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## Moderating Gender in the Association of Islamic Lifestyle and Marital Adjustment among Secondary School Teachers

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### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** The aim of the present study is to investigate the moderating role of gender in relationship of Islamic lifestyle and marital adjustment among secondary school teachers in city of Birjand, Iran. **Method:** The present research is a correlative study and the sample size was determined through stratified random sampling in which 300 teachers in Birjand (150 males and 150 females) were selected. Locke-Wallace marital adjustment test and Kaviani lifestyle questionnaire short form are used in the present study. Then descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation and inferential statistics, Pearson's correlation coefficient test, Fisher's z-test and ANOVA were used. **Results:** The mean of Islamic lifestyle is different in men and women, but there is no significant difference in marital adjustment in two groups. The coefficient of correlation between lifestyle and marital adjustment is significant in men but is not significant in women. **Conclusion:** The results of the present research indicate that lifestyle and marital adjustment is higher in men than women. In addition, gender does not play a significant role in this regard.

**Keywords** Lifestyle; Marital Adjustment; Gender Differences.

### INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, still the family as the most foundational pillars of society is considered by experts who are involved in education and training. World Health Organization has introduced family as the basic social factor in increasing the health and well-being (Campbell, 2003). Also one of the aspects of adjustment in human life is marriage in a way that the satisfied and successful marriage requires a stable level of the compatibility among couples (Tirgari, Asgharnezhad, Bayanzadeh, & Abedin, 2006). Marital adjustment can be considered as the family system or even a part of the forces of life and reviving the family.

Rani (2013) believes that the marital status as a condition in which there are a general sense of happiness, marital satisfaction and being together that cause the development of couples in a variety aspects of life and reinforce the reciprocal perception from each other. So when the wife and husband try together to achieve harmony and balance in different areas of marital life, the adjustment is resulted. Therefore, marital adjustment is a dynamic process which may be evaluated at each point of time on a continuum from fully compati-

ble to incompatible. Thus, the marital adjustment is a multidimensional concept which has more objective characteristics than marital satisfaction (Broman, 2005). Adjustment in marital relations affects on the various aspects of the life quality including mental health of the couple, life satisfaction, job satisfaction, income, the rate of educational success and even longevity (Santtila, et al., 2007).

Since the two institutions of religion and family emphasize on similar values, researchers predict a close relationship between these two dimensions. This orientation has led to the attitude that religion can reinforce and strengthen marital relations. The religious attitude can affect the marital relations, because religion includes guidelines for life and provides a system of beliefs and values which these attributes can affect marital life (Hünler & Gençöz, 2005). Additionally, it seems that each religion provides a lifestyle for humans and claims the optimal society and healthy life are achieved by following the lifestyle (Toolabi, Samadi, & Motaharinezhad, 2013). Islam as a religion is not exemption for giving particular lifestyle. There is a promise between man and God, which respecting and observing it opens the spiritual doors and leads the human being to the modern and Islamic lifestyle in order to direct him to the happiness in the worldly and the Hereafter lives (Rajabnezhad, Haji, Mahdavi Talab, & Rajabnezhad, 2012).

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Islamic lifestyle is different from other life styles. In sociology, management, medical sciences and clinical psychology, etc, we talk about lifestyle, but in the fields only specific behaviors are studied and direct connections are established with cognitions and emotions; but since Islamic lifestyle is Islamic must be associated with emotions and cognitions. Therefore, if we wish any behavior to have Islamic basis must be supported by a minimum of Islamic knowledge and emotions. The indentations cannot be ignored based on Islamic lifestyle; like prayers that it not be supported by believing in God and the resurrection cannot be considered as Islamic behavior (M Kaviani, 2011). Generally, religion has a set of rules, values and behavioral norms, rituals and ceremonies, and it is claimed that it suggests the best lifestyle to the individuals and the society. Religion can influence on individual's creativity and makes him/her able or disable in confronting the genetic and environmental limits (Kajbaf, Sajadian, Kaviani, & Anvari, 2013). To have a good lifestyle, two kinds of orientation are needed: first one is Dos and don'ts accepted in the life and the second one is the ways of implementation and making it objectivity. The first orientation is often moral and is based on values and the second orientation is based on the practical value of these components and both cases are seen in the Islamic life style. Islamic lifestyle is made up of ten indicators that the absence of each of them makes Islamic lifestyle incomplete. The boundary of each of these indicators can be identified and of course the presence of all of them together gives a result higher than the simple sum of them (Shariati, 2013). The most innovation of Islamic lifestyle is that it has been provided based on Islamic teachings (doctrine) and the universality of Islam. Islamic lifestyle relates to people's lives and all aspects of it (Kajbaf, et al., 2013).

The results of a research on Turkish couples by Hünler and Gençöz (2005) show that religiousness has an important influence on marital satisfaction, but the couples' religiousness has not influential impact on problem solving among couples. McNulty and colleagues (2004) showed that the religion significantly influences on adjustment and can be used in clinical and counseling practices. Rezaei (2010) in a research found that training the Islamic lifestyle has significant impact on commitment and intimacy of couples. Further, the results of a research by Kajbaf and colleagues (2013) indicate that Islamic lifestyle has a positive relationship with happiness and life satisfaction.

Moreover, gender differences are highly considered among numerous studies. Indeed, gender differences are one of the important and disputable factors in various fields. Although religious texts speak about the equality of men and women in cases, the gender differences are obvious in these texts. Jawaheri kamel and colleague (2010) found that the interactive proportion of two variables of gender and attachment style on marital satisfaction is not significant, that is, marital

satisfaction rooted in the attachment style of couples does not depend on man and woman and gender difference does not any critical effect on this issue and vice versa. Hamidi (2007) found a significant difference between the marital satisfactions among students based on gender. In this regard, the results of a research by Shakeian (2012) on the impact of gender on marital adjustment show that women compared to men enjoy further marital adjustment. Naserkhaki and colleagues (2011) found that there is a significant relationship between the quality of life with gender and occupational status.

Life with low conflict is possible in the light of paying attention to spiritual issues and nurturing religious beliefs. Values give meaning to life and are considered as a shelter in the most critical conditions such as sorrow, grief and mourning. Religious belief is an infrastructure for forming Islamic lifestyle. This causes Muslims to have a special responsibility and role in training spirituality in self and his/her relatives. On the basis of religious teachings, a life is good and desirable in which spirituality grows and that life has a divine color (Khatib, 2011).

Considering the importance of adjustment in marital life for improving mental health among couples as well as society, the necessity of doing some actions for development of marital and family relations, particularly increasing the level of marital adjustment among couples are proposed; but for realization of this issue, first we should obtain some information about this structure and identify its effective factors in order to be able to do appropriate actions to create, protect and increase it in couples. Since lifestyle and gender are considered important factors in marital adjustment, therefore, in the present research, the moderating role of gender in relationship of Islamic lifestyle and marital adjustment among Iranian secondary school teachers has been investigated.

## METHOD

The present research is of the correlative researches and the statistical population consists of all secondary school teachers in Birjand in school year 2012-2013 that a sample size including 300 teachers (150 males and 150 females) was selected through stratified random sampling. To analyze data, descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution table, mean, standard deviation and inferential statistics, Pearson's correlation coefficient test, Fisher's z-test and ANOVA were utilized.

## RESEARCH TOOLS

1- Islamic lifestyle test (ILST): this test has been made by Kaviani (2009). It has two long and short forms including 135 questions and 76 questions, respectively. In this study, the short form was used. Its validity in relation to religious orientation has been reported 0.64 (M Kaviani, 2011). The questionnaire measures 10 as-

pects including social, worship, beliefs, moral, financial, family, health, knowledge and thought, security and timing components. In the present study, reliability was obtained as 0.87 by Cronbach's alpha method.

2- Locke-Wallace marital adjustment test (LWMAT): it is a short self-report questionnaire designed to measure the quality of marriage reaction and is the most common tool of measurement used in the field (Harrison & Westhuis, 1989).The test contains 15 items ranged from 2 to 158. Low scores show incompatibility and high scores show adjustment, and scores below 100 indicate stress in marital relations (Sanaei Zakir, 2008).This test was translated by (Mazaheri, 2000) and was applied on a sample of Iranian couples; he reported the reliability and validity of this test by split-half method as higher than 90 (Mazaheri, 2000)In the pre-

sent study, reliability of this scale was obtained 0.70 by Cronbach's alpha.

In terms of demographic characteristics, 50% (n=150) of the sample were female and 50% (n=150) were male. In terms of education, the highest frequency is for individual with Bachelor's degree with 62.3% (n=187) and the lowest frequency is for individuals with diploma degree with 3.7% (n=11. In terms of age, the highest frequency is for individual between 20 to 30 years old with 45.7% (n=137) and the lowest frequency is for individuals over 50 years old with 1.3% (n=4). In this study, according to the literature, the relationship between Islamic lifestyle and marital adjustment has been studied by considering the moderating role of gender. The descriptive findings Islamic lifestyle and marital adjustment are presented in table 1 separately according to gender.

**Table 1. Descriptive Results of the Research Sub-Scales**

Statistical indicators of the group		No.	Average	Standard deviation
Women	Islamic lifestyle	150	236.80	22.84
	Marital adjustment	150	108.68	21.60
Men	Islamic lifestyle	150	228.80	23.60
	Marital adjustment	150	106.76	21.60

Since, the analysis criterion is group differences, so the differences in research variables between two groups are reported in table 2.

**Table 2 . Comparison of Means in Two Groups of Men and Women**

Statistical parameters of variables	Mean for women	Mean for men	Difference of means	t-value	Degree of freedom	Significance level
Islamic lifestyle	236.80	228.80	7.99	2.98	298	0.003
Marital adjustment	108.68	106.76	1.92	0.81	298	0.414

As the results in Table (2) Show, Since the t-value obtained for Islamic lifestyle (2.98) with 298 degrees of freedom is more than the t-value of the table and also the significance level of this test is 0.003 and is lower than the significance level of 0.05, therefore it may be said with 95% confidence that the means for Islamic lifestyle in men and women are different; but in the

case of marital adjustment, there is not a significant difference between the two groups. In order to test this hypothesis that is the correlation between Islamic lifestyle and marital adjustment in men and women different or not, Pearson correlation coefficient and Fisher's z-test were used.

**Table 3.Comparison of Correlation in Groups of Women and Men**

Statistical parameters of variables	r	p	z	p
Women	0.15	0.09	2.02	0.04
Men	0.31	0.001		0

As the results in Table (3) show the correlation coefficient between the Islamic lifestyle and marital adjust-

ment is significant in men, but is not significant in women. Therefore, we can say that by increasing Is-

Islamic lifestyle in men, the level of marital adjustment is increased. Fisher's z-test result also confirms the difference in the relationship. To investigate the moderating role of gender in relationship of Islamic lifestyle and

marital adjustment, ANOVA test was used. Thus, the Islamic lifestyle was divided into two high and low components and their inter active effects with gender on the level of marital adjustment were examined.

**Table 4. Test for Moderating Role of Gender**

Statistical parameters of variables	Sum of between-group squares	Degrees of freedom between groups	Mean of between-group squares	F-value	Significance level	Size effect
Islamic lifestyle	3300.68	1	3300.68	8.09	0.005	0.04
Gender	99.19	1	99.19	0.24	0.62	0.001
Islamic lifestyle* Gender	255.21	1	255.21	0.62	0.42	0.002

As the results in Table (4) shows, since the obtained F-values for interactive effect of the gender and marital adjustment are smaller than F-value of the table and also the significance level of the tests are higher than 0.05, therefore, with 95% confidence we can say that the moderating role of gender in relationship of Islamic lifestyle and marital adjustment is rejected.

#### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The present study was done aiming at determining the moderating role of the gender in relationship of Islamic lifestyle and marital adjustment among secondary school teachers in city of Birjand. The lifestyle of individuals is related to their physical, mental and spiritual conditions. Religious behaviors have positive values in the meaningfulness of life. Behaviors such as trust in God and pilgrimage can cause individual's internal and spiritual relaxation through creating hope and encouragement towards positive attitudes (Eyvazi, 2011).

The first finding of this study showed that the mean of Islamic lifestyle is different in men and women, which this finding is congruent with the result found by Rezaei and colleagues (2013) who showed that there is a significant difference between the means of marital satisfaction and lifestyle in the two groups of retired and non-retired men and women; But in the case of marital adjustment there was no significant difference between the two groups, which this finding is not compatible with the results of the research conducted by Rahimi and colleagues (2014), who found that there is a significant difference between marital adjustment in men and women.

The second finding of the present study shows that the correlation between lifestyle and marital adjustment is significant in men but not in women. Therefore, we can say that by increasing Islamic lifestyle in men, the level of marital adjustment increases but this is not the case in women. This finding is compatible with other results (Hünler & Gençöz, 2005; McNulty, et al., 2004; Mullins & al, 2001) who indicated that Islamic lifestyle has a significant relationship with marital adjustment and

happiness of the spouses. The lack of significant relationship between Islamic lifestyle and marital adjustment among women may be due to this reason that marital adjustment of women, rather than being depended on their gender role, depends on the gender role of their spouses.

It can be said that Islamic lifestyle is of factors which have significant role in marital adjustment. This subject is also confirmed based on the religious teachings, because life is sweet and relaxing when the individual does not forget God and His remembrance and the affluences He has bestowed him/her and always seeks the Divine satisfaction (Majlesi, 1978). In such lives, because of the righteous actions of wife and husband, God makes them happy with his compassion (Holy Quran, Nahl: 97). The wife and husband and who are looking for good and full of affection relations should correct their relations with God. If they do so, God corrects their relations the more the wife and husband worship God, the more the anger of God goes away from them and the more they will provide the happiness of the world and Hereafter (Moslehi, 2012). Overall, we can say that Islamic lifestyle is one of the most important factors which are effective in commitment of couples to the relation and stability of the family and results in marital adjustment. Couple's Islamic lifestyle helps to consider the marriage and the formation of family as a holy and divine fact and more commit to the continuity of marriage and protection of family. If religious teachings can be internalized effectively in the individuals' beliefs and be reinforced by some mediators such as performing religious tasks and participation in the religious and social rituals can consolidate the marital links and promote marital adjustment and marital satisfaction.

The final finding of the research shows that the gender does not have moderating role in relationship between lifestyle and marital adjustment; that is, there is no significant difference in marital adjustment between male and female participants in terms of Islamic lifestyle. This finding is compatible with the results of pre-

vious studies (Jawaheri Kamel, et al., 2010; Wanic & Kulik, 2011), but is not compatible and congruent with other findings (Hamidi, 2007; Naser Khaki, et al., 2011; Shakeian, 2012) who showed that the gender does not have a significant effect on marital adjustment and satisfaction. A few studies have been done in Iran on this subject; however, we can state that according to valuable beliefs of our society on commitment and loyalty to family, Islamic lifestyle, regardless of the gender, has been internalized in the culture of Iranian people and the men and women know themselves bound to observe moral and religious commitments.

The most important limitation of the present research was that there is the possibility that individuals have not expressed their internal intentions precisely or may have tried to show that they are more religious than what they are. Being self-reported the used tools and also the temporariness of the studied variables are of the other restrictions of the present research that made attention to these restrictions necessary. According to findings of the research, it is suggested that the family therapists and advisors try to increase the commitment and marital adjustment in couples by training, promoting and propagating Islamic lifestyle to them.

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