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A study on perception and attitude towards marriage among unmarried young adults

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Abstract

The study aimed to examine perception and attitude towards marriage among unmarried young adults. A total of 240 unmarried young adults (120 males and 120 females) were selected from six zones of Hyderabad using a purposive random sampling method. The data was collected using self-developed questionnaire to assess perception and attitude towards marriage. An exploratory research design was adopted for the study. The findings revealed that unmarried young adults generally hold positive perception and neutral attitude towards marriage. After conducting correlation analysis it was observed that perception towards marriage ($r=0.397^{**}$) were positively and significantly associated with overall attitude towards marriage at the 0.01 level. Interestingly, the present findings suggest that although respondents had positive perception towards marriage and neutral attitudes towards marriage, both were significantly interrelated, indicating an association between perception and attitude.

Keywords: Perception, attitude, marriage and young adults

Introduction

Young adults, generally considered the age period between 20-35 years (APA, 2023) represents an important developmental phase characterized by identity exploration, career development and the establishment of meaningful relationships. It serves as a foundation for making decisions related to future relationships, marriage and family formation (Bessie and George 2018) [3]. During this transition, young adults attempt to balance personal goals with familial expectations as family continues to influence major life decisions such as education, career and marriage (Bhatia and Auti 2024) [4].

In India the young adult population is of 27.5 percent of the total population. (Indian Census, 2011) [8]. Projected estimation about young adult population is 26 percent of the total population (UNFPA, 2025). In recent decades, there has been a noticeable shift in societal attitude towards traditional gender roles. This shift has been driven by various factors, including increased education and employment opportunities for women, and changing cultural and social norms (Malarvizhi and Geetha, 2023) [15].

Marriage has traditionally been regarded as a significant social institution and an important milestone in adult life. However, changing social values, individual aspirations and evolving lifestyles have contributed to shifts in perception

of marriage, including delayed marriage, remaining single and diverse forms of marital relationships (Siddaiah and Ashraf 2024) [18].

Perception towards marriage refers to individual's, beliefs, expectations and understanding regarding marital relationships, family roles, values and social interactions. Positive family environments and supportive relationships contribute to favourable perception of marriage and while negative experiences may influence uncertainty or less positive view (Sahin and Bilge 2022) [17].

Marriage attitude refers to an individual's feeling, beliefs and evaluations regarding marriage as an institution. It reflects how individuals understand the importance, purpose and role of marriage in their lives and influences their expectations, decisions and readiness for marital relationships. A study conducted by Chandra *et al.* (2023) [5] reported that 95.2 per cent of participants perceived marriage as beneficial for emotional, social and economic support. The majority 64.8 per cent viewed marriage as necessary for life long companionship. Therefore, examining young adults perception and attitude towards marriage is important to understand their expectations, changing beliefs and values regarding marriage as well as the evolving role of marriage in contemporary society.

Review of literature

Radulovic and Avirovic (2016) ^[16] examined young people's views on marriage in the Republic of Macedonia. The findings from 120 university students revealed that most participants perceived marriage as an important source of happiness and personal fulfilment which leads to a better and more stable life.

Kh and Veena (2020) ^[14] studied on views on marriage and cohabitation among young adults. The findings indicated that young adults hold positive view of marriage, considering it a socially esteemed institution. They believed marriage promotes mutual respect, joint responsibilities and stronger emotional bond, all of which enhance relationship stability and individual well-being.

Akgul (2022) ^[1] examined undergraduates perspectives on the concepts of family and marriage. The results showed that students have favourable attitudes toward marriage describing it as a meaningful, valuable and trustworthy relationship grounded with emotional connection and human values.

Ashwini *et al.* (2022) ^[2] revealed that more than half 64 per cent viewed marriage as a responsibility while one fourth 84 per cent expressed willingness to get married. The study highlighted that youth attitudes towards marriage are changing, with greater acceptance of personal choice, evolving relationship patterns and flexibility in marital practices.

Suryadi *et al.* (2023) ^[19] studies on attitudes and intentions of marriage among 140 young adults with age ranging 17-25. The study showed predominantly positive attitude toward marriage with higher levels of positive attitudes compared to negative ones, indicating that they generally view marriage as meaningful and valuable source for future family life.

Ingawale *et al.* (2025) ^[9] conducted a study on working women's perception on marriage and family involving 60 participants aged 25-45. The findings revealed that the majority 96.6 per cent of women had an optimistic view of marriage as lifelong partnership based on trust, support, a source of companionship and stability.

Eluowa *et al.* (2025) ^[6] examined the relationship between family background and marital perception among 450 upper basic 2 social studies students in Nigeria. The findings revealed that students generally have a positive perception of marriage, emphasizing values such as love, emotional readiness, mutual understanding and harmonious relationship.

In conclusion, the reviewed studies consistently demonstrate that young males and females across diverse cultural contexts hold predominately positive perception and attitude towards marriage.

Materials and Methods

Location of the study

The present study was conducted in Hyderabad city of Telangana State to examine the perception and attitude of unmarried young adults towards marriage. Hyderabad was selected because of its diverse demographic population from different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. Sample was collected from six zones from which 12 circles were selected to draw the information from unmarried young adults.

Sample size

A total of 240 unmarried young adults comprising 120 males and 120 females were selected as a sample for the study.

Tools used for the study

A structure questionnaire consisting of 15 items was used to assess perception towards marriage. The scale reliability was found ($\alpha = 0.759$, Cronbach's Alpha). The attitude towards marriage scale consisted of 20 statements covering four major components marriage optimism vs pessimism, romanticism vs realism, religious vs secular orientation and individualism vs interdependence were used to measure unmarried young adults attitude towards marriage. The reliability of the scale was found ($\alpha = 0.740$ Cronbach's Alpha).

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Perception towards marriage

S. No	Category	Male (n1)=120		Female (n2)=120		Total (n)=240	
		f	%	f	%	f	%
1.	Positive	63	52.5	50	41.7	113	47.0
2.	Neutral	25	20.8	44	36.6	69	28.8
3.	Negative	32	26.7	26	21.7	58	24.2
Total		120	100.0	120	100.0	240	100.0

Note: 'f' represents frequency and % represents percentage

Table 1 depicts the distribution of unmarried young adults based on their perception towards marriage. Nearly half of the respondents (47.0%) had a positive perception towards marriage, while 28.8 per cent has a neutral perception and 24.2 per cent had a negative perception. Based on gender-wise distribution males (52.5%) reported a more positive perception than females (41.7%), whereas females were more likely to have neutral views. Overall, unmarried young adults generally hold a positive perception towards marriage, with male showing more favourable perception than females.

Table 2: Attitude towards based on marriage optimism vs pessimism

S. No	Category	Male (n1)=120		Female (n2)=120		Total (n)=240	
		f	%	f	%	F	%
1.	Optimistic	58	48.3	51	42.5	109	45.4
2.	Neutral	38	31.7	40	33.3	78	32.5
3.	Pessimistic	24	20.0	29	24.2	53	22.1
Total		120	100.0	120	100.0	240	100.0

Note: 'f' represents frequency and % represents percentage

Table 2 represents the distribution of unmarried young adults based on their level of marriage optimism. The findings revealed that 45.4 per cent of respondents expressed an optimistic outlook towards marriage, followed by 32.5 per cent with a neutral perspective and 22.1 per cent showing pessimistic outlook. Gender-wise analysis indicated that males (48.3%) reported higher marriage optimism compared to females (42.5%), while females showed a slightly higher tendency towards pessimistic views. Overall unmarried young adults exhibited a

favourable outlook toward marriage, with males demonstrating comparatively more optimistic view than females, as they tend to associate marriage with personal fulfilment, social acceptance and a stable family life.

Table 3: Attitude towards marriage based on romanticism vs realism

S. No	Category	Male (n1)=120		Female (n2)=120		Total (n)=240	
		f	%	f	%	f	%
1.	Romantic	58	48.4	55	45.8	113	47.1
2.	Neutral	46	38.3	33	27.5	79	32.9
3.	Realistic	16	13.3	32	26.7	48	20.0
Total		120	100.0	120	100.0	240	100.0

Note: 'f' represents frequency and % represents percentage

The above table 3 shows the pattern of romanticism vs realism among unmarried young adults towards marriage. The findings indicated that nearly half of the respondents (47.1%) possessed romantic views, while 32.9 per cent had a neutral orientation and 20.0 per cent showed realistic views. On comparing genders majority of males (48.4%) possessed romantic orientation and females (45.8%), whereas females showed comparatively more realistic views. Overall unmarried young adults exhibited a greater inclination towards romantic perspectives on marriage, with slightly males showed slightly higher romantic orientation than females, reflecting stronger expectations of love, companionship and emotional bonding in marriage.

Table 4: Attitude towards marriage based on religious vs secular orientation

S. No	Category	Male (n1)=120		Female (n2)=120		Total (n)=240	
		f	%	f	%	f	%
1.	Religious	56	46.6	55	45.8	111	46.2
2.	Neutral	35	29.2	48	40.0	83	34.6
3.	Secular	29	24.2	17	14.2	46	19.2
Total		120	100.0	120	100.0	240	100.0

Note: 'f' represents frequency and % represents percentage

Table 4 describes the religious and secular orientation of unmarried young adults towards marriage. Nearly half of the respondents (46.2%) exhibited a religious orientation followed by 34.6 per cent with a neutral orientation and 19.2 per cent with a secular orientation. Based on analysis across gender both males (46.6%) and females (45.8%) showed higher religious orientation, while females reported a higher

neutral orientation. Overall unmarried young adults were more inclined towards religious orientation, with males showing slightly higher religious orientation than females, indicating the continued importance of traditional beliefs in shaping marital attitudes.

Table 5: Attitude towards marriage based on individualism vs interdependence

S. No	Category	Male (n1)=120		Female (n2)=120		Total (n)=240	
		f	%	f	%	f	%
1.	Individualism	40	33.3	60	50.0	100	41.7
2.	Neutral	54	45.0	42	35.0	96	40.0
3.	Interdependence	26	21.7	18	15.0	44	18.3
Total		120	100.0	120	100.0	240	100.0

Note: 'f' represents frequency and % represents percentage

The results from Table 5 showed that 41.7 per cent of unmarried young adults exhibited an individualistic orientation, followed by 40.0 per cent with a neutral orientation and 18.3 per cent with an interdependent orientation. Females (50.0%) demonstrated higher individualistic orientation than males (33.3%). In contrast, males reported relatively higher neutral and interdependent orientations. Generally unmarried young adults valued personal independence and self-determination.

Table 6: Overall attitude towards marriage

S. No	Category	Male (n1)=120		Female (n2)=120		Total (n)=240	
		f	%	f	%	f	%
1.	Positive attitude	44	36.7	33	27.5	77	32.0
2.	Neutral attitude	60	50.0	81	67.5	141	58.8
3.	Negative attitude	16	13.3	06	5.0	22	9.2
Total		120	100.0	120	100.0	240	100.0

Note: 'f' represents frequency and % represents percentage

The results from Table 6 showed 58.8 per cent of unmarried young adults exhibited a neutral attitude towards marriage, followed by 32.0 per cent with a positive attitude and 9.2 per cent with a negative attitude. Females (67.5%) demonstrated a higher neutral attitude compared to males (50.0%) whereas males reported comparatively higher positive (36.7%) and negative (13.3%) attitude. Overall unmarried young adults demonstrated a balanced attitude towards marriage, which may be influenced by changing social values, educational exposure, career priorities, and evolving relationship patterns.

Table 7: Relationship between perception and attitude towards marriage

		Marriage optimism vs pessimism	Romantism vs realism	Religious vs Secular orientation	Individualism vs Interdependence	Over all attitude toward marriage
Perception towards Marriage	Pearson Correlation	0.496**	0.352**	0.236**	0.105	0.397**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.104	0.000

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The above Table 7 depicts the relationship between perception and attitude toward marriage and its dimensions. It was observed that marriage optimism vs pessimism, romanticism vs realism, religious vs secular orientation and

overall attitude toward marriage showed a positive and significant relationship with perception toward marriage at the 0.01 level of significance. However, individualism vs interdependence was not significantly related to perception

toward marriage. The interpretation of each dimension is described below to explain the association in a broader context.

Relationship between perception towards marriage and marriage optimism vs pessimism

A significant positive correlation was observed between perception towards marriage and the dimension marriage optimism vs pessimism ($r = 0.496^{**}$) at the 0.01 level of significance. The findings suggest that individuals who perceive marriage positively are more likely to develop optimistic expectations about marital life. This may be because favourable perception strengthens beliefs regarding emotional support, companionship and satisfaction within marriage.

These findings are aligned closely with the study conducted by Ingawale *et al.* (2025) ^[9] reported that young adults viewed marriage as a positive and supportive relationship based on trust and emotional security.

Relationship between perception toward marriage and romanticism vs realism

The analysis indicated a positive and significant association between perception towards marriage and romanticism vs realism ($r = 0.352^{**}$) at 0.01 level of significance. This implies that a positive perception of marital relationships. Individuals who view marriage positively will give more importance to love and companionship in married life.

The findings are consistent with the study conducted by Ganth and Kadiravan (2017) ^[7] found that individuals with stronger romantic tendencies are more likely to develop commitment-oriented relationship as they associate marital relationships with love, emotional connection and companionship.

Relationship between perception towards marriage and religious vs secular orientation

The findings showed a positive and significant relationship between perception toward marriage and religious vs secular orientation ($r = 0.236^{**}$) at the 0.01 level of significance. This indicates that individuals with positive perception of marriage may be more likely to value religious and traditional aspects associated with marriage. This could be due to the belief that marriage holds social, cultural and moral significance which shapes their orientation toward marriage.

The present findings were on par with a study conducted by Keldal (2022) ^[11] found that religiosity increased and readiness for marriage among young adults. The study supports the current finding by indicating that individuals with stronger religious orientations tend to view marriage as a meaningful and valuable institution, contributing to more favourable perceptions toward marriage.

Relationship between perception towards marriage and overall attitude towards marriage

The results demonstrated a positive and significant relationship between perception towards marriage and overall attitude towards marriage ($r = 0.397^{**}$) at the 0.01 level of significance. This suggests that positive perception of marriage contribute to the development of favourable attitude toward marriage. Individuals who view marriage as

meaningful and beneficial may show greater acceptance of marital commitment, companionship, and family life.

The findings are supported by Tamizarasi and Jecinth (2023) ^[20], who reported that positive perceptions of marriage are associated with favourable attitudes toward commitment, companionship, and family life.

Conclusion

The study concluded that unmarried young adults generally possess a positive perception and balanced attitude towards marriage. Marriage was viewed as a relationship involving family support and family values. The findings showed that perception towards marriage were positively associated with attitude of this dimension like optimism vs pessimism, romanticism vs realism, religious vs secular orientation. The study highlights the influence of emotional, cultural, and personal factors in shaping marital perceptions and attitudes.

Future scope

This study highlights on developing programmes that enhance emotional readiness and realistic expectations about marriage among young adults. Further research can explore the perspectives of married and unmarried individuals to understand the relationship between pre-marital perceptions, marital satisfaction and adjustment. Such studies can provide deeper insights for promoting healthy and stable marital relationships.

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