

Original Article

MARITAL ADJUSTMENT AMONG EARLY, AGE-APPROPRIATE ARRANGED AND LOVE-MATCHED MARRIAGE, MOTTA, NORTH WEST ETHIOPIA

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Received: 23 July 2014, Revised and Accepted: 28 August 2014

ABSTRACT

This study was attempted to compare marital adjustment of early, age-appropriate arranged and love-matched married individuals. Two hundred ten married individuals were selected through purposive sampling technique. The findings showed that there was statistically significant marital adjustment difference among early, age-appropriate arranged and love-matched married individuals. Similarly, statistically significant differences were found among the three study groups on the four dimensions of marital adjustment (consensus, satisfaction, cohesion, affection expression). Concerning sex difference in marital adjustment, early married males had significantly higher marital adjustment than their counter females. Besides, early married males were significantly higher than females only on satisfaction and affection expression dimensions. Moreover, age-appropriate arranged married males were significantly higher only on affection expression dimension than female counter parts. Most importantly, marital adjustment was positively and significantly related to age at marriage but negatively and insignificantly related to the length of marriage and the number of children.

Keywords: Marital adjustment; early marriage; age-appropriate arranged marriage; love-matched marriage; consensus, satisfaction, cohesion, affection expression

INTRODUCTION

It is obvious that most human beings get in to marriage at some point in life, which is a developmental milestone in the life of individuals (Kurdek, 1991) and the most highly valued forms of human association (Bowman & Spanier, 1978). Most couples that marry are filled up with expectations; some of the expectations are realistic while others are unrealistic (Dinna, 2005). For Dinna happiness, satisfaction and fulfillment of expectations are possible only by mutual adjustment that leads to common concept of marriage.

Individuals may get married through different marriage arrangements. For instance when we take the individuals' age at marriage, there are children and/or adolescents married before the marriageable age (18 years for Ethiopians) called early married and there are also individuals who married after the marriageable age through parents/elders arrangement or through self-choice based on love. All of these marriage practices are present in Gojjam culture specifically at Motta Administrative Town. In the previous time arranged marriages including early and age-appropriate arranged marriages were dominantly practiced in the Town, but these days it seems that the freedom to make choices about relationship and marriage left to individuals. This indicates marriage is changed from institutional marriage (being largely economic or entailing the provision of basic domestic services) to companionship (intimacy, sexual gratification, shared friends and interests) (Giddens, 1992).

Research conducted by Mehandiratta et al. (2007) and O'Neil (1976) indicated that physical, social and psychological readiness and maturity are very important in marital relationship. But early marriage is practiced violating this fact before the marriageable age of individuals with or without the full consent of spouses. As a result, couples who married as adolescents have had less experience in developing mutuality and social cognitive skills required to maintain a stable and satisfied union than couples who marry as adults (Teti et al., as cited in Vue, 2000). Pathfinder International (2006) and Vue (2000) also added that early married couples face financial hardships, communication problems, problems in sexual adjustments and transitioning in to parenthood because couples marry before they have a chance to

strengthen their relationships with each other, which is the cause for marital distress and dissatisfaction. On the other hand, Boykin (2004) researched out the presence of successful early married individuals in spite of different problems they faced in their life. With this regard, many local researchers (for example Amsalu, 2007; Belay, 2008; Gage, 2007; Yishak, Workneh, & Asham, 2009) have tried to identify the causes and consequences (physical, economical and social) of marriage at early age. However, the influence of marriage arrangements on marital adjustments was left unexplored locally.

Many individuals get married through parents' or community elders' arrangement after they reach at marriageable age which is called age-appropriate arranged marriage. In this marriage the families of both spouses take the leading role in arranging the marriage, but the choice whether or not to accept the arrangement remains with the young people (Dinna, 2005). Age-appropriate arranged marriages are based on the principle that parents or elders have the wisdom to select the appropriate spouse for the individual. In order to select the spouse, parents or elders are more likely to base their decision on non-romantic criteria (like economic, political and social status) in which love, affection, and respect are relatively unimportant before marriage but assumed to develop after the wedding through years (Bowman & Spanier, 1978).

The world, in general appears to be moving toward the freedom of choice in marriage which is known as love-matched marriage. In this marriage the selection of a partner is based on love, friendship, compatibility and interpersonal attractions (Lee & Stone, 1980) rather than focus on non-romantic criteria of the extended family members. In this practice, the partners (the husband and the wife) attracted, loved, knew each other and then get in to marriage rather than considering the political, social, and economic backgrounds of the couple. Implies love precedes and determines marriage and less emphasis is given to the socio-economic aspects of the match. This is why spouses in love-matched marriage have more satisfaction and marital adjustment than spouses of arranged marriages (Boykin, 2004; Dinna, 2005; Lev-Wiesel and Al-Krenawi, 1999). On the contrary, traditionalists argue that love-

matched married partners involved in a very intense romantic love before marriage and used it as sole criteria to become a partnership disregarding the other aspects of their relationship; as a result, after marriage the many responsibilities of marriage down grade the couples' love and make them martially poor adjusted than their counterparts in arranged marriages (Xioache & Whyte, 1990).

Whatever the type of marriage arrangements (early, age-appropriate arranged, or love-matched), the successes of marriage is determined by the interaction between the two partners over the time span of their marriage. Researchers Parouty, Markowski, and Barners (2000) demonstrated that the ultimate measurement of successful marriage is the degree of adjustment achieved by the individuals in their marriage roles and interaction of one another. Martial adjustment is the collective outcome of the degree of consensus on matters of importance in martial functioning, marital satisfaction, marital cohesion, and expression of affection and love (Spanier and Cole as cited in Corsini and Ozaki, 1984).

Having all these things in mind, the present researchers tried to explore previous researches conducted in relation to the marital adjustment of early, age-appropriate arranged and love-matched marriage arrangements, was found to be none in Ethiopian context as far as the knowledge of the present researchers concerned. In fact some researchers (e.g. Amsalu, 2007; Belay, 2008; Gage, 2007; Yishak et al., 2009) have conducted research on the causes and consequences of early marriage; Birhan (2006) has investigated the relationship of communication and marital satisfaction; and Tsehay (2006) has examined the relationship of children and marital satisfaction. Hence, none of these studies have shown the marital adjustment of the three marriage arrangements specifically in comparative form. Therefore, the lack of well documented information and the presence of controversies and inconsistencies in the literature initiate the present researchers to investigate the martial adjustment of early, age-appropriate arranged and love-matched married individuals. To this end, attempts were made to address the following basic questions.

- What are the general patterns of marital adjustment among participants?
- Is there a significant difference in marital adjustment among early, age appropriate-arranged and love-match married persons?

- Is there a significant difference in the dimensions of marital adjustment among the three groups?
- Is there a significant relationship between marital adjustment and sex, age at the present marriage, duration of the present marriage, and the number of children in the present marriage among all participants?
- Do males significantly differ from females in their marital adjustment in each group?
- Do males significantly differ from females with specific reference to the dimensions of marital adjustment in each group?

METHODS

Participants

Two hundred ten married individuals (105 males and 105 females) was selected using purposive sampling technique from Motta administrative town-Amhara regional state. Participants comprised of 70 early married; 70 age-appropriate arranged married; and the rest 70 love-matched married individuals. The mean age of the participants was 31, ranging from 18 to 48 years old. The minimum and maximum age of the participants engaged in the present marriage range from nine to 40 respectively and they stayed three to 18 years in their marriage.

As mentioned before, all participants of early marriage were married before they reached 18 years old. So, their minimum and maximum age at the present marriage were found under this age. As Table 1, number 1 showed below, the minimum age of early married male and female participants were 13 and 9 years respectively at the time of marriage with the present partner. Unfortunately, the maximum age of male and female participants at marriage were the same i.e. 17 years old. On the other hand, all age appropriate-arranged and love-matched married individuals were married at 18 years or above. The minimum age at marriage for both male and female appropriate arranged married participants were 18 years old at the present marriage while the maximum age at marriage were 40 for males and 36 for females. The same table revealed that 20 and 18 years at marriage were the minimum age for male and female love-matched married participants respectively. In the same group, the maximum ages at marriage were 37 for males and 28 for females.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

N _i Variables		Marriage Arrangements						
		Early marriage		Age appropriate-arranged marriage		Love-matched marriage		
		Male (N=35)	Female (N=35)	Male (N=35)	Female (N=35)	Male (N=35)	Female (N=35)	
1	Age of engagement in the present marriage	Minimum	13	9	18	18	20	18
		Maximur	17	17	40	36	37	28
		M	16.31	14.57	25.29	21.23	25.66	21.17
		SD	1.05	1.88	5.46	3.61	4.47	2.77
2	Duration of the present marriage	Minimum	4	4	3	3	3	3
		Maximur	18	18	18	18	18	18
		M	12.14	13.31	9.74	10.37	7.37	8.20
		SD	4.45	3.63	4.75	4.65	4.14	4.95
3	Present age	Minimum	20	18	24	24	24	22
		Maximur	35	34	47	43	48	40
		M	29.60	26.66	35.66	30.97	33.86	28.54
		SD	4.07	4.65	6.27	4.85	6.85	5.07

Concerning the mean age of participants at the time of marriage with the present partner, male and female early married participants had 16.31 and 14.57 respectively while 25.29 for males and 21.23 for females were the mean age of age appropriate-arranged married participants at marriage. The rest 25.66 and 21.17 were the mean age of male and female love-matched married individuals respectively. That is, male participants in all the three marriage arrangements had higher mean age at the time of marriage with the present partner than female participants.

Respondents were also asked about how long they have been stayed with their present partner in marriage. As the results presented in Table 1, number 2 above showed that the minimum duration of years, participants stayed in marriage with the present partner were 4 for early married individuals and 3 for both age appropriate-arranged and love-matched married individuals. However, for all the three group of participants the maximum years they have been married was 18 years. In general, early married participants have been stayed longer (i.e. male M=12.14 and female M=13.31) years in the present marriage followed by age appropriate-arranged (i.e. male M =9.74 and female M=

10.37) and then in turn by love-matched (i.e. male $M = 7.37$ and female $M = 8.20$) married participants.

In the same Table, number 3 indicated that the minimum present age of early married participants were 20 and 18 for males and females respectively. While the minimum present age for age appropriate-arranged married males and females were the same i.e. 24. Similarly, the minimum present age of love-matched participants were found to be 24 for males and 22 for females. With regard to the maximum present age of the respondents, early married individuals' age were 35 for males and 34 for females and 47 and 43 years were for age appropriate-arranged married males and females respectively. While maximum age of love-matched married males and females were 48 and 40 respectively.

Generally, 29.60 and 26.66 were the mean age of early married participants for males and females respectively while age appropriate-arranged married individuals had the mean age of 35.66 for males and 30.97 for females. Similarly, love-matched married participants had a mean age of 33.86 and 28.54 for males and females respectively.

Measures and Procedures

Instrument

The instrument encompasses the adjustment scale to measure the overall marital adjustment of the participants. It consists of 36 items cluster against four subscales namely consensus, cohesion, satisfaction, and affectional expression. Half of these items that are 18 items were adapted from (Spanier & Bowman, 1978) and the other 18 items were developed by the researchers. The items of the scale are arranged on the three point rating scales on which data collectors rate based on participants' responses.

The length of the subscales vary in length; consensus with 13 items (scores range from 13 to 39), satisfaction with 10 items (scores range from 10 to 30), cohesion with seven items (scores range from seven to 21), and affection expression with six items (scores range from six to 18), and the total adjustment scale with 36 items (scores range from 36 to 118).

Construction

As mentioned before, half of the adjustment scale items were adapted from (Spanier & Bowman, 1978) and the researcher tried to make the items contextualized with the culture of the society to whom the study was conducted. The rest half numbers of the items of the instrument were constructed by the researchers based on the literature. Most of the items of Spanier and Bowman instrument have five and six scales, but to make the instrument easy and understandable to the participants, the researchers narrow the scales in to three levels. Hence, all the items adapted from Spanier and Bowman and constructed by the researchers were arranged in to three point rating scales.

Reliability and Validation

Pilot test was conducted and Cronbach Alpha was calculated to check the reliability of the scale and the four sub-scales. Based on the result, four items, which lowers the reliability value, were deleted from the instrument. The result showed that the reliability of the total items was found to be .83; and the reliability index of the four sub-scales (consensus, satisfaction, cohesion, and affection expression) was found to be .84, .71, .83, .63 respectively.

Two experts from psychology and language departments examined the content validity of the instrument. Based on experts' comments and the observed difficulties during piloting, some modifications were made and the instrument was constructed to collect the final data for the study.

Administration

Assistant data collectors were instructed to identify one of the volunteer partners (i.e. either the husband or the wife) and asked the participants at what age they married the current partner, the type of marriage arrangement, and how many years stayed with their current partner before started to full fill the questionnaire. Prior to start the data collection, participants were reminded about the confidentiality of

the information they were provide.

To make the administration uniform, the questionnaire was read to all participants by the data collectors. Respondents were required to hear statements from their readers and then indicate their degree of agreement with the item on the mentioned ranging scales, so that the data collectors made a mark based on respondents' choice. Clear explanations were given to those participants who have some difficulties during the data collection.

Scoring

After checking inconsistencies or skipped questions, items were grouped against the four subscales of marital adjustment and items were got its own code. Negatively worded items were reversed in to positive prior to scoring. Data quality was further ensured by double data entry and immediate rectification of discrepancies found between the two data sets. Then, the total marital adjustment score was generated by summing the scores of each item of the subscales which ranging from 36 to 118 with the higher scores reflect the higher level of marital adjustment.

Analysis

In order to analyze the data, descriptive statistics (minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation); ANOVA; Scheffe Post Hoc comparison; independent sample t-test; and Pearson correlation were employed in relation to the stated research questions. Besides, all computations were done with the help of the Statistical Package for the Social Science version 12 (SPSS-12) soft ware and all significance tests were tested at .01 and .05 level.

RESULTS

Patterns of Marital Adjustment

In an attempt to see the general patterns of marital adjustment, descriptive statistics was used to present all participants' average scores on each item of the four dimensions of marital adjustment. As presented in chapter three, the data were collected by the instrument which has 36 items grouped under the four subscales and leveled in to three ratings indicating *one is a minimum score, two is an average score/the midpoint of the scale, and three is a maximum score*. Hence, Table 2, showed that the patterns of marital adjustment on each marital adjustment dimensions. (*Min*=minimum, *Max*=Maximum, *M*=Mean, *SD*=Standard Deviation).

Table 2: Patterns of Marital Adjustment (N=210)

Adjustment Dimensions	Min	Max	M	SD
Consensus	1	3	2.59	.57
Satisfaction	1	3	2.57	.61
Cohesion	1	3	2.50	.56
Affectional Expression	1	3	2.52	.61
Over all marital adjustment	1	3	2.55	.59

Table 2 above depicted the general patterns of participants' marital adjustment. The table showed that participants had a mean score of 2.55 on the overall marital adjustment. Specifically, respondents had mean scores greater than or equal to 2.5 on the four dimensions of marital adjustment including the overall marital adjustment, which is closer to the maximum level of rating on the scale.

Marital Adjustment by Marriage Arrangements

To examine whether there is a significant difference among early married, age-appropriate arranged married, and love-matched married individuals in terms of their marital adjustment, ANOVA was carried out. The result revealed that there was statistically significant difference in marital adjustment among early married, age-appropriate arranged married, and love-matched married individuals ($F_{(2,207)} = 13.07, p < .05$).

In order to locate where the differences were existed, Scheffe multiple comparison test was employed and result revealed that statistically significant differences were observed when early married individuals were compared with age-appropriate arranged married and love-matched married individuals. That is, early married individuals had

less mean score on marital adjustment followed by age-appropriate arranged and in turn by love-matched married counter parts. Scheffe multiple comparison test also indicated that there was no significant difference found between age-appropriate arranged married and love-matched married individuals in their marital adjustment mean scores.

Table 3: One Way ANOVA for Marital Adjustment by Marriage Arrangements (N=210)

Marriage Arrangement:	M	SD	df	F
Early married	87.5	10.0		
Age appropriate-arranged married	92.4	10.4	207(2)	13.07*
Love-matched married	95.7	7.92		

*p<0.05

Marital Adjustment by Dimensions and Marriage Arrangements

ANOVA was computed to examine whether there is statistically significant differences among marriage arrangements with regard to

marital adjustment dimensions. Hence, significant differences were observed among early, age-appropriate arranged, and love-matched married individuals in all the four dimensions of marital adjustment i.e. consensus ($F_{(2,207)} = 9.51, p < .05$), satisfaction ($F_{(2,207)} = 7.89, p < 0.05$), cohesion ($F_{(2,207)} = 5.28, p < 0.05$), and affection expression ($F_{(2,207)} = 10.61, p < 0.05$).

Table 4: Scheffe Post Hoc Test of Marital Adjustment by Marriage Arrangements (N=210)

Marriage Arrangements (I)	Marriage Arrangements (J)	
	Age appropriate-arranged married	Love-matched married
Early married	-4.89*	-8.19*
Age appropriate-arranged married		-3.30

*p<0.05

Table 5: One Way ANOVA on Dimensions of Marital Adjustment by Marriage Arrangements (N = 210)

Adjustment Dimensions	Marriage Arrangement						df	F
	Early married (N=70)		Age appropriate-arranged married (N=70)		Love-matched married (N=70)			
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
Consensus	31.83	4.52	34.06	4.78	35.01	3.97	207(2)	9.51*
Satisfaction	24.44	3.36	26.04	3.66	26.57	2.84	207(2)	7.89*
Cohesion	16.86	2.71	17.34	2.36	18.17	2.15	207(2)	5.28*
Affection Expression	14.40	2.18	14.97	2.00	15.96	1.88	207(2)	10.61*

*p<0.05

The results of Scheffe Post Hoc Test(I-J) in table 1 below portrayed that statistically significant difference were existed on early married individuals compared with age-appropriate arranged and love-matched married individuals on consensus and satisfaction dimensions. That is, early married individuals had lower mean score on these two dimensions than their counter parts from age-appropriate arranged and love-matched married individuals. However, there were no statistically significant differences found between age-appropriate arranged and love-matched married individuals on consensus and satisfaction dimensions.

With regard to cohesion dimension significant difference was observed only between early and love-matched married individuals. Implies,

early married individuals were scored less than love-matched married individuals on cohesion dimension. However, the mean score of age-appropriate arranged married individuals were not significantly different from the mean scores of both early and love-matched married participants on cohesion dimension of marital adjustment.

In relation to affection expression dimension, love-matched participants were significantly different from both early married and age-appropriate arranged married individuals. In other ways, love-matched participants had higher mean score than both early and age-appropriate arranged married participants on affection expression dimension. But there was no significant difference observed between early and age-appropriate arranged married participants on this dimension.

Table 6: Scheffe Post Hoc Test for Marital Adjustment Dimensions by Marriage Arrangements (N = 210)

Adjustment Dimension	Marriage Arrangements (I)	Marriage Arrangements (J)	
		Age-appropriate arranged married	Love-matched married
Consensus	Early married	-2.23*	-3.19*
	Age-appropriate arranged married		-.96
Satisfaction	Early married	-1.60*	-2.13*
	Age-appropriate arranged married		-.53
Cohesion	Early married	-.49	-1.31*
	Age-appropriate arranged married		-.83
Affection Expression	Early married	-.57	-1.56*
	Age-appropriate arranged married		-.99*

*p < 0.05

Marital Adjustment by Demographic Factors

Pearson correlation was used in order to see the relationship of marital adjustment with demographic variables such as age at the present

marriage, duration of the present marriage, and the number of children in the present marriage. The results are presented in Table 7 below.

Table 7: Correlation between Marital Adjustment and Demographic Variables (N=210)

No	Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Age at the present marriage	-						
2	Duration in the present marriage	-.29**	-					
3	Number of children in the present marriage	-.16*	.69**	-				
4	Marital adjustment	.25**	-.09	-.02	-			
5	Consensus	.19**	-.18**	-.11	.85**	-		
6	Satisfaction	.25**	.03	.08	.81**	.51**	-	
7	Cohesion	.15*	.01	.03	.76**	.46**	.57**	-
8	Affection expression	.21**	-.07	-.04	.72**	.48**	.46**	.54**

** $p < 0.01$ * $p < 0.05$

As can be seen from Table 6 above, age at the present marriage was positively and significantly related to marital adjustment ($r = .25, p < .01$) and the same is true with all marital adjustment dimensions i.e.

consensus ($r = .19, p < .01$), satisfaction ($r = .25, p < .01$), cohesion ($r = .15, p < .05$), and affection expression ($r = .21, p < .01$). However, length of marriage and number of children were negatively and insignificantly correlated with marital adjustment.

Table 8: T-values of Marital Adjustment by Marriage Arrangements and Sex

Marriage Arrangements	Sex				t
	Male (N=35)		Female (N=35)		
	M	SD	M	SD	
Early married	90.00	9.61	85.06	9.91	-2.12*
Age appropriate arranged married	94.29	7.77	90.54	12.46	-1.51
Love-matched married	95.51	8.44	95.91	7.48	0.21

* $p < 0.05$

In order to see if there is a significant sex difference in participants' marital adjustment, independent sample t-test was used and result showed that statistically significant difference was found only in the mean score of early married males and females in their marital

adjustment. That is, males ($M=90.00, SD=9.61$) marital adjustment was statistically higher than females ($M=85.06, SD=9.91$), [$t(68) = -2.12, p < .05$]. But, statistically significant difference was not found between age-appropriate arranged married males and females, and love-matched married males and females in their mean score of marital adjustment.

Table 9: T-values of Early Married Marital Adjustment Dimensions by Sex

Adjustment Dimensions	Sex				t
	Male (N=35)		Female (N=35)		
	M	SD	M	SD	
Consensus	32.51	4.57	31.14	4.43	-1.28
Satisfaction	25.26	2.91	23.63	3.61	-2.09*
Cohesion	17.26	2.14	16.46	2.19	-1.24
Affection Expression	14.94	2.20	13.83	2.02	-2.26*

* $p < 0.05$

In an attempt to compare early married males and females with specific reference to marital adjustment dimensions, independent sample t-test was employed for every marriage arrangement. Thus, statistically significant differences were observed between male and female early married participants on the satisfaction and affection expression dimensions of marital adjustment. Implies that, males score

higher on satisfaction ($M=25.26, SD=2.91$) and affection expression ($M=14.94, SD=2.20$) dimensions than females ($M=23.63, SD=3.61$), [$t(68) = -2.09, p < .05$] and ($M=13.83, SD=2.02$), [$t(68) = -2.26, p < .05$] respectively. However, there was no significant difference existed between early-married male and female participants on both consensus and cohesion dimensions.

Table 10: T-values of Age-appropriate Arranged Married Marital Adjustment Dimensions by Sex

Adjustment Dimensions	Sex				t
	Male (N=35)		Female (N=35)		
	M	SD	M	SD	
Consensus	34.57	4.26	33.54	2.26	-.90
Satisfaction	26.71	3.08	25.37	4.09	-1.55
Cohesion	17.51	1.74	17.17	2.86	-.61
Affection Expression	15.49	1.70	14.46	2.16	-2.21*

* $p < 0.05$

Regarding age-appropriate arranged married participants statistically significant sex difference was seen only on the dimension of affection expression. That means, the mean score of males ($M=15.49, SD=1.70$) was higher than the mean score of females ($M=14.46, SD=2.16$), [$t(68) = -2.21, p < .05$] on affection expression dimension. However, there were no statistically significant sex differences found on the three

dimensions (consensus, satisfaction, and cohesion) of marital adjustment.

Besides, independent sample t-test results revealed that, there were no statistically significant sex differences found in love-matched married participants in all the four dimensions of marital adjustment.

Table 11: T-values of Age-appropriate Love-matched Married Marital Adjustment Dimensions by Sex

Adjustment Dimension	Sex				t
	Male (N=35)		Female (N=35)		
	M	SD	M	SD	
Consensus	34.77	3.49	35.26	4.43	.51
Satisfaction	26.66	3.24	26.49	2.42	-.21
Cohesion	18.06	2.29	18.29	2.04	.41
Affectional Expression	16.03	1.65	15.89	2.11	-.31

p>0.05

DISCUSSION

Patterns of Marital Adjustment

As it is presented in the earlier section, the level of marital adjustment is determined based on the scores of items from the four sub scales i.e. consensus, satisfaction, cohesion, and affectional expression. In order to see the general patterns of marital adjustment among the participants, descriptive statistics specifically the mean scores of each items on each dimensions of marital adjustment was used. The evidence from the findings of this research indicated that all the mean scores of the participants were above the average and even near to the higher values on the scale in all items of marital adjustment dimensions. Since there is no available previous research findings related to this finding (at least to the knowledge of the present researcher), this finding is new to the literature.

Marital Adjustment by Marriage Arrangements

The result revealed that statistically significant difference was observed in the mean score of marital adjustment among early married, age-appropriate arranged married, and love-matched married persons. Scheffe Post Hoc pair wise comparison result showed that the highest mean score difference was found when early married individuals were compared with age-appropriate arranged and love-matched married individuals. However, there was no significant mean score difference between age-appropriate arranged and love-matched married individuals. This implies that age at marriage is a more important factor that influences partners' marital adjustment rather than the type of marriage arrangement. Along with this finding, Bowman and Spanier (1978) and Burgess, et al. (1971) reported that people who married very young had poor marital adjustment than those who married at later age. In addition, other researchers (Boykin, 2004; Ji & Norling, 2004; Kurdek, 1991; Levine & Hennessey, 1990; Linda & Beard, 1986) showed that people who marry later in their lives are more likely to have higher marital quality, stability, satisfaction, and adjustment than those who were married at a younger age. Early married partners have greatly increased stress, marital instability, and lower marital quality (Moris & Carters, 1999); lower marital satisfaction (Levine & Hennessey, 1990); and poor adjustment in marriage (Bowman & Spanier, 1978). This is because age is related to physical, social and psychological readiness and maturity that is very important for marital relationship (Mehandiratta et al., 2007; O'Neil, 1976; Teti et al., cited in Vue, 2000). This may be due to age gap between partners, education, number and age of children, the presence or absence of informed consent at marriage, the number of times partners engage in marriage, the presence of step-children and relatives in the home and other possible factors might create this difference.

On the other hand no significant mean score difference was found between groups of age-appropriate arranged and love-matched married individuals. Inconsistent to this finding, Fox (1975) indicated that age-appropriate arranged marriages showed significantly lower level of marital quality as compared to autonomous marriages. However, there were considerable mean score difference between age-appropriate arranged and love-matched married persons that is love-matched groups had higher mean score than age-appropriate arranged groups. This finding is well supported by Lev-Wiesel and Al-Krenwi (1999) stated that individuals who married after marriageable age through arrangement have lower level of marital adjustment than love-matched married counterparts. Xiaohe and Whyte (1990) also suggested that spouses of love-matched feel better about their marriage, more satisfied and have better adjustment with their marital relationship than arranged marriages.

This is could be perhaps because when partners are free and independent to choose each other, they express and share their own previous experiences and 'develop their own rules and expectations about marital roles' (Boykin, 2004) before they are going to married so that partners may become very close and rely on each other emotionally. Therefore, this may contribute a lot to have equalitarian and open structure of marriage which in turn makes them to have better marital adjustment.

Dimensions of Marital Adjustment by Marriage Arrangements

The general discussion on the difference in the overall level of marital adjustment among the three marriage arrangements would be more elaborated if we see in terms of the four marital adjustment dimensions. In relation to this, love-matched married individuals scored higher mean score followed by age-appropriate arranged married and then in turn by early married groups on all the four dimensions of marital adjustment. In line with these findings, Dinna (2005) showed that love-matched married individuals had higher mean score than age-appropriate arranged married individuals on all the four dimensions of marital adjustment.

The One Way ANOVA result revealed that there was statistically significant difference observed among the three marriage arrangements on all the four dimensions of marital adjustment. Scheffe Post Hoc pair comparison disclosed that the mean score of love-matched and age-appropriate arranged individuals were significantly higher than the mean score of early married individuals on both consensus and satisfaction dimensions. Hence, love-matched and age-appropriate arranged married individuals have better agreement with their partners on "a variety of relationship issues such as finances, religious matters, dealing with parents and in-laws, house hold tasks....." (Spanier & Lewis, cited in Dinna, 2005; Prouty et al., 2000) and have higher level of satisfaction (i.e. having less discussion about divorce, leaving the house after fight, regretting marrying, getting each others' nerves,...etc and high degree of commitment, happiness...etc) in their marital relationship than early married individuals. However, statistically significant differences were not existed between age-appropriate arranged and love-matched married individuals in both consensus and satisfaction dimensions of marital adjustment.

Concerning cohesion dimension, early married were significantly less than love-matched married individuals. Implies that love-matched married partners were more "connected, intimate, have mutual and stimulating sharing of activities, etc" (Prouty, et al., 2000) than early married partners. But age-appropriate arranged married individuals were not significantly different from both early and love-matched married individuals on cohesion dimension of marital adjustment.

With regard to affection expression dimension, love-matched married individuals were significantly higher than early and age-appropriate arranged married individuals. Put in other words, love-matched married persons had significantly better affection expression i.e. "sowing love (Prouty, et al., 2000); fulfillment of sexual needs (Moris & Carters, 1999); appreciation (Okoh, 2008); ... etc" than early and age-appropriate arranged married persons. However, statistically significant differences were not obtained between early and age-appropriate arranged married individuals in this dimension of marital adjustment. Since there is no available research report specifically on this very issue (at least to the knowledge of the present researcher), it is not possible to discuss the findings in line with earlier findings.

Marital Adjustment by Demographic Factors

The relationship of marital adjustment by demographic variables

In an attempt to examine whether there is significant relationship

between marital adjustment and age at the present marriage, duration of the present marriage, and the number of children in the present marriage among all participants, Pearson correlation was conducted. The result of the correlation indicated that marital adjustment was positively and significantly related to age at the present marriage. That is, as the age at marriage was higher, partners' level of marital adjustment becomes higher and vice versa. Supporting this finding, Tsehay (2005) reported that older age married individuals have shown that statistically significant higher mean scores of marital satisfaction than younger age married individuals. Lee (1997) also showed the presence of positive correlation between age at marriage and overall score of marital quality i.e. older age married individuals had more marital quality than younger age married individuals.

On the other hand, marital adjustment was negatively and insignificantly correlated with duration of the present marriage. Put in other words, as the number of years partners staying in marriage, their marital adjustment decreased but it was not significant. In line with this Bowman & Spanier, (1978) revealed that marital adjustment begins to decline during the first years of marriage and appears to be further accelerated by the birth of the first child; and the intensity of the decline in adjustment begins to lessen several years after marriage. Moreover, Olson & Defrain (2000) have found out that marital quality tends to decrease over the time.

Similarly, marital adjustment was negatively and insignificantly related to the number of children in the present marriage. Implies, as partners have more and more children, their marital adjustment becomes decline but it is not significant. In supporting this finding, Burgess, et al. (1971) indicated the presence of an inverse relationship between the number of children and the level of marital adjustment. That is, couples with two or more children have lower marital adjustment scores than childless or one child couples. Similarly, Eshelman (1991) indicated that marital quality is lowest for marital partners with many children than for partners with fewer children. However, Tsehay's (2005) finding is directly the opposite of the present finding that states the mean score of married persons who have five and above children were higher marital satisfaction followed by those who have one up to four children and in turn by those who have no children.

Marital adjustment by sex

A noteworthy independent sample t-test result indicated that there were statistically significant differences between male and female early married persons in their mean score of marital adjustment. That is, the mean score of early married males were significantly higher than the mean score of early married females. Since, the higher score in the total scale is an indicative of better adjustment; early married males have better marital adjustment in their marriage than early married females. Though there is no available research report specifically on early married males and females (as the knowledge of the this researcher concerned) related to their marital adjustment, this finding agrees with the general literature that was reported by Olson and Defrian (2000) which suggested that in many lasting marriages, it is the wife who is unhappy than the husband. Tsehay (2005) also supported that males have significantly higher level of marital quality than females.

There may be a number of possible explanations for such sex discrepancy in the marital adjustment of early married persons. One possible reason might be, many women enter in marriage having completed less work on their identity; having little or no preparation for child bearing and child rearing; and being dependent on their husbands for financial security and social status (Newman & Newman, 1979) with a lot of negative consequences and creates many problems especially for females (Belay, 2008) like reproductive health problems, physical and sexual abuse by the husband, early pregnancy and child birth, and difficulty of shouldering the many responsibilities of marriage. Consequently, all these problems may contribute to minimize the level of marital adjustment of early married females.

In similar manner, age-appropriate arranged married individuals revealed that there was considerable mean difference observed between males and females, though the difference was not statistically significant. This result is supported by the finding of Madathil and Benschhoff (2008), and Dinna (2005) suggested that there were no significant differences found between husbands and wives of age-

appropriate arranged marriages in marital adjustment. But the present finding contradicts with Xiaohe and Whyte (1990), stated that husbands of age-appropriate arranged marriages were happier than wives in the same marriage arrangement.

Besides, the t-test result disclosed that there was no statistically significant difference found between love-matched married males and females in the mean score of their marital adjustment. This finding is inconsistent with Madathil and Benschhoff (2008), and Dinna (2005), noted that there was a significant difference between husbands and wives of love-matches in their marital adjustment (i.e. men had lower total adjustment score than women). Similarly, Xiaohe and Whyte (1990) also added that wives of autonomous marriages were happier than husbands.

Marital adjustment dimensions by sex.

Independent sample t-tests were also carried out to see sex differences on the four dimensions of marital adjustment. Hence, early married males had significantly higher mean score on satisfaction and affection expression dimensions than females counter parts. Though there was no significant sex difference found on consensus and cohesion dimensions of marital adjustment, the mean scores of males were higher than the mean scores of females in both dimensions. Unfortunately, researches conducted in these specific areas were not available (as the knowledge of the present researcher); therefore, the findings are unique to this research. This difference could be perhaps due to early marriage practices affect the overall personality of the child specially the female child (Amsalu, 2007) due to the before mentioned problems that female early married individuals faced.

In the assignment of looking at the significant sex differences of age-appropriate arranged married persons with specific reference to the four dimensions of marital adjustment, males were significantly higher than females only on affection expression dimension. This result did not confirm the previous findings of Dinna (2005) that showed the absence of statistically significant difference between age-appropriate arranged married males and females in all dimensions of marital adjustment. Even though statistically significant males had higher mean scores on the rest three dimensions than females. This finding is deviated in consensus, satisfaction, and affection expression dimensions and consistent with cohesion dimension according to Dinna (2005) which indicated that age-appropriate arranged married females had higher mean score on satisfaction and affection expression dimensions, equal on consensus dimension and less mean score on cohesion dimension than males.

Moreover, there was no statistically significant sex difference existed between the mean score of love-matched married males and females across all the four dimensions of marital adjustment. This might be perhaps because of love-matched married persons consider marriage after they have reached 21 years old (Fox, 1975) so that both partners love, choose, understand and know each other very well before the wedding is conducted (Dinna, 2005). Therefore, they are far away from traditional views with husband dominate, sex segregation, and construction of wave's world, gender role differences prescribed by the society, and have equalitarian and more open structure of marriage (Fox, 1975). Consequently, love-matched males and females to be close each other, discuss different issues openly and resolve problems more effectively, and understand to each other's expression of affection.

CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions from these findings were made within the context of the following limitations. First, purposive sampling was used to sample participants. Second, the data used in this study was collected using only one instrument i.e. a rating scale. With the presence of these limitations one may tentatively conclude the following that are applicable to the samples only.

Participants' general patterns of marital adjustment scores were above the average of the scale. This means participants had above the average level of marital adjustment in their marital life.

Early married persons had significantly less marital adjustment than age appropriate-arranged and love-matched married persons. Though love-matched married individuals had higher marital adjustment than

age appropriate-arranged married, the difference was no statistically significant. This generally implies that age at marriage have more influence on marital adjustment than the type of marriage arrangement.

There was statistically significant difference among early, age appropriate-arranged, and love-matched married groups when it comes to the four dimensions of marital adjustment. That is:

Early married individuals had significantly less marital adjustment than age appropriate-arranged and love-matched married individuals on both consensus and satisfaction dimensions. Though love-matched married had higher than age appropriate-arranged married on consensus and satisfaction dimensions, the differences were not statistically significant.

Early married individuals were statistically less than love-matched counter parts on cohesion dimension. However, age appropriate-arranged married individuals were not significantly different from both early married and love-matched married individuals on this dimension.

Love-matched married persons had significantly more affectional expression than early and age appropriate-arranged married on affectional expression dimension. But there was no statistically significant difference between early and age appropriate-arranged married persons. Generally, love-matched married persons were better on all the four dimensions of marital adjustment followed by age appropriate-arranged married and then in turn by early married persons.

Marital adjustment was positively and significantly related to sex and age at the present marriage. Males had significantly better marital adjustment than females. As age at marriage increases, the level of marital adjustment also significantly increases. That means older married persons had better marital adjustment compared with younger married ones. However, marital adjustment was negatively but insignificantly correlated with the duration of marriage and the number of children in the present marriage.

Early married males had significantly higher marital adjustment than early married females. Even if males in age appropriate-arranged marriage had considerably higher marital adjustment than females, the difference was not statistically significant. On the other hand, love-matched married males and females had almost equal level of marital adjustment.

Sex differences with specific reference to the dimensions of marital adjustment in each study group indicated that:

Early married males had significantly higher marital satisfaction and affectional expression than female counterparts. Even if early married males again had higher marital consensus and cohesion than females, the differences on both dimensions were not statistically significant.

Age appropriate-arranged married males had significantly higher affectional expression than female counterparts. Though males were higher on consensus, satisfaction, and cohesion dimensions, the differences were not statistically significant.

There was no statistically significant sex difference among love-matched married persons in all the four dimensions of marital adjustment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the findings and conclusions arrived at, the following recommendations are forwarded:

- Parents or other community elders should not pressured individuals to marry early before their marriageable age.
- The Town administration need to prepare different training programs like couple education programs that are important to improve the level of early married individuals' marital adjustment especially of females.
- The Town administration should organize and conduct community discussion and make married individuals who have

better marital adjustment share their experience so that early married individuals learn from it.

- The data used in this research is mainly based on rating scale measures; future researchers could include other qualitative methods to gather more in-depth and comprehensive information from participants.
- In addition to the variables considered in this study, future research might examine other possible factors such as age gap between partners, education, age of children, the presence or absence of informed consent at marriage, the number of times partners engage in marriage, the presence of step-children and other relatives in the home, religious beliefs and possible others that might influence marital adjustment.
- Finally, future research may include early love-matched married individuals as a separate group of participants while studying marital adjustment of the present study groups.

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