



Exploring the Relationship Between Emotional Maturity and Social Adjustment among Women in Pakistan

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Abstract: This study explored the relationship between emotional maturity and social adjustment among married and unmarried women in Pakistan. A cross-sectional design was employed with a sample of 150 women (75 married and 75 unmarried), aged between 25 and 35, selected through convenience sampling from Gujrat, Pakistan. Emotional maturity and social adjustment were measured using standardized tools. Results exposed a strong positive correlation between emotional maturity and social adjustment, $r = .930$. Regression analysis confirmed the emotional maturity as a strong significant predictor of social adjustment by explaining 86.6% of the variance $R^2 = .86$, $\beta = .93$. Married women demonstrated significantly higher emotional maturity $M = 80.97$, $SD = 2.99$ as compared to unmarried women $M = 48.76$, $SD = 5.13$ and lower social adjustment scores both with very large effect sizes where Cohen's $d = 7.67$ and 5.20 , respectively from data. Cultural expectations around marriage in Pakistan highlight the family roles, emotional regulation and societal conformity that may account for these differences. The findings also exposed that the influence of marital status on women's emotional and social development, stressing the great need for culturally sensitive mental health interventions that support emotional growth and social integration.

Key Words: Emotional Maturity, Social Adjustment, Marital Status, Women, Pakistan

Introduction

The study investigates the correlation between social adjustment and emotional maturity in married and unmarried women, focusing on various dimensions of adjustment. Adjustment is defined as a behaviour aimed at overcoming challenges and fulfilling personal needs while achieving satisfaction and equilibrium (Bai & Srivastava, 2022). It involves self-acceptance and engaging with social activities (Finkel et al., 2017). Types of adjustment include normal and abnormal. Normal adjustment occurs when interactions align with established norms, while abnormal adjustment refers to maladaptive behaviors that deviate from those norms (Jokar et al., 2024). Social adjustment specifically relates to the balance of social relationships, employing social skills to navigate interactions (Oyakawa, 2025).

Social adjustment theories can be categorized into peer status, social skills, relationship, marital status and functional approaches. Peer status approaches centre on an individual's popularity within peer groups (Abbas et al., 2019). Social skill approaches focus on observable behaviors indicative of social competence (Faisal et al., 2025). Factors impacting social adjustment include temperament, which describes an individual's innate reactions to their environment (Pan & Sun et al., 2022), attachment styles that influence future social and positive marital relationships, with secure attachments leading to higher social competence; and parenting styles that significantly shape social and emotional development, determining whether children develop social skills (Guha & Mahaptara, 2022).

Emotion, as defined (as cited by Matin et al., 2024), is a brief experience marked by intense mental activity and significant feelings of pleasure or displeasure, closely linked with attitude and inspiration. Matin et al. (2024) categorises

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emotions into two types: emotions to express, such as sadness that lessens when communicated, and emotions to control, like anger that requires healthy expression to avoid harm. Emotional maturity reflects an individual's development in processing emotions appropriately for their age and married life, demonstrating emotional resilience and regulation (Meena & Jain et al., 2023).

Researchers listed characteristics of emotionally mature individuals, including the ability to express love openly, face reality, learn from experiences, harsh marital bonds and receive criticism (Gomez-Lopez, 2019; Jokar et al., 2024). Studies identify factors influencing emotional maturity as flexibility in adapting to situations, taking responsibility for one's life and choices, recognising that vision can outweigh knowledge, and the pursuit of personal growth (Nichols, 2022). Emotionally mature people seek alternative views, maintain a non-judgmental stance, exhibit resilience in challenges, remain calm, display realistic optimism, are approachable, possess self-belief, and embrace humour, all of which are crucial aspects of emotional development (Rozyan & Javazaden, 2022). One study found that men in arranged marriages showed moderate emotional maturity while women exhibited higher levels, indicating the role of emotional maturity in social adjustment within cultural contexts (Shah & Mistry, 2020). The significance of emotional maturity in aiding social adjustment among unmarried women was also noted (Shaud & Asad, 2020).

Furthermore, Abbas & Aqeel et al., (2019) established a positive correlation between emotional maturity and social adjustment in married persons, highlighting notable gender differences in emotional maturity and social adjustment, where males significantly stronger than females. Sruthikeerthy et al. (2023) found significant differences in marital adjustment and emotional maturity levels between husbands and wives, linking these factors to age, marriage type, and number of children. Zheng et al. (2025) studied emotional maturity at early and late marriages, finding no significant gender differences during early age marriage or older, indicating similar emotional development across males and females (Zheng et al., 2025).

Kalsoom and Kamal (2020) observed gender differences in emotional maturity among postgraduate students and research scholars, with male students generally less emotionally mature than female ones. Haider et al. (2024) assessed social adjustment among industrial workers, noting significant differences linked to marital status. Haider et al. (2024) demonstrated that working women scored higher in emotional maturity compared to non-working women, suggesting that employment contributes positively to emotional growth (Haider et al., 2024). Vala & Vasel et al. (2021) found no significant differences in emotional or social maturity levels between married and unmarried women, indicating other factors may influence social adjustment more than marital status alone (Vala & Vasel et al., 2021). Study highlighted a positive association between emotional maturity and job satisfaction among teachers, asserting that emotional development affects professional fulfilment for both genders (Gómez-López, 2019).

Research by Shojaei Vazhnany et al. (2020) found that while females had higher social adjustment scores, emotional maturity levels were consistent across genders. A study by Yu et al. (2024) identified the importance of emotional maturity in self-esteem, though no significant gender differences in self-esteem levels were found (Yu et al., 2024). Research studies noted that students who read the Bhagavad Gita demonstrated higher emotional maturity, signifying cultural influences on emotional development (Shojaei Vazhnany et al., 2020). Kanth & Sen (2024) examined the link between emotional/social maturity and marital satisfaction, with emotional maturity proving a stronger predictor (Kanth & Sen, 2024).

Rozyan (2022) highlighted significant gender differences in social adjustment among females, underscoring the importance of tailored marriage life adjustment strategies. Meena et al. (2023) studied Facebook's impact on social adjustment, finding positive correlations between online interactions and real-world social support among female married individuals compared to males. Brandão et al. (2020) revealed connections between emotional maturity and coping strategies, suggesting that emotional maturation is vital for effective coping (Arshad, 2025; Brandao et al., 2020). Overall, these studies illustrate the interconnections between emotional maturity and social adjustment, indicating how emotional development influences social interactions and personal well-being among married couples.

Rational of the Study

Social adjustment is a major problem in society, especially after marriage for women. This study will be a significant endeavour in promoting social adjustment issues and also help to solve this issue. The study will also be beneficial for promoting emotional maturity. By understanding the adjustment problem of married and unmarried women, it will help women solve the adjustment problem and promote emotional maturity. This study gave information about social adjustment and emotional maturity. It will also serve as a future reference for related research.

Participants and Method

A cross-sectional research design was used to collect data. The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between social adjustment and emotional maturity among married and unmarried women. The sample population was selected from Sara-i-Alamgeer village and the government vocational centre. By using a convenient sampling technique, 150 (75 married women, 75 unmarried women) aged 25-35 years were contracted. In order to collect data, a self-built demographic sheet, along with the Social Adjustment Scale SAS-M developed by Gameroff et al. (2011), was used. The respondents were asked to rate the 45 items of the SAS-M on the Likert scale (1 not at all to 5 all the time). Lastly, the Emotional Maturity Questionnaire developed by Grille (2014) was used, which includes 30 items with a 5-point Likert scale. Before the questionnaires were given out, the participants' verbal and written consent was obtained to confirm their willingness to be involved in the study. Correlation, Linear Regression analysis and Independent sample T-test analysis were calculated for descriptive analysis.

Results

The results indicate that Social Adjustment and Emotional Maturity undergo a very strong positive correlation ($r = .930$, $p < .01$) wherein with the rise of social adjustment, an increase in emotional maturity also occurs on a significant scale (Table 1). Regression analysis shows that social adjustment is one of the very strong predictors of emotional maturity ($B = 2.52$, $\beta = .930$) and the predictor explains 86.6 per cent of the variance in the variable, emotional maturity ($R^2 = .866$) (Table 2). The emotional maturity ($M = 80.97$, $SD = 2.99$) of the married population was spuriously higher and the social adjustment scores ($M = 1.52$, $SD = 15.35$) were spuriously smaller as compared to the unmarried ones ($M = 48.76$, $SD = 5.13$; $M = 65.18$, $SD = 7.99$, respectively) with very large effect sizes (Cohen $d = 7.671$, 5.202) (Table 3). The number of participants aged 29-35 was more emotionally mature ($M = 75.46$), and less socially adjusted ($M = 1.38$) than the number of the participants aged 25-29 (EMS $M = 56.97$, SAS $M = 86.72$) with strong statistical significance ($p = .000$, Cohen $d = 1.33$ for EMS, 2.29 for SAS) (Table 4). SAS and EMS means reflected minor disparities after years of marriage, which, as indicated by statistical significance ($p = .000$), were relatively big (EMS effect size = 1.36) (Table 5). Slight yet significant effects on both variables were found to be due to family system; nuclear families had slightly higher EMS ($M = 67.83$) than the joint families ($M = 63.24$), yet the result is statistically significant ($p = .000$, $d = 0.27$) (Table 6). In general, emotional maturity and social adjustment are closely associated with each other and are greatly influenced by marital status, age, years of marriage, and family type.

Table 1

Correlation between Social Adjustment and Emotional Maturity.

Variable	1	2
Social Adjustment	-	.930**
Emotional Maturity		-

** $p < .01$.

Table 2

Simple Linear Regression Analysis for Emotional Maturity as Dependent Variable of Social Adjustment.

Variable	B	B	SE
SAS	-54.95		5.47
EMS	2.52	.930	.082
R^2	.866		



Table 3

Mean and Standard Deviation of the Measure of Social Adjustment and Emotional Maturity as a Function of Marital Status: T-test

Variables	Married		Unmarried		t	P	Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD			
SAS	1.52	15.35	65.18	7.99	43.44	.000	5.202
EMS	80.97	2.99	48.76	5.13	46.94	.000	7.671

**p<.01

Table 4

Means and Standard Deviation of the Measure of Social Adjustment and Emotional Maturity as a Function of Age T-test.

Variables	25-29		29-35		t	P	Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD			
SAS	86.72	38.87	1.38	35.64	-8.28	.000	2.28855
EMS	56.97	14.91	75.46	12.63	-8.00	.000	1.338196

**p<.01

Table 5

Mean and Standard Deviation of the Measure of Social Adjustment and Emotional Maturity as a Function of Years of Married Life: T-test

Variables	1-3 years		4-6 years		t	P	Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD			
SAS	1.48	17.13	1.54	13.37	-1.62	.000	0.003905
EMS	81.08	80.87	2.98	3.02	.301	.000	1.364822

**p<.01

Table 6

Mean and Standard Deviation of the Measure of Social Adjustment and Emotional Maturity on the Function of Family System T-test

Variables	Joint		Nuclear		t	P	Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD			
SAS	1.02	45.16	1.19	43.84	-2.15	.000	0.00382
EMS	63.24	16.39	67.83	16.99	-1.61	.000	0.274971

**p<.01

Discussion

Findings supported the hypothesis of a positive relationship between social adjustment and emotional maturity at a significance level of $p < 0.01$, indicating a strong correlation (Pearson's $r = .930$, $p = .000$) between these constructs for both married and unmarried women. This aligns with existing literature, demonstrating that working women tend to exhibit higher emotional maturity compared to non-working counterparts (Shojaei Vazhnany et al., 2020). Additionally, social and emotional maturity were linked to marital fulfilment, with emotional maturity showing a stronger predictive power for marital satisfaction (Brandão et al., 2020). Using simple linear regression, the study found that emotional maturity significantly predicts social adjustment. The second hypothesis, concerning differences between married and unmarried women in social adjustment and emotional maturity, was confirmed through independent t-tests. Married women had higher mean scores for social adjustment ($M = 1.52$) and emotional maturity ($M = 80.97$) compared to their unmarried counterparts (social adjustment $M = 65.18$; emotional maturity $M = 48.76$) (Jangra, 2020; Khurshid et al., 2020).



The study further explored age-related differences between married and unmarried women, finding significant mean differences for both social adjustment (married $M=86.72$, unmarried $M=75.46$) and emotional maturity (married $M=56.97$, unmarried $M=48.76$) across two age groups (25-29 and 29-35). Additionally, differences in social adjustment and emotional maturity were identified based on years of married life and family systems (Yu & Wu, 2024; Zheng et al., 2025).

The findings of this study revealed that emotional maturity significantly predicts social adjustment among married women in Pakistan. This aligns with previous research that suggested emotionally mature individuals tend to hold better interpersonal skills, flexibility, and capacity for coping with social roles and responsibilities (Faisal et al., 2025; Khurshid et al., 2020). In Pakistani culture, marriage is often viewed as a social milestone that reinforces emotional responsibilities and interpersonal requirements predominantly for women (Abbas & Sundas, 2019). These expectations may foster increased emotional regulation, patience, coping abilities and social negotiation that contribute to the higher emotional maturity observed among married women in Pakistan. The strong correlation observed in the current study, $r = .930$, $p < .01$, underscores the interdependence of these variables, highlighting that emotional competence is foundational to successful social engagement in collectivistic societies like Pakistan (Shaud & Asad, 2020).

According to some recent studies, emotional maturity is closely tied to cultural values, gender expectations and social learning machineries mainly in non-Western contexts (Kalsoom & Kamal, 2020; Haider et al., 2024). At the same time, unmarried women may face fewer family-based responsibilities, but they often navigate societal pressures associated with their marital status, which may impact their emotional regulation and social participation inversely. These insights highlight the need for culturally stranded psychological interventions and policies that address the emotional and social challenges practised by women across different marital contexts in Pakistan. Overall, results confirmed the positive relationship between social adjustment and emotional maturity, emphasising emotional maturity's role as a predictor of social adjustment. Married women demonstrated greater emotional maturity than unmarried women, underlining the significance of these findings in understanding social dynamics among women.

Conclusion of the Study

The current study examined the correlation between social adjustment and emotional maturity of married women and of those women who were actually not married, and also detected the discrepancy between the variables of social adjustment and emotional maturity between the two groups. The results indicated that there is a strong positive relationship between emotional maturity and social adjustment, indicating that the better the emotional maturity, the better the social adjustment, irrespective of whether the woman is married or unmarried. Also, an adequate discrepancy between married and unmarried women as regards the mark of emotional maturity and social adjustment was observed in the study. This shows that marital status could affect the way women handle their emotions and relate to social settings. The findings emphasise the significance of emotional development in the improvement of social functioning and indicate the possible psychosocial differences depending on life roles and duties.

Limitations and Recommendations

There are several limitations to this study that ought to be taken into account in the interpretation of the results. Only married and unmarried women were added to the sample, as only fifty women were studied because of the time factor, and there was no sign of other marital statuses or even men in the study. Moreover, the study analyst limited it only to the females located in the Gujrat district area in Sara-i-Alamgeer, making it difficult to extrapolate the findings. According to the limitations that are identified, it is recommended that future studies be conducted so as to enlarge the sample to cover both males and females, include other district participants, and study a wider population in the form of college and university students. Also, the same research might be carried out in clinical practice, and with undergraduate samples, to better understand the nature of the connection between emotional maturity and social adjustment.

Implications

The current study examines the role of emotional maturity in the process of promoting social adjustment among women, and it is therefore established that emotional maturity will have a positive impact on social functioning. The



study has also given other researchers a research base to analyze these variables on various populations and settings in the future.

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