Marriage Proposals & Self-Perceived Experiences of Females for Standard or Ideal Beauty: An Exploratory Study of Pakistan

Dr. Asma Seemi Malik* , Anam Rafaqat** , Maryam Zafar***

* Assistant Professor & Incharge Department of Sociology, LCWU Asma.seemi@lcwu.edu.pk
** MS Student, Gender and Development Studies, LCWU anamrafaqat28@gmail.com
*** Lecture Assistant, Gender and Development Studies, LCWU maryamzafar19@yahoo.com

A R T I C L E   I N F O

A B S T R A C T

In Pakistan, female have been facing numerous challenges during search of best marriage proposal. Over the globe ideal beauty standards have been implicated for female which might be negatively influence their mental and physical health. Findings of the current study analyzed the differences in perception, thoughts, exposure and feelings of individuals regarding their personal or physical appearance and society's positive or negative influences over their perception while looking for marriage proposal. The present study identified the in-depth experience or perception of individual through interviews of 12 females who have been rejected in different marriage proposals and who have been perceived the social norms and cultural barriers that female have been facing all around them while searching for life partner. When females' perception were analyzed through content analyses technique, 8 major themes identified followed by initial coding and sub-themes i.e. self-perception, societal pressure, self-care/ beauty charmer, rejection factors, media networking, psychological issues, gender Differences, and self V/S society. About 15 major themes emerged from the analysis of responses of the participants who had gone through with typical rejection process during marriage proposal were as following; self-perception, societal pressure, selection criteria, religious perspective, beauty standards, rejection factor, social comparison/ responsibilities, psychological issues, socialization, socio-economic comparison, social networking, self v/s society, marriage proposal, gender difference, and culture. The study came into limelight the religious aspects of beauty that is universal and standardized, that was created by the almighty Creator of each and everything which is beautiful and complete in its all aspects. Also, the issues that have been created for females due to socio-cultural expectation believes regarding ideal beauty standards which imparted psychological and physical consequences that were usually negative or detrimental for female health and well-being. The rejection has been basically announced on the basis of typical selection criteria formulated by specific class and followed within that social circle.

Introduction

The feminine beauty ideal may be a socially constructed opinion that are imposed on women to meet those beauty standards by realizing themselves to strive for achieving that most vital assets. The process of marriage proposal has been followed differently in western and eastern cultures. In western societies, the individual has right to choose his or her life partner, families don't interfere in their relationship matter while in eastern cultures like Pakistan marriage is agreement between two families followed by whole process of

proposal selection (Gleysteen, 2018).

Beauty is perception of physical attributes about person that might be pleasing and give sensational illustration to i.e. shape, color, and sound. Beauty can be expected ideal or pleasurable appearance, style or composition of anything. Also, it defined quality or attributes of any individual that highlight sensational appealing (Hagman, 2002).

Women have been facing numerous gender based stereotypical roles and duties in domestic as well as profession sphere that are socially constructed due to their physical attributes. Society is basically trend setter which has defined standards of beauty associated with women regarding their color, hair color, hairstyle, facial feature, figure and attire. Women's beauty is just restricted to their physical appearance rather than their intellectual abilities which has always been mandatory component of their personality (Churianti, 2017).

Globally, social applications have made communication so comfortable regarding beauty standards for females, they feel convenient while interacting with anybody for becoming attractive personality. Which make them vulnerably arrogant about their perceived body image and modification while living in the specific culture. From adolescent age, females start developing complexes associated with their problems in body image as being slim has been considered a perfect body image (Henriques & Patnaik, 2020).

The level of body image dissatisfaction is measured by dichotomies of perceived self and ideal self. Women's personality might be influenced by disparities about perceived body weight or body fat. The cultural and societal environment have been dictating the ideal self-image about right body, which could be either internal ideal or societal ideal (Thummy, 2015).

Around the world females have been using multiple make-up products of various companies to look extraordinarily charming which might be suitable to meet social and financial standards. tons of implication are done to make themselves seems to be elegant and prosperous that have been practiced by female over the globe (Sunaina, 2021).

Ideal Feminine beauty standard has become remarkable burden on females, which they have to bear to get adjustable in society. The main predictors of mental disorders i.e. depression, social anxiety, and eating disorders have been associated with dissatisfaction of one's own body (O'Brien, 2009).

In our society, the teenagers have been on risk due to toxic or fatal beauty standards that are dangerous for their mental and physical health. Positive thoughts regarding their inner and outer self is vigorously important in developing healthy relationship with one's own self.

For Egyptian men, beauty is defined as fair skinned, they reject ladies with dark complexion while searching for marriage proposals. The second most prevalent reason for rejection is overweight (Fayed, 2017).

For marriage you just not only need to preserve your physical appearance or attractiveness with the passage of time but you have to make compatibility and understanding with your life partner as you would be expected to share your whole life. In Pakistan, arrange marriages are planned and practiced by the families or usually parents of the couple (Emery, 2020).

Pakistan's beauty standards have been typically rooted since colonial era i.e. fair color complexion, big eyes, lengthy hair and tiny physique. Women may have to face different societal pressure regarding self-representation according to locality. While marriage has become burdened, they are supposed to be suitable for any proposal in specific culture (Najmi & Shivers……).

Among Pakistani females, so called mother-in-laws who have competition to bring ideal Bahus and compare each other's bahus on the basis of style, walking and sitting at different events and functions such as marriage ceremonies, religious gatherings, and social gatherings or dinners on those social beauty standards (Zahra, 2018).

Literature

A survey was conducted on 3,300 women with the age range of 15-64 to identify their wish for medication of few elements in their physical appearance. The results indicated that about 67% of females have been inhibited their lively events due to their body dissatisfaction. Most commonly they went for body weight loss (Etcoff, Orbach, Scott, and D'Agostino, 2005).

Jha, Adelman, Ramasubramanian and Jain (2009) conducted a research which found that for matrimonial, the dark color complexion is considered to be more detrimental for women as compare to men. Women have been facing more discrimination fue to dark color and men desire for faired color women while looking for arrange marriage.

Gerwal (2008) conducted a research on refugees to identify their psychological well-being due to their skin tone in the west. The results shown that their socio-psychological well-being i.e. self-esteem, self-dissatisfaction and body image has been affected due to societal discriminatory attitude toward them.

In Pakistan a research was carried out to analyze the effect of marriage proposal rejection on self-esteem. The data was collected from working and non-working women through snow ball sampling technique and qualitative and quantitative method was applied for analysis of results. The findings shown that the rejection were caused due to body image, number of siblings, married younger sisters old age and professional incompetence and results depicted no cause and effect relationship between marriage proposal rejection and self-esteem (Iram and Muazzam, 2016).

A study was conducted to identify the gender interest in height choice while mate selection. The data was collected through cluster sampling technique based on five samples of individuals that was born in between 953 and 1964, 1935 and 1954, 1964 and 1076, 1977 and 1983 and 1984 and 1991. The results shown that female's preferred tall mates while males were looked for short heighted partners (Lin tao, 2020)

Bertisson and Gillberg (2017) conducted a study in Sweden to identify how media communicate about beauty ideal. The study was based on qualitative research method, Semi structured interviews were carried out to analyze female's perception about ideal beauty standards that have been communicated through exposure on social media.

Methodology

The present study identified the beauty standards and attitudes constructed by society that affect women in marriage proposals in Pakistan.

Theoretical framework

Following two theoretical perspective were used in the study;

• The perception about human, as they adapt most likely things in their surrounding and compare themselves with other things or people (Leon Festinger Social Comparison Theory, 1954).

• Whatever media has been portrayed or presenting information to the public that could be biased or unrealistic (Framing Theory notion, 1974)

Research design

The present study was based on qualitative research method, interviews were conducted following semi-structured pattern of questions.

Sampling Strategy

For data collection, purposive sampling technique was used

Participants

The sample was comprised of 12 young unmarried females from different age group 25-30 years old from various parts of the city of Lahore. About 6 participants were those who rejected in marriage proposals and 6 participants were with opinion regarding beauty standards.

Tool Measurement

For in-depth analysis, self-constructed questionnaire was designed for conducting semi structured Interviews to collect information regarding beauty standard, societal attitudes and personal beauty from the participants.

Inclusion criteria

Educated unmarried females 25 years to 30 years old who were rejected once, twice or more times in marriage proposals or in matchmaker finding.

Exclusion Criteria

Below the 25 years and above 30 years' old uneducated unmarried females, divorced and widow women, and married men or unmarried males were excluded in the present study.

Operational Definition

Beauty Standards

Beauty standards are socially constructed expectations of perfect figure, complexion and physical appearance of young females rather than appreciation of their inner abilities, skills, confidence, knowledge, and personality.

Procedure

In the current study, self-developed questionnaire was constructed by analysis of literature. The data was recorded through in-depth interviews by participant with their permission in audiotape recorder. The interviews were transcribed in English language then experts were requested to review and analyze generated items for final question statement. The ethical consideration was observed during research, participants were ensured about confidentiality of their data, interview time and location was decided according to feasibility of participants.

Analysis Technique

The thematic analysis was used to bring out verbatim and then intervening and major themes from the transcribed data was gathered to highlight whether beauty standard, societal attitudes and personal beauty

will create any impact on marriage proposals.

Results

Table 1: Perception of respondents about ideal beauty standards and stereotypes while looking for marriage proposal

Themes of opinions of respondent		
Major Themes	**Sub-Themes**	**Emerging Themes**
Perception of Body image	Overweight Partially satisfied	• weight management, skinny • Physic, facial features, insecure, fitting, comfortable, comparison, cosmetic Surgery, weight, Conscious about meal, Curves, physical Appearance
Societal Pressure	Body Shaming/Stereotypes Judgmental Mental Pressure Confidence Behavior Insecurities	• Weight, white complexion, height, modeling figure, skinny, enjoyment, emotions • Negative points, coping-strategies, positive-Thoughts • Cooking, Stitching, Domestic work, rejection • Satisfaction, Healthy lifestyle, Lazy, socialize, • opportunities, Abbaya, Hijab, treated unfairly • Tension, weight, dehydration, focus on herself, appearance, discriminatory behavior,
Self-care/ beauty charmer	Special effort Mind set Physical Appearance Beauty Creams	• using beauty products, Clean skin, acne free, exercise, diet, creams, sunblock, cleansing, sunscreen, moisturizer, serum, weight, BMI, walk • Fair Complexion, fresh skin, competition, proud, beautiful, • Women's Priority • Harmful Chemicals
Rejection factor	Causes of Rejection	• Complexion, Weight, height, educated bride, class system, over makeup
Media Networking	Cosmetics Influence of social media Portrayal Drama/film Industry	• Excessive use of makeup, Social Media usage, beauty creams, Advertisement • Fair and lovely, glow, Acne, complexion, fashion, Leading character, clean skin, • Leading character, Role, beautiful,
Psychological Issues	Mental Health V/S physical health Low self-esteem	• Inferiority complex, rejection, Dark complexion, stress, depression, bulimia, vomiting, diet, • Curve nose, big forehead, pimples, negative thoughts, extremely skinny, Obesity, small height, Lack of confidence, show piece, pock
Gender Differences	Critically for Male Cooking Height Comparability	• Financially Stabled • Gender specified (women's role). • Character attitude, flirt,
Self V/S society	Education Male Friends Modernism	• Over less qualified, working or non-working, well mannered, respect, value, disrespect, taunt, • Co-education, urban life of women, self-assumptions, class system, • Dressing, Culture, narrow minded people, class system matter,

Table 2 Experience of respondents about ideal beauty standards and stereotypes while being rejected in marriage proposal

Themes of respondent who were rejected in marriage proposals		
Major themes	**Sub-themes**	**Emerging Themes**
Self-perception	Perfection Partially satisfied Grooming	Perfect, complete, confident, relief, figure, health, education, social skills, domestic skills, professional skills, Comfortable, encourage, too skinny, extra conscious. Judge, ideal body, fat, archive, Environment, job, help

Societal pressure	Mentality Stereotypes Glamorous	Compatibility level, morals, mental demands, negligence, confidence, discussion about herself, Mindset, time, money, makeup products, pretty, beauty to marriage, beauty to achievement, Perception, pretty, desire, mindset, fit in, competition, Brown color
Selection criteria	Parents Baho Perception/restrictions	Cooking, backing, stitching, handmade embroidery, household chores, Pretty, fair complexion. Insult, job, demands, requirement, all-rounder, Life start after marriage, dine out, dressing, trips
Religious perspective	Beauty Faith/believe	Beautiful, universe, artificial, eye lash, tall, short, dark, fair Ayet, independent, slave, basic rights, positive development, helper, listener
Beauty Standards	Artificial cosmetics Special effort	Transformation, whiting injections, lip surgery, eye surgery, eye lifter, checks lifter, Botox, smile, big eyes, cosmetic surgeries, life race, Fairness, Care, grooming, presentable, makeup, boost confidence, professional requirement, whiting creams, diet, weight
Rejection factor	Causes of rejection	Skinny, Complexion, professional standards, smile, height, unrealistic beauty standards, living standards, parents income, perfect body, face features, caste, fashion, over makeup,
Social comparison/ responsibilities	Woman on screen Off screen women/typical women	Sleeping, studio, shoots, professional institute, home, friends, party, social gathering, food Domestic work, Daughter, care, job, update, husband, in-laws, responsibilities
Psychological issues	Mental health Behaviors Stereotypes Stress management	Hurt mentally, lose self-worth, disturb routine, parents suffer, tension, burden, anxiety, depression, rejection, allergy, negative comments, suffer, humiliation, stress, traumatizing, crucial time, self-esteem, Nagging, self-esteem, Suicide, life time, job rejection, emotional hurt, fantasy, decision, Arguments, negative comments, emotional hurt, judge, comparison, build inn, comparison with sisters, Arguments, negative comments, emotional hurt, judge, comparison, build inn, comparison with sisters, Beauty, equal education, Abbaya, pilot, outdoor profession, bigger eyes, long hair, complexion Didn't teach, cry, fear, apologize, problem face, modesty,
Socialization	Positive grooming Family strength	Unconscious brain, strongly inculcate, strongly rooted, passion, beauty passage, typical women, demanding, moral standards, Groom positively, girlish way, backbone, disturbance
Socio-economic comparison	Lead class Middle or low class	Chief, servant, maintenance, dressing, appearance, social circle, 15% families exist, Domestic responsibilities, job, 85% families exist
Social networking	Portray Drama or fashion industry	Advertisement, perfect girls, creams, whiting injection, trend, body shaming, job, brainstorming, Leading role, Fashion, beauty, news channel, rating, no intelligence, smartness, education, able to attend camera, fully cosmetic, dummy
Self V/S society	Society beauty standards Self-beauty standards	Perfect complexion, perfect figure, model body, no fat, overly qualified, English language, job, cosmetic maintenance, physical-appearance, perfection, Inner abilities, Softness, politeness, comb hair, clean nail, tie hair, presentable, best creator, beauty is everywhere, skills, support, responsible, confidence
Marriage proposal	Education Height Male friends Social media Finance Modernism	Basic need, care, respect, commitment, understanding, level, domestic violence, control, cleaver, demanding rights, job focused, pressurize, behavior, conservative family, caretaker, lifestyle, sharing responsibilities, ego Problems, no acceptance, justification, according to their son, Co-education, lack of women institute, acceptance, change, mindset, conservative families Important, update, informative, life with social media, Strong, income, dowry, car, expansive surgeries, expansive makeup, healthy diet, exercise Trend, presentable, culture, joint family, issues, inappropriate, too modern

Gender difference	Cooking Female Male specified specified	Priority, Women responsibility, dependent, expectations Beauty base rejection, no stress, Teacher, doctor, prefer, Earner, every profession
Culture	Variations	Fashion, adoption, dressing

Discussion

The qualitative analysis was conducted to collect in-depth information about beauty standards in marriage proposals. Both groups (1- opinion of females regarding beauty standards in marriage proposals, 2- females passed through the situation of rejection in marriage proposals on the basis of beauty standards) have same thoughts and experiences regarding beauty standards in marriage proposals. All the responses were almost similar with a slightly difference.

The first major theme was ***Perception of Body Image***. Weight has become common problem in our physical appearance which is considered as essential element in beauty. Participants said, they are worried about their weight. Few participants were worried because of skinny and few were worried due to overweight. One of the participants is very conscious about her dressing because of heavy physic, *"I think, I'm not physically perfect. I think, I'm slightly fat or maybe there is some problem in my physique. Besides this, I've no issue but I feel insecure sometimes that people are beautiful and have perfect physique. And I'm not that much perfect as my body is fat. I don't wear tight clothes because I look fat".*

Another participant also said that, *"It is very common here like people pointing out that "you are getting fat control yourself otherwise you can't find perfect match"*

One of the partially satisfied participant said that, *"If someone is skinny, she wants to gain weight and if someone is fat.. She wants to lose weight. If someone has high fat curves, they want to reduce it. So, I feel like mostly women are never happy about their appearance and it's not just about being fat. And in this I consider society is playing a major role".* Females are unhappy and dissatisfied with their physical appearance i.e. body weight, height and color complexion. Almost every respondent had issues with weight and complexion. Everyone has been trying to get a perfect body or figure that media portrayed. Females are doing exercises and followed diet plans to look imaginary. The finding of present study was supported by the study on women who were having dietary habits and participating in weight-control activities when they failed to maintain weight reduction that might be linked to a drop in self-esteem and an increase in depressive symptoms (Bacon et al., 2005). Another study found that obesity was associated with increase in focus on the manipulation of body size, which has resulted in guilt, body shaming, and anxiety in individuals. Females' body size is really matter on their personal satisfaction (Andreyeva, Puhl & Brownell., 2008).

The second major theme was ***societal pressure***. Society set the beauty standards for women. Everyone is in the race of beauty due to societal pressure. One of the participants said that, *"Obviously yes our society wants this. And we made a perception that a woman should be fair, not to be fat or not be skinny and perfect figure. I think these are the perceptions in our society that what kind of women should be".* Female have been faced a lot of societal pressure regarding beauty and acceptance. Mostly Rejection in marriage proposal depended on female physical appearances. The present finding was supported by, Women are evaluated more positively by males when they might be thin, and were even criticized by other women when they were not thin. Society has been continuously pressurized by depicting the ideal body images of skinny women through the media. Resultantly, women have been felt "normative dissatisfaction" with their bodies (Stice & Shaw, 1994).

Nobody can imagine how much mental pressure a women have to face just because of these societal standards. One of the participants said that, *"Mothers always advice their daughters to learn the household work as it is very important. But, when the marriage proposal arrives then it considers as 2nd priority and your physical appearance comes first that gives intense stress or tension".*

People's behavior is also a kind of societal pressure. One Participant is very disappointed just because of these standards not only in marriages but also in workplace. People treat you unfairly because you are no pretty. She said that, "When I get out in the society and notice everywhere is beauty standards, I've been a part of several organizations and communities and all of them treated me with the beauty standards they had. That's why because I wear abaya and I cover my face. And I found that people don't consider me and gives me opportunities just because I wear abaya and cover my face. And this thing affects me. "

Third major theme was ***Self-care/ beauty charmer.*** Everyone has been using different beauty and skin care products to make themselves beautiful and empowered. They feel confident when they do makeup. One of the participants said that, *"I do make efforts whether conscious or unconscious. I try to keep my diet healthy, I buy beauty products that keep my face clean and acne free. I usually do these kind of general efforts. And as to why, I think this is because since my childhood everyone around me like all women try to look beautiful and act a certain way. And in my overall society everyone wants to look perfect, and beautiful. So, to fit in that I also got in the race"*

Everyone is trying to keep her skin fresh and glowing. Another participant also said that, *"The precaution about to use sunblock/sunscreen is necessary. And when you went at home it is important to cleanse your face, moisturize your face and then use any good serum for good skin is consider must So that my skin will not be damaged. And I make my mind and I use these products according to my BMI. If my BMI is going good then I know, the thing I've to change is my diet. And in diet what I've to do is to avoid junk food that's it. Except this, I don't follow any diet"*

Fourth major-theme was about ***Beauty Standards***. Physical appearance has been significantly important for every woman at every place. Women have to look presentable and attractive. One of the participants said that, *"Physical appearance is considered more important especially for women, or it becomes the priority for women to look good." "People show off their new brides in-front of others as she is moon (a symbol of beauty) but no one never said that: look my bride is look like night (as dark as night). One of the term use for it (hath laya meli hondi ay), people feel very proud that, look our new bride is so pretty. They actually show off their daughter in-law in-front of others."*

Another participant said that, *"I went to a wedding where the bride was considerably less fair or have dull complexion. And even the groom was equally or more dull as compared to bride...But everyone was pointing out towards the bride and was saying that look the bride is not looking good. . So, then I realized that people are still stuck in this misconception and all because of the beauty standards we're still portraying on screen"*

Nobody care about how many chemicals used in manufacturing these beauty products. One of the participants said that, *"People use it. They forget how much chemicals it has. We don't know how much side effects we would have after using these products. But media portray strangely and female are using these products"*

Fifth major-theme was ***Rejection Factor.*** There are number of factors exist in our society for female rejection. But complexion is one of the biggest factors of rejection. Participant highlight the fairness factor as it is very important. One of the participants said that, *"When anyone came to see a woman for a marriage proposal mother-in- law will be compulsory. She has some perceptions about her "BAHO". Not perceptions but she idealizes her "BAHO". Our society's women think that a (Baho) should be fair, well mannered, can move on in our society (socialize), beautiful etc. we made a whole standard. People focus on physical appearance rather than nature. So fairness counts a lot"* Fairness and physical appearance is of one the demanding factor for bride. *"Current situation in India and Pakistan in marriage proposals is complexion (fair) "when we hire aunty (rishty krwany wali), boys family first ask if the girl is white or not because we need a white girl"*

Media Networking was sixth major-theme. World widely, teenagers have been started using social media 24/7, children are also started using phones from early age. Social media has been playing crucial role set beauty standards through different kind of advertisement of beauty products. One of the participants said that, *"Instagram is like a new business for the influencer and other people. They are promoting business, clothes etc. we know from the social media that "beauty comes by Appling primer, concealer, foundation etc." People, who used powder, today need it all. If we talk about any other cream, they will tell you that you will get fairer skin by applying 6 days or 24 hours etc. they basically show you that you have a darker skin but it gets fair it after applying these products. Means how is it possible, Promoting selling it. We are selling fair color". This is what social media doing it".*

Drama and fashion industries are major components of social media which have created different criteria for the selection of actress or model. Society is expecting ad adopted this criteria while BAHO selection. One of the participants said that, *"Have you ever seen a girl in media who have dull complexion? Mean in a role where they are playing as a lead role and if they came to know that they are fat for that role, they start to do exercise, and follow strict diet before shooting. It means, if you have to work for that certain role and you are fat, and then you cannot do that role on screen. Whenever we see a role in which a fat girl is acting...then the character mostly will be negative or evil. And if it is nay be not a character of evil then it will be a role of grandmother."* According to Bell & Dittmar, 2011, the media has always been promoted a manufactured image of what the "perfect figure" is for the female; therefore young females have stressed feel

to feel body dissatisfaction.

Another participant also said that, *"See how fashion changes in TV dramas, we follow it immediately, just as we follow the beauty standards so quickly. And our media industry is so inconsiderate. A serial Pari Zaad came on Hum TV. In this drama lead character sanwla larka dikhaya ha (which is a good portrayal of body image) however, the actor they choose for the role is very fair himself, and he is black with the help of makeup. Look from this how many good and dark skinned people there are in our media industry. Because they have no chance to come forward"*

Seventh major-theme was ***psychological Issues*** emerged from initial coding. There are a lot of psychological issues women have to face just because of these beauty standards i.e. inferiority complexes of skin, body and overall appearance which is disturbing mental health because it's out of control. One of the participants said that, "*When reject in marriage proposals, definitely your mental health will effect. Maybe you have never thought so much about yourself but after rejection in marriage proposal you start to think about yourself what the reason is and why I had rejected. When you rejected two or three times, you start looking for flows in yourself like my complexion is not white, my height is not good, I am fat, because of all these, and you go into depression". Then you think about yourself like you are not like the other girls, you don't have importance or you don't have a value. So there is a fight with you and Allah that you made me like this or what is lacking in me" so yeah its affect your mental health and even physical health and it has ruined the lives of many girls because we are not getting married so yeah depression r stress automatically comes when someone rejects you so many times".*

Females are in stressful situation most of the time due to their physical appearance. Another participant said that, *"When I gained weight, I would like to say that wherever I go and wear any clothes, my first thought doesn't look fat because of it and it causes stress and depression all the time"*

Eighth major-theme emerged was ***gender differences*** in expected roles and duties socially constructed by society while searching marriage proposal. One of the participants said that, *"When a male proposal came, we don't see his appearance. Our families focus on his career. And boy should be settled. We don't see anything else. I don't understand, why we don't see a women's ability. Our focus is just on her appearance"*

Another participant said that, *"When mother in law came to see you for her son, after the first and second question, the question must come that you can make bread, you can make food. It is a necessary question".*

Height is also a factor of rejection. We are discriminating on the basis of height. We idealized that male should be tall then female. It is a misconception. One of the participant said that her sister's mother in law always pushing her by saying that,*"Use this tip, make a drink, it makes you taller, my son have a good height. How do you two look in the pictures?"*

Self V/S Society was ninth major-theme as everybody has a different opinions regarding beauty in society. Physical appearance is considered in beauty rather than her abilities. One of the participants said that,

"So in my point of view beauty is how much you are confident in yourself. And society beauty standards are girl should be fair, heighted, zero size figure, weight 45 not more than actually we also want like this because we are not confident about our self"

One of the participant said that Morality is very important in case of beauty. Morality depends on your communication especially you can attract people through your morality. But society have different point of view regarding beauty.

"My concept of beauty is always human morality, if a person is good at talking to you, he looks lovely no matter what. Beauty is not just about looking cute. There are a lot of people who are beautiful to look at but when you talk to them you don't feel like talking again"

Tenth major-theme emerged from codes was ***Marriage proposal's belief.*** The participant said that, class system matter a lot, *"when marriage proposal came, it might be they will not reject you when they know that she is studied in co-education but they will think for a moment that the boys will be her friends ...somewhere this things stuck in the mind. "May be it is not possible in the elite class family because they have male friends and parties. So I think it will be normal for them.*

Cultural dressing is acceptable in our society. If we try to change dress code then we have to face negative comments and arguments from society, one of the participants said that *"If women dress up in western clothes she's considered non cultural and people think she's too out to be a married woman "ghar basanay wali nai ha".*

First major-theme emerged was ***Perception of Body Image***, when women were interviewed who have been faced rejection in marriage proposals due to beauty standards.

One of the participants was very confident about herself. She thought that, she has all the abilities that make her perfect. "*If I talk confidentially and openly about myself, always felt perfect in health physique and education. Now in the current era every woman should be capable of professional and domestic skills just to survive, and I always thought I am capable enough for both skills*"

Another participant was partially satisfied with herself because people compare her with siblings or other beautiful women on the basis of height, complexion, and facial features etc. Participant said that*, "I was very confident before about myself before the rishta system. Everyone always told me you are perfect and you know a lot of skills, you manage households very well and you can do it. Even I was a bit fat not in the means of obese but a healthy person. Even I was little fat not too much fat but I was healthy". So I was very confident and happy from my body. But now every single person who comes to meet us on the basis of marriage proposal made me realized that I should look after myself and pay extra attention. Each and everyone just talk on different arguments and then go away*"

One participant is not feeling good about her appearance. Friends always encourage her to move on in her life. She is trying to keep busy herself in job. Participant said that, *"I have been feeling comfortable in my own body but I haven't always felt this way. I felt something bad when any marriage proposal came because every time I heard something different. Yeah but now I am doing my job and feel very comfortable because my friends always encourage me"*. The present finding are supported by S, napp, Hensley-Choate, & Ryu, 2012, Body image perceptions may begin as early as childhood, and a large part of one's body image perceptions is influenced by one's familial ties. Family support has been found to have a significant influence on having a positive body image, according to research.

We are living in a kind of society where everyone is trying to pressurize you and your family to do something that can make you beautiful. *Societal pressure* was second major-theme that can disturb mental health. One of the participants said that, *"Just to find a perfect groom many parents neglects the demands, mental health, compatibility level which their daughter wants and they never realizes that they did this. They never understand that the morals and confidence of their daughters that is decreasing gradually, when they have to face the situation of being discussed on the daily basis"*.

The beauty products are not necessary but women have to use these products to move in typically advanced society. A Participant said that, *"Beauty does effect because every other women spends a lot of their money and time on makeup and skin care products. Even I think that these things will make me look pretty. I also think that these things are not important but I use them every time. But if we bring beauty in rejection than yes I felt a bit hurt"*

Another participant said that,"*This is our society which has set a standard for the women to look beautiful to set fit in a society. Due to this a perception is made in society that a women should always look pretty*"

Parents and society have different selection criteria for girls in case of marriage proposal. Parents train us like domestic chores are really important. The thing which I experienced is just your physical appearance. Firstly people will judge you on the basis your physical appearance then will see other factors. Participant said that,

"We girls are taught from the start that we should know about households, cooking, and stitching so we cannot be rejected, but those who came for marriage proposal they judge us on the basis of appearance. Beauty matters a lot in this matter, so yes! Beauty affects my life badly"

For Baho different kind of **selection criteria** is followed by society for show off that was third major-theme. One of the participants said that, *"Nowadays people need a daughter in law who has fair complexion nevertheless how their son looks. This is an absurd standard set in society by people that a daughter in law should be beautiful or our self-esteem will be offended. Gorgeous daughter in law is important in this society nowadays"*

Another participant said that we make effort to look beautiful.*"Everyone wants to be beautiful because that is in demand nowadays. For marriage proposal women should be attractive, for a job women should be gorgeous, means if you have the element of beauty in yourself than you are a so called all-rounder in everything"*

Religious perspective was fourth major-theme, as Islam is very calm and beautiful religion. A respondent beautifully described about God's creatures. Respondent said that,*"Allah almighty is the creator of whole universe how can someone doubt the creation of mighty, can you make something that he creates. Human being cannot even make a single lash of an eye. There are some artificial extensions but if one of our lash is burned it cannot grow again. Allah almighty has created everything which existed in this system and we should not make any doubts in his creation, some people are dark some are white, some of them are skinny and some of them are fat, some are tall and some are short, the bottom line is they all are created by*

Allah almighty. Prophet (PBUH) said in his khutba that kisi ghory ko kaaly py koi foqiyat hasil nai ha"

Another respondent also said in a very disappointing way that Allah is the only one who help us, *"Allah is the one who created everything, he is the only one who grants you your every wish and helps you, ultimately this society has left us alone".*

Fifth major-theme of **Beauty standards** identified, according to which females have been transforming their self for others. There are a lot of beauty products and cosmetic surgeries existing that help to make their physical appearance according to expectation of society. According to respondent, *"Simple transformation to make others happy should not be done for example the trend of Botox nowadays. Many artificial cosmetic tends are prevailing nowadays in the society such as lip surgery, injections, eye lifter, cheek lifter and many more physically and facially"* Etcoff, Orbach, Scott, & D'Agostino, 2005 conducted a study to identify women's self-consciousness about their looks in Saudi Arabia, it was found that is a global problem, 90% women wanted to transform at least one element of their physical appearance.

Everyone is doing effort at her physical appearance because nobody wants to feel the pain of rejection. One of the respondents said that, *"I undergo a lot of changes just to look pretty. I made efforts for my complexion, and weight loss. Weight is the main thing that people notices when they look at you. To make my complexion fair i used several creams and for weight I tried many diet plans because I felt that this is the need of time. Parents have to face a lot whenever someone rejects the marriage proposal, that's why I changed myself a lot"*

Everyone has been faced the same **Factor of rejection** during process of marriage proposals which was sixth major-theme. The main reason is color complexion. Your complexion should be fair, milky and shining because when you're in laws take you out you should look like a full moon, after beauty standards professional standards are really essential. If you are earning good then you will get a handsome life partner. Other than that your height matters a lot. One of the respondents also said that, *"Caste matters a lot in Pakistan for example if we are Rajput than it is compulsory to make matrimonial match in Rajput caste. It is also vital in our family. Family status is also considered an important factor if family is rich than it will determine that the groom will get a car and handful of dowry"*

Seventh major-theme was Social **Comparison/ Responsibilities.** *According to respondent house wives are typically compared with the women on screen, both of them have different kind of duties and responsibilities. A respondent said that, "After artificial cosmetic trends observing women on TV have made husbands and brothers to forget the fact that those women do this stuff on the basis of their job. They have to do this from morning to 5pm in the evening and afterwards they are busy in their world of socializing. A typical woman who is doing job has ultimate responsibilities of family, even after that she is keeping herself with the trends of the society. If we talk about the married women, she cannot neglect her husband. She can neglect anything in the world including herself but she can never neglect her husband and in laws. Also she can never neglect her social and religious responsibilities. The comparison between women who belongs to different statuses has made a sense of insecurity within many housewives. They always felt a sense of threat that their husband may get attracted towards other women".*

Another respondent also said that, *"Whenever people come for a marriage proposal they tend to like the younger sister. They conveys this message through marriage bureau that they like younger sister more than the elder one. It is not to blame sisters but people do not understand that. Due to this stress your self-esteem get low which results in that you do not talk to anyone agrees with everyone's decision and feel less confident while making any decision"*

Socialization is one of the major eighth major-themes that might be important to shape personality. Family plays vital role in development of positive non-discriminatory thoughts and personality characteristic. One of the participants said that, *"Islam has declared first institution of education of child is mother, those institutions of 5 to 7 years become the base of one's life. That woman who appears on television does not belong to any family. They might have their own families and they try hard to make it strong and for that they come out. When someone has a passion than they tend to work out, but for a house wife or an ordinary women it is not possible. An ordinary cannot adopt everything. You should never expect this standard from the one who cooks for you and handle all the house chores, and I think this should be taught to man"*

Family is the most important element in your positive grooming and to make yourself feel satisfied with your physical appearance. If anyone from your family might ever pointed you out on features or physical appearance then you would feel disappointed and develop self-complexes. The present finding were supported by study conducted on body image perceptions that may begin as early as childhood, and a large part of one's body image perceptions was influenced by one's familial ties. Family support has been found to have a significant influence on having a positive body image (S, napp, Hensley-Choate, & Ryu, 2012).

Some respondent said that **socio-economic status** is very important when you look for marriage a

proposal that was ninth major-theme. According to respondent lead class families have different kind of lifestyle, there more focused to maintain their social circle. They have servant and chief to maintain their food and home. In Pakistan, hardly 15% families belong to elite class and 85% families are belonged to middle and low class. Middle class families have typical women involved in all kind of domestic responsibilities.

Women have been used as a symbol to promote social networking which tenth sub-theme. Due to their beauty they have been treated as a showpiece on TV either it may be a fashion show or any news channel for highest rating. A participant said that, promoting beauty products that make you fair is actually promoting the concept that only fair woman is beautiful.

A respondent said that, *"Media portrays the perfect beauty in front of viewers due to which it affects the beauty standards of people. Media always portray things in which they can get high rating. They tend to advertise that and make business out of it. Nowadays trend of various creams is very common in Pakistan. Just to accomplish fair complexion people are going crazy about this. Whitening injections are being used by many actresses of industry and public is following them. All these type of things are shown on media"*

Everyone is beautiful in their own way but society has set standards for being beautiful which included fair skin and perfect model body. The eleventh major-theme **Self v/s society**, both have a different concept of beauty. One of the respondents said that, *"For me the definition of beauty is our abilities, skills, talent and confidence. But society has defined it on some perspectives such as figure, height, complexion, and features. It means that if you comprise these properties than you are special and perfect especially for in the context of women"*

Another respondent said that, *"Women's beauty lies in is her skills and how she supports her family. In difficult times how much is she confident in her skills to cope up with that situation. But unfortunately society has fixed the parameter for women within beauty standards and these are such things which one has not made herself.*

Numerous expectations are associated with any **Marriage Proposal** which is twelfth major-theme. People are going to change their mind set with the passage of time A respondent said that, *"Probably in cities both man and woman are working together just to make ends meet and creating healthy environment for family. That's why now many people pay attention on education of a person so she can help her husband in difficult times"*

Height might be a main reason of rejection in marriage proposals. All participants have same opinion regarding height. One of the respondents said that, *"Many people rejects woman on the basis of height, they always need the appropriate height which matches with their son. I have personally experienced this type of behavior during marriage proposals phase"*

Having male friends would not be a factor of rejection in marriage proposals. One of the respondent said that, *"It exist only 50% other 50% do not accept this, because many institutes are co. If someone's daughter is studying in o-education than mostly their sons have also studied from there. You cannot argue about that. You should develop more women institutes or demolish co-education system"*

Now day's financial status is very important factor. People want to get their children married in financially strong family. A participant said that, *"Family plays an important part. If family is rich than dowry will be ample even getting a car in dowry is in trend nowadays"*

Actually we categorized profession and responsibilities on the basis of **gender differences** that is thirteen major-them. One of the respondents said that, *"Some people demands for educated daughter in law and must be a working women. Even some demands that she should be teacher or doctor"*

Society has different expectations from male and female. Respondent said that, *"Beautiful woman and handsome earning man is now been made the basic requirement of the society".* Media has been portrayed both male and female differently according to stereotypical expectations. The present finding is supported by the Heinberg and Thompson, 1995, through content analysis genders differences were found in media portrayal. The research identified that men and women were depicted differently when we talked about body weight. Women were represented extraordinarily thin in the media, but males were portrayed as being of average weight or muscular.

Culture and its variations also play significant role in setting trends that was fourteenth major theme. One of the participant said that, *" If we compare our culture decades back and now, we use to take culture and religion equally but now we just adopt the culture trend even they are supporting our religion or not. Now we have mehndi ritual, we shifted from full dress to half blouse. It was not our culture. The woman who wore this is those who idealize this. Culture may have variations but we are adopting culture according to our own perspectives"*

Conclusion

Pakistan has a significant beauty standards inspired by western exposure through social media and colonial or cultural fusion. Usually female's attractiveness was measured by white complexion, eyes, lengthy hair, and a tiny physique. Women continue to face different restrictions and societal pressures on self-representation regarding the context of their locality. Marriage is not all about appearances it is about sharing your life with compatibility, abilities and understanding. In the present study, researcher found that physical appearance and attractiveness has been considered more crucial during marriage proposals or in mate selection. Females are not satisfied with their bodies as well as their physical appearance because of societal pressure or attitude. Furthermore, female's opinion regarding beauty are different they are doing struggle to make herself prettier because people made it necessary for everything. If you want people accept you then you have to be beautiful. Furthermore, there is a lot of psychological problem a women have to face after rejection i.e. anxiety, stress, low-self-esteem, low-confidence, inferiority complex, trauma, loss of self-worth & decision making power and distressing. Furthermore, there is a lot of reasons for rejection in marriage proposals like complexion, weight, height, caste, financial status, culture, qualification, socio-economic class and professional standards. On the other hand, media is a strongest influencer and communicator that highlight those gender stereotypical sex roles targeting just females' physical appearance, body image, out wear, and features on the basis of perceived expected beauty standards of our society. Every beauty product and beauty treatment have been introduced by social media. Media have been depicting imaginary standards that have no actual implication in reality that's just for models on screen or red carpet and advertising, but due to media exposure females' self-perception regarding their own self let down when they might have been faced rejection in marriage proposals, based on beauty standards that people have been inculcated through social media.

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