

Stereotypical Perceptions about Married and Unmarried Working Women in Relation to Parent's Education among University Students

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The present study aimed at investigating the differences on perception about married and unmarried working women in relation to parent's education among university students. In the present study a sample of 300 students 150 female with the age range of 20 to 27 years ($M = 21.50$, $SD = 3.23$) and 150 male with the age range of 20 to 32 years ($M = 22.60$, $SD = 3.10$) were selected to give their opinion about married and unmarried working women in Pakistan. The positive stereotypes scale (PSSC) and negative stereotypes scale (NSSC) revised by Kalsoom and Kamal (2008) were used to study the perception of students whose parents level of education was up to primary as compared to the students whose parents level of education was middle and above. The findings of the study revealed satisfactory reliability values ranged .85 to .94 for both scales used to study stereotypes. The results of the study indicated that there is a nonsignificant difference on stereotypes about married and unmarried working women among the two groups of students whose parents were less and more educated. From the findings of this study we may infer that education has non significant relation to the perception about married and unmarried working women among university students.

Keyword. Working women, married and unmarried, stereotypes, education and stereotype.

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Traditionally, women have been associated with caretaking roles, which involve being responsible for the bulk of household chores, childrearing, and care of dependents (Eagly & Wood, 2012). Women are also more likely to occupy roles that involve caretaking outside of the home (e.g., nursing, daycare, and teaching). Over time, this led to the inference that women are communal warm, kind, caring, collaborative, and obedient (Deaux, 1984; Eagly & Steffen, 1984). These two distinct sets of traits (i.e., communal, agentic) reflect behaviors associated with specific roles and thus, drive others' evaluations regarding how people perceived to occupy each role are and how they should be. According to this theory, women are expected to be innately different with each group lacking the traits held by the opposite sex. Further, the theory posits that views regarding these roles spill over into various contexts (e.g., the workplace) creating a situation in which men and women are expected to display vastly different behaviors, even in identical roles.

Although more people than in the past are delaying marriage or choosing not to marry at all, marriage is still seen as a normative developmental milestone in almost every culture (DePaulo & Morris, 2005; Morris, Sinclair, & DePaulo, 2007). Single people, especially those who are not in a romantic relationship, are perceived as less responsible, less mature, and less well-adjusted than married people (Etaugh & Birdoes, 1991; Morris, DePaulo, Hertel, & Taylor, 2008). Based on these

stereotypes, single people might be expected to be seen as less committed to their jobs and less likely to succeed as employees compared to married people, and might thus be discriminated against in employment decisions/status as well. However, people expect single individuals to be able and willing to work longer hours than married people, because the single people may have fewer obligations outside of work (DePaulo, 2006), and this might lead people to favor singles in employment decisions.

Traditional conceptions of marriage as entailing greater social responsibilities outside the workplace for women may promote perceptions of married women as less suitable for employment compared to single women. On the other hand in particular, expectations of motherhood may create bias against married women in perceptions of employability and parental status too (Jordan & Zitek, 2012) Very limited prior research has investigated whether people show marital-status biases in perceptions related to gender. To examine whether people show biases in their perceptions of employees or prospective employees based on marital status especially for female employees. The results of three experiments suggested one possible contributor to this phenomenon; People may perceive women as less suitable for employment following marriage (Jordan & Zitek, 2012). A study by Ambady, Shih, Kim and Pittinsky (2001) found that positive stereotypes can facilitate cognitive performance and negative stereotypes and hinder cognitive performance which suggested that

is relationship between stereotypes and behavior. However, at an early age, children tend to demonstrate stereotyped beliefs about the gender roles that are dominant within their culture (Berk, 2009).

Although there are many factors involved in social environment, parents' roles are among the most influential in terms of how children learn about gender stereotypes (Cunningham, 2001b). Research points to a relationship between parents' gender ideologies meaning their attitudes and beliefs about gender and adolescents' gender role attitudes (Epstein & Ward, 2011; Fulcher, 2010; Sutfin et al., 2008; Marlene, Barbara, & Christiane, 2018) such that traditionally minded parents are likely to have children with more rigid ideas about gender, while parents with more egalitarian beliefs about gender roles tend to have children who are more flexible in their thinking about this topic. This study examined the relationship of parental education, race, and gender to sex-role stereotyping. A significant effect for race and parental education level was noted. White children gave more stereotyped responses than did black children, and children whose parents were in the middle- and high-educational levels gave more stereotyped responses than did children whose parents were in the low-educational level. A significant interaction was also found between educational levels of parents. White children tended to give more stereotyped responses as the educational level of their parents increased (Halpern, 2014).

In today's economic landscape, this is often necessary for families to survive financially. Moreover, there are nearly 4,000 families headed by a single mother, 67 percent of whom are employed outside of the home (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013b). These statistics clearly illustrate that it is no longer a viable expectation for women to be solely devoted to their family yet, women who violate the traditional devotion schema continue to be faced with the perception that they are lacking both as employees and as parents (Bernard & Correll, 2010). And working mothers, even especially, are stereotypically viewed as unable to meet the demands of work devotion. Those who challenge this belief and become successful working mothers often make a trade as they are perceived as less devoted employees and less effective parents (Okimoto & Heilman, 2012). In the past 50 years, women have made significant progress toward comprising a larger part of the workforce. However, women are noticeably lacking in leadership positions as well as in occupations traditionally dominated by males. Instead, research suggested that this persistent gender segregation may be due, in part, to stereotypes regarding what is and is not appropriate for men and women (i.e., gender stereotypes) (Heilman, 2012; Joslin, 2015; Mockler, 2015). In particular, gender biases are present in the perception that women, will be warmer but less competent, less dependable, and less committed. As a result of these evaluative gender biases, women are less likely to be selected for hiring and promotion, or to be given resources or funding for training and skill improvement,

which ultimately impedes their career progression (Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2004; Fiske, 2010; Heilman & Okimoto, 2008). Gender biases in the workplace are exacerbated when women become mothers as the motherhood role often activates a set of stereotypes specific to caregiving (Cuddy et al., 2004; King, 2008). In an indigenous study Haleem (2014) found women as shy, submissive, emotional and obedient while studying gender stereotypes. The contents of the Pakistani textbook showed highest percentage of stereotypes (regarding exclusion) gender and education policies in developing countries (Islam & Asadullah, 2018).

The stereotype content model (SCM) suggested that stereotypes do not involve singular feelings of hostility and prejudice, but rather involve mixed positive and negative emotions (Fiske, Cuddy, & Glick, 2007; Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002). The dimensions of competence and warmth are central to this model as it predicts that stereotypes often fall high on one dimension and low on the other. From a SCM perspective, working mothers can be perceived in one of two ways, as competent and cold (i.e., nontraditional; as a professional woman aiming to advance in the organization) and as incompetent and warm (i.e., traditional; occupying a caregiving role). These views elicit divergent feelings of envy and pity, respectively, with professional women regarded as competitors in the workplace and therefore objects of envy whilst caregivers are written off as harmless and in need of protection (Cuddy et al., 2004; Eckes, 2002; Fiske et al.,

2007). In combining predictions from social role theory and the SCM, it becomes evident that the way an employed woman is perceived largely depends on the social role(s) she occupies (e.g., married, mother) and whether she is deemed as traditional (i.e., a warm, communal caregiver) or nontraditional (i.e., a competitive and competent, yet cold and perhaps threatening). Single women were caught up in a strange dichotomy during this time. They had become more independent both financially and emotionally by being part of the workforce. They were gaining more acceptability by society as viable, contributing members. But all of this success was at the expense of 'the family' because they were taking away jobs from men who needed the work to support their wife and children (O'Brien, 1973). American culture has found it more acceptable for single women to be independent and have meaningful careers. But the underlying threat to men and the family is still part of the modern unmarried women stereotype. This is evidenced in the many films that portray single women as having very responsible careers, but who have some sort of break down (or eventually settle for something less than they really want) because they are not fulfilled (Faludi, 1991; Srivastava & Srivastava, 2010). However based upon all the set of evidences cited in the literature the present study was planned to study stereotypical perception about the married and unmarried working women in relation to the parent's education among university students.

Pakistan is a traditional patriarchal society where the status of a woman is still covered under the shadow of a man where men is the protector for her, and unmarried working women are considered as deviants against the socio-cultural norms. People having rural backgrounds may have low literacy rates also, which is vital for transfer of wisdom and objective perception regarding gender role norms and attitudes. In this instance parent's education plays an important role in the development of gender role attitudes and stereotypes, as Haleem (2014) revealed that there are stereotypes regarding women character and gender biasedness but change would come through education and awareness, this has provided the logical grounds to relate parent's education with the stereotypical perception of children. Although the literature specifically related to the current study is not available in bulk but the evidences (Islam & Asadullah, 2018; Marlene, Barbara, & Christiane, 2018) are clear that parents education is very significant for stereotypes development therefore, in order to understand role of parent's education who are the central figures in a family responsible for the upbringing of their children for future roles there was a felt need to consider this aspects for exploring stereotypes about married and unmarried older working women in the patriarchal, traditional cultural context of Pakistan.

Method

Objectives of the Study

- 1) The main objective of the present study was to explore the stereotypes about unmarried working women as compared to the married working women in relation to parent's education among university students.

Sample

In the present study a sample of 300 students 150 female with the age range of 20 to 27 years ($M = 21.50$, $SD = 3.23$) and 150 male with the age range of 20 to 32 years ($M = 22.60$, $SD = 3.10$) were selected to explore the stereotypes about the unmarried working women as compared to the married working women. Regarding the marital status of the participants 38 were married and 262 were unmarried. For determining the link of parents education with the perception of their children data was divided for fathers' education on stereotypes about married and unmarried working women and the sample of students was divided into two groups i.e., one, less educated (up to primary, $n = 116$) and the other is more educated (middle to metric $n = 184$). Similarly for determining the link of mother's education on stereotypes about married and unmarried working women, the sample of students was divided into two groups i.e., one, less educated (5 years, $n = 213$) of basic formal education and the other is more educated (6 to 10 years $n = 87$) of formal education.

Instrument

Positive and Negative Stereotypes Scale. This instrument was originally developed by (Ansari et, al., 1982) specifically to study stereotypes of women. Responses on each item are given weight according to its category i.e. (*very less*), 1 for (*less*), 2 (*average*), 3 (*high*), 4 and for (*very high*), 5. In the present study a list of 107 adjectives (e.g., sad, independent, confident etc.) consisted of 2 scales i.e., Positive Stereotypes Scale (PSSC) and Negative Stereotypes Scale (NSSC) developed by Ansari et al. (1982) and revised by Kalsoom and Kamal (2008) was used to explore the positive and negative stereotypes about the unmarried working women as compared to the married working women among university students. Positive stereotypes scale is a five point Likert type scale includes the 51 adjectives where as negative stereotypes scale is also a five point Likert type scale includes 56 adjectives. High scores indicate high stereotypes and low scores indicate low stereotypes.

Procedure

In this study the participants were approached individually to administer the two forms of the same instrument and demographic information sheet to get their opinion on the stereotypes scales about unmarried working women as compared to the married working women. These participants were university students selected from the different departments of Qaid-i-Azam,

University Islamabad. Verbal instructions were also given by the researcher in order to inform and brief about the administration of the instrument. They were also informed by the researcher that they should not interact with each other during the administration of the instrument. Because they can get influenced by their fellows so their own response could be influenced. They were informed that first they have to give some personal demographic information as well, then they have to rate and give their opinion on the response options given on the two forms of the same instrument about the married working women and unmarried working women respectively. Their written consent was also taken on a consent form. All the participants were also ensured about privacy and confidentiality of the information provided by them. The participants were acknowledged for their participation also.

Results

Alpha coefficients, independent sample t test was used to analyze data of university students on PSSC and NSSC about married and unmarried working women.

Table 1

Alpha coefficients for PSSC and NSSC for Married and Unmarried Working Women among Students(N= 300)

Variables	Items	Alpha	Alpha
		Coefficients (unmarried)	Coefficients (married)
Total	107	.88	.85
PSSC	51	.90	.90
NSSC	56	.92	.94

Note. PSSC= Positive Stereotypes Scale, NSSC= Negative Stereotypes Scale.

The results in Table 1 showed quite high alpha reliability estimates for positive and negative stereotypes scale on the data collected from university students for both PSSC and NSSC about married and unmarried working women. Which reveled satisfactory and sufficient proof of internal consistency and stability of scores on the measures used in the study.

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Table 2

Difference between Father's Education on Positive Stereotypes about married and unmarried working women among university students (N=300)

Variable	Father's Education				<i>t</i>	95% CI		Cohen's <i>d</i>
	Upto Primary(5 years <i>n</i> =116)		Middle and above (6-10 years <i>n</i> =184)			LL	UL	
Positive Stereotypes	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>				
Married working women	162.27	16.60	161.88	16.98	.19	3.53	4.31	0.02
Unmarried working women	158.32	12.30	159.96	13.38	1.06	4.66	1.38	-0.13

Note. PSSC= Positive Stereotypes Scale, *df*=298 **p*<, .05, ***p*< 0.01

The results in Table 2 indicates that there are non significant differences between the two groups of students whose father is less and more educated on PSSC about the married and unmarried working women. However, mean values are bit higher about positive stereotypes married working women from the group of students whose father is less educated (5 years of formal education) and more educated (6- 10 years of formal education). The effect size is very small.

Table 3

Difference between Father's Education on Negative Stereotypes about unmarried and married working women among university students (N=300)

Variable	Father's Education				t	95% CI			Cohen's d
	Upto Primary (n =116)		Middle and above (n =184)			LL	UL		
	M	SD	M	SD					
Negative Stereotypes									
Married working women	171.12	9.21	172.28	9.32	1.05	3.32	1.00	-0.13	
Unmarried working women	172.66	18.36	174.00	18.20	-.62	5.60	2.92	-0.07	

Note. NSSC = Negative Stereotypes Scale $df=298$ * $p<.05$, ** $p< 0.01$

The results in Table 3 indicates non significant differences on NSSC about the married and unmarried working women among the two groups of university students whose father is less (5 years of formal education) and more educated (6- 10 years of formal education). However, mean values are bit higher about the unmarried working women then married working women on negative stereotypes. The effect size is very small.

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Table 4

Difference between Mother's Education on Positive Stereotypes about married and unmarried working women among university students (N=300)

Variable	Mother's Education							
	Up to Primary (n =213)		Middle and above(n =87)		t	95% CI		Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD		LL	UL	
Positive Stereotypes								
Married working women	162.07	17.92	161.94	16.09	.06	4.34	4.08	0.01
Unmarried working women	160.31	13.53	158.93	12.76	.83	1.87	4.62	0.10

Note. PSSC= Positive Stereotypes Scale, *df*=298 **p*<, 0.05, ***p*< 0.01

The results in Table 4 indicates non significant differences between the two groups of university students in relation to their mother's education i.e., less (5 years of formal education) and more (6-10 years of formal education) on PSSC about the married and unmarried working women. The overall mean values indicates that participants scored slightly high on PSSC about the married working women as compared to the unmarried working women. The effects size is very small for unmarried working women.

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Table 5

Difference between Mother's Education on Negative Stereotypes about unmarried and married working women among university students (N=300)

Variable	Mother's Education							
	Upto Primary (n =213)		Middle &above (n =87)		t	95% CI		Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD		LL	UL	
Negative Stereotypes								
Married working women	172.21	9.47	171.67	9.21	.45	1.78	2.86	0.06
Unmarried working women	175.87	20.93	172.51	16.98	1.45	1.19	7.92	0.17

Note. NSSC = Negative Stereotypes Scale, $df=298$ * $p < .05$, ** $p < 0.01$

The results in Table 13 indicates non significant differences between the two groups of university students in relation to their mother's education i.e., less (5 years of formal education) and more (6-10 years of formal education) on NSSC about the married and unmarried working women. But the overall results shows that both the groups scored high on NSSC about the unmarried working women than the married working women. However the effect size is very small.

Discussion

In order to meet the requirements of the present study an indigenous instrument in Urdu language Positive Stereotypes Scale & Negative Stereotypes Scaled developed by (Ansari, 1982) and revised by (Kalsoom & Kamal, 2008) was used. Alpha reliability coefficients were determined separately on the data collected from students for studying stereotypes about married and unmarried working women for total scores and for two scales separately and the alpha coefficients were found quite high which is the sufficient and satisfactory prove of the internal consistency and stability of scores on the measure used in this study (see Table 1). The values of alpha reliability coefficients showed high internal consistency between the scores on the measure.

Parent's education plays an important role in the growth and development of a person. With reference to the present study it was also assume that father's education may have significant association regarding the perception of their children (university students) on stereotypes about married working women as compared to the unmarried working women in Pakistan. But this notion was not supported by the findings of the present study. The findings of independent t test showed a non significant difference between the two groups of students i.e., group one whose fathers are less educated and group two whose fathers are more educated regarding the perception of positive stereotypes about married working women as compared to the unmarried working women.

However, mean values indicated that the students from both groups scored slightly higher on positive stereotypes about married working women as compared to the unmarried working women (see Table 2), Which has reflected that married working women were perceived more positively than unmarried working women. More over similar findings were also observed on the perception of negative stereotypes among the two groups of students about married and unmarried working women (see Table 3), however mean values showed slightly higher negative perception about the unmarried working women than married working women. Although these findings are not in accordance with the previous studies (Eagly & Wood, 2012; DePaulo, Hertel, & Taylor, 2008). But these findings might be explained in the lens of cultural backgrounds of Pakistani society where working women in general are not viewed positively due to the patriarchal norms and traditional mindset of the society. We as member of the society are trained with the traditional gender role ideology since childhood from home, school, and workplace through all the social institutions. Although the findings of this study has rejected the link of parents education on the stereotypes perception of students about married than unmarried working women. But non significant results also indicated the similar kind of attitudes towards the both married and unmarried working women which itself reflects the gender biases in general and around working women also who are consider as deviant by many people (Heilman, 2012; Joslin, 2015;

Mockler, 2015) which is pertinent in Asian cultures especially in Pakistan.

Mothers are considered as major institution for the growth and development of a person. An educated mother is thought to be a backbone for any nation's development. Considering that notion in mind the results of the present study were analyzed with reference to the stereotypes about the unmarried working women as compared to the married working women in relation to the mother's education of university students. But the findings of the present study showed non significant difference between the two groups of students i.e., one whose mothers are less educated and second whose mothers are more educated on positive stereotypes about married working women as compared to the unmarried working women (see Table 4). Mean values indicated the same pattern in which students scored relatively higher on positive stereotypes about the married working women as compared to the unmarried working women. On the other hand results of independent sample t-test also revealed the similar pattern of non significant findings on the perception of negative stereotypes among the two groups of students about married as compared to the unmarried working women (see Table 5). However mean values suggested similar pattern that unmarried working women were perceived more negatively than the married working women by both groups of students. These findings may be in accordance with (Jordan & Zitek, 2012) who has studied women hood as target

of stereotypes in general except marital status, and married women with children are viewed under motherhood stereotypes than unmarried working women. The explanation for these non significant difference might be the nonequivalent groups used for comparison as the number of participants for both groups were not equal. And secondly the difference between the level of education was also very nominal from primary to metric level of education was considered for comparisons in two groups. So there was a minimum gap between these two groups and higher level of education might indicate significant change in the direction of the results like metric level to masters' level of education. But other than that the obvious reason in a patriarchal society like Pakistan might be that mothers are also followers of that mind set where male domination is prevalent and men are considered all and all whether it is education, choice of living and decision making in general so mothers might have that traditional attitude which is transferred and transformed into their children's attitude as well through their training and upbringings as endorsed by the findings of the study conducted by (Islam & Asadullah, 2018; Srivastava & Srivastava, 2010).

Another very important explanation might be that most of the parents in Pakistani society think that they should do marriages of their daughter as soon as possible because they think the only safe and secure place for her daughter is her own home which is her husband's house (traditional gender role norms), and most of the

time marriage is encouraged as compared to the higher education and professional life of a women. And there are few professions which are considered safe (Alvai, 1991), so it is not acceptable for them to perceive women as independent, confident and empowered. Overall to conclude the findings of the present study revealed non significant differences on the perception of positive and negative stereotypes measures among the two groups of university students while considering the parents education.

Conclusion

Overall to conclude, the findings of the present study revealed non significant differences on the perception of positive and negative stereotypes measures among the two groups of university students while considering the parents education. But the higher mean scores on the stereotypes measures might be due to the existing biased attitude toward the working women in general in the traditional society where patriarchal norms are deep rooted.

Limitations and Suggestions

- 1) Based upon the findings of the present study it is suggested that instead cross sectional studies longitudinal researches should be conducted in order to see the impact of education in relation to stereotypes of unmarried and married working women.

- 2) Secondly longitudinal studies may provide more in-depth understanding regarding the relation/impact of education on stereotypes and gender.
- 3) We may infer insight drawn from the findings of the present study on the policy intervention regarding gender, gender role socialization, status and power.
- 4) Both genders unmarried working men with unmarried working women and married working men with married working women should be focused to make more valid and comprehensive comparisons in futures.

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