

# Self-Silencing, Communication Patterns and Marital Adjustment in Married Couples

 Mahnoor Saleem<sup>1</sup>

 Irum Fatima<sup>2</sup>

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## Abstract

This study explored the relationship between self-silencing, communication patterns and marital adjustment in married couples. The study assumed a positive association between self-silencing, communication patterns, and marital adjustment and hypothesized the prediction among them. One hundred participants were recruited from Lahore, Pakistan, who had a duration of marriage between 1-8 years. To assess the study variables, the Self-Silencing Scale by Dana Jack (1992), the Dyadic Adjustment Scale by Spanier (1976) and the Communication Patterns Questionnaire by Christesen and Shenk (1991) were used. The results revealed that self-silencing, self-demand/partner-withdraw, and partner-demand/self-withdraw were negatively correlated with marital adjustment. At the same time, constructive communication had a significant positive correlation with marital adjustment. Hierarchical regression for husbands showed that constructive communication patterns positively predicted marital adjustment. The study is beneficial for the understanding of researchers and the awareness of the public about marital well-being.

**Keywords:** Self-Silencing, Communication patterns, Marital Adjustment, Married couples

## 1 Introduction

Marriage is one of the achievements of life, where one chooses a partner with a new role and desire. It includes a passionate and legitimate duty that is very important in any adult's life (Nitsche & Hayford, 2020; Wallerstein, 2019). Marital adjustment is vital to have a worthy marital relationship. Life partners enter marital relationships with various beliefs and opinions about happiness and vary in their desires for happiness. In this way, communication, involvement and sharing are the pillars of adjustment in marriage (Nawaz et al., 2022; Slathia, 2014). The current research provides an introduction of variables and concepts used in the study, a review of the existing literature and research on self-silencing and communication patterns in married couples,

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<sup>1</sup>University of Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan

<sup>2</sup>University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan

**Corresponding author:** [mahnoor.saleem24@gmail.com](mailto:mahnoor.saleem24@gmail.com)



and the role of these variables in the marital adjustment of married couples.

Self-silencing is when a person inhibits and suppresses their feelings and thoughts, including anger, thoughts that their partner is wrong, egocentric or illogical (Patrick et al., [2019](#); Robba, [2023](#)). The central component behind the theory of self-silencing is that an individual deliberately and intentionally chooses to suppress their voice and, in this manner, give up the feelings of self to protect a relationship (Patrick et al., [2019](#)). Individuals high in self-silencing are generous and self-sacrificing people who remain quiet about their sufferings and distress while trying to maintain or enhance their interpersonal relationships. This procedure of degrading and repressing one's emotions and sentiments causes a fall in an individual's confidence, self-esteem and feelings of a lost self (Tariq & Yousaf, [2020](#)).

Communication is one of the most crucial processes relating to society and is utterly necessary for the honing and polishing an individual's skills and interactions, which would help in adulthood (Hargie, [2021](#)). According to some sources, Eighty-five per cent of marriages are communication-based, and if this line of communication is disturbed, the marriage itself will bear the negative consequences (Jacobson & Margolin, [2019](#)). So, having poor patterns of communication is potentially detrimental for the couple.

Mazzuca et al. ([2019](#)) put the relay of emotions and personal meanings as partners in marriage in an attempt to figure each other out and view each other's issues and unique attributes through their lens under the category of marital communication. It is, hence, evident that more communication is going on in marriage through hearing the other, expressions, gestures and even silence rather than simple speech. Without proper communication, the marriage is more likely to fall apart, as communication keeps any meaningful association, including marriage, alive (Sassler & Lichter, [2020](#)).

Marriage is also an area based on proper adjustment, which means there are few regrets over adapting to new scenarios and minimal usage of defensive mechanisms and worrying (Wallerstein, [2019](#)). The degree to which two married individuals perceive each other's behaviour patterns as fulfilling is called marital adjustment. Marriages achieve harmony between those two individuals who communicate properly and can approach their marital and familial problems with a positive attitude and arrive at mutual agreements (Pramono, [2020](#)). This type of adjustment is the way individuals in a marriage change, acquire, and set the right way to behave and engage in exchange with each other to attain the highest level of fulfilment the relationship can offer (Huston et al., [2021](#)).

## 2 Literature

As per the contextual model of marriage proposed by Fincham & Bradbury ([1988](#)), the quality of marriage is contextualized upon the carriage of interactions between individuals, so marital adjustment itself is greatly dependent upon the couples' communication patterns. So, it is held that both contexts, distal, which includes communication patterns, and proximal, the significance of a person's gender role, would influence the quality of and adjustment within the marriage.

### 2.1 Past Research Studies

Pietromonaco and Overall ([2021](#)) suggested that to ensure and improve a close relationship, women are dominantly impelled to encompass self-silencing, and this loss of voice can be depicted by the covering of their emotions and prerequisites, which adds to cut down their confidence and over the long run, an assumption of losing one's sentiment of self. The consistent restraint of one's individual beliefs and ideas from their partners brought about discouragement, low confidence, and a loss of voice (Payne-Steele, [2021](#)). Furthermore, it was also found that husbands revealed more trouble than wives in imparting their feelings and emotional skills, being

passionate about character, and conveying feelings that influence the nature of a marriage due to their facilitative role in intimacy.

Sillars et al. (2021) found that the wife usually had demands, and the husband tended to withdraw communication instead of reverse case. Moreover, Sivagurunathan et al. (2019) shared that males stated more silencing than females. For both genders, the scores of depression and silencing were positively correlated. Results additionally demonstrated that depressive symptomatology represented a critical level of the difference in silencing; however, social desirability did not represent a considerable augmentation in the variability described in silencing the self.

Medeiros and Rubinstein (2015) investigated and proposed that male self-silencing augments were usually prejudiced by the desire to appear emotionless and rigorous. Men are motivated to restrict their considerations to minute or low subjects, straightforwardly separating themselves from others to appear more autonomous and reputable (Borkowski & Thorpe, 2023). According to this study, when both spouses are self-silenced, they have more dissatisfaction and distress when interacting with their self-silencing members with reduced overall communication. Additionally, females' self-reported silencing was identified with their own and their partner's relationship adjustment (Carrillo, 2022).

Romero-Canyas et al. (2013) noticed that after experiencing rejection, people's hostility is moderately clarified by the level to which they had primarily repressed their beliefs and feelings to satisfy the basis of rejection (Jiang et al., 2021). It was also found that rejection-sensitive women react well to rejection; however, when meeting their partners, they are also prone to self-silence. The dispositional rejection sensitivity predicts women's greater hostility after rejection, and in this association, self-silencing is the mediator (Kahya, 2021).

(Brannen and Collard (2023) found that couples encountering troubles and difficulties in their marital life either neglect to try to convey and communicate, or the efforts they do make demonstrate unsuitable, often prompting disagreements (Jacobson & Margolin, 2019).

Shaud and Asad (2020) conducted a study and found a high correlation between communication patterns and marital adjustment. Findings further suggested that the compatibility of spouses with more robust communication skills was higher than that of spouses with weak interaction skills (Priyadharshini & Gopalan, 2020). Mehrpouya et al. (2021) revealed that both constructive and unconstructive communication between spouses was influenced by financial strain, which was also a good mediator than individual emotional distress of the linkage between economic strain and marital instability. Moreover, no gender differences were reported.

Prager et al. (2019) also found that both partners feel less verified when their spouse withdraws from disagreements. Also, for husbands, self-verification fully mediated the link between demand/withdrawal pattern marital satisfaction, and for wives, a partial mediation was reported (Itzhakov et al., 2022).

Shaud and Asad (2020) confirmed that the relationship between marital adjustment and communication is high for those women for whom relationships were more important, as compared to women with less relationship-focused standards. Moreover, Abreu-Afonso et al. (2022) assured that a couple's capacity to talk about issues successfully is one of the most significant indicators of global marital satisfaction. He recommended that communication skills are essential not just because they give way to tackling problems and contrasts but also because they make an expanded intimacy dimension feasible.

Iordachescu et al. (2021) demonstrated an extremely noteworthy association between marital adjustment, stress and depression. The results additionally indicated that exceedingly educated working and non-working married females can do well in their marital life and are free from misery

compared to educated working and non-working married females. Similarly, Pietromonaco and Overall (2021) proposed that effective communication is an essential factor for a strong relationship. If two individuals fail to convey their emotions, wants, and desires, their relationship might be unfavourably influenced (Karimi et al., 2019). Talking to one another about the issues in the relationship may resolve many problems and strengthen the relationship by diminishing the likelihood of any other individual making misunderstandings.

So, in light of the literature mentioned above, it can be concluded that the patterns of communication and self-disclosure greatly influence the adjustment married couples adopt whenever a problem arises between them. There has been attention towards the maintenance, increased intimacy and marital adjustment among couples due to the increased divorce rate in current societies, as marital maladjustments are the consequences of dissatisfaction. This research interest has long been the focus of investigation in the West and Western countries. However, in Pakistan, this topic has not been extensively studied, and there is a great need to conduct research concerning various variables in the area of marital adjustment. The current study was planned to determine the level of marital adjustment concerning self-silencing and communication patterns in Pakistani society. This study is an effort to find how self-silencing and communication patterns in married couples affect their marital adjustment and to highlight the problems regarding communication of different matters between married couples.

## 2.2 Aims and Objectives

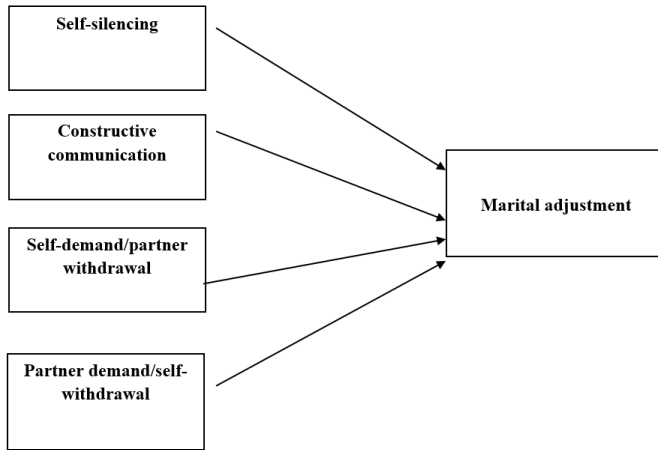
This research is carried out.

- To investigate the relationship among self-silencing, communication patterns and marital adjustment in married couples.
- To investigate whether self-silencing and communication patterns are likely to predict marital adjustment in married couples.

## 2.3 Hypotheses

- There is likely to be a significant positive relationship between self-silencing, communication patterns (constructive communication, self-demand/partner-withdraw and partner-demand/self-withdraw) and marital adjustment of married couples.
- Self-silencing and communication patterns (constructive communication, self-demand/partner-withdraw and partner-demand/self-withdraw) are likely to predict marital adjustment in married couples.

## 2.4 Hypothetical Model



**Figure 1:** Hypothetical model of Self-silencing, Communication patterns (constructive communication, self-demand/partner-withdraw and partner-demand/self-withdraw) and marital adjustment of married couples.

### 3 Methodology

#### 3.1 Research Design and Sample

This correlational research design (cross-sectional) recruited the sample comprised of 50 married couples (N=100, male participants = 50, female participants = 50) living in Lahore city through a purposive sampling technique.

##### 3.1.1 Inclusion criteria. Following are the inclusion criteria.

- Participants from Lahore were included in the sample.
- The duration of marriage was from 1-8 years.
- The education of the participants was at least 12 years.

#### 3.2 Assessment Measures

It is silencing the Self-Scale (STSS). The STSS scale, developed by Dana Jack (1992), is a self-report measure used to determine the degree to which individuals self-silence in their interpersonal relationships. The scale consists of 31 items, of which five items (1, 8, 11, 15, 21) are reversed scores. It is a 5-point Likert scale, and global scores of this scale range from 0 to 115, with higher scores indicating stronger opinions and actions of self-silencing.

The Seven-Item Short Form of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale. It is a multidimensional assessment of marriage in which emotional fulfilment evaluations were enhanced with self-reports of noticeable practices and events. It is a 32-item scale created to operationalize four components of marital adjustment: agreement, fulfilment, attachment and affectional articulation.

Communication Patterns Questionnaire-Short Form (CPQ-SF). It is a self-report measure in which a couple of members individually report their typical communication patterns. It consists of 11 items and has three subscales. The rating of this scale is on a 9-point Likert scale (1 = very unlikely; 9 = very likely) to indicate the representativeness of the conflict and communication patterns in their relationship.

**Table 1a:** Descriptive Statistics of Demographic Variables for Husbands (n=50) and Wives (n=50).

Variables	Husbands		Wives	
	<i>F</i>	%	<i>F</i>	%
Employment status				
Employed	50	100	06	12
Unemployed	0	0	44	88
Regional affiliation				
Urban	43	86	43	86
Rural	07	14	07	14
Family system				
Joint	38	76	38	76
Nuclear	12	24	12	24
Type of marriage				
Arranged marriage	29	58	33	66
Marriage of choice	21	42	17	34
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Age	29.60	3.49	25.68	3.20
Education in years	16.14	1.48	15.22	2.10
Number of family members living in your house	8.22	4.44	8.22	4.44

**Table 1b:**

Variables	Husbands		Wives	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Duration of marriage	2.92	1.84	2.92	1.84
Number of children	.86	.81	.86	.81
Monthly family income	108700	48600.94	108700	48600.94

### 3.3 Procedure

The research protocol was administered individually. All the queries of the participants related to the research were answered, and it was made clear that the partners had no cooperation while responding to the questions asked in the protocol. The average time consumed by the respondents to fill out the questionnaire was almost 10 to 15 minutes. The research protocol was given to 53 couples (106 participants), of which 50 (100 participants) filled the protocol. So, the response rate was 94.34%. Obliging expressions were granted to respondents for being part of the research.

### 3.4 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations for the study were as follows:

- Prior permission was obtained from the respective authors to utilize the questionnaires.
- Informed consent was taken from the participants.
- The privacy of the participants and confidentiality of the information was kept up.
- Study participants were allowed to withdraw at any time during the research.
- The results of the study were reported accurately.

## 4 Results

### 4.1 Reliability Analysis

**Table 2:** Reliability Coefficients and Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables (N=100)

Variables	k	M	SD	a.	Min-Max	
					Potential	Actual
Self-silencing Communication Patterns	31	3.09	.43	.76	1-5	1.81-4.48
Constructive communication	4	27.64	6.88	.78	1-9	1-9
Self-demand/Partner withdraw	3	12.74	5.82	.61	1-9	1-9
Partner-demand/Self withdraw	3	12.52	5.72	.60	1-9	1-8.67
Marital adjustment	7	3.70	.74	.65	0-6	2-5.14

Note. M=Mean; SD=Standard Deviation; Mini=Minimum value; Max= Maximum value;  $\alpha$  = Cronbach alpha

Two of the subscales of communication patterns, Self-demand/Partner withdrawal and Partner-demand/Self-withdraw, have relatively low reliability, i.e., .60 and .65, respectively; however, the reliability values of other subscales were significant enough to carry on further analyses following the present research hypotheses.

**Table 3:** Correlations between Demographics and Study Variables for Married Individuals (N=100)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1. Age	-	-.51**	.26**	-.47**	.000	.15	-.07	-.06	.39**	.42**	-.11	-.15	-.14	.07	.07	-.12
2. Gender		-	-.23*	.86**	-.03	.000	.02	-.08	.00	.00	.000	-.02	.03	-.06	-.06	.15
3. Education in years			-	-.32**	-.25*	-.08	-.13	-.07	-.13	-.09	-.02	-.37**	.08	-.13	-.13	-.11
4. Employment status				-	.01	.10	.06	-.07	.03	.03	.04	-.01	-.01	.08	.08	.04
5. Regional Affiliation					-	.21*	-.18	.14	.34**	.25*	-.20*	.01	-.00	-.01	-.01	.01
6. Family system						-	-.42**	.08	.22*	.21*	-.17	.02	.03	.10	.10	-.07
7. Number of family members living in house							-	.13	.05	-.00	.32**	.14	-.17	.04	.04	.13
8. Type of marriage								-	.08	.04	.21*	.02	.04	.02	-.05	.05
9. Duration of marriage									-	.66**	.05	.20*	-.27**	-.05	-.05	-.12
10. Number of children										-	-.03	.22*	-.20*	-.00	-.00	.03
11. Monthly family income											-	-.23*	.02	-.07	-.07	.13
12. Self-silencing												-	-.33**	.36**	.36**	-.29**
13. Constructive communication													-	-.26*	-.26*	.31**
14. Self-demand/Partner-withdraw														-	1.00**	-.29**
15. Partner-demand/Self-withdraw																-
16. Marital Adjustment																

Note. Gender 1 = male, 2 = female; Employment Status 1 = employed and 2 = unemployed; Regional Affiliation 1 = urban and 2 = rural; Family System; 1 = joint and 2 = nuclear;

\* p < .05, \*\* p < .01, \*\*\* p < .00

The results showed that self-silencing, self-demand/partner-withdraw and partner-demand/self-withdraw were negatively correlated with marital adjustment. At the same time, constructive communication is positively associated with marital adjustment. Among the demographics,

education in years and monthly family income were negatively correlated with self-silencing, while duration of marriage and number of children were positively associated with self-silencing. Similarly, the duration of marriage and the number of children were negatively correlated with constructive communication.

**Table 4:** Correlation between Demographics and Study Variables for Married Couples (N=50)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1. Age	-	-.6	-	.05	.20	-.05	-.05	.38**	.41**	-.23	.20	.16	-.03	-.01	-.10
2. Education in years	.37**	-	-.21	-.07	.02	-.04	-.17	.52**	.55**	-.05	-.03	-.30*	.11	.12	-.01
3. Employment status	-	-.32*	-	-.29*	-.08	-.20	-.02	-.18	-.09	-.10	-.43**	.20	-.13	-.04	.33*
4. Regional affiliation	-	-	-.03	.06	.19	.01	-.08	.01	.16	.07	-.04	.31*	.27	-.24	
5. Family system	-	-	-	.31*	-.19	.12	.37**	.29*	-.25	-.07	-.00	-.19	.02	.09	
6. Number of family Members	-	-	-	.31*	-.19	.12	.37**	.29*	-.25	-.07	-.00	-.19	.02	.09	
7. Type of marriage	-	-	-	.31*	-.19	.12	.37**	.29*	-.25	-.07	-.00	-.19	.02	.09	
8. Duration of marriage	-	-	-	.31*	-.19	.12	.37**	.29*	-.25	-.07	-.00	-.19	.02	.09	
9. Number of children	-	-	-	.31*	-.19	.12	.37**	.29*	-.25	-.07	-.00	-.19	.02	.09	
10. Monthly family income	-	-	-	.31*	-.19	.12	.37**	.29*	-.25	-.07	-.00	-.19	.02	.09	
11. Self-silencing	-	-	-	.31*	-.19	.12	.37**	.29*	-.25	-.07	-.00	-.19	.02	.09	
12. Constructive Communication	-	-	-	.31*	-.19	.12	.37**	.29*	-.25	-.07	-.00	-.19	.02	.09	
13. Self-demand/Partner-withdraw	-	-	-	.31*	-.19	.12	.37**	.29*	-.25	-.07	-.00	-.19	.02	.09	
14. Partner-demand/Self-withdraw	-	-	-	.31*	-.19	.12	.37**	.29*	-.25	-.07	-.00	-.19	.02	.09	
15. Marital adjustment	-	-	-	.31*	-.19	.12	.37**	.29*	-.25	-.07	-.00	-.19	.02	.09	

Note. Males (Light face values) and females (Bold values). For employment status 1= employed and 2= unemployed; for regional affiliation 1= urban and 2= rural; for family system; 1 = joint and 2 = nuclear; \* p <.05, \*\* p <.01, \*\*\* p <.00

The results revealed that constructive communication positively correlated with marital adjustment for both husbands and wives, while self-silencing, self-demand/partner-withdraw and partner-demand/self-withdraw were negatively correlated with marriage adjustment.

**Table 5:** Hierarchal Regression Analysis for the Predictors of Marital Adjustment (N=100)

Variables	Marital Adjustment		95% CI
	Model 1 β	Model 2 β	
Education in years	.11	.03	[-0.07, 0.09]
Self-silencing		-.12	[-0.60, 0.16]
Constructive Communication		.19	[-0.01, 0.17]
Self-demand/Partner-withdraw		-.10	[-0.13, 0.06]
Partner-demand/Self-withdraw		-.15	[-0.16, 0.04]
R <sup>2</sup>	.01	.18**	
F	1.19	4.04**	
ΔR <sup>2</sup>		.17**	
ΔF		4.71**	

Note. \*p<.05; \*\*p<.01; \*\*\*p<.001

Model 1 for marital adjustment included education in years, while Model 2 included self-silencing, constructive communication, self-demand/partner-withdraw and partner-demand/self-withdraw. The results showed that Model 1 was insignificant while Model 2 was significant with 18% variance having F (5, 94) = 4.71, p =.00 However, the marital adjustment was not predicted by any variables (education in years, self-silencing, constructive communication, self-demand/partner-withdraw and partner-demand/self-withdraw) in Model 1 and Model 2.



**Table 6:** Hierarchal Regression Analysis for the Predictors of Marital Adjustment of Husbands (N=50)

Variables	Marital Adjustment		95% CI
	Model 1 $\beta$	Model 2 $\beta$	
Education in years	-.03	-.02	[-1.14, 0.96]
Self-silencing		-.01	[-0.14, 0.13]
Constructive Communication		.37*	[0.05, 0.68]
Self-demand/Partner-withdraw		.07	[-0.30,0.46]
Partner-demand/Self-withdraw		-.21	[-0.55, 0.16]
R <sup>2</sup>	.00	.23*	
F	.03	2.62*	
$\Delta R^2$		.23*	
$\Delta F$		3.26*	

Note. \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$

Model 1 for the marital adjustment of husbands included education in years, while Model 2 for marital adjustment included self-silencing, constructive communication, self-demand/partner-withdraw and partner-demand/self-withdraw. The results showed that Model 1 was not significant while Model 2 was significant, with 23% variance having  $F(5, 44) = 3.26$ ,  $p = .04$ , in which constructive communication positively predicted marital adjustment for husbands.

**Table 7:** Hierarchal Regression Analysis for the Predictors of Marital Adjustment of Wives (N=50)

Variables	Marital Adjustment		95% CI
	Model 1 $\beta$	Model 2 $\beta$	
Education in years	.33*	.16	[-0.90, 0.86]
Self-silencing		-.23	[-0.18, 0.00]
Constructive Communication		.23	[-0.02, 0.34]
Self-demand/Partner-withdraw		-.19	[-0.38,0.12]
Partner-demand/Self-withdraw		-.00	[-0.26, 0.30]
R <sup>2</sup>	.11*	.31**	
F	6.03*	3.94**	
$\Delta R^2$		.27**	
$\Delta F$		4.10**	

Note. \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$

Model 1 for wives' marital adjustment included education in years, while Model 2 for marital adjustment included self-silencing, constructive communication, self-demand/partner-withdraw and partner-demand/self-withdraw. The results showed that Model 1 was significant with 11% variance having  $F(1, 48) = 6.03$ ,  $p = .02$ . In contrast, Model 2 was overall significant having  $F(5,44) = 3.94$ ,  $p = .01$ . Still, none of the variables (self-silencing, constructive communication, self-demand/partner-withdraw and partner-demand/self-withdraw) in Model 2 predicted the marital adjustment for wives.

## 5 Discussion

Communication patterns allude to the demonstration or occurrence of communicating or sharing information, thoughts or emotions. They are the fundamental components that certify that the people in any relationship appropriately represent the communication norms with one another. It entails understanding, which includes perceiving, inferring and comprehending the sense of the verbal and non-verbal patterns of the other person and sharing meaning (Naeem et al., 2021). At the same time, marital adjustment can be characterized as the general feeling of joy, fulfilment,

and understanding regarding husbands' and wives' interests, aims, and morals (Ahmed & Iqbal, 2019). The results revealed that self-silencing, self-demand/partner withdrawal and partner demand/self-withdraw were significantly negatively related to marital adjustment. At the same time, constructive communication had a significant positive relationship with the marriage adjustment of the couples (Ahmed & Iqbal, 2019). The results were consistent with the past research that those couples, who interacted regularly, found it easy to adjust themselves compared to those who did not. Durães et al. (2020) revealed constructive communication patterns associated with more significant relationship adjustment in married couples. On the other hand, Sillars et al. (2021) concluded that reduced or destructive communication caused a decrease in relationship adjustment and, therefore, affected satisfaction with the relationship.

These findings indicated that when individuals in marital relationships have low education and income, they may increasingly refrain from disclosing their feelings or emotions. Duration of marriage and number of children may increase the probability of self-silencing because people may attribute that their children's future may be influenced by the quality of their relationship with their partner and how they communicate with their partner. The negative relationship between these two variables and constructive communication was also found. This finding was consistent with that of Bean et al. (2020), who demonstrated that constructive communication reduces with an increase in the number of children and increased length of relationship.

The results also revealed that constructive communication was positive, while self-silencing, self-demand/partner-withdraw, and partner-demand/self-withdraw negatively affected their marital adjustment. Karakose & Ledermann (2023) supported the findings, revealing that married individuals with constructive communication patterns have more significant relationship adjustment. In the same way, Indumathy and Kanth (2022) found that destructive communication (self-silencing and withdrawal communication patterns) is negatively related to the marital adjustment of married people.

The results revealed that for husbands, only constructive communication predicted marital adjustment and a positive relationship was found between them. This means that those husbands who effectively communicate with their partners are well-adjusted in their marital lives compared to those who do not. These findings are supported by the findings of Indumathy and Kanth (2022), which showed that constructive communication patterns between married couples predict their higher adjustment to the relationship.

It was found that constructive communication had a positive while self-silencing, self-demand/partner-withdraw and partner-demand/self-withdraw had a negative relationship with their marital adjustment. The findings are consistent with those of Deylami et al. (2021), who demonstrated that constructive communication patterns positively correlate with marital adjustment, while destructive communication patterns (self-silencing and withdrawal) are negatively related to marital adjustment.

The education level of wives was positively correlated with the wives' marital adjustment. This finding was supported by Inman and London (2022), who showed that higher levels of education have associations with relationship adjustment. However, a negative relationship between wives' education level and self-silencing was also found. This means wives with low education levels would be involved in more self-silencing behaviour to maintain their relationships. Moreover, age, number of family members, duration of marriage and number of children were negatively related to constructive communication. These findings are consistent with that of previous research. Hasani-Moghadam et al. (2022) indicated that an increase in age is associated with low constructive communication and more avoidance of communication (Shrout et al., 2023). On the other hand, Durães et al. (2020) demonstrated that constructive communication reduces with an increase in the relationship duration and the number of children.

## 5.1 Conclusion

It can be concluded that communication is the foundation for supporting and promoting relationship adjustment. Individuals with more destructive communication approaches have poor marital adjustment than those with better ones. Moreover, individuals with better adjustment show more constructive and less destructive communication approaches than individuals with poor marital adjustment. Based on these findings, implications and recommendations for future research will be discussed next.

## 5.2 Implications of Study

This research can provide help for future research on the topic of self-silencing and communication patterns between married couples. It can also provide awareness to people to adopt healthy, constructive, and open communication patterns in their marital relationships rather than destructive ones to have a well-adjusted relationship. It is expected that the results of the present study will be helpful for psychologists and counsellors. Future research should also be done on the role of self-silencing behaviour in marital life.

## 5.3 Limitations and Suggestions

The sample size was relatively small and was collected only from Lahore, which cannot be generalized. The inclusion criteria of the study included only the participants from urban areas. So, the results cannot apply to people living in rural areas. Some participants were hesitant to disclose their personal information, which could increase the chances of bias in the reporting of the responses.

## 6 References

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