. Adolescents who have better mental health help them to accomplish their milestones in their adolescence period. Moreover they are more likely to perform constructively in every aspect of their life in order to contribute in the society. Baumrind (1991). The most common mental health problems in adolescents are anxiety disorders, depression, eating disorders as well as other risk behaviors including those that relate to sexual behavior, substance abuse, and delinquent behaviors. According to Baumrind, (1975). Who is founder of developmental psychology described adolescence stage as a period of emotional and behavioral disturbance before going and maintaining stable equilibrium in adulthood age. Adolescent stage is often described as increase high risk taking behaviors such as using illegal drugs, substance misuse, careless driving, delinquency, eating disorders, unprotected sexual activities, teenage pregnancy and suicidal behaviors. These behaviors are known as risky behaviors as they are threatening to adolescent's physical and mental health Williams, Conger &, Blozis, (2007). During the previous years there are numerous researches which demonstrate that parental marital satisfaction and type of family has a significant effect on the personality and adjustment on their children Wang & Crane (2001). Mental health is a state and a functioning level which socially adequate and individually gratified. A person who is mentally healthy is well adjusted to societal norms, accepts realism ad remains optimistic in life even when he gets along with challenges and stresses of life. Currently, the research is progressively focusing on the mental health of adolescents that how to facilitate young people whose surroundings are not enough favorable to avoid hazards. In conclusion the adolescent children should have a chance to grow and develop healthy both physically and mentally in order to support themselves, their families and contribution to the society. But in order to accomplish these goals, they must be stopped from participating in illegal and negative activities so that externalize and internalize problems can be minimized. The home environment in which adolescent children grow can negatively influence them in numerous of ways. The parental marital satisfaction and involvement with adolescent children makes the home environment comfortable which reduces the probability to engage in risky behaviors.

### **Literature Review**

Sigelman, & Rider (2003). Conducted a study on the effect of parents' marital satisfaction, marital life period and type of family on the mental health of their children. The sample was comprise of 360 school going children who were students of 8th, 9th and 10th classes. Marital satisfaction of the parents was assessed through the marital satisfaction scale developed by developed by Shaw, Winslow & Flanagan. (1999. Mental health inventory was used to examine the mental health of the children. It was concluded from the study that marital satisfaction of the parents has a significant affect the mental health of their children. It was also discovered that children living in joint and nucleus families belonging to parents with high marital satisfaction had better mental health as compare to the children belonging to parents who had low marital satisfaction. Seifert, & Hoffnung, (2000). ) conducted a study on the parental marital satisfaction, stability of their marriage and depression in children. The total sample of 120 children with their parents was selected. Marital adjustment test was used to examine the marital satisfaction, stability of marriage was evaluated by using marital status inventory, and childhood depression in children was assessed by using inventory of depression for children. The results of the study indicated that children of fathers who were dissatisfied with their marriages had the depressive symptoms. Moreover it was demonstrated that those children had depressive symptoms whose fathers had an unstable marital

relationship. The results also showed that the childhood depression was not significantly related to their mother's marital dissatisfaction with marriage. Papalia, Olds & Feldman (2004).conducted a study to investigate the gender difference in the mental health of adolescents. The total sample was comprised of 120 students who were taken from urban and rural areas. The students were randomly selected from ten different secondary schools from both urban and rural areas. Mental health inventory was used to evaluate the mental health status of adolescents. It was concluded from the study that there is significant gender difference in adolescent's mental health status. Moreover it was revealed from the study that adolescents who had better mental health were more emotionally stable and much better adjusted as compare to the adolescents with poor mental health were insecure, fearful, emotionally unstable, and maladjusted.

### **Rationale of the Study**

Previous researches have shown that perception of marriage and marital satisfaction has changed with time. Marital satisfaction is considered to be essential ingredient in the maintenance of a marriage as well as it enhances the happiness of the couple. Marital satisfaction of parents also makes the home environment healthy which influences the mental health of their children. Today the adolescent's mental health is a major concern because adolescents who have high-quality of mental health will also improve their physical health. Adolescents who have good mental health may reveal more optimistic and constructive behaviors. Moreover the adolescent mental health issues are important because it may cause a serious distress and pain for family and to society. There is large number of researches that have been held on the marital satisfaction and on adolescents' mental health status. But yet the researcher believes that the convictions of results on which conclusions have achieved from the worldwide researches are not valid in the Pakistani society and should be explored in detail in order to generalize the results on the Pakistani population. Therefore this study was conducted in order to find out the relationship between parental marital satisfaction, family structure and mental health of adolescents. Apart from this reason; this study is carried out to know that whether they are gender difference in mental health of adolescents.

### **Objectives**

To examine the relationship between parental marital satisfaction and mental health of adolescents.

To find out the impact of family structure on mental health of adolescents.

To identify the gender difference in mental health of adolescents.

To investigate the impact of family structure on parental marital satisfaction.

### **Hypotheses**

H1: Parental marital satisfaction and mental health of adolescents is significantly related.

H1: The mental health of adolescents is different among nucleus and joint family.

H1: There is a gender difference in mental health of adolescents.

H1: The parental marital satisfaction is different among joint and nucleus family.

### **Methodology**

The present study is aimed to investigate the relationship of parental marital satisfaction, family structure and adolescents' mental health status.

## Research Design

The correlation research design was used in the current study, as a relationship between parental marital satisfaction, family structure and adolescent mental health status was investigated.

## Sample

In the present study the sample was collected through purposive sampling technique. Participants in the current study were adolescents with age range of 17-19 years. The total sample was comprised of three hundred subjects (N=300) out of which one hundred (n=100) was adolescents and one hundred (n=100) was parental couples. The data was selected from private universities. There are 20 universities present in Lahore which are recognized by Higher Education Commission. Four universities were randomly selected for the purpose of 20 percent of data collection. From each university 25 students of both genders was selected. The data was collected from students of Forman Christian College University, Beaconhouse National University, Hajvery University and University of South Asia.

## Results

### Hypothesis 1

There is a significant relationship between parental marital satisfaction and mental health of adolescents

Table 4.1 *Pearson Product Correlation of mother marital satisfaction, father marital satisfaction and mental health of adolescents*

	N	MMSS	FMSS	Mental health
Mental health	100	.912(**)	.913 (**)	1
MMSS	100	1	.993 (**)	.912(**)
FMSS	100	.993(**)	1	.913(**)

Note: \*\*p < 0.01

The table 4.1 shows that is a high correlation between mother marital satisfaction and mental health of adolescents .912(\*\*) which is significant on the 0.01 level. Similarly there is a high correlation between father marital satisfaction and mental health of adolescents .913(\*\*) which is significant on P-value 0.01 level which indicates that there is a significant relationship between parental marital satisfaction and adolescents' mental health, thus the hypothesis is accepted.

### Hypothesis 2

The mental health of adolescents is different among nucleus and joint family.

Table 4.2: *Descriptive Statistical analysis and independent t-test*

Family Structure	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t	p
Nucleus	50	114.24	66.951	98	-5.339	
Joint	50	175.30	45.368	98	-5.339	.000

Note: \*p < 0.05

The table 4.2 indicates that scores are significantly higher for mental health of adolescents in joint families (M = 175.30, SD = 45.368) than in nuclear families (M =114.24, SD = 66.951); t (98) = -5.339 and the value of p is .000 which indicates that there is a significant difference in the mental health of adolescents among joint and nucleus families, thus the hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis 3 There is a gender difference in mental health of adolescents.

Table 4.3: *Descriptive Statistical analysis and independent t-test*

Gender difference	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t	p
Male	50	162.86	64.511	98	2.901	
Female	50	126.68	60.112	98	2.901	

Note: \* $p < 0.05$

Mental  
.005

Health

The table 4.3 indicates that the scores are significantly higher for mental health of adolescent boys ( $M = 162.86$ ,  $SD = 64.511$ ) than adolescent girls ( $M = 126.68$ ,  $SD = 60.112$ );  $t(98) = 2.901$  and the value of  $p$  is .005 which indicates that there was a significant difference in mental health of both genders, thus the hypothesis is accepted.

#### Hypothesis 4

The parental marital satisfaction is different among joint and nucleus family.

Table 4.4: *Descriptive Statistical analysis and independent t-test*

Family Structure	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t	p
Nucleus	50	13.22	7.186	98	-5.165	
Joint	50	19.32	4.254			
Nucleus	50	12.92	7.401	98	-5.289	
Joint	50	19.24	4.079			

Note: \* $p < 0.05$

FMSS

.000

MMSS

The table 4.4 indicates that there is a significant difference of father marital satisfaction in joint family ( $M = 19.32$ ,  $SD = 4.254$ ) than nucleus family ( $M = 13.22$ ,  $SD = 7.186$ ),  $t(80) = -5.165$   $p = .000$ . Similarly the marital satisfaction of mothers is significantly higher in joint family ( $M = 19.24$ ,  $SD = 4.079$ ) than nucleus family ( $M = 12.92$ ,  $SD = 7.401$ ),  $t(76) = -5.289$  and the value of  $p$  is .000 which indicates that there is a significant difference of parental marital satisfaction among joint and nucleus families, thus the hypothesis is accepted.

## Discussions

The results of the current study indicated that there is a significant correlation of parental marital satisfaction with mental health of adolescents. In the present study statistically significant relationship found between parental marital satisfaction and adolescent mental health status of adolescents which is supported by the previous researches. Mudasir (2013) has concluded that children exhibit more physical and mental health problems when the parents have persistent and unsettled marital disagreements. When parents have a marital conflict, it creates internal stress within their children which makes them uncomfortable and as a result they develop mental health problems. In case of adolescents, they get more affected by their parental marital conflicts and dissatisfaction as they are more cognitively developed and mature emotionally than small children (Kail, & Cavanaugh (2000). The result of the present study indicated that there is a significant difference in mental health of adolescents among nucleus and joint family. These results of the present study were supported by the research that was conducted by Jenkins, Simpson, Dunn, Rasbash, & Connor (2005). who conducted a study to assess the impact of joint and nucleus on the behavior of children. It was concluded from the study that children who were living in joint families had less behavioral problems and they showed better behaviors as compare to the children who were living in nucleus families. It has been shown by the previous research that girls experience great level of stress as compare to boys, and this level of gender difference in mental health remain present through all stages of life period, including adolescence, young and middle adulthood and late adulthood Gill & Sharma. (2003). The Feldman (2003) result of the present study

indicated that there is a significant difference of Parental Marital Satisfaction in joint and nucleus families. The Marital Satisfaction of parents is better in joint families than in nucleus families. The results of the present research are supported by the study conducted by Dacey & Travers (2004) who found that marital satisfaction is high in joint families as compare to nucleus families. It has been commonly observed that marriage is not a configuration of a single relationship, though it is a joining of two families. Family structure has a great influence on the marital relationship of a couple. When a woman enters a new family, new home and meets new people, she has to make adjustments with a number of things. In Pakistani society, the in-laws play a crucial role in enhancing the marital satisfaction of the couple. If the in-laws are kind they may help the couple to understand each other's temperament and if the woman is working, the household work can be divided into family members.

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the relationship of parental marital satisfaction, family structure, and adolescents' mental health status. The results revealed that there is significant relationship between parental marital satisfaction and adolescents' mental health status. The results of the present study indicated that children living in joint family system possess better mental health as compare to children living in nucleus family system. Moreover, the results showed that there are gender differences in mental health of adolescents as the adolescent boys showed better mental health as compare to adolescent girls. Furthermore, it was concluded from the study that parental marital satisfaction is better in joint family system than nucleus family system. Therefore the results of the current study are a clear illustration that parental marital satisfaction significantly affects the mental health of their children. In conclusion, the findings of present study contribute to the growing literature that marital conflict of parents can have a negative influence on the mental health of their adolescent children.

### **Recommendations**

As the sample size was very small and the results cannot be generalized on overall population. So it is suggested that a large sample size should be used for future researches.

Also the demographic variables such as birth order, educational attainment, socioeconomic status, and educational level could also be taken into account to explore a comprehensive picture of factors that enhance mental health of adolescents.

For future studies the parents and children should get interviewed individually to identify that whether marital dissatisfaction of parents negatively affects the mental health of children.

Parents are much busier in their careers and do not get enough time for their children. So they should spend more time with their children in order to identify and solve their problems.

There must be a psychologist or school counselor present in every educational institute to secure the mental health of every child by educating teachers, counseling students and their parents.

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