

General Health and Life Satisfaction of Students in Polygamy and Monogamy Families

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Present study aimed at investigating and comparing general health and life satisfaction of students in polygamy and monogamy families. The sample size of this research consist of 128 students (32 male and 32 female from polygamy families and 32 male and 32 female from monogamy families) were selected at random. To collect the data General Health Questionnaire and Life Satisfaction Scale of Students were applied. The results of the present study showed that there was negative significant correlation between physical symptoms, anxiety, social dysfunction and depression sub-scales and total scores of GHQ and life satisfaction, and also the results of the ANOVA indicated that there was not any significant difference between the mean scores of four groups on general health scale and sub-scales. The results did not emerge significant difference between four groups on life satisfaction scale. But results indicated a significance difference between male and female students on physical symptoms, anxiety, depression and total scores of GHQ. The female students scored significantly higher than male students, but there was not any significant difference between two groups of gender on social dysfunction sub-scale scores and life satisfaction scale.

Keywords: General Health, Life Satisfaction, Polygamy and Monogamy families.

Islamic culture gives permission to adults to have remarriage, but children are reared to love and trust only their natural parents. "Polygamy represents expanded family structures that are based on marriages involving a husband with two or more wives. Interestingly, polygamy is legally and widely practiced in 850 societies across the globe. In the last two decades, polygamy has been the focus of a significant growth in public, political, and academic awareness. Tulisalo and Aro (2000) examined the paternal remarriage as a modifier of proneness to depression in young adulthood, and results illustrated that poor atmosphere at home at 16 years and father's remarriage (but not mother's) in childhood were associated with subsequent depression. Girls, whose father had not remarried, but boys whose father had remarried, were more depressed than others. When polygamy is the accepted practice in a particular social milieu,

it does not have a deleterious psychological effect on adolescents. The lack of parental involvement was found to place children at risk for developmental disorders (Farber & Egeland, 1987), and the most damaging form of maltreatment is psychological unavailability (Egeland, Sroufe, & Erickson, 1983). The large sizes of polygamous families also tend to reduce the amounts of support and parental interaction received by the children, especially from the fathers. Absence of family support and warmth plays a risk factor in the development of childhood stress (Garnezy, 1983). The association between polygamy and child abuse also appears to spill over to related indices of educational adjustment. Eapen, Al-Gazali, Bin-Othman, & Abou-Saleh (1998), Kampambwe (1980), and Owuamanam (1984) obtained similar findings for polygamous families. In a study Cherian (1994) argued that the level of conflict, hostility

and aggression in polygamy families is higher than monogamy families.

There exists some evidence that mental health has relationship with life satisfaction for example, Viren et al. (2007) examined the associations between life satisfaction, loneliness, general health and depression. Sam (2001) examined self reported satisfaction with life. The students reported on the whole good satisfaction with life. However students from Europe and North America were on the whole more satisfied than their peers from Africa and Asia. It was also found that factors such as the number of friends, satisfaction with finances, perceived discrimination and information received prior to the foreign, sojourn significantly affected the student's life satisfaction. Kenneth et al. (2004) investigated coping resources (Coping Resources Inventory for Stress), perceived stress (Perceived Stress Scale), and life satisfaction (Satisfaction with Life Scale) among American and Turkish university students.

Results support the use of transactional stress constructs in studying life satisfaction with students in both countries. American and Turkish students did not differ significantly in regard to perceived stress, life satisfaction, or an overall measure of coping resources; however, they did differ significantly regarding specific coping resources. There were significant sex differences for both countries, generally favoring males, in regard to specific coping resources.

Researches around the world have shown that polygamy (remarriage of father) has complex effects on children psychological statues and their well-being, and this issue is obviously more complex in traditional culture of Sistan and Baluchestan region, so the present study aimed at investigating and comparing the general health and life satisfaction of students in polygamy and monogamy families.

Objectives:

1. To find out the relationship between general health and its sub-scales and life satisfaction
2. To find out the significant difference between the mean scores of students in polygamy family and monogamy family on general health
3. To find out the significant difference between the mean scores of students in polygamy family and monogamy family on life satisfaction?

Method

Sample:

The sample size of this research consist of 128 students (32 male and 32 female students from polygamy family and 32 male and 32 female students from monogamy family) were selected at random from University of Sistan and Baluchestan.

Tools:

General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-28): It was developed by Goldberg (1972) with 28 questions. It consists of four dimensions of minor problems except severe depressive symptoms, anxiety, social dysfunction, and depression, in that research Alfa coefficient of physical symptoms was 0.67, anxiety: 0.71, social dysfunction: 0.59 and depressions: 0.75.

Life Satisfaction Scale: This scale was developed by Huebner (1994) in order to identity students' life satisfaction. The findings suggest that the reliabilities all range from .70s to low .90s; thus they are acceptable for research purposes. Test-retest coefficients for two- and four-week time periods have also been reported (Huebner, 1997) falling mostly in the .70 - .90 range, providing further support for the reliability of the scale. In a study Tamini and Mohammadyfar (2009) showed that Cronbach's Alpha was 0.7577.

Results and Discussion

Table-1 Pearson correlation between life satisfaction and mental health (n=128)

Variable	Physical symptoms	Anxiety	Social dysfunction	Depression	Total GHQ
Life satisfaction	-.461**	-.426**	-.469**	-.386**	-.520**

** p< 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 1 shows that there is a significant negative correlation between the scores of life satisfaction and GH, and its sub-scales (physical symptoms, anxiety, social dysfunction, depression and total GHQ). To compare the mean scores of general health and its subscales of polygamy and monogamy family students one Way ANOVA test was applied. Results indicated that there is no significant difference among the mean scores of four groups on physical symptoms (F=0.175, p>0.05), anxiety (F=0.209, p>0.05), social dysfunction (F=0.7, p>0.05), depression (F=0.105, P>0.05) and total scores of mental health (F=0.143, p>0.05). To compare the mean scores of life satisfaction of polygamy and monogamy family students One Way ANOVA was applied, and the results did not emerge any significant difference among four groups on life satisfaction scale (F=0.104, p>0.05). To compare the mean scores of gender t-test was applied and the results of table-2 show that there is a significant difference between two groups of gender on the mean scores of physical symptoms, anxiety, depression and total scores of mental health

Table 2. Mean, SD and t value of gender on physical symptoms, anxiety, social dysfunction, depression and mental health

Gender	Mean	SD	t value
Male	54,531	3.77	-2.19*
Female	71,563	4.92	
Male	56,719	4.41	-2.10*
Female	72,969	4.33	
Male	83,750	3.96	-0.624
Female	87,656	3.05	
Male	45,313	5.54	-2.34*
Female	69,688	6.20	

*p<0.05

To compare the mean scores of two groups of gender t-test was applied and the results of table-3 show that there is not any significant difference between two groups on life satisfaction scores.

Table 3. Mean, SD and t value of gender on life satisfaction

Gender	Mean	S.D	t value
Male	2.35	4.25	1.236*
Female	2.43	3.42	

*p>0.05

Discussion

In response to the first question Pearson correlation was applied and the results showed that mental health and its sub-scales had negative significant correlation with life satisfaction. The results are in conformity with Viren et al. (2007). It seems that there is a strong negative relationship between mental health and life satisfaction of students i.e. if the scores of mental health of students increase, the life satisfaction level will decrease vice versa if mental health scores of students decrease their life satisfaction level would increase.

To response to the second and third question One Way ANOVA was applied and the results did not emerge significant difference between four groups of students. The results are in conformity with Tulisalo and Aro (2000). In a Islamic and traditional culture like Baluchestan (Iran), polygamy has been accepted and in many families this type of marriage is exist and family members especially first wife and children can easily cope with the results of remarriage syndrome, so the mental health and life satisfaction of children of these families is not different from common family children because might they

have adjusted with this type of life style.

In response to fourth and fifth question of research t-test was applied and the results showed that women students exhibited poor mental health than men students and there was no significant difference between two groups on life satisfaction scores. The indigenous culture of Baluchestan emphasize that women should be passive and it prefers that men should be active and take the responsibilities in life so they feel more capable than women and also men catharsis their feelings and emotions but there is no permission for women, the mentioned causes can justify the differences between two groups of gender.

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