PERCEPTIONS OF WEDDING TRENDS AND RITUALS: A GENDER BASED COMPARATIVE STUDY

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ABSTRACT
World widely, Weddings have been setting trends of overspending and societal pressure. The present study explored gender perception regarding wedding trends and rituals that have been practicing due to lavish and simple weddings in Lahore. The impact of socio-demographic variables e.g. educational level, income level, and age differences were analyzed with respect to wedding trends and rituals. Quantitative research design based on self-developed questionnaire was used to collect data (N=300) from different private and public institutes, through purposive sampling technique from different areas of Lahore. For descriptive and inferential statistics, the data was analyzed through SPSS version 25. Independent sample T-test and One-Way ANOVA was applied; the results indicated that there was a significant gender differences and socio-demographic variables also found statistically significant differences with respect to trends and rituals. The study identified preferences and reasons of simple and lavish weddings through gender perspectives.
Keywords: trends, rituals, socio-demographics, gender perception.

INTRODUCTION
The current study is based on gender differences in perceptions about wedding trends and rituals practicing in Lahore with a gender lens across different socioeconomic and educational levels. Weddings set worldwide trends of overspending and societal pressure. A trend is a general direction or something popular (Gibss & Gibbs, 2015). A wedding trend is the popularity of events or items in weddings on the ongoing days (Link et al., 2020).

Weddings are the expression of love (Spark, 2016). The current ongoing practices of weddings set worldwide trends of overspending and societal pressure (Amna, 2019). Even during a survey in 2019, it was revealed that $22.5k is the average cost of a wedding in the United States of America and over time the average has outgrown to $28k in the year 2021(Knueven, 2021). The same scenarios are to be found in Pakistan. Pakistani people are so fond of lavish weddings that they can spend up to 500k with the viewpoint that they will only get married once (Muse, 2020).

It has been explored that Pakistani weddings are exceptionally lavish. Apart from Nikah and Walima, all different ceremonies are pointless and part of Hindu wedding ceremony trends. Like different spiritual obligations, marriage is a virtuous act however, broadly assumed that human beings spend to expose their wealth to others (Islami, 2021).

Trends and Rituals of wedding ceremonies in provinces of Pakistan
A lot of events are part of Pakistani wedding that was adapted to the Hindus of the sub-continent before the partition. As most of Pakistan's population is Muslim, therefore, the major events of the normal wedding would be expected as nikah and walima. Pakistanis included other events according to their financial stability, affordability, and sometimes due to cultural pressure. If we look back in few decades,

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the wedding ceremonies in Pakistan include three major events mehndi baraat (nikah) and walima (Saeed, 2018). With passing decades, generations demand new trends and rituals in Pakistani weddings. Few rituals are different in every province as their culture is also different from each other (Junaid, 2021). The trends and rituals of Punjabi weddings have lots of traditions in their weddings. They started engagement (Mangni) or baat pakki event as a commitment of the relationship before marriage. They celebrate alot in all the events with music and dance and perform rituals like Jhota chupai, rasta rukai, and doodh pilai (Punjabi weddings, 2016).

In trends and rituals of Sindhi weddings, women of grooms' and brides' families get together in which they apply oil to the bride's hair. They called this ritual Sanhh which means engagement of two people in the tribal area. In this event, women also practice a ritual in which flowers and leaves are used to enhance the beauty of brides. This ritual is known as Sagary which means the start of a new journey. After marriage, a different rasam is observed in which couples see each other in the mirror. This ritual is known as Arsi Mashaf which means looking for the first time (Marriage Traditions in Pakistan, 2018).

The trends and rituals of Pashtun weddings are different from other cultures. A musical dance function is arranged by the groom's family after the date fixing of marriage. This event is known as the Siyakhni which means a special event. Another ritual is performed after ruksati in which guests and family members take the bride to the groom's house and this function is known as Dehleez Par which means cross the entrance of the house (Marriage Traditions in Pakistan, 2018).

In trends and rituals of Balochi weddings, the Balochi community is celebrating their wedding in long seven days events in which the bride is restricted at home and not allowed to go out for these seven days. The bride stayed at home for two days with her sisters and friends to look for and cared for herself. This ritual is called Dozokhi which means hidden (Marriage Traditions in Pakistan, 2018).

Wedding traditions across various generations

Older people tend to ignore the wedding trends, which seem unnecessary to them. These trends usually involve a big bridal party, bachelor party, bridal shower, Mayon, ubtaan, and after-party. However, the younger generation participates more in these trends (Allen, 2019). Moreover, between 1930 to 2015, the percentage of Indian and Pakistani marriages involving dowry payments quadrupled, and the average actual value of dowry payments tripled. However, after 2015, the average dowry size decreased. The young generation is more self-dependent, and mostly the grooms refuse to accept the dowry. But in comparison, it could be seen that older people used to take a lot of dowry payments as a symbol of their status (Biswas, 2021).

Objectives

To examine the perception of gender about wedding trends and rituals across different socioeconomic, educational group as well as within generation of Lahore.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Tirmizi (2011) examined regarding trends of Pakistani wedding ceremonies expenses. The results revealed that upper-middle-class families spent extraordinary money all the events of the lavish wedding because they have societal pressure and show off their status to people. There was no proper reason or justification for spending that much money on weddings. Events of the wedding were celebrated for more than a week. Most of the respondents concluded that they are doing this because of the phrase that "Log kya kahein gay" if they don't do lavish wedding ceremonies.

A qualitative study by Durani (2014) was carried out on the wedding ceremony and the customs practiced among the Rajput people who live in a small town in central Punjab (Pakistan) which revealed that wedding ceremonies serve two essential purposes. Families fully enjoyed and celebrate every event of the wedding, especially women. Second, they assist the bride and groom in undergoing a status shift by assigning their new responsibilities and expectations as husband and wife.

Myung and Smith (2018) conducted a study to understand the wedding preference concerning both genders in the Millennial generation of Pakistan, notably Millennial females. They emphasized their alternatives for the bridal ceremony and reception locations, meals and beverage options, and the maximum influential assets for wedding ceremony element ideas. The findings consisted of 678 patterns of the usage of the purposive sampling approach. According to the outcomes, the maximum not unusual place bridal ceremony web page became a sacred space. The maximum famous forms of wedding

ceremony reception venues had been a lodge and a ceremonial dinner hall. However, Millennial adult males now no longer have trouble preferences.

A study conducted by Salem (2018) about the adaptation of marriage trends and style in Pakistan. The results revealed that many marriages were postponed because the couple was not able to afford a lavish wedding as required. Adaptation of trends and rituals also changes with age. The study was conducted by Musaeva et al. (2019) based on wedding trends. Ethnographic material was used for field observation. The study aimed to investigate that if weddings held in cities are new versions of old trends or adapt to the exact directions. The results of the studies concluded as multicomponent ceremonies, which consist of traditional preparations of the weddings and the rituals after weddings.

Javed & Mughal (2020) researched wedding trends and rituals in Pakistan. It has been revealed that all the traditions and trends are followed despite age. People demanded younger age for women and mature age for men. People like to follow extra expensive wedding ceremonies. Helia (2017) conducted a study on wedding trends in Finland. The study consisted of the most significant sample (N=14,150). The research is quantitative and entirely focused on weddings, and surveys were conducted. The study results indicated that the average age was 27 for the bride, and 30 for the groom. Most of the weddings were traditional, inviting up to 100 guests. The study also highlighted that most couples planned their weddings before 13-24 months. The research also highlighted the importance of ongoing trends, and the couple decided to go along with it.

Pessin (2018) studied the changing patterns of wedding trends and rituals in the US. The study was conducted among different religious groups and education. The findings revealed that religion is the biggest factor in following trends and rituals. Education has minimal contributions toward following the different trends and rituals of wedding ceremonies. A similar study was conducted in Egypt using semi-structured surveys. The sample consisted of 66 engaged couples who were to marry in a short time. However, during the study, it was seen that many marriages were postponed because the couple was not able to afford a lavish wedding as required. Matrimonial transactions were firmly based on gender and compliance with marital standards (Salem, 2018).

Lamidi (2020) conducted a study that role of educational background contributions toward following the wedding trends. The study revealed that educational backgrounds make huge difference while choosing the trends of wedding ceremony across the globe. Nazirov et al. (2020) examined a study that reveals about the family structure and crisis faced by breadwinner especially on wedding ceremonies. Financial stability is essential to follow the rituals of the marriage. Differences in status would increase and decrease in the number of rituals practice of the wedding.

According to the study by Allen (2019), the generational difference when choosing a wedding style. Older people tend to ignore the wedding trends, which seem unnecessary to them. These trends usually involve a big bridal party, bachelor party, bridal shower, mayoon, ubtaan, and after-party. However, the younger generation participates more in these trends.

Hypotheses

1. There will be significant differences in perceptions about wedding trends and rituals across different genders.
2. There will be significant differences in perceptions about wedding trends and rituals across different socioeconomic backgrounds.
3. There will be significant difference in perception about wedding trends across different educational background.
4. There will be significant difference in perceptions about wedding trends and rituals across younger and older generation.

METHODOLOGY

In the present research, quantitative research design was used to identify the gender differences in perceptions about wedding trends and rituals in Lahore.

Research design

The current study was based on quantitative research design to investigate male and female's perceptions about current wedding trends and rituals.

Sample

In the present research, the sample (N=300) consisted of males (150) and females (150) of different educational levels from Lahore. The data was collected from different socio-economic class which were

below 55,000 to above than 1,50,000. The age group ranging between 18-56 years.The sample included both male and female who were either married, single, divorced or widow. The participants were approached through purposive sampling from private and public educational institutions as well as from different areas of Lahore.

Inclusion criteria

In present research both males and females from different educational levels, age range of 18 to 56 years and socio-economic class ranging from less than 50,000 to above than 1,50,000 are included in the sample.

Exclusion criteria

In the present research, males and females from outside the Lahore, participant below 18 years or above 56 were excluded.

Instrument

In the present study a self-developed questionnaire was used to measure the perception regarding wedding trends and rituals among males and females. The scale was consisted of 34 items having 5 subscales (Trends, Rituals, Preferences, Effects and Causes). Results were measured by utilizing 5-point Likert reporting-scale. The sub-scale titled wedding trends is a valid and moderately reliable instrument (Cronbach Alpha 0.73). The sub-scale titled wedding ritual is a valid and highly reliable instrument (Cronbach Alpha 0.80). In the first step, pilot study was conducted to polish the questionnaire. In the pilot study, opinions of 10 experts were taken. On the basis of their opinion, the questionnaire was rephrased and restructured. The criteria of younger and older generations are taken from Serafino and the criteria of socio-economic class were taken from Bureau Statistics.

Table No. 1 Psychometric properties of tools used in the current study

Assessment tools	Cronbach Alpha
Trends	.73
Rituals	.80
Affects	.72
Traditions	.72

Procedure

Data was collected through online surveys using Google Document and in person by using a questionnaire. Participants were being briefed about the purpose of the research and confidentiality of the research. Informed consent was also taken. The researcher visited different educational institutions and different areas of Lahore to collect data. Participants took 10-15 minutes average to fill out each questionnaire. The data was collected from the University of the Punjab, Government College University Lahore (GCU), Lahore College for Women University (LCWU), Kinnaird College for women (KCW), University of Central Punjab (UCP) and also from different areas of Lahore. After completing the questionnaire, the researcher thanked each participant for giving valuable time for the study.

Table No. 2 Demographic of participants (N=300)

Demographic variables	F	%
Gender		
Male Female	150	50
	150	50
Age (years)		
18-24	142	47.3
25-40	112	37.3
41-56	46	15.3

Educational level

Below Matric	76	25.3
Intermediate-Bachelors	76	25.3
Masters	74	24.7
PhD	74	24.7

Marital Status

Married	147	49.0
Single	140	46.7
Divorce	9	3.0
Widow	4	1.3

Family Structure

Joint	128	42.7
Nuclear	154	51.3
Extended	18	6.0

Income

Below 55,000	102	34.0
56,000-1,50,000	112	37.3
Above 1,50,000	86	28.7

Table 1 displayed the demographic data of the participants. Out of the total 300 samples, 150 males and 150 females were selected from different institutions including Below Matric (76), Intermediate/ Bacholers (76), Masters (74), PhD (74) within age groups of 18-24 years, 25-40 years and 41-56 years. Majority of participants living in nuclear family (154) joint family (128) and living in extended family (18). A small proportion of participants (86) were earning more than 1,50,000 rupees per month while more of the participants (112) were earning 56,000-1,50,000. About (102) participants were earning below 55,000. Most of the participants were married (147), single (140), divorced (9), widowed (4).

RESULTS

This study examined perception about simple and expensive weddings through gender lens with the help of self-developed questionnaire. The data was analyzed by using Independent Sample T-Test and one way ANOVA.

In the current study, the first hypothesis was "There will be significant differences in perceptions about wedding trends and rituals across different genders. Independent sample T- test analysis was conducted to examine hypotheses. The results were presented in table 3

Table 3: *Independent sample t-test of gender with respect to wedding trends and rituals (N=300)*

Gender							Confidence Interval		Cohen's d
	Male		Female						
	M	*SD*	M	*SD*	*t (df)*	*p*	*LL*	*UL*	
Trends	29.90	10.03	33.73	11.58	3.06(297)	.002	-6.29	-1.36	0.35
Rituals	12.96	3.92	14.61	4.40	3.43(297)	.001	-2.60	-.71	0.40

Table 3 indicated that there was a significant gender difference with respect to trends and rituals. The table also indicated that females (*M*=33.73, *SD*=11.58) scored more than men (*M*=29.90, *SD*=10.03) in trends. The results of independent sample T-test also indicated that females (*M*=14.61, *SD*=4.40) scored more than males (*M*=12.96, *SD*=3.92) in rituals. The value of Cohen's d indicated moderate effect size for both trends and rituals.

Furthermore, it was hypothesized "there will be significant difference in perceptions about wedding trends and rituals across younger and older generation". ANOVA was applied to examine the difference of trends and rituals with respect to age. The results were presented in table 4

Table No. 4: ANOVA on younger and older generation with respect to wedding trends and rituals (N=300)

Variable	SS	df	MS	F	p
Between Group Trends	1513.73	2	756.87	6.50	.002
Within Group	34563.81	297	116.38		
Between Group Rituals	42.61	2	21.30	1.18	.31
Within Group	5431.74	297	17.99		

*F value is significant at $p<0.05$

The result of ANOVA indicated that there was significant difference in age groups with respect to trends (F (2. 297) = 6.50; p=.002). Post Hoc was also conducted to identify the difference between the groups. The analysis highlighted that there was a significant difference in trends between group 18-24 with 25-40 (M=4.33, SD=1.36) and 41-56 (M= 4.84, SD= 1.83). There was no significant difference in age group with respect to rituals.

Another hypothesis of the study was "there will be significant difference in perception about wedding trends and rituals across the different educational levels. ANOVA was also conducted to examine the differences between education respect to trends and rituals regarding marriages. The results are presented in table 5

Table No. 5: ANOVA on different education levels with respect to wedding trends and rituals (N=300)

Variable	SS	df	MS	F	p
Between Group Trends	2114.15	3	704.72	6.14	.000
Within Group	33963.40	296	114.74		
Between Group Rituals	127.40	3	42.47	2.39	.07
Within Group	5256.95	296	17.76		

*F value is significant at $p<0.05$

The result of ANOVA in education levels indicated that there was a significant difference in trends (F (3,296) =6.14; p=.000). Post Hoc highlighted that in trends participants till matric have significant difference with MPhil (M=6.28, SD=1.73) and PhD (M=6.54, SD=1.75) participants. However, no significant difference was revealed in rituals (F (3, 297) =6.14; p=.07).

It was hypothesized there will be significant differences in perceptions about wedding trends and rituals across different socioeconomic backgrounds. ANOVA was conducted to examine the differences between incomes with respect to trends and rituals regarding marriages. The results were presented in table 6

Table No. 6: ANOVA on various socio-economic background with respect to wedding trends and rituals (N=300)

Variable	SS	df	MS	F	p
Between Group Trends	459.68	2	229.84	1.91	.15
Within Group	35617.86	297	119.92		
Between Group Rituals	157.73	2	78.86	4.48	.01
Within Group	5226.61	297	17.59		

*F value is significant at $p<0.05$

The results suggested that there was significant difference in rituals (F (2,297) =4.48; p=.01). Post Hoc indicated that with respect to rituals, the significant difference lies between group till 55,000 with till 1,50,000 (M=1.42, SD.57) and above 1,50,000 (M=1.65, SD=.61) However, no significant difference was revealed in trends (F (2,297) =1.92; p=.15).

Moreover, the data was graphically represented for the preferences and opinions. The visual representation is given in this figure I.

Figure I: Graphical representation of preferences of participants (N=300) Fix this figure as picture
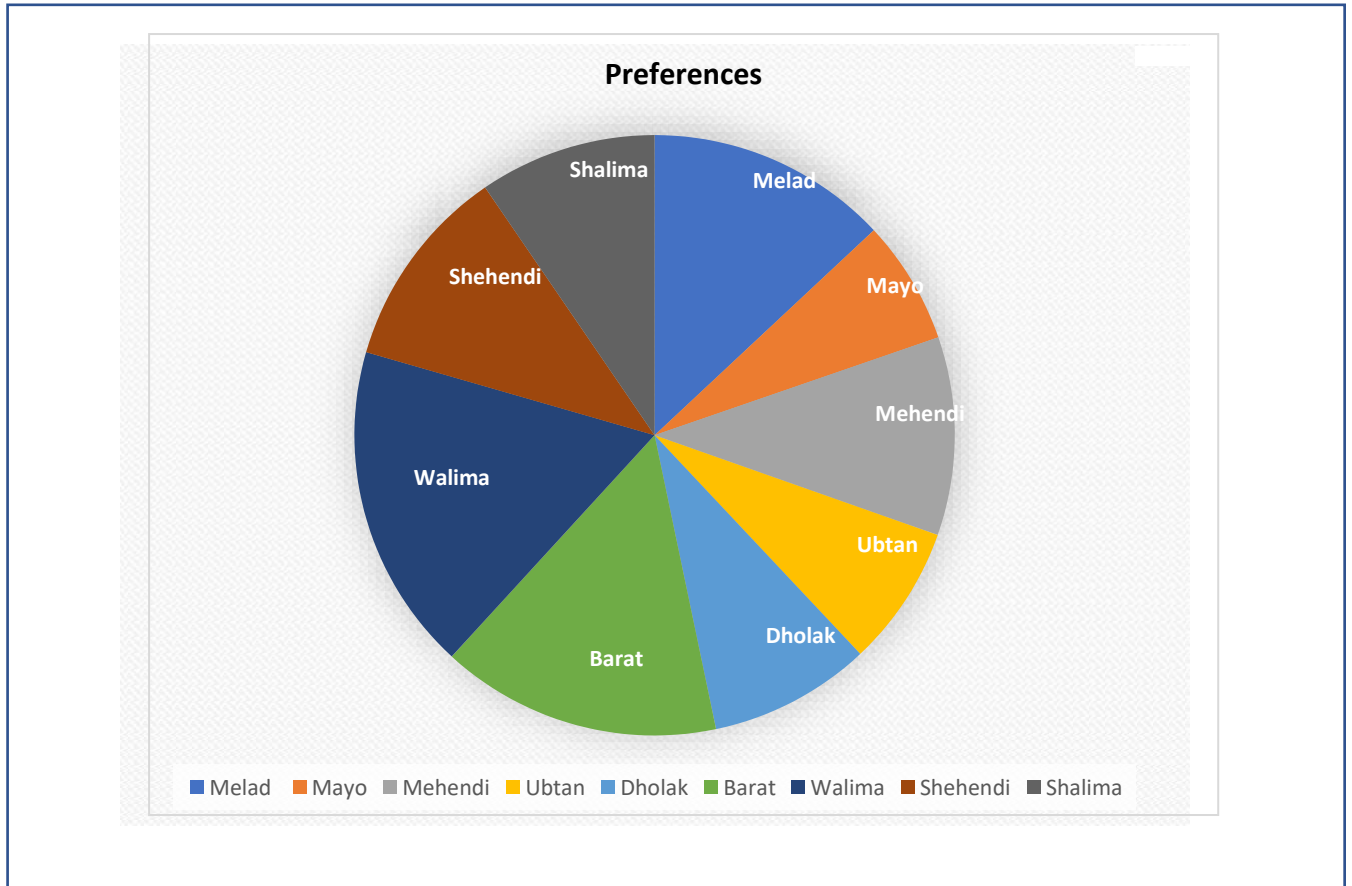
The graph represented that people preference for "Walima" more than other rituals in Pakistan. Moreover, the graph also represented that "Ubtan" is the least preferred rituals according to the participants.Figure II Graphical representation of percentages portraying the reason towards simple wedding
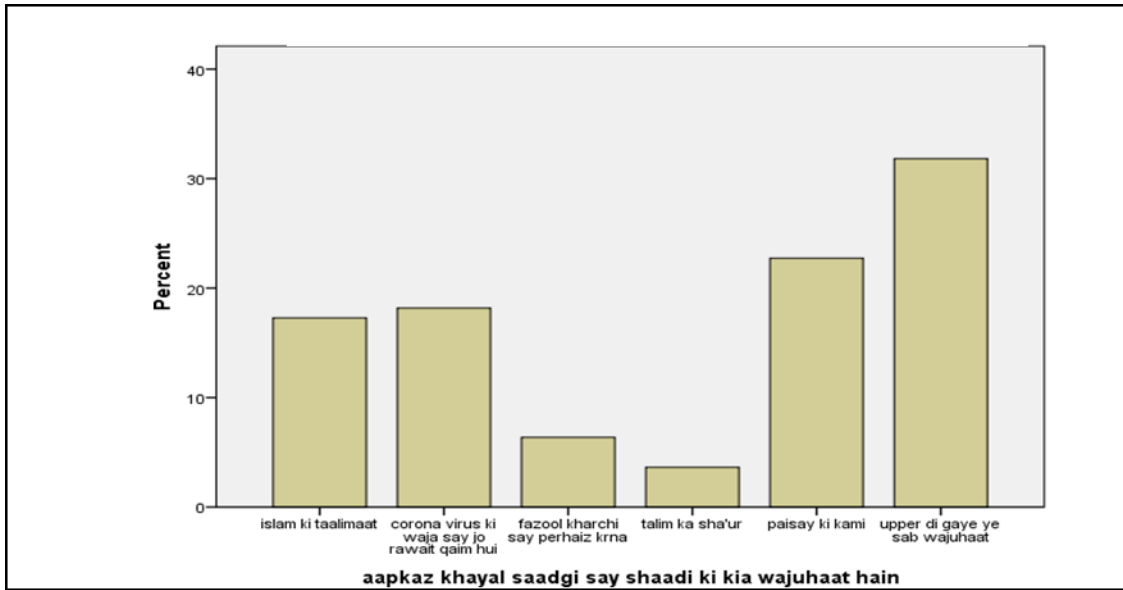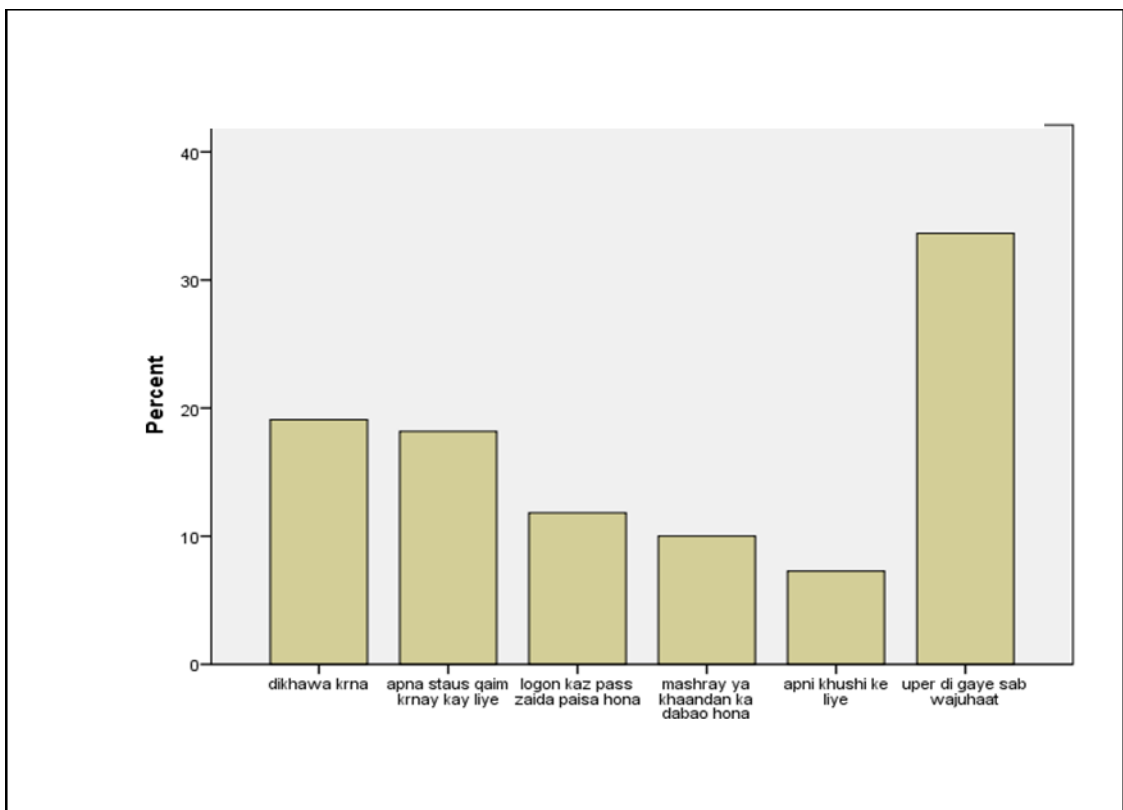
Figure II represented the percentages of reasons why people prefer simple weddings. The least selected option was role of education with a percentage of 2% of total population and the most selected option was all mentioned above with 33% of total population.

Figure III Graphical representation of marriage portraying the attitude towards lavish wedding

The figure III represented the percentages of reasons of expensive weddings. The above figures represented the percentages of opinions and choices of participants towards marriage. The least selected option was self-happiness with the percentage of 9% of total population and the most selected option was all mentioned above with a percentage of 35% of total population.

DISCUSSION

The first hypothesis of the study was that "there will be a significant difference in perceptions about wedding trends and rituals across different genders". In the current study, a significant difference was observed between males and females in the perception of wedding trends. The result showed that females scored higher than males. The finding of the current study was also consistent with previous literature (Myung & Smith, 2018). Another indigenous research also supports the current findings of the study (Munir & Akhtar, 2019). It has been revealed that females scored more in rituals concerning wedding rituals which implies that females are more indulged in wedding rituals than males. The similar findings were also observed (Woźny, 2022).

The second hypothesis of the study was that "there will be significant differences in perceptions about wedding trends and rituals across different socio-economic backgrounds". It was revealed in the present study that there was no significant difference in groups of socio-economic backgrounds of participants concerning the perception of wedding trends. The results indicated that socio-economic backgrounds do not change the perception of wedding trends. Similar reason was found in the work that perception of wedding trends was more influenced by other factors such as religion rather than socio-economic background. However, no significant difference was observed in wedding trends concerning socio-economic backgrounds (Yusuf et al., 2020). The study reflected that different socio-economic backgrounds have different wedding rituals being followed. This result was supported by previous literature. The previous study showed that rituals vary across the status of the families because they followed the rituals according to their financial status and stability (Nazirov et al., 2020).

In the current study, the third hypothesis was that "there will be a significant difference in perception about wedding trends and rituals across different educational backgrounds". The results showed that there was a significant difference in educational levels concerning wedding trends was observed which highlighted that participant till matric have significant differences with MPhil and Ph.D. Participants regarding their perception of trends. The difference in wedding trends concerning educational level is supported by earlier literature by (Lamidi, 2020).However, the result revealed that there was no significant difference in wedding rituals concerning educational levels was observed. The previous study supported the current study in this regard that perception about wedding rituals is more of a factor of religion rather than education. Rituals are more connected with the religious background rather than educational background (Pessin, 2018).

Furthermore, the fourth hypothesis was that "there will be a significant difference in perceptions about wedding trends and rituals across younger and older generations". The findings of the ANOVA indicated that there is a significant difference in perception about wedding trends concerning age and highlighted that there was a significant difference in trends between groups 18-24 with 25-40 and 41-56. In a previous study, it was concluded that there was a significant difference in the generations due to the changes in decades (Utomo, 2018). The hypothesis was accepted as a significant difference was observed in the different generations. Group 18-24 had a significant difference with groups 25-40 and 41-56. The study was supported by previous studies which showed that rituals are consistently changing with the passage of time a Moreover, the data was graphically represented for the preferences and opinions.

The present study also explored the preferences of participants regarding different wedding rituals including melad, ubtan, mayoun, dholak, mehndi, barat, shendi, walima, maqlawa. The visual representation has depicted in above figure I which showed that people are more concerned and preferred walima as compare to other wedding rituals while least preferred event was ubtan.

The researched identified reasons behind simple weddings which are represented above in figure II with percentages of reasons why people prefer simple weddings. The least selected option was role of education with a percentage of 2% of total population and the most selected option was all mentioned above reasons with 33% of total population i.e. Islamic education, Due to Covid, avoid of extra-expenses, role of education, low income.

The researcher also explored the percentages of reasons of expensive weddings. The above figures III represented the percentages of opinions and choices of participants towards marriage. The least selected option was self- happiness with the percentage of 9% of total population and the most selected option was all mentioned above i.e. showoff, to maintain their status, high income, family or societal pressure, self-happiness with a percentage of 35% of total population.

CONCLUSION

The study was based on a quantitative research design to investigate the perception of males and females regarding wedding trends and rituals concerning different factors such as gender, socio-economic levels, educational background, and age group. The study was based on a self-developed questionnaire and all the analyses were examined through t-test and one-way ANOVA. The results highlighted that there is a significant gender difference in perception of wedding trends and rituals practicing in Pakistani society. Females scored higher in both, which means that females are more indulged in practicing trends and rituals than males. Moreover, a significant difference was observed in trends and rituals concerning socio-economic levels, educational level, and within different age groups (younger/ older) that might be due to generational gaps. However, there was no significant difference reported in trends concerning socio-economic levels and rituals in educational background. The present research explored preferences, opinions and reasons of people regarding practices of lavish or simple wedding ceremonies, which highlighted that mostly people know about their religious or social boundaries in rituals, but they have been practicing due familial or societal pressures, due to high income or status, few of them just have been doing for sake of happiness.

Limitations and Recommendations

The research was new and unique that is why participants were little hesitated to respond to different items, data was collected only from Lahore. Most of respondents feel hesitate to talk about their own socio-economic class. The relationship of wedding trends and rituals should be explored with dowry and qualitative could be done to explore the phenomena from different provinces, sects, castes, religion, and ethnic groups of Pakistan.

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