

**IMPACT OF MARITAL CONFLICT ON ANGER  
EXPRESSION AND RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION:  
THE MEDIATING ROLE OF SELF-SILENCING**

**By**

**Shandana Saeed**

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**Thesis Title: Impact of Marital Conflict on Anger Expression and Relationship Satisfaction: The Mediating Role of Self-Silencing**

**Submitted by: Shandana Saeed**  
MPhil/Psy/S-19

**Registration #: 15217**

Master of Philosophy  
Degree name in full

Psychology  
Name of Discipline

Anum Javed  
Name of Research  
Supervisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Research Supervisor

Dr Anis-ul Haque  
Name of Co- Supervisor.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Co-Supervisor

Prof. Dr. Khalid Sultan  
Name of Dean (FES)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Dean (FSS)

Brig. Syed Nadir Ali  
Name of Pro-Rector  
Academics

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Pro-Rector Academics

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I, Shandana Saeed

Daughter of Saeed Ullah Shah

Registration # **15217-MPhil/Psy/S-19**

Discipline Psychology

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## ABSTRACT

**Title:** Impact of Marital Conflict on Anger Expression and Relationship Satisfaction: The Mediating Role of Self-Silencing

The current study was aimed at exploring and evaluating the relationships between marital conflict, self-silencing, anger expression and relationship satisfaction and to explore the impact of marital conflict on anger expression and relationship satisfaction through the mediating role of self-silencing. For this purpose, Silencing the Self Scale (Jack, 1991), was used to assess self-silencing, Sound Relationship House Questionnaire's (Gottman, 1999), subscales pertaining to destructive and constructive conflict were used to assess marital conflict, to evaluate Anger-In and Anger-Out modes of Anger Expression, subscales of Multidimensional Anger Inventory (Siegal, 1986) were used while to assess Anger-Control mode of Anger Expression, Anger Management Scale (Hambry & Banyard, 2013), was used and Relationship Satisfaction was measured using Couple's Satisfaction Index (Funk & Rogge, 2007). The instruments used to measure variables of marital conflict, anger expression and relationship satisfaction were first translated into Urdu and after being put through a pilot study to ensure the functionality of the scale, were then used in the main study. The data for the main study was collected over a sample of 300 married individuals (150 males and 150 females) with ages ranging from 25-65 from the vicinity of Islamabad and Rawalpindi. The results obtained indicated significant positive relationships between destructive conflict and anger-out, destructive conflict and anger-in and for self-silencing and anger-in. Significant negative relationships were also observed between destructive conflict and relationship satisfaction as well as between self-silencing and relationship satisfaction. Mediation analysis however, did not indicate the mediating role of self-silencing in the relationship between marital conflict, anger expression and relationship satisfaction. Relevant to Jack's (1991) theory of Silencing the Self, mean differences across gender indicated that females significantly self-silence more than males. Mean differences also indicated that females significantly expressed more anger-out mode of anger expression. No significant mean differences were found along different family types. One-way Analysis for duration of marriage displayed that anger-in mode of anger expression was used more by individuals who had been married for a shorter duration of time.

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*Shandana Saeed*

## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to my dearest father. Thank you for always encouraging me and for always inspiring me to go forward.



# CHAPTER-1

## INTRODUCTION

It is rare to find any relationship that is always fully devoid of any conflict. At the same time, that is not so healthy in the eyes of professional marriage counsellors. Marital conflict is even more common and working through it is a challenge that both people have to tackle. The word “conflict” brings about a lot of negative connotations with it, however, in terms of marriage, it might not be all that bad. Conflict refers to a disagreement between two or more parties. In the context of marital relations, it can be referred to as a “state of tension between marital partners”. It is truly rare to find a couple that does not fight or have disagreements from time to time. These disagreements may come in different shapes and forms and in different frequencies and different intensities, all based around the types and nature of conflicts between couples and most importantly on basis of how the couple handles previous conflicts. Not all conflict is bad, certain types of conflict may even bring the couple closer together, again, this all depends on how the two parties may handle conflict. The levels of understanding and compromise is of high importance when handling disagreements of such context.

When we discuss conflict, the next thing that comes to mind is anger. The negative apparel of conflict comes in the guise of anger and its association with conflict. How people handle their anger and how people express their anger in varying situations, says a lot about an individual. The expression of anger varies from person to person, same as how the experience of anger varies. How we express anger is one thing but how individuals in martial relationships express anger that might be displaced from

outside or from conflict amongst themselves says a lot about a marriage and the general state of it. How conflict is dealt with has a massive impact on how it is expressed among two parties. This also includes the intensity of the conflict and the negativity of the conflict, which may or may not yield more intense expressions of anger and frustration.

However, there is a major issue that affects how you express anger in these scenarios. That factor is the impulse to self-silence. This means that you tend to keep quiet when you find yourself in conflict, regardless if you're right or wrong. The partner bottles up the anger inside and forces themselves to go along with what the other is saying. This promotes dissatisfaction towards the relationship.

This habit of self-silencing can stem from any number of factors. It may be the result of an upbringing that punished disobedience or liberal ideas. This leads to women being affected by it more but it is a problem for men too. It can also stem from a lack of confidence or self-esteem issues. These tend to cause the person to judge themselves based on outside standards. Many studies have shown that rejection-sensitive people are willing to self-silence in order to stay on their partner's good side. This can be to avoid future heartbreak in the form of divorce.

The way that a patriarchal society affects over-all marriage and gender-roles in a marriage can very much dictate how the marriage will end up functioning. There are certain presumptions and heavy expectations that still do, in this day and age, very much control marriages. The expectation of a submissive wife, limited to her household and the expectation for an authoritative husband, while may draw an apparent and societal definition of a "successful marriage" however something else might be brewing inside, underneath all the covers and disguise. The heavily reinforced aspect of self-silencing might as well be the root of most problems, when anger is consistently repressed, when



dissatisfaction is not properly addressed and participation in conflict becomes one sided, all for the reason that self-silencing is assumed to be the way to a 'happy' marriage. Within cultures where self-silencing is reinforced, it does not always have to be assumed that there is a severe imbalance in equity among the couple, in some instances, especially dictated by research, men have been found to self-silence just as much, if not more, than their female counterparts. Which is another interesting factor to further examine. Why is it that men have been reported to self-silence just as much as women despite the fact that in theory, self-silencing appears to be a highly gendered variable in the way that it has previously been researched? men's self-silencing behaviors and their impacts on the different elements involved in marriage such as anger expression and relationship satisfaction as well as marital conflict behaviors will yield varying results as just as people are different, every relationship and its patterns are different.

A functional marital relationship is something every married couple strives for in their lives, sadly only a few have the capacity to put in the effort and sometimes it ends in a potentially never-ending cycle of emotional abuse, repressed feelings, mixed feelings, and a constant dissatisfaction and no escape as it is frowned upon. Within a majority of the people of Pakistan, there is a stigmatization of marital roles and relationships. The traditional marriage culture comprises of submissive attitudes for a woman towards her husband and the men being ridiculed for being affectionate and permissive towards a wife along with a suppression of emotions, lack of communication and expression between the couple, and dismissive attitudes towards conflict.

The occurrence of conflict is essentially due to a clash of interests. Rahim (2010), states conflict as being a procedure that is born of disagreement within or between social groups. Nicholson (1992), defines conflict as a process that occurs when individuals or groups wish to take part in ventures that are not inclusive of the needs and desires of the other group/individual. Conflict comes in different forms; it can be on an intrapersonal level or an international level or simply between two people.

### **1.1 Rationale of the Study**

The focus of the current study is to assess the impacts of marital conflict on the relationship between anger expression and relationship satisfaction and to see how self-silencing mediates these relationships. The cultural context of this study involving the variables is very important, Jack's model of silencing the self is highly applicable in Pakistan's gendered society where women's role in society is always submissive. Many studies have been conducted on the broad term of anger, however anger expression is a newer aspect that this study aims to understand, specific to marital contexts. Anger expression with self-silencing is also relatively unresearched in Pakistan, especially in context with marital conflict. The main issue with research in Pakistan is that the marital conflict or relationship satisfaction-based studies tend to use questionnaires that inquire about topics that are relatively taboo and people feel uncomfortable answering them, this study aims to address similar issues without being too invasive in regards to such taboo topics. The aim of the study is to gather a deeper insight into marital conflicts, how people express their frustrations and to what extent they actually self-silence. An important factor of this study is that most studies done on self-silencing are gender specific, it will be interesting to explore both sides on the story in marital relationships.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

To study the impacts of marital conflict on anger expression and relationship satisfaction and observe the mediating role of self-silencing among married individuals.

## **1.3 Research Objectives**

1. To examine the relationships between marital conflicts, self-silencing, anger expression and relationship satisfaction.
2. To examine the impact of marital conflict on anger expression and relationship satisfaction.
3. To explore the impact of marital conflict on anger expression and relationship satisfaction with the mediating role of self-silencing.
4. To investigate the role of demographic variables (such as gender, age, education, family type, duration of marriage, etc.) in relation to marital conflict, self-silencing, anger expression and relationship satisfaction.

## **1.4 Research Questions**

1. Destructive conflict will have a positive relationship with Anger-in.
2. Destructive conflict will have a positive relationship with Anger-out.
3. Constructive conflict and Anger-control will have a positive relationship.
4. There will be a negative relationship between Destructive conflict and Relationship satisfaction.
5. Constructive conflict will have a positive relationship with Relationship satisfaction.
6. Self-silencing will have a positive relationship with Anger-in.
7. Self-silencing will have a negative relationship with Relationship satisfaction.

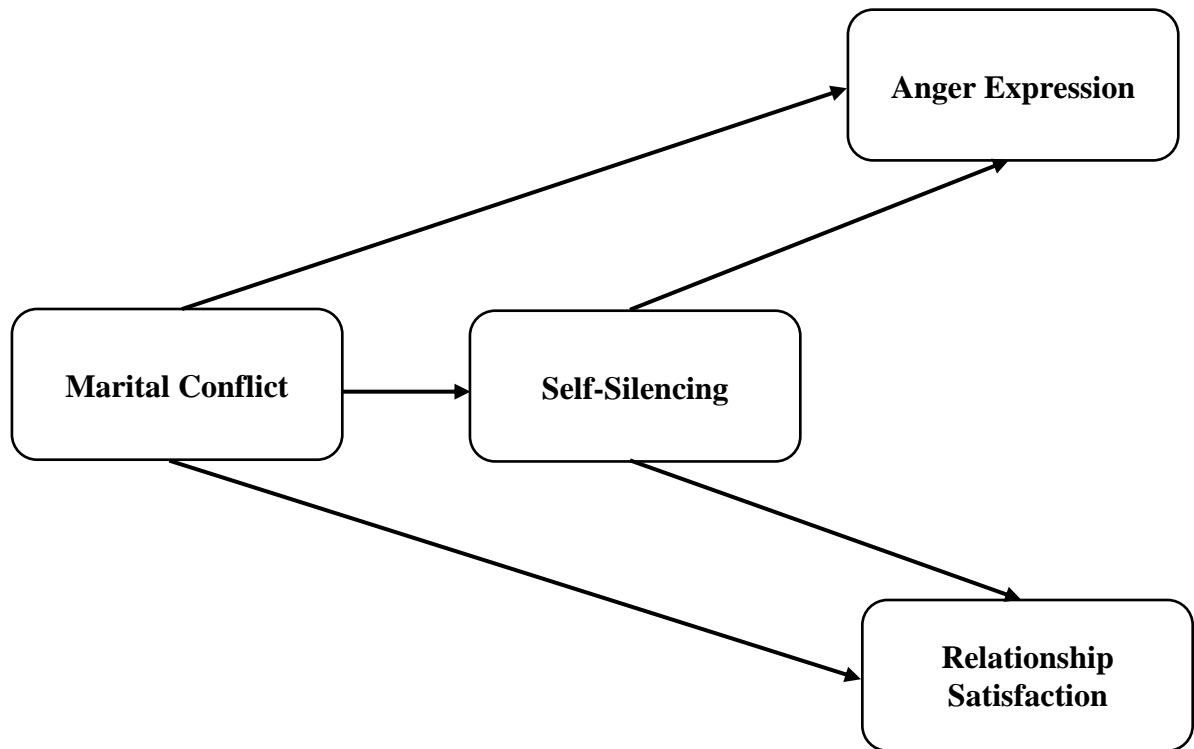
8. Self-silencing will mediate in the relationship of Marital conflict with Anger expression and Relationship satisfaction.
9. Females will self-silence more than males.
10. Anger-out will be high in males as compared to their female counterparts
11. Females will have more anger-in and anger control as compared to males.
12. Individuals with longer duration of marriage will self-silence less than those in the early years of marriage.
13. Higher age groups will have lowered relationship satisfaction levels.
14. Individuals in joint-family systems will self-silence more than in nuclear-family systems.

### **1.5 Null Hypotheses**

1. Destructive conflict will not have a positive relationship with Anger-in.
2. Destructive conflict will not have a positive relationship with Anger-out.
3. Constructive conflict and Anger-control will not have a positive relationship.
4. There will not be a negative relationship between Destructive conflict and Relationship satisfaction.
5. Constructive conflict will not have a positive relationship with Relationship satisfaction.
6. Self-silencing will not have a positive relationship with Anger-in.
7. Self-silencing will not have a negative relationship with Relationship satisfaction.
8. Self-silencing will not mediate in the relationship of Marital conflict with Anger expression and Relationship satisfaction.

- a. Self-silencing will not mediate in the relationship between destructive conflict and anger-out.
  - b. Self-silencing will not mediate in the relationship between constructive conflict and anger-in.
  - c. Self-silencing will not mediate in the relationship between constructive conflict and anger-control.
  - d. Self-silencing will not mediate in the relationship between destructive conflict and relationship satisfaction.
  - e. Self-silencing will not mediate in the relationship between constructive conflict and relationship satisfaction.
9. Females will not self-silence more than males.
  10. Anger-out will not be high in males as compared to their female counterparts
  11. Females will not have more anger-in and anger control as compared to males.
  12. Individuals with longer duration of marriage will not self-silence less than those in the early years of marriage.
  13. Higher age groups will not have lowered relationship satisfaction levels.
  14. Individuals in joint-family systems will not self-silence more than in nuclear-family systems.

## 1.6 Conceptual Framework



*Figure 1.* Model explaining the mediating role of Self-silencing in the relationships between Marital Conflict, Anger Expression and Relationship Satisfaction.

The above figure describes the relationships between the variables of marital conflict, anger expression, relationship satisfaction and self-silencing. The conceptual framework portrays that marital conflict has impacts on anger expression as well as relationship satisfaction. At the center of the framework self-silencing variable is observed to be mediating the effects of marital conflict on anger expression and relationship satisfaction.

## **1.7 Significance of the Study**

This research highlights the ever-changing trends in marital relationships. The Silencing the self theory by Jack (1991), provides a solid theoretical framework for this research and aids in the exploration of the variables and their relationships between them. An important aspect of this research is the application of self-silencing theories and exploration of different modes of anger expression within context to Pakistani culture. The culture being such that inhibited, submissive and self-silencing behaviors are reinforced and encouraged, the application of relevant theories makes for interesting findings and adds to the significance of the research. Another important aspect of the study is that of marital conflict as it is addressed in terms of negative forms of conflict as well as positive conflict behaviors among married individuals. The study further observes different age groups and different durations of marriage as well. While there is much research available on anger, an important aspect of this research is how it addresses different forms of anger and its expression, which enhances the significance of the study.

## **1.8 Methodology**

The current study follows a cross-sectional survey-based design to explore the mediating role of self-silencing in the relationship of marital conflict with anger expression and relationship satisfaction among married individuals.

## **1.9 Delimitations**

The sample selected consisted of married individuals instead of married couples in order to provide more insight into individual experiences in regards to marital conflict, anger expression, relationship satisfaction and self-silencing. Another delimitation of the study can be observed in the scales used. The instruments used in

the research were translated and adapted as it was observed that for the sample, English was a second language and many people found it difficult to understand and relate to the statements on the questionnaires, so the instruments were translated into Urdu for optimal understanding of the scales for the participants. Further a criteria was set that individuals who had been married for 6 months or more would be included in the research as the newly married would take some time to settle into their new environments.

### **1.10 Operational Definitions**

**Self-silencing.** It can be defined as the restrained expression of the self in romantic relationships. Silencing The Self Scale (Jack, 1991) was used in the present study to measure this construct. Higher scores indicated higher levels of self-silencing behaviors.

**Marital Conflict.** Marital conflict is the presence of increased rates of dispute, disrespect, demanding and aggressive interactivity amongst married couples. To measure this variable, the 5-item version of Sound Relationship House Questionnaire (Gottman, 1999) was used, this included 5 constructs from the measure (Harsh Start-up, Gridlock on Perpetual Issues, Four Horsemen, Accepting Influence and Compromise) to assess marital conflict.

***Destructive Conflict.*** Destructive conflicts are conflicts of a negative nature. Higher scores on destructive conflict subscales indicated higher levels of destructive conflict.

***Constructive Conflict.*** Constructive conflicts are conflict situations involving attempts to resolve and come to mutual agreements with reference to disagreements and conflict situations. Higher scores on constructive conflict subscales indicated increased constructive conflict behaviors.



**Anger Expression.** Anger expression denotes the behavioural aspect of a person's subjective process of handling the experience of anger. This variable was measured with the help of two scales: Multi-dimensional Anger Inventory (Siegel, 1986) and Anger Management Scale (Banyard, 2013). Higher scores on both the scales indicated higher levels of issues with anger. The modes of anger expression were operationalized as follows:

**Anger-In.** Anger-in refers to the suppression of anger experience. Anger-In was measured using Multi-dimensional Anger Inventory (Siegel, 1986). Higher scores reflected more anger-in mode of expression.

**Anger-Out.** Anger-out refers to the outward expression of anger. Anger-out was measured using Multi-dimensional Anger Inventory (Siegel, 1986). Higher scores reflected more anger-out mode of expression.

**Anger-Control.** Anger-control is the composed and controlled expression of anger. Anger-control was measured using Anger Management Scale (Banyard, 2013). Higher scores on the scale reflected higher instances of anger-control.

**Relationship Satisfaction.** This is an interpersonal assessment of one's partner's positive affect towards and interest in the relationship. The variable of relationship satisfaction was measured by using Couples Satisfaction Index (Funk & Rogge, 2007). Higher scores indicated higher levels of satisfaction in the relationship, whereas lower scores indicated lower levels of relationship satisfaction.

## **CHAPTER-2**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

#### **2.1 Marital Conflict.**

A common type of conflict is the marital conflict which is found to be a universal reality amongst two individuals who are married or living together in a romantic context. Simmel (1955), highlights the commonality of conflict and how it is entirely normal to have conflict in personal relationships.

The term “marital conflict”, is not restricted to a difference in opinions or occasional discord, rather it consists of a series of conflict situations that go unsettled and result in damaging a marital relationship. There are differing views regarding marital conflict, some view it as being episodic while others see it as a continuous pattern of behavior (Canary et. al, 1995).

According to Buchler et al., (1998), marital conflict refers to the inflated instances of discord, contempt, berating, taxing and antagonistic exchanges between married couples. Cummings (1998), takes a more neutral and comprehensive look at marital conflict and recognizes it to be an occurrence of relational exchanges whether of mild or intense, that revolve around dissimilarity in beliefs and general point of views, regardless of the exchange being constructive and favorable or destructive and hostile.

The marital relationships themselves are almost as distinctive and different as the people in the relationship, one relationship varying from the other, just as people are different from one another, keeping this variation in mind, it becomes evident that

marital conflict is a natural state of affairs and essential to the keep the spirit of the marital relationship alive (Ashford, LeCroy, & Lortie, 2006).

Tolorunleke (2014), defined conflicts in marriage as a “state of tension or stress between marital partners as the couple tries to carry out their marital roles”

## **2.2 Theories Explaining Marital Conflict.**

**Behavior exchange theory.** To explain marital conflict, various theories exist. The behavior exchange theory explains that when couples are not in a state of disturbance in their relationship will display positive behaviors while couples experiencing distress will exhibit negative behaviors (Birchler, Weiss & Vincent, 1975). It suggests that the motive behind the exchange is to increase benefits and minimize costs, couples analyze the possibilities of their relationships and when the negatives outgrow the positives, that’s when most couples fall apart.

A series of studies were conducted in 1976 to understand behavior exchange. Couples were brought in and assembled into two groups being a group of happy and the other of unhappy couples, one group expressing dissatisfaction and the other expressing fulfillment in regards to their marital relationships. During the study, both groups were asked to form resolutions on “high and low-conflict tasks”. They rated the effects of their intentional conduct on their partner and the effects of their partner’s conduct on themselves. In the first study, the unhappy couples did not vary from the happy couples on how their intentional conduct was expected to be received. Interestingly though the conduct of the partners in the unhappy couples group was met with negativity by their spouses which was in contrast of the happy couples group. In a second study, the unhappy couples’ conduct was likely to be coded by their partners as

considerably more negative than they intended (Gottman, Notarius, Markman, Bank, & Yoppi, 1976).

Similarly, it's been suggested that when there is a higher level of mutual exchange of positive behaviors among non-disturbed couples. This has been suggested as being a "central characteristic of successful marital interaction", (Azrin, Naser, & Jones, 1973). However, they also found that just because there is a presence of high-frequency positive behaviors, it does not always mean there is a mutual, equal level of exchange in behaviors. The non-disturbed couple may exhibit higher levels of positive behavior reciprocity in contrast with disturbing couples. By displaying more frequent positive behaviors, the non-disturbed couples may be more inclined to show more reciprocity as well.

**Interdependence theory.** There is a notion based on the conflict that married couples are in fact, dependent on one another and this dependency is what leads to issues in the marriage. Functional marriages depend upon their capability to connect and interrelate to help them achieve solutions and increase rewards while simultaneously reduce costs for the couple (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). Van Lange and Balliet (2014), understand interdependence theory to be similar to social exchange theory in that intimate relationships are construed through relational dependence, this is defined as the procedure through which the interactions between people have an effect on the people themselves and their encounters with one another.

Stemming from Interdependence theory, Braiker and Kelley (1979) believe that conflict arises when the way out of it or the answer to the conflict is not satisfactory to the couple. This highlights a significant issue in problem-solving techniques used to resolve conflict due to the interdependency. Thus, making conflict the primary route towards the development and dissolving of intimate relationships.

**Marital contracts, a cognitive approach.** Sager (1976) on the other hand, issued that marital disfunctions are caused because of differing “contracts”. These marriage “contracts” refer to the imbalance in relationship expectations and what they wanted out of the relationship. Sager (1976), argued that a majority of the partners are not informed regarding their own “contracts”, let alone those of their significant others. This results in the couple getting involved in conflict without having a good understanding of what exactly the root of the conflict was. Adding Sager’s theory to a cognitive approach to marital conflict implicates that first, couples will have differing schemas, second that couples have little to no knowledge of these schemas which leads us to the third, that they will be unable to convey what they understand regarding their schema to their spouses, allowing a chain of ill-communicated conflict to arise.

**Gottman’s approach on marriage and conflict.** Gottman’s methods and understandings of relationships and their functionality was a game-changer in terms of couples’ therapy. One of his most popular work includes the “Gottman Method of Relationship Theory”. This process was based on his Sound Relationship House Theory, the approach emphasized on building stronger relationships, he focused on 9 components:

1. ***Building love maps*** – This is in reference to improving one’s understanding of one’s relationship. It’s a way to get a glimpse into your partner’s mind. What are their favorite and least favorite things? Who is the closest friend of your partner? Was it a pleasant childhood for them? After a long day, how do they prefer to unwind? Building Love Maps entails asking the proper questions in order to have a better understanding of your relationship. You and your partner should know one other better than anybody else in an ideal relationship.

2. ***Share fondness and admiration.*** This alludes to the cultivation of affection and admiration in a marriage. This occurs in instances of expressions of appreciation for certain attributes. Maybe a love for a spouse's comedic side or the way they're always willing to provide a bit of assistance to those who need it. Spouses can describe the major and small reasons they love their companions in a healthy relationship.
3. ***Turning towards each other*** - This entails being conscientious of a spouse's requirements and reacting to their connection requests. Whenever a partner is in need of attention, assistance, or consolation, the partners are more willing to indicate their needs or make a gesture to provoke a reaction from them, which the Gottman refer to as a "bid." When a partner responds to their spouses with what they might require, they switch their attention to that bid. Turning down (or worse, rejecting) a bid on a regular basis is a recipe for catastrophe in any relationship. It is important to establish a secure space for the couple to express themselves and their wants when they both acknowledge and turn toward each other's bids.
4. ***Creating a positive perspective*** - It's when the pair focuses on the positive aspects of each other rather than rushing to judgement. Positive perspective implies that a person will extend to their spouse a sense of trust and faith, placing confidence in their spouse, assuming that they had been simply distracted and not deliberately careless. Realizing they're on the same side which further deepens and solidifies their bond from within.
5. ***Managing conflict*** - When managing conflict, an individual's partner's sentiments and thoughts are taken into account. A continuous communication to ensure settlement is another part of conflict management. When an

individual is caught up in disagreement with their spouse, it's necessary to breathe and attempt to remain calm by doing anything to divert their attention away from the topic in question.

6. ***Making life dreams come true*** - It is critical to be associated with someone who is attempting to motivate their partner to achieve their objectives. This has been observed to be an important factor in marriage success. This step may entail devising a strategy for repaying costs accrued throughout the relationship or expressing support for them returning to their education or their careers. Helping a partner's aspirations come true demonstrates that they care about their partner's happiness and are prepared to go to any length to achieve it.
7. ***Creating shared meaning*** - This would be the time when spouses begin to develop routines, customs, and emblems that they can cherish and exchange with one another.
8. ***Weight-bearing wall, Trust and Commitment***- All of the levels of the Sound Relationship House are crucial; however, they can't stand alone without the foundations of loyalty and cooperation. Couples decide to place confidence in one another and stick with each other in a healthy, fulfilling marriage. Couples genuinely adore each other and promise to aid in the growth of that love.

### **2.3 Constructive vs. Destructive Conflict**

Although Piaget (1985) was one of the first theorists to view conflict as a positive and natural occurrence (in the cognitive sense), Deutsch (1973) first delved into new territory by distinguishing between constructive and destructive conflict. Conflict may be both helpful and detrimental. Since disagreements frequently lead to squabbles and animosity, marital conflict has traditionally been regarded as a negative

phenomenon characterized by physical violence, abusive language, and disengagement (Buehler et al., 1997; Burman, Margolin, & John, 1993). Conflict behaviors are generally classified as destructive, constructive, or disengagement by researchers (Crohan, 1996; Kurdek, 1995; Oggins, Veroff, & Leber, 1993; Pasch & Bradbury, 1998). Explicitly adverse responses to marital difficulties, such as shouting, obscenities, criticizing, antagonism, and disdain, are examples of destructive behaviors.

Constructive conflict is regarded as a means of dialogue, cooperation, and/or brainstorming between opposing partners in order to achieve a mutually fulfilling aim. Despite its prevalence in everyday life, constructive marital conflict has gotten little scientific attention (Cummings, Goeke-Morey, & Papp, 2003). In reality, most marriages may well be able to resolve marital conflict by using constructive tactics like affirmation as well as discussing and communicating with each other. (Kerig, 1996). Openly positive replies, such as speaking good things, gently debating the issue, and attentively hearing out the other party, are examples of constructive conflict behaviors.

Withdrawn behaviors involve removing oneself from a quarrel or an individual, as well as fleeing the scene or being silent. These three components aren't the form of categorizing conflict behaviors, but they do cover a lot of ground. Favorable or unfavorable manifestations of emotions (Gottman et al., 1998); angry or pleasant (Matthews, Wickrama, & Conger, 1996); and negative, positive, or indifferent (Smith, Vivian, & O'Leary, 1990) are some of the terms used by scientists and in research to describe conflict behaviors. Conflict behaviors, despite the different ways of defining the variable, can have an impact on a couple's marriage.

Destructive conflicts end with the two parties disgruntled with the conclusion, that might happen as a consequence of intimidation, physical and/or verbal threatening behavior, and it may develop further than the acute problem through involving



additional subjects. Destructive conflicts are, as the name suggests, destructive in nature, there is no reconciliation from it and leaves both parties dissatisfied and upset.

Additional constructive techniques for reducing tension have been used in constructive marital conflict tactics, such as honest conversations of concerns, peacefully resolving disagreement, and displaying compassion both during and after the dispute (Cummings, Morey, & Papp, 2003). Constructive marital conflict can even help children achieve better outcomes by teaching them problem-solving skills and efficient communication methods, which can lead to more beneficial social relationships. Reductions of reinforcing and exacerbating behaviors, as well as increased degree of social abilities, positive behavioral conduct, and coping styles, are all positive consequences (Goodman, Barfoot, Frye, & Belli, 1999; McCoy, Cummings, & Davies. 2009). As per marriage behavioral theories, destructive conflict behaviors result in adverse marital appraisals and decreases the overall satisfaction in the marriage, inflicting dissatisfaction and instability, whereas constructive conflict behaviors lead to many positive marital appraisals and rises in marital satisfaction and stability (Karney & Bradbury, 1995; A.B. Kelly et al., 2003). Destructive marital conflict, on the other hand, entails more adverse conflict resolution strategies, such as hostile and confrontational behavior, recurrent arguments, as well as unsettled challenges.

Gottman along with his associates (Gottman, 1994; Gottman et al., 1998) discovered that destructive conflict behaviors (such as, critique, passive aggressiveness, disdain) used during occurring interactions anticipated divorce approximately 7 years later in young couples, newly married and close to 14 years later in relatively long-term marital couples (in marital relationships for an average span of 5 years).

## 2.4 Impacts of Marital Conflict

Marital conflict impacts various parts of a married individual's life, Fincham and Beach (1999), mention three major areas that are affected by marital conflict, indicating its importance:

**Psychological health.** Coyne and Downey (1991), state the presence of deep-rooted issues with the over-all well-being of a person. Similarly, the relationship between depression and eating disorders has become increasingly well known (Beach et al 1998), and an association between the two has been proven (Van den Broucke et al 1997). Physically abusive and emotional, verbal and related forms of abuse between spouses (O'Leary et al 1994), men's intoxication behaviors (O'Farrell et al., 1991), rapidly progressive alcohol consumption, cyclical drinking, excessive drinking, and out of home drinking/social drinking (Murphy & O'Farrell, 1994) have all been linked to early onset drinking. Marital conflict tends to have a lesser impact on anxiety disorders (Emmelkamp & Gerlsma, 1994), which could indicate a complex relationship that varies by spousal sexual identity and anxiety disorder type (McLeod, 1994). Recent reviews of pathology and marriage stability have emerged as a result of increased research (Davila & Bradbury, 1998; Halford & Bouma, 1997).

**Physical health.** Despite the fact that marital couples are generally stronger than single people (House et al., 1988), marital conflict has been associated with impaired health (Burman & Margolin, 1992, Kiecolt-Glaser et al., 1988) and particular conditions including cancer, heart disease, and neuropathy (Schmaling & Sher, 1997). Displaying aggressive behaviors during conflict are related to changes in immunoregulatory functions (Kiecolt-Glaser et al., 1993, 1997), endocrine (Kiecolt-Glaser et al., 1997, Malarkey et al., 1994), and cardiovascular (Ewarts et al., 1991)

functioning, marital interaction studies suggest possible mechanisms that may account for these links. Although it affects both spouses, marital conflict has a greater impact on women's health (Gottman & Levenson, 1992; Kiecolt-Glaser et al., 1997; Malarkey et al., 1994). As a result, marital conflict has been linked to a variety of health issues and is still an area of interest for researchers.

## **2.5 What Marital Conflicts Are About**

Fincham (2003), states that the causes of marital conflict can range from minor to major. Couples express dissatisfaction with a variety of sources of conflict, including instances of both verbal and physical aggression to certain aggressive personality traits and actions. Marital conflict draws upon a predisposition for the male to disengage in response to conflict, this is linked to perceived imbalance in a couple's distribution of work. Dissatisfaction in marriage is also linked to power struggles. Divorce is predicted by women's claims of infidelity, excessive alcohol consumption, or substance abuse, as well as husbands' jealousy and wasteful spending. Divorce is more likely as the severity of the problem grows. Violence among newlyweds, as well as psychological aggression (verbal and nonverbal violent behaviors that are not directed at the partner's body), is a predictor of divorce, despite the fact that it is rarely identified as a problem by couples.

## **2.6 Patterns of Conflict Behavior**

One of the patterns described was the "Chains of negative behavior". This means that while the conflict itself is a negative incident, what follows is just as negative and poorly handled by the couple. While it is evident that behavior that is displayed post-conflict can be easily anticipated in distressed marriages as compared to non-distressed marriages, typically the behavior is negative and tends to intensify, sometimes to the point where it may become difficult for the couple to deescalate.

During such conflicts, with the presence of negative exchanges with negative effects, the conflict tends to intensify. Whereas non-distressed couples tend to have more of a “repair” approach to the conflict (Fincham, 2003).

Secondly, another prominent pattern in conflict situations demonstrated by troubled couples, according to Fincham (2003), is the "demand-withdraw" pattern. Which implies that one partner will make demands, complain about things, and so on, during which, the second party will feign disinterest and defensiveness. (Karney & Bradbury, 1995).

## **2.7 Duration of Marriage and Marital Conflict**

A very important aspect of married life is the general variation in marital processes that occurs across different stages in a couple’s life together (Gagnon, Hersen, Kabacoff, & Van Hasselt, 1999). When put through the processes of differentiation, older couples express lesser instances of marital conflict (Henry et al., 2007; Levenson, Carstensen, & Gottman, 1993; Rock et al., 2007) and in general report more understanding and empathy during conflict triggering situations (Carstensen, Gottman, & Levenson, 1995).

However, this does not dismiss the other side of the spectrum when it comes to the duration of marriage and frequency and intensity of conflict. The relevant studies are limited and are not inclusive of multiple aspects of married life to formulate specific and accurate notions on the subject (Smith et al., 2009).

According to the Socioemotional Selectivity Theory (SST) (Carstensen, Isaacowitz, & Charles, 1999; Carstensen & Mikels, 2005), with a shorter time frame, elderly individuals highlight positive parts of their experience and occupations while minimizing unfavorable elements, such as the ones in marital relationships. Previous

research indicate that elderly couples demonstrate more positive - and less negative - conduct during arguments (Carstensen et al., 1995) and studies of self-reported marital quality support this perspective (Carstensen et al., 1995; Gagnon et al., 1999). However, perceived marital quality is investigated in far more studies of ageing and marriage than direct measurements of couples' conduct. Furthermore, elderly couples express less suffering in the face of conflict, but this does not always imply that they have less conflict (Akiyama, Antonucci, Takahashi, & Langfahl, 2003; Birditt, Fingerman, & Almeida, 2005). Moreover, elderly couples evaluate their spouses' actions more positively than younger couples do based on observers' judgments (Story, et al., 2007).

The majority of research on age variations in marital interaction focus on conflicts. Conflicts like this are crucial for younger individuals (Krause & Rook, 2003), but may not be as much for older couples (Krause & Rook, 2003; Levensen et al., 1993). Other marital contexts, such as working collaboratively such as when spouses participate together on daily operations, become increasingly salient as they get older (Baltes & Staudinger, 1996; Berg, Johnson, Meegan, & Strough, 2003).

## **2.8 Gender Differences on Marital Conflict**

According to Gottman (1990), physiological differences between males and females render marital conflict physically painful for spouses. Fitzpatrick (Fitzpatrick, 1990; Burrell and Fitzpatrick, 1990) claims that marital conflict behaviors are explained by a social-cognitive process based on gender identity and development and marital beliefs. In the domain of marital conflict, every viewpoint indirectly addresses the problem of men and women's parity. According to Gottman (1990), physiologically grounded gender difference causes emotional imbalance in marital relationship, with

women being accountable for managing adverse effect. Fitzpatrick (1991), on the other hand, claims that certain processes solely occur in one form of conventional gender-based marriage, not really in couples who have more progressive views of marriage or those for who understand that for them marital relationships don't entirely revolve around sharing feelings.

Interestingly enough, when we discuss marital conflict the image of a male dominant household comes to mind, with a very submissive and oppressed wife. This may not always be the case, as in this context, especially with marital conflicts, there is always an impact of a gendered society or a patriarchal society reinforcing gender roles which empower the trajectory of conflict within a married couple to be a specific way, painting the man as the constant obvious source of conflict and dissatisfaction. While the assumption of an oppressive husband is one thing, reality is actually quite different and it varies from person to person, couple to couple and between different cultures and societies. Males and females in society are assigned separate gender roles by patriarchal rules. Gender roles influence men and women in every facet of their personal-lives, interpersonal interactions and their intimate relationships, according to Knox and Schacht (2000). Traditionally, men have been generalized and stereotyped as being regarded as logical, impartial, autonomous, determined, ambitious, and powerful. Women have long been stereotyped as emotional, subservient toward others, loving, maternal, loving, collaborative, empathetic, motivated towards interpersonal relationships and their maintenance, and adept at household chores and child raising (Worden & Worden, 1998). However, conflict behaviors are often used differently by men and women, according to research. Wives engaged in more destructive actions, whereas husbands engaged in more retreat and constructive acts (Carstensen et al., 1995; Levenson, Carstensen, & Gottman, 1994). The majority of the partners in this

study were younger White American spouses in the early stages of their marital relationships. There is limited data as to whether married couples have varied conflict behavior patterns across the duration of their marriage.

For a long time, many actions in romantic relationships were regarded to be the domain between either males or females. The demand-withdraw pattern has been named after a gendered stereotype collection of behaviors. One spouse, usually the wife, tries to talk about problems, criticizes or blames their spouse, and seeks or demands improvement in this pattern. The other spouse, usually the husband, seeks to avoid talking about the issue, justifies himself against critique, and withdraws from the conversation (e.g. Christensen, 1988; Eldridge & Christensen, 2002; Sagrestano, Heavey & Christensen, 1999). In one of the oldest studies on marriage, Terman and colleagues (1938) noticed this pattern, observing that wives frequently claimed that the husbands were emotionally or physically distant, while husbands reported of being harassed and pestered by their spouses.

In a Brazilian sample-based study by Delatorre and Wagner (2018), whilst attempting to study the gender differences among couples in their engagements in constructive and destructive conflict behaviors, out of the 750 couples, more men reported having displayed constructive conflict behaviors, specifically referring to compromise constructive conflict behaviors, while their female counterparts reported more destructive conflict behaviors.

## **2.9 Anger**

Anger has many names, rage, wrath, fury, exasperation and many more. It is an instinctual, very primitive emotion and it is one of the basic human emotions. The American Psychological Association describes anger as a negative emotion defined by

hostility directed at an individual or an object that has been perceived to have wronged you on purpose. The emotion of anger is a psychological and biological emotional situation characterized by sensations ranging in intensity from minor irritation or annoyance to great feelings of frustration and resentment, as well as neuroendocrine system stimulation and autonomic nervous system activation. (Spielberger, 1999).

According to Darwin (1965), when animals of all types and their forefathers were challenged or endangered by an opponent, anger was regarded as a strong feeling that spurred them to fight and defend themselves. Similarly, Freud (1924), referred to it as a product of a innate impulses that prompts individuals into a destructive course, he conceptualized anger and named it the "instinct of destruction. This self-destructive behavior also referred to the "life instinct" i.e. (libido), however, was suppressed, which imminently evolves and causes the violent power away from itself and towards the outside world. Anger that couldn't be released at outer objects, seethed back into the self, resulting to psychological manifestations including melancholy, migraines, and other psychogenic manifestations (Alexander & French, 1948; Freud, 1936).

An intriguing element of anger is that it is frequently thought of as a variable-intensity emotional state. Anger, according to Feshbach (1964), is an influencing emotional response involving expressionistic characteristics.

To conclude, anger arises in situations of social encounters, when a person has experiences with delayed or denied course of action, wishes, hopes and dreams, needs and aspirations, or perhaps when a person might experience events and interpret them as being unjust (Averill, 1983; Bikik, 2004; Eisenberg, & Delaney, 1998; Kisaç, 1997).



## 2.10 Theories of Anger

**Izard's approach to anger and its antecedents.** Izard (1991) provides a typical, straightforward account of anger, listing the following causes: restraint, the blockage or interruption of objective focused activity, unpleasant situational arousal, having been deceived or unfairly wounded, and righteous outrage. He sees it as an interactive emotion that interrelates with utter disdain. Anger releases the energy in a way that might be justified as a defensive response to aggressiveness. Anger, according to Izard (1991), is a highly significant emotion. However, it is frequently unfavorable and is normally avoided whenever possible. He also claims that suppressing anger might lead to various health issues. While, in Izard's opinion, anger is not the main source of aggressiveness, suitable display of justifiable anger could actually deepen the bond between the furious person and the person who is the subject of his or her fury. He also maintains that control over anger can inhibit fear. A similar concentration on the causes of anger (and joy, sadness, and fear) is made in an extensive cross-cultural study by Scherer, Wallbott, and Summerfield (1986). The investigators found the following antecedents of rage across a variety of European cultures: difficulty with associates, outsiders, unsuitable incentives, failed family life instances, annoyance, and inability to achieve goals. They refer to unfair treatment, violations of standards, and property harm in the context of human relationships. The antecedents of Scherer et al. are consistent with Izard's causes.

**Lazarus's conceptualization.** Lazarus (1991) takes a more comprehensive and much more complete approach to anger than various other emotion theorists, expressing it primarily through his cognitive motivational-relational view of emotion and coping mechanisms. He considers anger, similar to the other negative effects, to be the outcome of pain, grief, or danger, however with that he assigns responsibility of such

outcomes to a person or an event or situation. The inference for such angry individuals is that whoever inflicted the pain, grief, or danger might have exerted power and avoided it if they had so desired. More specifically, Lazarus believes that the maintenance of one's ego identity is a subject of universal relevance to everyone. Every attack on this will elicit anger, a response that is influenced by one's temperament and recent experience of being humiliated. Average adult anger is sparked by a degrading attack against the "me and mine", according to Lazarus, and perhaps even ordinary impatience may suggest feeling disrespected within that setting. Anger, on the other hand, is easily converted by cognitive (or emotion-focused) coping mechanisms (1991). The function for appraisal, that Lazarus consistently portrays as between primary and secondary, seems to be at the core of his theory of emotion (Lazarus sees cognition as a necessary aspect of emotion). There must be a valid aim at risk, an incompatibility associated with achieving this objective, as well as preoccupation with said maintenance of self-esteem over attacks when it comes to the primary assessment of anger.

When the relevant circumstances are fulfilled, as well as the main evaluation that proceeds to anger has been formed, secondary appraisals, as per Lazarus (1982), ensue. For instance, responsibility is assigned. If this is focused toward some external agent, anger would follow; if it has been focused at oneself, anger would follow. According to Lazarus, in order for anger to arise, one should understand that the person who is responsible also possessed power yet decided not to use it. Anger often leads us to believe that attacking the offender is the best approach. Furthermore, if someone believes there is still a decent chance that attacking will be an effective means of dealing with a specific situation, anger is much more probable to occur. Lazarus also makes several insightful observations about the effects of rage and how to manage it. He finds

that anger is frequently suppressed, especially if it appears that expressing it would result in a forceful reaction. He claims that while communicated anger could be both beneficial and harmful, unchecked anger could be either unproductive and biologically harmful. He also mentions the presence of a variety of psychopathic forms of severe, long-lasting, or recurring anger, as well as the incapacity to communicate anger whatsoever. Whether or not such expressions are considered abnormal would, in fact, rely mostly on moment, location, and society.

**Averill's concept on anger.** Averill (1982), summarizes early accounts of anger that characterize it as complex and often irrational, although not noncognitive. At the interpersonal level, he argues that it has been viewed as involving a violation of socially accepted conduct and as having the aim of exacting revenge or at least punishing the perpetrator. Typically, biological factors (such as the basic animal nature of human beings) have been adduced to account for a lack of control over anger. As a result, culture has attempted to dictate and to create standards for the feeling and manifestation of anger in order to reap the effectiveness it can provide while minimizing the risks.

The usual victim of anger, according to Averill (1982), is a partner, or a companion or maybe just an associate. Its goal is frequently to alter the circumstances that led to it. There is often an apparent wrongdoing, whether committed on intent or by accident. To put it another way, the source of anger may be an unlawful conduct or a preventable mishap. Several approaches to show anger are described by Averill, however he claims that humans appear to concentrate on the most theatrical ones, which primarily involve external aggressiveness. The physical expression of anger, however, is relatively uncommon in terms of physical violence, as Averill (1972), indicates. Anger is frequently addressed within Western culture through thorough

communication in regards to viewing the disagreement as a myriad of issues which can be resolved. Despite the fact that the feeling of anger may well have been uncomfortable, most individuals consider most instances of anger as having positive effects. Averill also addresses the duration of anger, considering it to be influenced by cultural norms. In Western society, for instance, a premeditated murder must not linger "too long". Each community has its own set of top and lower boundaries for how long people may be angry. He further adds that, especially in American society, males and females are on similar levels, prone to being furious, however the mode in which anger is communicated varies depending on sex, amongst many other factors.

### **2.11 Typology of Anger:**

**State and Trait Anger.** Spielberger (1970), concentrated on the notion of State vs Trait Anger where he wished to evaluate anger as an affect state that changes in strength as well as in variation from individual to individual in predisposition to anger. State anger (S-Anger) has been described as a psychological and physiological state or circumstance characterized by individual experiences ranging in severity from a slight irritation to extreme outrage and violence, as well as autonomic nervous system stimulation or activation. S-Anger has been thought to change throughout a duration as a result of irritation, personal grudges, unfairness, or even becoming verbally or physically assaulted (Spielberger, Gorsuch, & Lushene, 1970).

Whereas trait anger (T-Anger) was characterized by the frequency with which people felt furious over time. This was presumed that people who have high T-Anger comprehend a broader variety of circumstances as inciting anger (e.g., obnoxious, aggravating, upsetting) than people with low T-Anger, and also that people with high

T-Anger would have more prevalent and severe S-Anger levels anytime they met with annoying or infuriating situations.

## **2.12 Anger Expression**

When discussing anger, the experience of anger is not the only thing that comes to mind. Whilst exploring the domain of anger, it is important to understand both the experience and the display of anger. When it comes to explaining the process that which people adopt in order to display in behavioral terms, their anger, we may refer to anger expression. With a progression in studies on anger, the focus turned to the significance of the contrast between angry “feelings” and the expression of that anger (Spielberger et al., 1985). The behavioural part of anger expression is one's technique of coping with the emotion of anger (Han et al., 2015). The way that the anger is put forth or dealt with is what anger expression means or refers to. So it is understood that anger expression is the way by which an individual might process their anger.

Arslan (2010) understands that the experience of anger will always cause a variation in how and to what level the anger will be expressed. Meaning that not everyone will express their anger in the same way, the frequency and the intensity of the anger expressed will always vary from person to person and also from situation to situation. While Han, Won, Kim and Lee (2015) understand it to be purely behavioral in nature in the sense that it is how an individual handles their experience of anger, simply put, the concrete way in which a person processes their anger. This expression might be done outwardly, in a way that is observable, such as verbal abuse, shouting, screaming, passive-aggressive comments or unnecessary harsh criticism, or the expression might be regressed and put aside, whilst not dealing with it, and the anger might be expressed in a controlled manner.

## 2.13 Conceptualization of Anger Expression

It also became evident that it was just as significant to measure the mode through which people display anger. One of the first studies on anger expression was conducted by Funkenstein, King and Drolette (1954), when they triggered the feelings of anger among college students and evaluated their physiological responses in a laboratory setting. Here the researchers developed a classification for two types of anger expression:

**Anger-Out.** The student's anger state responses were elicited and when the student would express anger towards the experimenters, it was classified as Anger-Out. Anger displayed in an outwardly manner, that includes both the condition of being angry and the sensation of being angry. Anger, as well as its expression in violent behavior, is fundamentally the same as physical aggression, as aforementioned. Anger-out can take the shape of physiological or motor action, which includes aggressively shutting doors or hitting others, or verbal behavior, such as critiques, verbal attacks, negative comments, or excessive swearing. Such aggressive behaviors or outbursts of anger might be specific targeted against the origin of aggravation or frustration, and they might be targeted passively at people or things linked with, or emblematic of, the triggering source.

**Anger-In.** If the student's anger was directed towards themselves, that form of anger expression was labelled as Anger-In. The experience of anger itself, when retained or denied, is specifically processed in the mind as an affective state, this means that it may fluctuate in magnitude. Nevertheless, the freudian notion of anger directed inward toward the ego or self contrasts from the concept of anger as suppressed anger (Alexander, 1948).

## 2.14 Spielberger's Types of Anger Expression

While there now had been work and research done in the domain of anger it's expression, there was still more to learn about the different forms of expression of anger. There were further attempts at measuring anger expression, however, each came with its own set of problems. To tackle these problems, Spielberger (1988) developed a sounder measure and a better understanding of anger expression itself. He detailed three types of anger expression, two of which were similar as Funkenstein, King and Drolette's (1954) explanations.

***Anger-Out.*** This refers to an observable expression of anger, usually negative and aggressive.

***Anger-In.*** It was understood to be an experience and suppression of the outward anger expression. It describes an inhibition of the anger expression which can be observed in the individual's behavior.

***Anger-Control.*** This refers to a patient expression of anger, where anger is experienced however it is expressed in a calm manner. With Anger-Control, Spielberger (1988), discusses a tendency to take part in assuasive activities that decrease anger arousal and soothe the person. This means that a hostile anger experience is lowered by decreasing the emotional arousal state which usually triggers the expression of Anger-Out.

So, to sum, Anger-Out alludes towards the propensity to express anger outwardly, usually in a hostile, violent manner; Anger-In describes the capacity to sense anger but repress it; and Anger-Control provides the opportunity to be peaceful, cool, and regulate affective expressions of anger. Anger-In and Anger-Control are distinct seeing as how the aforementioned explains the likelihood of experiencing acute angry

influence and remain incited psychologically via actions including seeking retribution and also being reprovng or vengeful. Anger-Control, on the other hand, refers to the desire to participate in soothing and restorative efforts to minimize tension and soothe the person. Anger-In and Anger-Control both entail angry responses, but Anger-Control reduces violent as well as other counterproductive responses through reducing cognitive and emotional stimulation, that largely acts as an indicator for this type of behavior, whilst Anger-In explains the suppression of behavior while maintaining a high level of cognitive and emotional stimulation. Spielberger's work (Spielberger, 1988; Spielberger et al., 1985, 1995) offers reproducible component patterns for such variables as well as substantial evidence of the measures' reliability and validity.

## **2.15 Gender Differences in Anger Expression**

There are certain words and phrases that have generally been associated with either males or female, masculinity or femininity. Similar to that, there are certain situations where different forms of anger-expression may be associated to different genders. This is all in context to specific cultures, where a woman's anger might be associated with being repressed or a man's measure of masculinity might be associated with an outward expression of anger. While anger-control expression might hold differently for both men and women in patriarchal societies.

Keeping that in view, there has been some research suggesting that females seem to be more inclined than males to conceal their anger (Haynes, Levine, Scotch, Rinleib, & Kannel, 1978), possibly due to the fact that the societal construct of 'good ladies' are discourages women from expressing their anger openly (Lemer, 1985). Jack (2001), suggests that women tend to be very selective of when and where they might feel it is appropriate to express their anger, particularly because of the fact that they



attempt to understand the repercussions of their anger expression; i.e., where to suppress the anger, where to display it outward, and where to control and appropriately deal with the anger; as well as which relationship allows for the relative appropriate anger expression. Jack's (1991, 1999) work, with reference to anger, explores the way interpersonal relationships affect the mode of anger expression for women. Fehr et. al, (1999) discovered that women expressed outward anger more in close relationships. They posit that women's higher proclivity to express anger-out in these situations reflects a higher sensitivity to the condition of their intimate relationships and significantly larger determination to accomplish a desired level of closeness within such interactions, but also their observed greater propensity to deduce self-esteem from intimate relationships. Females explain experienced anger largely in interpersonal references, according to Thomas (2000), and Jack (2000), situating their anger directly in tales regarding relationships as well as emphasizing on the relational sources, presentation, and implications of their anger.

Guelder and Clayton (1987), discovered extraordinarily decreased anger-hostility ratings in old ladies on the Profile of Mood States, implying that the elderly women had mastered 'womanly behavior'. Female undergraduates who were diagnosed as prehypertensive due to high blood pressure were unable to effectively communicate their hostility, which got internalized and manifested as anxiety, muscle fatigue, and emotion dysregulation (Kalis, Harris, Bennett, & Sokolow, 1961). Female clerical employees with coronary heart disease were more likely than those without the condition to repress hostility in the Framingham Study (Haynes & Feinleib, 1980).

Families are more likely of being more tolerant of their boys' anger than their girls', and male lead characters on television (a major socialization tool) exhibit substantially more anger than female characters (Birnbaum & Croll, 1984). Despite the

evidence that males and females have similar levels of general anger (Deffenbacher et al., 1996), males tend to display anger-out expression of anger more in terms of being physically and verbally abusive more than females, whereas women are more likely to participate in anger expression modes that are more suppressive and very much less aggressive (Archer, 2004; Björkqvist, 2018). Moreover, females might be less inclined to answer to anger inciting stimuli with violence, preferring rather to invest in much more prosocial "friendly" behaviours rather than violence, and therefore will abstain from aggressive behaviour until a greater danger barrier is passed (Taylor et al., 2000).

Doster, Purdum, Martin, Goven and Moorefield (2009), conducted a study where they assessed gender differences on anger expression and cardiovascular risks. With reference to anger-out and anger-control they found significant differences. They found that throughout the sample with ages ranging from 29-63, that men scored higher on anger-out and anger-control, with approximately equal differences on anger-in mode of anger-expression. Considered collectively, the research implies that women do not react as quickly as males react with aggressive anger-out expressions to stimuli. As a result, disparities in violent behaviors across genders may exist only at reduced levels of instigation, which might be explained by women's lesser proclivity to react to anger with anger-out expressions as compared to males (Fahlgren, Cheung, Ciesinski, McCloskey & Coccaro; 2021).

## **2.16 Relationship Satisfaction**

Everyone's definition of a "happy" or "successful" relationship is very different, about as different as the people themselves. Understandably so, couples would also be just as different. Being in a fulfilling intimate relationship is something everyone at some point in their lives, strive for. Intimate relationships and the formation of such

relationships is a fundamental aspect of simply being human and human behavior (Guerrero, Anderson & Afifi, 2011). In other words, relationship satisfaction can be referred to as an intuitive assessment of an individual's relationship.

Relationship satisfaction is an interactional indicator of a spouse's positive attitude about the partnership/marriage and commitment or commitment towards it (Rusbult & Buunk, 1993). It can be seen as person's opinion towards their relationship. It is a subjective measure of one's experiences. However, according to the individual's relationship experiences, it is not to be seen as a property or component of a relationship, it is merely a subjective opinion.

The assumption of an evaluation of an individual's relationship is a very generalized way of looking at relationship satisfaction. It is much more complex than just a feeling of being happy in a relationship as the term satisfaction in itself, in terms of relationships becomes very complicated. Relationship satisfaction could mean a number of things for different people and people would describe their ideal relationships very differently as everyone's needs and desires are very different from one another.

## **2.17 Theories Explaining Relationship Satisfaction**

Marital satisfaction in various fields of study, including: psychological causes, social demographic patterns, parenting, physical wellbeing, and psychopathology, has been widely discussed in the literature (Bradbury, Fincham, & Beach, 2000).

**The U-Shape pattern of relationship satisfaction.** During the initial phases of relationship satisfaction theorization and analysis, it was believed that satisfaction is a U-shaped path in married life. Glenn (1990), explains that satisfaction in the early stages of married life tends to be elevated as compared to later in the marriage. He did

a cross-sectional analysis starting right from marriage and saw that satisfaction took a U-shaped course from being previously highly satisfied in the relationship to a slow decline along the years. Glenn indicated that after a long period, marital satisfaction in the subsequent duration of the partnership would be "statistically non-significant". Kudrek (1998), correlates this course of relationship satisfaction with the introduction of children into married life and their departure from home as they grow up, however children do not completely account for the incremental decline in satisfaction. Pineo (1961), correlates this with the discrepancies formed over time by the partners. Others equate it with the decrease after marriage in the "chase" factor (Johnson, Amoloza & Booth, 1992).

**Interdependence theory.** According to interdependence theory, individuals in a relationship want to maximize their benefits and decrease their costs. People subconsciously account for rewards and costs in order to assess whether their relationship brings about favorable or unfavorable outcomes, they essentially assess whether they're getting anything out of the relationship or not. When the benefits come up as being more than the costs, the result of the relationship is favorable; when the costs exceed the rewards, the result is unfavorable, making the relationship appear unfavorable to them. It is not often enough to please people with this mental note of understanding if the relationship has a positive or negative result, because people also have previous perceptions of what they think the relationship should be like. Some individuals, for instance, expect highly satisfying relationships, so results have to be especially positive for them to be satisfied. The notion of comparison levels is included in the interdependence theory to account for these preferences in the relationship. The expectations regarding the sort of outcomes an individual anticipates in a partnership/marriage are included in the degree of comparability. This expectation is

focused on past relationship experiences of the individual and on personal impressions of the relationships of other people (Guerrero, Anderson & Afifi, 2011).

**Triangular Theory of Love.** Usually when considering the ingredients that formulate a healthy relationship the words “intimacy, passion and commitment” are among a few that come to mind. These elements have been found to be of high importance when it comes to theories regarding healthy relationships (Aron & Westbay, 1996). Affinity, desire, as well as dedication are all critical elements of a basic "complete love" which may be deemed as being total and real love, according to the "triangular theory of love" (Sternberg, 1997). Following the discovery of intense and mutually satisfying love, Sternberg created his triangular theory of love. Although ardent and an empathetic love are two varying typologies, they are linked as the elements in relationships. According to Sternberg (1997), these elements are of highest importance for relationship satisfaction.

In loving partnerships, the affinity aspect relates to an experience of togetherness, connectivity, and attachment. As a result, it encompasses most of the emotions that offer ascent to the sensation of tenderness in a fulfilling and affectionate relationship. The motivations which contribute to passion, physical desirability, physical completion, and other associated processes in emotionally intimate relationships are referred to as the affinity element. The factors that act as incentives and varying modes of excitation which contribute to the feeling of desire in a loving relationship are under the domain of the affinity element. The decision/commitment element relates to the determination of loving someone temporarily and the willingness to keep that love in the long term.

The cognition elements allowed to determine on the presence of and a prospective lifetime devotion to a loving relationship are therefore included in the decision/commitment element's domain. In a broad sense, the affinity element is thought to be primarily, but not solely, influenced by internal forfeiture in the partnership; the affinity component is thought to be majorly, but not entirely, based on motivated engagement in the relationship; and also, the decision/commitment element is thought to be in large part, but not purely, based on cognitive course of action in and dedication to the relationship. The closeness component could be considered "warm," the affinity element "hot," and also the decision/commitment would be element "cold," according to one perspective. The perception of love can also be divided in a variety of different ways, and it's vital to emphasize right away that the current division into closeness, affinity, and decision/commitment isn't the only one available, and neither is it applicable to all potential scenarios (Sternberg, 1986, 1997, 2006).

**Attachment theory.** Vollmann, Sprang and Brink (2019) state that attachment is an integral part of close relationships. Attachment is an essential part of how individuals perceive themselves and the people around them and from there, how they perceive, experience and navigate different kinds of relationships and the intimacy in different relationships (Hazan & Segal, 2015).

People make lasting psychological relationships with their main care-giver, usually the mothers, throughout early infancy and most of the childhood of the individual, according to attachment theory. Attachments, as first proposed by Bowlby (1978), provide a vital progressive function. Children's attachment leads to pursuing closeness behaviors like sobbing, which attract their carer to comfort the child. Babies are much more successful in obtaining the nutrition and safety that boost their survival odds when they are closer to their caregiver. The child's behaviors and

expectancies are shaped throughout time by the standard and stability of the care-giver engagement. The form of attachment style that the children acquire is determined by these initial encounters. Behavioral patterns and perceptions regarding relationships characterize attachment styles.

They are somewhat consistent from childhood through emerging adulthood, and they also have an impact on the types of emotional attachments they form with others (Fraley, 2002). Attachment theory used to be divided into three categories: secure, avoidant, and anxious-resistant attachment types (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991). Whenever a child's care-giver is constantly receptive to their requirements, they form a stable attachment. Children with avoidant attachment have care-giver who've been insensitive to their requirements. When a care-giver is attentive but irregular, the anxious-resistant attachment type develops. Attachment styles such as avoidant and anxious-resistant attachments are also classified as insecure attachments. Behavior inclinations can be seen in toddlers as young as 1 year old through a process called as the strange situation (Ainsworth & Bell, 1970).

**Romantic Attachment.** The concepts of attachment theory were applied to romantic partnerships by Hazan and Shaver, (1987). These commonalities among infant-care giver relationships and romantic relationships led to this conclusion. Individuals from both sorts of relationships rely on the other individual (whether a caretaker or a love partner) to meet their emotional and physical requirements. Romantic attachment is comparable to care giver-infant attachment in that it is based on the expectation of a spouse's role in providing such requirements consistently.

Parent and marital relationships possess a similarly high level of physical and compassionate love, allowing for the establishment of strong affective bonds through direct touch with romantic interests and some caregivers, the hormone oxytocin

is secreted as babies develop attachments with their mothers (Feldman, 2012). While contrasting children and adults, Hazan and Shaver (1987) discovered that attachment styles emerged approximately at comparable levels. Attachment types formed in infancy through childhood are fairly constant into puberty (Fraley, 2002), although it's unknown exactly how much influence the early attachments have on romantic relationships formed later in life. When comparing children and adults, Hazan and Shaver (1987) discovered that attachment styles emerged at comparable levels.

Yet, according to recent study (Kamenov & Jeli, 2005), attachment types might vary according to the type of relationship. For individuals that have strong and safe parental attachments seem to be more inclined in developing safe attachments in other relationships (including relatives, acquaintances, intimate partners), whereas people who have had unstable parental attachments have a wider range of attachment patterns. People with unstable romantic attachments, specifically anxious attachments, depend on more than one other attachment figures to address their requirements when it becomes challenging to do so with their love partner, according to Kamenov and Jeli (2005). Romantic attachment is impacted by encounters with attachment figures in the same way that parental attachment is. While encounters with several love partnerships might lead to differences in romantic attachment type, such adjustments are transient. Rapid, significant changes in romantic attachment style are uncommon (Fraley, 2002).

**Social Exchange Model.** The central principles of exchange theory indicates that individuals are selective in terms of wanting to be involved in a relationship since it can result in a decent standard of consequences (characterised as the rewards obtained from the relationship excluding the costs of partaking in the relationship), and therefore these consequences are superior to those accessible in competitive relationships (Nye, 1979; Sabatelli, 1984; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959).



A person's impression of his or her spouse's traits (such as physical attraction, well tempered etc) and how good the communication is among the couple determines the degree of consequences thought to be possible from a relationship (such as the variations of compassion experienced and the impartiality in the relationship). Such attitudinal and interpersonal results are compared to an individual's aspirations, or the Comparison Level (Nye, 1979; Sabatelli, 1984; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959).

McDonald (1981), states that this Comparison Level (CL) is derived from socially constructed (societal relationship norms) and perceptive configurations (personal assumptions stemming from relevant individualistic exposures) and embodies an individual's assumptions for relationship consequences that they believe are pragmatically attainable (Nye, 1979, Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). The comparison level concept is significant because of its function in evaluating relationship consequences and, as a result, evaluating the degree of satisfaction obtained from a relationship (Homans, 1974; Nye, 1979; Sabatelli, 1984; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959).

The satisfaction received from a relationship or marital union, according to Nye (1979) and Sabatelli (1984), is the outcome of the rewards minus the expenses in the marital relationship measured over what people assume is actually attainable inside a marriage. Individuals are more likely experience satisfaction within a relationship if the results consistently exceed the presumptions. Persons are likely to be disappointed with a partnership if results repeatedly miss the mark on the expectations (Sabatelli, 1984). Also, according to Nye (1979), some features of a connection will appear more prominent than others this means that not every element or attribute of the relationship will be of the same level of significance to every couple.

As a result, married couples find fault with certain component of their relationship, such as how frequently sexual encounters happen, whenever the regularity

of sexual activity routinely drops below a certain subjective norm maintained by these people whenever this part of the marriage is significant to them. An individual's summarized judgments in regards to their relationships would be poor if they believe that their marriage falls short of satisfying their presumptions among most of the components that they deem as being significant to them. As a result, couples assess their partnerships by comparing the results obtained to their presumptions of exactly what is actually realistic and attainable from a partnership.

These expectations differ greatly from one individual to the other. Variations in comparison levels might elaborate why certain couples are happy in what some people might consider to be a toxic relationship and why others are unhappy in what most might consider to be a healthy relation. In this aspect, pleasure must be understood as the result of a relationship among an individual's presumptions and the behavior of his or her spouse. It's also worth noting that subjectively, relationship standards aren't set in stone meaning that they are subject to variation and difference as the relationship progresses and grows. According to Thibaut and Kelley (1959), as stakes in intimate partnerships alter and progress, such benchmarks of expectancies are inclined to vary. They also show that times of increased satisfaction are likely to be accompanied by a rise in expectancies, which will eventually lead to a decrease in contentment. Decreased concentrations of contentment, on the other hand, are likely to be accompanied by a fall in the comparison levels, eventually increasing satisfaction. Hence, it becomes important to understand that variations in satisfaction over the progression of an intimate relationship might be caused by differences in the spouse's conduct and/or variations in the degrees of expectancy as a consequence of recurring relationship relevant encounters.

## **2.18 Factors Involved in Relationship Satisfaction**

Relationship satisfaction has been described as a complex subject including a variety of aspects in its determination (Meeks et al., 1998). Some of these variables have been shown to have positive relationship satisfaction correlations, such as participation and devotion to the relationship (Sacher & Fine, 1996), how they understand the behavior of their partner (Murray, Holmes & Griffin, 1996), feelings of affection for the significant other (Broderick & O'Leary, 1986), empathy (Davis & Oathout, 1987), good communication between the couple (Canary & Spitzberg, 1989) and an understanding of the feelings of one's significant other are all distinct factors that create a stronger satisfaction with one's own feelings.

## **2.19 Gender Differences on Relationship Satisfaction**

Seeing it from a couple's point of view, the ideal situation would naturally be for both parties to display and experience satisfaction in a relationship. However, that might not be the case for all couples, which either leads to the development of more conflict, anger or separation. In context to the current study, it might not be as simple. When the element of marriage is added to an intimate relationship then the entire dynamic changes. This is especially true for south eastern Asians cultures. So, the experience and display of relationship satisfaction for married couples tends to vary. For married couples there exists a lot of self-silencing in cultures relevant to the study, there tends to be an expectation to be satisfied with their relationship despite the reality being far from the ideals held by the people in the relationship. In some cases they might not even have a way out of the relationship so they're essentially demanded to experience being happy in the marriage.

Males and females have diverse experiences with marriage, according to marital researchers. "There are two marriages in every marital union, his and hers," Jesse Bernard, a notable family scholar, notably declared in 1972. Connides (2001), concludes on the basis of Bernard's (1972), statement that women report having had sustained significantly lower rates of relationship satisfaction. While there are a multitude of researches suggesting that women experience lower rates of relationship satisfaction (Kamp Dush, Taylor, & Kroeger, 2008; Myers & Booth, 1999; Stevenson & Wolfers, 2009; Whiteman, McHale, & Crouter, 2007), there are also various scholars providing evidences of no significant gender differences on the matter of relationship satisfaction (Broman, 2005; Kurdek, 2005).

At the same time it is important to keep in mind the level of differences in satisfaction between married couples, such as the results obtained by Whiteman et. al, (2007), who uncovered a significant difference in the mean marital satisfaction between men and women, indicating that women experienced over-all lower mean level in terms of marital satisfaction. One of the reasons for the stark difference in relationship satisfaction might be attributed to uneven management of the household, finances, an increased risk of violent behavior, and the varying norms in regards to intimate activities, all being examples of a woman's submissive role in marriage (Finlay & Clarke, 2003; Walker & Thompson, 1995). Since an imbalance of power is linked to decreased relationship satisfaction (Ball, Cowan, & Cowan, 1995; Brezsnyak & Whisman, 2004; Gray-Little, Baucom, & Hamby, 1996), women are much more inclined to report being dissatisfied than their male counterparts. Alternatively, there is existence of literature supporting men's experience of relationship satisfaction. As reported by Fowers (1991), men reported experiencing more relationship satisfaction in their marriages than their wives did, however, there is not such an abundance of

research with similar results even though they are present at a very valid and significant amount.

Viewing relationship satisfaction from a cultural perspective is very important. Qadir, Prince, Khan and Silva (2005), concluded that despite popular opinion, contradicting cultural norms, majority women stated a desire to be content inside their marriage. Several women were afraid of upsetting or offending their families by publicly sharing their thoughts about their spouse selection or marital dissatisfaction. Pakistani women view marriage as a societal and family responsibility that requires them to be flexible, as the husband rarely does.

In another study within Pakistan, Arif and Fatima (2015) studied the relationship satisfaction levels between different types of marriages, one being arranged marriage, the other being, marriage of choice with acceptance from parents and lastly marriage of choice without acceptance from parents. The results showed that both men and women experienced relationship satisfaction in arranged marriages and marriages of choice with the acceptance of parents, whereas the couples who opted for marriages without the acceptance from their parents displayed relationship dissatisfaction.

## **2.20 Self-Silencing**

Where conflict occurs, it is not uncommon for one party to suppress their feelings and reactions and stay quiet to avoid prolonging the altercation. This act is what is we now call self-silencing and it is formed due to societal attitudes regarding genders (Jack, 1991). Swim, Eyssell, Muroch and Ferguson (2010) define self-silencing as an inconsistency in the desire to truthfully express yourself and refrain from doing so. Silencing oneself during a conversation has been defined as a strategy for limiting, removing, or undermining the validity of an individual's use of words (Thiesmeyer,

2003). It can be imposed in a way that is overt and explicit or concealed and indirect, typically done as a powerful role by individuals and done in a way that is beneficial to some and undesirable to others.

A significant aspect of self-silencing is that it sometimes tends to be done by the individual as a decision, but when done in particular social contexts, it means negative outcomes simply for speaking about what's on one's mind (Kaiser & Miller, 2001).

Women's self-silencing becomes internally directed when they use an external standard to determine whether they should speak and when they believe that speaking one's voice threatens relationships, they believe they are responsible for maintaining (Jack, 1991).

When females use an outside norm to evaluate whether or not women can voice their opinions, and so when they assume that expressing one's mind may pose as a threat to their intimate relationships, they end up believing that they are accountable for preserving their relationships, their self-silencing becomes inwardly oriented (Jack, 1991).

## **2.21 Jack's Theory of Silencing the Self**

Jack (1987, 1991), proposed a theoretical framework for understanding how women develop depression. The theory incorporates ideas from both attachment theory and self-in-relation theory. The attachment theory highlights the necessity of interpersonal ties in personal growth (Bowlby, 1969, 1973, 1980) as well as the negative impacts of an absence of secure relationships on adaptation and growth. A fundamental principle of the theory of attachment is that people need strong relations with others and pursue them. Attachment behaviors, such as proximity seeking, escalate when near and

stable connections are not made. If a close relationship appears to be distant, it also results in distress and despair. In this context, attachment theory emphasises depression's interpersonal nature. The significance of relationships with female's sense of self, Jack (1991) claimed, when combined with gendered expectations for intimate relationships, ends up putting women at higher danger of adopting relationship behaviors and point of views which may enhance sensitivity to depression.

The socially acceptable combination of attachment behaviors for women was coined by Jack (1991) as "compliant connection." Compliant connectivity is distinguished by excessive care, everybody else' satisfaction, and self-expression repression. It's the same as nervous attachment. Females who have an interpersonal sense of self and are compelled to explore attachment in self-sacrificing forms, according to Jack (1991), are more likely to experience gendered notions regarding romantic relationships. The recession of firsthand perception and feeling, experiential suppression, temper repression, and emotion restriction are all examples of silencing the self, which are in responses to cultural norms for conduct in female relationships. Such silencing mechanisms, according to Jack, lead to the decline of self-esteem and a higher propensity to depression.

## **2.22 Self-Silencing in Women**

The basic claim made by Gilligan (1990) suggested that women are interpersonal creatures has indeed been largely verified through literature, studies reveal that women are primarily driven to engage in self-silencing for the maintenance of or to nurture a romantic connection (Remen, Chambless, & Rodebaugh, 2002). Besser et al. (2003) discovered that higher self-silencing is associated with increased relational reliance. Ladies in intimate relationships were

shown to be more dependent than both single females and males in partnerships, according to the same studies. The quality of such meaningful connections typically plays a significant part in female's self-silencing; it was also discovered that adolescent girls who indicated unhappiness with intimate relationships also engaged in more self-silencing behaviors; this correlation was not observed in teenaged boys (Harper & Welsh, 2007). Females might be a little more immersed in their relations than males, hence more impacted by them, as seen by higher levels of dependency. Females who may be more reliant on their relationships may be more inclined to get their sense of self-concept from other people's opinions and perceptions of them.

Research demonstrated that females scored significantly higher on the Externalized Self-Perception subscale than males (Lutz-Zois et al., 2013), suggesting that relations and other people's ideas impact female's sense of self more profoundly than that for males. The positive relationship among self-silencing and self-criticism (Besser et al., 2003) contributed to the observation of elevated concentrations of perfectionism having had predicted female's self-silencing, a link that did not hold true for males (Locker et al., 2012). Elevated levels of perfectionism are much more significantly predicted by culturally mandated perfectionism, which requires people to achieve in accordance with others' expectations instead of their own (Flett et al., 2007). The importance of external input on female's internal sense of self is reflected in their strong support for perfectionism.



## **2.23 Societal influences on Women's Self-Silencing**

The social construct that females are naturally obligated to caring for people surrounding them contributes to females' self-silencing (Jack, 1991). Throughout childhood to maturity, males and females are both socialized to think of females as interpersonal creatures, as daughters, siblings, spouses, and moms. Such programming is perpetuated not just on a cultural scale, but even within the household, according to researchers. Moms begin conversing with their children about love and marriage before the children enter puberty, a sociological phenomenon which has been explored to persist when the child reaches early adulthood (Packer-Williams, 2009). Furthermore, respectively the youth have accepted gender expectations for females, with males reporting stronger agreement with the concept that females ought to be submissive and self-silent in order to maintain harmony (Pia-Watson et al., 2014). The findings suggesting that males endorsed societal expectations for females to mute themselves from their youth demonstrates the powerful influence of men's beliefs on women's conduct, that women's conduct and behaviors are largely affected by reinforced gender expectations. Gender specific signals sent to girls through teenage years quickly produce manifestations of pretentiousness (Theran, 2010; Tolman, Impett, Tracy, & Michael, 2006) and early teenage self-silencing (Thomas & Bowker, 2015). Although gender norms are thought to play a part in women's self-silencing, they also have an impact on men's behavior.

## **2.24 Self-Silencing in Men**

While Jack's theory was based around women, a substantial amount of research indicates no differences in self-silencing amongst men and women. However, for men, self-silencing comes from a different direction but similar place.

Men's self-silencing is attributed to a widespread devotion to patriarchal values (de Medeiros & Rubinstein, 2015). Men are much more self-reliant than women (Besser et al., 2003), and they intentionally remove themselves from others to be perceived as being more contemplative and stable (de Medeiros & Rubinstein, 2015). For instance, one research showed that single males demonstrate higher degrees of dependability than males engaged in intimate relationships (Besser et al., 2003), suggesting that intimate bonds elicit this need for males to acquire a sense of empowerment and emotional detachment. This not only suggests that males are less socially reliant than females, but it could also reflect the influence of oppressive gender expectations in intimate relationships, as separation increase in an intimate relationship could be a way for males to exercise authority in a partnership (Babcock et al., 1993; Jack, 1999).

According to studies, males utilize self-silencing to get out of marital issues instead of ignoring them (Jack, 1999; Remen et al., 2002). It suggests that self-silencing merely acts as a means to disengage and diffuse a conflict situation. According to one study, males who are overly taxing towards their spouses are much more likely to be dissatisfied with their relationship and thus engage in self-silencing and distanced interaction (Uebelacker, Courtnage, & Whisman, 2003). These findings confirm the theory that men's silence is employed to avoid touch or compassion, which is at odds with the motive for women's silence. Males who are self-silent as a way of disengagement, according to Uebelacker et al. (2003), symbolize stricter cultural norms that recognize and attend to a man's demands above those of a woman. Notwithstanding men's natural desire to maintain their dominance in society, experts believe that cultural demands for males to remain quiet can assist in understanding their silence (Duarte & Thompson, 1999).

Men may fall short when it comes to affective vocabulary in close relationships to identify or communicate their feelings, rather than preferring silence as a means of avoidance of the entire situation (Gratch et al., 1995). Men tend to use self-silencing not out of a fear of having a negative impact on the relationship or furthering conflict situations, causing possible permanent damage to the relationship, rather it is used as an avoidance tactic. Gender standards may stifle men's emotional experiences or speaking, but they also imply that this behavior of remaining quiet is a form of authority, which means that despite gender-based stereotyping, men tend to use self-silencing as a power move as well.

### **2.25 Differing Effects of Self-Silencing Between Men and Women**

Self-silencing is associated with negative psychological symptoms in both males and females (Page et al., 1996), but the effects of self-silencing differ. Regardless of the fact that males expressed more self-silencing, females rated considerably higher on depression and anxiety assessments than males (Gratch et al., 1995). These differences could be a reflection of the distinct motivations for men and women's self-silencing, and also the varying goals that they might have (Jack, 2011; Jack & Ali, 2010).

### **2.26 Marital Conflict and Anger Expression**

It is understood that stressful situations are in general, considerably detrimental for not just health but also the impact that it has on relationships, certain research has even found that couples who experienced frequent repression of anger, the rate of occurrence of deaths at young ages was found to be higher (Harburg, Kaciroti, Gliberman, Schork, 2008). Similarly, when faced with conflict

situations, couples may experience frustrations of different intensities which may lead to anger most of the time.

One of the toughest aspects of married life an individual must learn to deal with correctly and masterfully is anger. Variations among married couples produce conflict, anger, and arguments in a marriage. These could give rise to suspicion, stress, and sometimes even dread if left unaddressed. The majority of married couples have taught themselves to either release or repress their anger. When a couple has a disagreement, they gradually figure out what they can and cannot disclose about themselves in order to prevent additional disagreements. Several couples fight and shout, then step back and eventually get close again with their partner until a new disagreement emerges. With their violent tendencies, certain partners go further and injure one another psychologically or physically. Other spouses manage their anger by burying it. Most individuals are afraid of expressing their anger openly, so they choose not to make such a big deal out of it. Anger that has been restrained can be deadly because it is constantly present, seething beneath the surface (Lamanna & Riedmann, 2006; Strong, Devault & Cohen, 2008).

It would be wishful thinking to assume that all couples simply suppress their anger or perhaps only express at a controlled level. Interestingly enough, it was found that when expecting or during conflict situations the experience of anger may also increase (Tamir, Mitchell & Gross, 2008). Anger may enable conflict-related physical responses (such as leaving the space, increasing tension); acknowledgement of a discrepancy between what the individual themselves wants and what the partner is offering; communicating to the spouse that his or her behavior is not in accordance to the individual's requirements; and greater accessibility to inferences and techniques in regards to the determinants and

consequences of, and responding appropriately to, the spouse's anger-inducing behavior.

Current literature on couples and conflict in relation mostly focuses on the extremes of anger, in accordance to this research, that would be considered as a generalized Anger-Out. Burman, Margolin, and John (1993) discovered that, while most married people became angry at some point during conflict situations, men and women (especially women) were much more likely to retaliate and respond to their spouses' anger, among partners with male-to-female physical intimate partner violence contrasted with partners who were verbally abusive, resigned, or had low conflict.

Tiberio and Capaldi (2019) found that females who conducted physical intimate partner abuse were more inclined to respond negatively to their partners' negative affect. Relational anger is made up of several components, including exhibited anger, but experienced anger can also anticipate couple outcomes. Emotions and displays/expressions are related, although they can act separately, according to basic emotion research (Lench, Flores & Bench, 2011).

When people expressed anger in inflated magnitudes, spouses replied with growing angry sentiments but indicated less and less angry behaviors, according to Slep, Heyman, Lorber, Tiberio, and Casillas (2021). As a result, expressing growing anger serves to amplify a person's spouse's anger experiences while also inducing cooler behavior. Emotional regulation is viewed as a process of achieving homeostasis (Chow, Ram, Boker, Fujita, & Clore, 2005). Fewer couples continually demonstrate increased rates of anger; extreme anger is a deviation from system parameters that it will revert back to. Hence, research suggests that

in the presence of destructive conflict, anger-out tends to be more frequently reciprocated.

Tiruwork, Tamiru and Tolla (2021) found that 60% of their participants were involved in destructive conflict situations and out of them, 5% of them expressed verbal and physical aggression frequently especially during attempts to resolve said conflicts, meaning Anger-Out.

## **2.27 Marital Conflict and Relationship Satisfaction**

A fascinating aspect in marital relationships is how they resolve conflicts and how that conflict affects their relationship satisfaction over time. While there is not much research that focuses on constructive conflicts and its positive relationship with relationship satisfaction, which evidently proves to be a tool used for improved satisfaction in intimate relationships, there is still a large amount of research pointing out the negative impacts of destructive conflict. In general, research maintains a negative view of the term “conflict”, referring to it the same way as destructive conflict has been addressed in this research. Constructive conflict behaviors serve to help with general relationship satisfaction while destructive conflict does the exact opposite. Wagner, Mosmann and Scheeren (2019) conducted research on a Brazilian population of 1500 males and females aged on average at 40 years of age to understand the predictive power of motivations and conflict resolution styles on relationship satisfaction and found that the approach for resolving conflicts was a predictor of relationship satisfaction. It was apparent from their research that the attempts at conflict reduction were also related to marriage satisfaction, especially through the use of communication and empathy for their partners and an improved relationship quality.

Kurdek (1995), found that partners who retreated and engaged in dispute had poorer relationship satisfaction, meaning that couples who were found to be more frequently involved in destructive conflict situations and behaviors experienced relationship dissatisfaction as well as those who sought avoidance strategies. Similarly, Moland (2011), examined the links between conflict and satisfaction in romantic relationships with a sample of 235 and found that women engaged in conflict more than males and in the instances where conflict was increased, satisfaction towards the relationship was lower. Interestingly, married participants of the study scored higher in conflict withdrawal and engagement. Participants with medium income levels scored higher on conflict withdrawal as compared to those with low income.

Stewart (2012), made an interesting observation towards the duration of the marriage and attempted to study how the length of the relationship affected conflict communication and relationship satisfaction. A hierarchical regression analyses found no significant relationship between the two however, the length of the relationship impacted the male participants perception of conflict communication that ended up being a predictor of relationship satisfaction.

Similarly, Rezazade, Ahmadi, Saadat, Kimiaei and Zade (2015) found that conflict in marriages of 10 years and 25 years or more, went from conflict over sexual relationship, family relations and daily hassles to financial issues and daily hassles. They found different themes of conflict to be associated with reduced satisfaction towards the marriage.

## **2.28 Anger Expression and Relationship Satisfaction**

How couples' express anger in front of their significant others is a good predictor of how long that relationship will last and its level of satisfaction for both parties. Kocur and Deffenbacher (2014) studied anger and anger expression in intimate relationships and reported that the participants indicated that the women expressed more Anger-Out form of anger in the relationship and the men did not differ in anger expression style in context to everyday life and in the relationship. The male sample reported high levels of Anger-Control than women, implying that men exerted more control over their anger expression and dealt with it appropriately thus maintaining their satisfaction in the relationship.

Outward expressions of anger may indicate that the person expressing it is aggressive and may behave in an undesirable manner (Shaver et al., 1987). It thus shows that the outward expression of anger may reduce one's fondness for the person who expressed it. Anger may, although, reveal the person's wants and insecurities (Clark & Brissette, 2003; Clark & Finkel, 2005; Ekman, 2003; Keltner, Ekman, Gonzaga, & Beer, 2003). Individuals who display their anger both in vocal and visual ways have been labelled as intimidating, socially inept, condescending, and calculated (Knutson, 1996; Tiedens, 2001). According to research, individuals who express anger-out are disliked more than individuals who do not express anger outward (Averill, 1982; Sommers, 1984; Tavris, 1984), and they cause discomfort and reduced relationship satisfaction amongst the people (Carstensen, Gottman, & Levenson, 1995; Gottman & Levenson, 1992), along with decreased levels of experienced connectedness (Tolstedt & Stokes, 1984). As a result, there is a lot of studies implicating that expressing anger-out has detrimental relational implications.



While it is widely understood that anger as a concept has negative connotations assigned with it, however when anger isn't all that bad, when expressed appropriately, in fact the repression of anger i.e. anger-in mode of anger expression can be have intense negative impacts on relationship satisfaction in the long run. Understanding the importance of expression in a relationship, Uehara, Tamura and Nakagawa (2018), carried out a study with a Japanese sample and found that participants reported more dissatisfaction towards the relationship when anger was not expressed (Anger-In).

## **2.29 Marital Conflict and Self-Silencing**

Within marital relationships, it is often found that one partner tends to quiet themselves duration a conflict situation, whether it is done as an attempt to put an end to the conflict or a submissive personality or withdrawal from the conflict. Whiffen, Foot and Thompson (2007), studied self-silencing as a mediator for marital conflict and depression with 115 couples and found both men and women who perceived the marriage to be in a state of conflict engaged in self-silencing.

Harper and Welsh (2003), studied relationship among self-silencing and relational and individual functionality and in a sample of 211, uncovered that those who self-silenced showed more agreeable behavior when faced with conflict, meaning that the individuals who self-silenced more did not get involved with destructive conflict behaviors, instead opted for constructive behaviors in response to conflict.

In conflict circumstances, self-silencing behaviors might show as disengaged, emotionally distant, or limited involvement in the encounter. They can also be seen as submitting, surrendering, or becoming subservient. Surrendering or

giving up isn't necessarily a bad thing; interdependence theory (Kelly & Thibaut, 1978) claims that partnerships where both parties are bargaining and are in a sort of state of compromise are effective. Structural inequalities can occur in relationships if just one person has a tendency of always conceding. Furthermore, subservient behaviors have been connected to sexual and physical abuse in some cases (Richards, Rollerson, & Phillips, 1991). Marital conflict tends to give room to a lot of self-silencing from both parties for varying reasons, men self-silence as a means to avoid or distance themselves while women self-silence out of fear of causing harm to the relationship or making things worse.

### **2.30 Self-Silencing and Anger Expression**

Self-silencing has been observed to be equal in occurrence amongst men and women mostly. However, the submissive attitudes that entail self-silencing have a great impact on the way that anger is expressed for example, an individual might self-silence instead of defending themselves from their spouses and engage in anger-in mode of anger expression. This is particularly true for women, Cox, Stabb and Bruckner (1999) theorized that women find it difficult to express anger and may need therapeutic assistance to do so. This causes women to develop forms of anger that are acceptable/expected of them by society whereas men have difficulty with Anger-Control. This indicates how much women's self-silencing and the subsequent anger-in is reinforced by society in an attempt to control and maintain relationships, which ironically ends up creating issues within intimate relationships in the long run instead. Brody, Haaga, Kirk and Solomon (1999), found that self-silencing was significantly correlated with anger suppression, as an attempt to save the relationship, couples were found to have self-silenced and put away their anger in attempts to keep the relationship alive.

Studies indicated that self-silencing was found to be associated with a fear of expressing anger and anger-in (Brody, Hagg, Kirk & Solomon, 1999). Additionally, it was also found that there was an association between self-silencing and anger-in and a negative relationship with anger-out, amongst depressed women, the study also indicated that specifically for women who ever depressed there was a higher rate of anger-in mode of anger expression (Tan & Carfagnini, 2008).

### **2.31 Self-Silencing and Relationship Satisfaction**

In terms of marital relationships, communication is vital. However, in situations and marriages where self-silencing becomes a recurring component, there might be detrimental effects on relationship satisfaction. This happens because the spouse in question who might appear to be self-silencing in order to avoid conflict situations or cause harm to the relationship is giving more room for dissatisfaction, due to the fact that as they self-silence for whatever reason deemed appropriate, they might be repressing their needs and their ideals for their marriage. On the flip side, some partners might self-silence solely to avoid the odd, minor conflict. Vazquez (1998), analyzed self-silencing and relationship satisfaction with depression and found that with a population of Hispanic women, regardless of age and marital status, women who self-silenced and self-sacrificed in the context of an intimate relationship did not have a satisfactory relationship.

Uebelacker, Courtnage and Whisman (2003), found that for women, there was an association found with self-silencing and marital dissatisfaction. Harper, Melinda and Welsh (2007), had similar findings where they found significant negative correlations between self-silencing and relationship satisfaction.

## **2.32 Pakistani Cultural Context to Relevant Marital Issues**

It is known that gender roles have been assigned through culture, such as masculine attributes such as power and domination to men and feminine traits such as submittal and helplessness to women, resulting in power dynamics to become disbalanced in societies (Koenig, 2018). Across various nations, particularly in Eastern and Asian cultures, males have an expectation placed on them to acquire necessary provisions for their families and are left with the task of important decision making, while women are expected to care for them and play a supportive role in the relevant decision-making processes. While being morphed into the frame of reference of marital relationships, such gender specific incorporations mold the presuppositions of the roles of husband and wife in terms of occupation status, making important decisions, domestic duties, and the power of holding ability to declare rulings inside a home (Ogletree, 2014), as well as make a contribution to the hardship of gender bias (Ogletree, 2014; Barreto & Ellemers, 2005).

Falconier (2013), found that gender role beliefs and presumptions are a significant determinant of relationship satisfaction. Pakistan is a conservative country where gender roles, gender role expectations, and marital role presumptions are heavily emphasized. In terms of private life as well as their social lives, females are believed to be more constrained than males. The only appropriate personal interaction among a male and a female is through matrimony. Inability to satisfy the said gender roles in the marriage, leads to disapproval from kin, neighborhood, and community, as well as cause strife in the marriage (Hadi, 2017; Ali et al., 2017).

The recurring theme here is that, time and time again is the gender-roles being reinforced in the marriage which dictates a lot of the interactions that might occur in the life of a married couple. Pakistan, like other Eastern collectivistic societies, collective wellness and domestic peace, especially parental compliance, are valued more than individual freedom (Stewart et al., 2000). In collectivist societies, the collective is paramount, and roles and responsibilities take precedence over the individual's personal inclinations (Triandis, 1995). Conservatism and compliance are highly prized in Pakistan, and therefore are especially pushed on women (Qadir, de Silva, Prince, & Khan, 2005), this provides ample room for self-silencing to become stronger and stronger amongst women especially as Pakistani women are told from a young age to suppress and put aside their desires, implementing a sort of constraint on the women that helps develop more submissive attitudes (Dyson & Moore, 1983). Such gendered restrictions even against expressions of anger then add to the depression in displays of relevant feelings (Jack, 1999). These submissive attitudes also might dictate the processes of the way that anger is expressed within the marriage, in terms of conflict situations, there might be an imbalance with the way that conflict is dealt with by both parties, in constructive terms or destructive processes, the way that anger is expressed whether one party fully expresses their anger outward or suppresses or constructively deals with it through communications, which in turn has an impact on relationship satisfaction as well.

## CHAPTER-3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

For this research, a cross-sectional survey-based design was used to explore the mediating role of self-silencing in the relationship of marital conflict with anger expression and relationship satisfaction. The instrument used to assess self-silencing was the Silencing the Self Scale (Jack, 1991), Sound Relationship House Questionnaire's (Gottman, 1999) relevant constructs were used to assess marital conflict. To assess Anger Expression, the Multi-Dimensional Anger Inventory by Siegel (1986) was used for Anger-In and Anger-Out, for Anger Control, Anger Management Scale by Stith, Hambry, and Banyard (2013) was used. To measure relationship satisfaction, the Couple's Satisfaction Index by Funk & Rogge (2007) was used.

The study was conducted in three phases:

**Phase I.** The measures for Anger Expression, Marital Conflict and Relationship Satisfaction were translated into Urdu. First of all, the scales were Forward translated with the help of Urdu language experts, and then brought to an expert committee for evaluation. After the Forward translations were accepted, they were put through the process of Backward translation. Once the scales were deemed acceptable, they were put forth to be tested.

**Phase II.** A pilot study was conducted to determine the effectiveness of the items and the reliability of the translated scales. A sample of 50 married individuals was used in the pilot study.

**Phase III.** Next, consent forms, demographic sheets and questionnaires were administered individually. The participants were assured that their participation is voluntary and that their information will be kept confidential and only used for the research.

### **3.2 Research Design**

A cross-sectional survey-based design was used for this study to investigate the role of self-silencing as a mediator in the relationship between marital conflict, anger expression, and relationship satisfaction.

### **3.3 Research Instruments.**

**Silencing The Self Scale.** The variable of Self-Silencing was measured using Silencing the Self Scale by Jack (1991). On a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, participants considered each statement on the 22-item scale. Items 1, 8, 15 and 21 were reverse scored. Three rationally derived sub-scales were selected to measure the relational schemas central to self-silencing. The subscales were considered to reflect both phenomenological and behavioral aspects of self-silencing:

***Externalized Self-Perception.*** This subscale evaluates an individual's self-discerning schema, including the degree to which they judge themselves using external criteria. Item numbers 6, 7, 23, 27, 28 and 31

***Silencing the Self.*** Silencing the Self examines the inclination to suppress self-expression and conduct in order to preserve relationships and minimize the risk of retribution, damage, or confrontation. Items 2, 8, 14, 15, 18, 20, 24, 26 and 30.

***Divided Self.*** The Divided Self assesses how much an individual perceives a separation between an outside fake self and an inner real self as a byproduct of

concealing specific emotions and opinions in a significant relationship. Item 5, 13, 16, 17, 19, 21 and 25.

**Sound Relationship House Questionnaire.** Developed by Gottman (1999), out of the questionnaire's 16 constructs, 5 were included to measure conflict, these constructs are Harsh Startup, The Four Horsemen, Gridlock on Perpetual Issues, Accepting Influence and Compromise. A 5-item version of the questionnaire was used with a binary type scale indicating True or False for the respondent in the pretense of their relationship. Higher scores indicate higher levels of martial conflict.

**Multi-Dimensional Anger Inventory.** Developed by Siegel, this is a 38-item functionalized scale with various components integrated. It is derived from previously reported assessments of anger (1986). The MAI is said to assess several aspects of anger, out of which, subscales relevant to the research such as Anger-in and Anger-out modes of expression (12 items) were to selected. Participants assessed each remark on a score ranging from 1 (completely undescriptive) to 5 (completely descriptive). The answers are rated on a 5-point Likert scale, with higher scores suggesting more anger issues relevant to the aspect being addressed in the statement.

**Anger Management Scale.** To assess Anger Expression-Control, the Anger Management Scale was used, which was authored by Stith, Hambry and Banyard (2013). The brief version was used to assess levels on Anger Expression-Control. Five questions from the Self-Awareness and Calming Strategies subscales were chosen and generalised to measure anger management in all interactions in the present version. The responses are on a 4-point Likert type rating scale (4-1) with 5 items in the abbreviated version.



**Couples Satisfaction Index.** A 32-item measurement scale, constructed to evaluate the level of an individual's satisfaction in a relationship by Funk and Rogge (2007) known as the Couple's Satisfaction Index. The scores can range from 0-161. Higher scores indicate higher levels of relationship satisfaction, while lower scores indicate relationship dissatisfaction.

### **3.4 Verification of Tool**

The scales and subscales of Sound Relationship House Questionnaire, Multidimensional Anger Inventory, Anger Management Scale and Couples Satisfaction Index, were firstly translated into Urdu using the Back Translation technique. These newly translated items were then put forth to be tested for further verification and assessment of their psychometric properties.

#### **Sample**

This verification was done on a sample of 50 married individuals (males= 25, females= 25) from Islamabad and Rawalpindi. The inclusion criteria consisted of individuals who had been in married for a minimum of 6 months.

**Table 1**

*Frequency table for sample characteristics and demographics of the Pilot Study (N=50).*

Categories	<i>f</i>	%
Gender		
Male	25	50
Female	25	50
Age		
25-35	9	18
36-45	12	24
46-55	13	26
56-65	16	32
Duration of Marriage		
0.6-10	10	20
11-20	11	22
21-30	19	38
31-40	8	16
41-50	2	4
Family Type		
Nuclear	27	54
Joint	23	46

Table 1 represents the distribution of pilot study sample on the basis of information collected from demographic sheet provided to the participants. The sheet inquired demographic information on gender, age, duration of marriage and family type. The table provides a comprehensive view of the demographics on the research sample.

**Table 2**

*Inter-scale correlation, alpha coefficients, and descriptive statistics of the study variables (N=50)*

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. DC	-	-.52**	.40**	0.14	0.20	-.45**	0.22
2. CC		-	-0.20	0.02	-0.26	.41**	-0.26
3. AI			-	-.62**	.33*	-.34*	0.18
4. AO				-	0.17	-.31*	0.17
5. AC					-	-0.10	-0.20
6. RS						-	0.06
7. STS							-
<i>a</i>	.87	.76	.77	.84	.80	.93	.85
M (SD)	4.82 (4.05)	7.46 (2.42)	16.02 (5.20)	11.72 (2.23)	13.78 (3.87)	106.38 (25.05)	64.08 (13.86)
Skewness	0.63	-1.14	-0.27	0.10	-0.25	-0.43	0.57
Kurtosis	-0.70	0.89	-0.77	-0.16	-0.33	-1.04	0.96

\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*  $p < 0.05$

*Note: DC= Destructive Conflict, CC= Constructive Conflict, AI= Anger-In, AO=Anger-Out, AC= Anger-Control, RS= Relationship Satisfaction and STS= Silencing the Self.*

Table 2 displays correlations among research variables, Destructive Conflict shows a significantly negative relationship with Constructive Conflict and a significantly positive relationship with Anger-In research variable. Further Destructive Conflict has a significantly negative relationship with Relationship Satisfaction. Constructive Conflict relationship was found to have a significantly positive relationship with Relationship Satisfaction. Anger-In was found to have a significantly positive relationship with Anger-Out. Anger-In was also found to have a significantly positive relationship with Anger-Control and a significantly negative relationship with Relationship Satisfaction. While Anger-Out has a significantly negative relationship with Relationship Satisfaction. Lastly, while non-significant, Silencing the Self was found to have a positive relationship with Destructive Conflict and a negative relationship with Constructive Conflict.

It further displays the descriptive statistics of the research variables, this includes the number of items, Means, Standard Deviations, alpha reliabilities, range of scores, skew and kurtosis. All the reliability values were in acceptable ranges, with reliabilities from .76 to .93 and were seen as being quite satisfactory.

### 3.5 Item Total Correlation

To further determine the consistency of the translated scales, item total correlation analysis was done.

**Table 3**

*Item-total correlations for Destructive conflict subscale (N=50)*

Items	Item-total correlation	Corrected Item-total Correlation
1	.56**	.48
2	.56**	.47
3	.56**	.47
4	.43**	.33
5	.67**	.60
6	.66**	.60
7	.63**	.56
8	.58**	.50
9	.74**	.67
10	.57**	.48
11	.62**	.55
12	.66**	.59
13	.75**	.70
14	.71**	.65
15	.58**	.48

\*\*  $p < 0.01$

Table 3 indicates the item total correlation for subscale for Destructive Conflict. The table points towards the majority of the items contributing positively towards the total Destructive Conflict measure.

**Table 4**

*Item-total correlations for Constructive conflict subscales (N=50)*

Item No.	Item-total correlation	Corrected Item-total Correlation
16	.40**	0.22
17	.40**	0.21
18	.58**	0.43
19	.48**	0.34
20	.62**	0.50
21	.66**	0.57
22	.77**	0.68
23	.58**	0.47
24	.45**	0.28
25	.77**	0.68

\*\*  $p < 0.01$

Table 4 indicates the item total correlation for subscale for Constructive Conflict. The table shows that all the items contribute positively towards the total Constructive Conflict measure.

**Table 5**

*Item-total correlations for Anger-in (N=50).*

Item No.	Item-total correlation	Corrected Item-total Correlation
3	.61**	0.37
4	.63**	0.49
11	.72**	0.57
19	.76**	0.64
20	.67**	0.49
27	.62**	0.53

\*\*  $p < 0.01$

Table 5 shows the item total correlation for subscale for Anger-In. The table indicates that the majority of the items contributing positively towards the total Anger-In measure, reflecting the internal consistency of the measure.



**Table 6***Item-total correlations for Anger-out (N=50).*

Item No.	Item-total correlation	Corrected Item-total Correlation
7	.78**	0.48
23	.66**	0.43
24	.72**	0.38
29	.75**	0.23

\*\*  $p < 0.01$ 

Table 6 shows the item total correlation for subscale for Anger-Out. The table indicates that the majority of the items contributing positively towards the total Anger-Out measure.

**Table 7***Item-total correlations for Anger-control (N=50)*

Item No.	Item-total correlation	Corrected Item-total Correlation
1	.71**	0.53
2	.79**	0.63
3	.79**	0.65
4	.74**	0.57
5	.69**	0.54

\*\*  $p < 0.01$

Table 7 shows the item total correlation for subscale for Anger-Control. The table indicates that all of the items are significantly related to the total test scores, indicating the internal consistency of the items of the Anger-control measure.

**Table 8***Item-total correlations for Couple's satisfaction index (N=50).*

Item No.	Item-total correlation	Corrected Item-total Correlation	Item No.	Item-total correlation	Corrected Item-total Correlations
1	.50**	0.44	17	.89**	0.87
2	.60**	0.57	18	.91**	0.90
3	.63**	0.61	19	.81**	0.79
4	.60**	0.56	20	.72**	0.70
5	.64**	0.61	21	.75**	0.73
6	.51**	0.65	22	.62**	0.59
7	.89**	0.88	23	.71**	0.69
8	.71**	0.69	24	.44**	0.39
9	.77**	0.75	25	.49**	0.44
10	.76**	0.24	26	.47*	0.43
11	.84**	0.82	27	.28*	0.22
12	.87**	0.86	28	.61**	0.58
13	.75**	0.72	29	.65**	0.62
14	.74**	0.71	30	.62**	0.59
15	.75**	0.67	31	.31*	0.25
16	.73**	0.70	32	.72**	0.69

\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*  $p < 0.05$

Table 8 indicates the item total correlation for items for Couples Satisfaction Index. The table points towards the majority of the items contributing significantly with the total score on Couples Satisfaction Index measure.

**Table 9**

*Item-total correlations for Silencing the self (N=50).*

Item No.	Item-total correlation	Corrected Item-total Correlation	Item No.	Item-total correlation	Corrected Item-total Correlation
2	.31**	0.24	19	.57**	0.51
5	.40**	0.31	20	.62**	0.56
6	.44**	0.36	21	.31*	0.21
7	.55**	0.48	23	.56**	0.49
8	.53**	0.14	24	.53**	0.47
13	.52**	0.46	25	.51**	0.44
14	.52**	0.24	26	.65**	0.60
15	.33*	0.331	27	.73**	0.69
16	.41**	0.52	28	.73**	0.68
17	.60**	0.58	30	.38**	0.29
18	.64**	0.53	31	.38**	0.30

\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*  $p < 0.05$

Table 9 indicates the item total correlation for items for ‘Silencing the Self scale’. The table points towards the majority of the items contributing positively towards the total ‘Silencing the Self’ measure.

## Discussion

After the scales were put through the thorough process of backward and forward translation, all with the help of language experts, the scales were put together, along with the demographic sheet, in order to conduct a pilot study for the newly translated scales. The questionnaire provided a detailed view of the demographic spread and a glimpse of the relationships between the variables and reliabilities of the scales, as well as the item correlations. First of all, Table 1 displays the demographic variables, with 25 males and 25 females, ranging from ages 25-65, the table further displays the frequencies for duration of marriage and family types. Next table (Table 2) describes the reliabilities of the scales, with the lowest being .76 for Constructive Conflict subscale and the highest being .93 for Couple's Satisfaction Index. Table 2 also depicts the relationships between the variables, the initial description of the relationships shows Destructive conflict having a significantly negative relationship with constructive conflict, whilst having a significantly positive relationship with anger-in, further, it showed a non-significant positive relationship with anger-out, and anger-control, and a significantly negative relationship with relationship satisfaction. Constructive conflict displays a significant positive relationship with relationship satisfaction while showing a negative non-significant relationship with anger-in. Anger-in reports a negatively significant relationship with anger-out and anger-out shows a significant negative relationship with relationship satisfaction. While anger-control shows negative relationships with relationship satisfaction and silencing the self. Lastly, silencing the self-displays no significant relationships with the other research variables. The item correlations provided an insight into how well the items functioned together and are internally consistent. The item correlation results for the relevant subscales all appeared to be within acceptable ranges.

### **3.6 Population, Sample and Sample Characteristics**

The target population for the current study was Pakistani married individuals. The inclusion criteria consisted of married individuals who had been married for a minimum of 6 months. The sample consisted of 300 (150 men and 150 women) married individuals with the age of 25 to 65 years with a mean age of 40.52(SD=11.14).

### **3.7 Sampling Technique**

Purposive sampling technique was used to collect the data from Islamabad and Rawalpindi. The inclusion criteria set for the sample includes individuals who have been married at least six months.

### **3.8 Data Collection**

Data was collected from the vicinities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi. The participants were briefed on the research and informed consent was sought from each of them. They were reassured that the information collected would strictly be used for research purposes only and that they could opt out of the research at any time. After they had agreed to participate in the research, they were given the booklet of questionnaires. Detailed instructions were provided to them regarding the questionnaires and on average, participants took about 30-40 minutes to complete the questionnaires.

### **3.9 Data Analysis**

The data was subjected to statistical analysis in order to assess the hypotheses. To evaluate the assumptions of the main study, correlation analysis, multiple regression analysis, linear regression, mediation analysis and t-test analyses were carried out. All analyses were conducted using SPSS 26.

### **3.10 Research Ethics**

The participants were fully briefed on the purpose of the research and they were reassured that any information that they provide will be strictly for research use only. Informed consent was taken from each of the participants and they were also told that their participation is completely voluntary and that they could opt out of the research if they so wished. The anonymity of the participants was also taken into account during data collection.

### **3.11 Delimitations of Research Study**

During this phase of the study, an important delimitation of the research was the sample inclusion criteria, which was that married individuals who had been married for at least 6 months were included in the study, this was to ensure that a good rapport had developed for newer couples and so they would have a better insight regarding their marital relationships. There was also a major uncertainty caused due to COVID-19, for which online questionnaires were also made available for individuals who opted for contactless participation in the research.

## CHAPTER-4

### ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA

#### 4.1 Research Demographics

**Table 10**

*Frequency table of demographics (N=300).*

Categories	<i>f</i>	%
Gender		
Male	150	50
Female	150	50
Age		
25-35	120	40
36-45	84	28
46-55	57	19
56-65	39	13
Duration of Marriage		
0.6-10	147	49
11-20	68	22.7
21-30	57	19
31-40	25	8.3
41-50	3	1
Family Type		
Nuclear	160	53.3
Joint	140	46.7



Table 10 represents the distribution of total study sample (N=300) on the basis of information collected from demographic sheet provided to the participants. The sheet inquired demographic information on gender, age, duration of marriage, family type, physical illness, and mental illness. The table provides a comprehensive view of the demographics on the research sample.

## **4.2 Inter-scale Correlations, Alpha Coefficients and Descriptive Statistics**

**Table 11**

*Inter-scale correlation, alpha coefficients, and descriptive statistics of the study variables (N=300).*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. DC	-	-.44**	.15**	.19**	-.02	-.47**	.26**
2. CC		-	-.08	-.04	.04	.41**	-.21**
3. AI			-	-.23**	.25**	-.12*	.14*
4. AO				-	-.16**	-.08	-.01
5. AC					-	.06	-.04
6. RS						-	-.27**
7. STS							-
$\alpha$	.85	.70	.86	.83	.84	.94	.82
M (SD)	5.92 (4.09)	7.23 (2.40)	17.64 (5.65)	12.03 (3.91)	14.22 (3.87)	108.32 (25.89)	64.89 (12.49)
Skewness	.25	-.80	.01	.03	-.40	-.56	-.07
Kurtosis	-1.04	-.12	-.81	-.91	-.55	-.33	.14

\*\*  $p < 0.01$  level, \*  $p < 0.05$  level

*Note: DC= Destructive Conflict, CC= Constructive Conflict, AI= Anger-In, AO=Anger-Out, AC= Anger-Control, RS= Relationship Satisfaction and STS= Silencing the Self.*

Table 11 portrays the relationships and their relative significance, between the research variables. Destructive conflict was found to have a significantly negative

relationship with constructive conflict and a significantly positive relationship with anger-in, and anger-out. At the same time, it was found to have a negative relationship with anger-control, however this relationship was not found to be significant. Next, destructive conflict displays a significantly negative relationship with relationship satisfaction and finally a significantly positive relationship with silencing the self. Further, the variable of constructive conflict provided an insignificant negative relationship with anger-in and anger-out. A significantly positive relationship was found between constructive conflict and relationship satisfaction and a significantly negative relationship with silencing the self-variable. Next, Anger-in and anger-out were found to have a significantly negative relationship while anger-in also provided a significantly positive relationship with anger-control. Anger-out provided a non-significant negative relationship with silencing the self and relationship satisfaction, while showing a significantly negative relationship with anger-control. Anger-control indicated the presence of a positive correlation with relationship satisfaction and a negative relationship with silencing the self, both of them being insignificant. Lastly, silencing the self-indicated having a significantly negative correlation with relationship satisfaction. The table also shows descriptive statistics regarding the research variables, this includes number of items, means, standard deviations, reliability values, range of scores, skewness and kurtosis. All subscales and scales appear to have appropriate and acceptable alpha reliabilities ranging from .70 to .94.

### **4.3 Multiple Regression Analyses**

**Table 12**

*Multiple regression analysis of Destructive Conflict and Constructive Conflict on Anger-Out (N=300).*

AO	B	SE	$\beta$	t	p	95% CI	
						LL	UL
DC	.21	.06	.21	3.41	.001	.088	.33
CC	.09	.10	.05	.89	.37	-.11	.30

R= .19 , R<sup>2</sup>=.04,  $\Delta$ R<sup>2</sup>=.04, (F= 6.07\*)

*Note AO=Anger-Out, DC=Destructive Conflict, CC=Constructive Conflict. CI= Confidence Interval, LL= Lower Limit, UL= Upper Limit.*

Table 12 displays multiple regression analysis of destructive conflict and constructive conflict on anger-out. Variance depicted by R<sup>2</sup> is observed as 4% for the outcome variable F= 6.07. The analysis describes destructive conflict significantly positively predicting anger-out mode of anger expression. Whereas constructive conflict does not appear to significantly predict anger-out.

**Table 13**

*Multiple regression analysis of Destructive Conflict and Constructive Conflict on Anger-In (N=300).*

AI	B	SE	$\beta$	t	p	95% CI	
						LL	UL
DC	.19	.09	.14	2.21	.03	.021	.37
CC	-.06	.15	-.025	-.40	.69	-.35	.24

R= .15 , R<sup>2</sup>=.02,  $\Delta$ R<sup>2</sup>=.02, (F= 3.61\*)

*Note: DC= Destructive Conflict, CC= Constructive Conflict, AI= Anger-In. CI= Confidence Interval, LL= Lower Limit, UL= Upper Limit.*

The above Table 13 shows the impacts of destructive conflict and constructive conflict on anger-in among married individuals. The R<sup>2</sup> value indicates 2% variance in the outcome variable with F=3.61. The findings indicate that destructive conflict positively predicts anger-in while constructive conflict does not significantly predict anger-in.

**Table 14**

*Multiple regression analysis of Destructive Conflict and Constructive Conflict on Anger-Control (N=300).*

AC	B	SE	$\beta$	t	p	95% CI	
						LL	UL
DC	.00	.061	.00	-.003	.99	-.12	.12
CC	.07	.10	.05	.73	.46	-.13	.28

R= .05 , R<sup>2</sup>=.002,  $\Delta$ R<sup>2</sup>=.002, (F= .33)

*Note: DC= Destructive Conflict, CC= Constructive Conflict, ACt= Anger-Control. CI= Confidence Interval, LL= Lower Limit, UL= Upper Limit.*

Table 14 shows a multiple regression analysis of destructive conflict and constructive conflict on anger-control. R<sup>2</sup> value describes a variance of .02%, with the outcome variable F=.33. The analysis reveals that destructive conflict and constructive conflict do not significantly predict anger-control.

**Table 15**

*Multiple regression analysis of Destructive Conflict and Constructive Conflict on Relationship Satisfaction (N=300).*

RS	B	SE	$\beta$	t	p	95% CI	
						LL	UL
DC	-2.30	.35	-.35	-6.48	.000	-2.95	-1.57
CC	2.70	.60	.25	4.51	.000	1.51	3.85

R=.52. , R<sup>2</sup>= .27,  $\Delta$ R<sup>2</sup>= .27, (F= 54.90\*)

*Note: DC= Destructive Conflict, CC= Constructive Conflict, RS=Relationship Satisfaction, CI= Confidence Interval, LL= Lower Limit, UL= Upper Limit.*

Table 15 displays a multiple regression analysis of destructive conflict and constructive conflict on relationship satisfaction. R<sup>2</sup> indicates 27% variance on the outcome variable F= 54.90, p<0.001 The analysis displays that destructive conflict a significant negative predictor of relationship satisfaction and has significantly positive predictor of relationship satisfaction.

### 4.3 Regression Analyses

**Table 16**

*Regression analysis of Silencing the Self on Anger-In (N=300).*

AI	B	SE	$\beta$	t	p	95% CI	
						LL	UL
STS	.061	.026	.14	2.36	.02	.01	.11
R <sup>2</sup> = .018							

*Note: AI=Anger-In, STS= Silencing The Self, CI= Confidence Interval, LL= Lower Limit, UL= Upper Limit.*

Table 16 indicates regression analysis of silencing the self on anger-in. The analysis indicates a variance of .18% in the outcome variable with  $F= 5.57$ ,  $p<0.05$ . The analysis explains that silencing the self significantly predicts anger-in mode of anger expression.

**Table 17**

*Regression analysis of Silencing the Self on Relationship Satisfaction (N=300).*

RS	B	SE	$\beta$	t	p	95% CI	
						LL	UL
STS	-.56	.116	-.27	-4.90	.000	-.79	-.34
R <sup>2</sup> = .07							

*Note: RS= Relationship Satisfaction, STS= Silencing The Self, CI= Confidence Interval, LL= Lower Limit, UL= Upper Limit.*



The table 17 indicates regression analysis of silencing the self on relationship satisfaction. The analysis displays variance of 7% in the outcome variable with  $F=24.02$ ,  $p<0.001$ . The tables describes that the variable of silencing the self is a significantly negative predictor of relationship satisfaction.

#### 4.5 Mediation Analyses

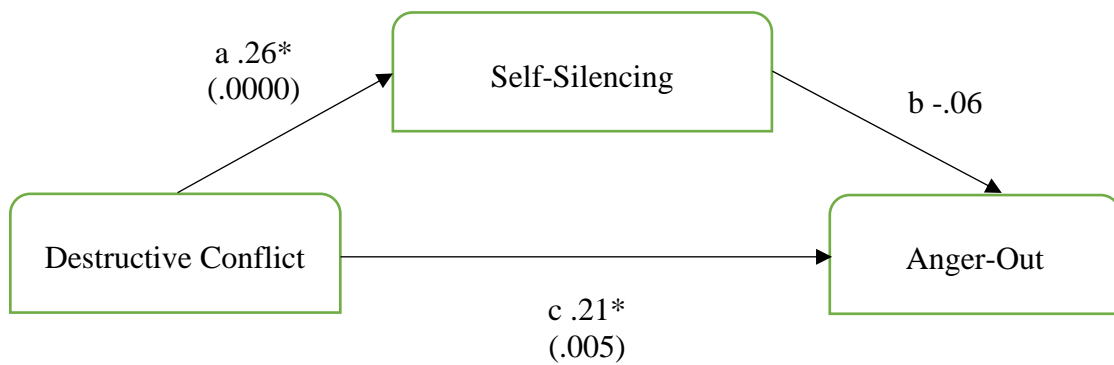
**Table 18**

*Mediation analysis of destructive conflict on anger out through self-silencing (N=300).*

Predictors	Anger-Out			
	Model 1	<i>B</i>	Model 2	
			95% CI	
			UL	LL
(Constant)	60.17	12.07*	9.76	14.38
DC	.26*	.21*	.08	.31
STS		-.06	-.055	.01
$R^2$	.06	.04		
$F$	21.75*	6.19		
$\Delta R^2$		.02		
$\Delta F$		15.56		

\*  $p < 0.05$  level

*Note: DC= Destructive Conflict, STS= Silencing the self*



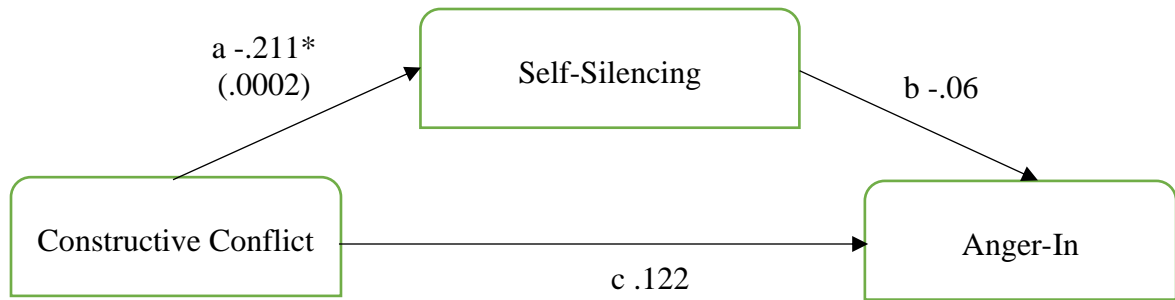
*Figure 2.* Mediation analysis of destructive conflict on anger-out through self-silencing.

The above table and figure display the analysis for predicting anger-out through destructive conflict and self-silencing to observe the mediation effects of self-silencing. Model 1 indicates a significant positive association between destructive conflict and self-silencing, explaining 6% variance. Next, it was observed that there was a negative relationship between self-silencing and anger-out, however it was not found to be significant, when destructive conflict and self-silencing were added together to predict anger-out, the relation become non-significant, with a variance of 2%.

**Table 19***Mediation analysis of Constructive Conflict on Anger-In through Self-Silencing**(N=300).*

Predictors	Anger-In			
	Model 1	<i>B</i>	Model 2	
			95% CI	
			UL	LL
(Constant)	72.93*	15.09*	10.77	19.41
CC	-.211*	-.06	-.42	.12
STS		.122	.003	.11
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.04	.02		
<i>F</i>	13.97	3.34		
$\Delta R^2$		.02		
$\Delta F$		10.63		

\*  $p < 0.05$  level*Note: CC= Constructive Conflict, STS= Silencing the self.*



*Figure 3.* Mediation analysis of constructive conflict on anger-in through self-silencing.

In the first model it is apparent that there is a significant negative association between self-silencing and constructive conflict, indicating a variance of 4%, meaning that it negatively predicts self-silencing i.e., the more the constructive conflict, the lesser the self-silencing. However, when put together with anger-in through self-silencing, the relationship becomes non-significant, with a variance of 2%.

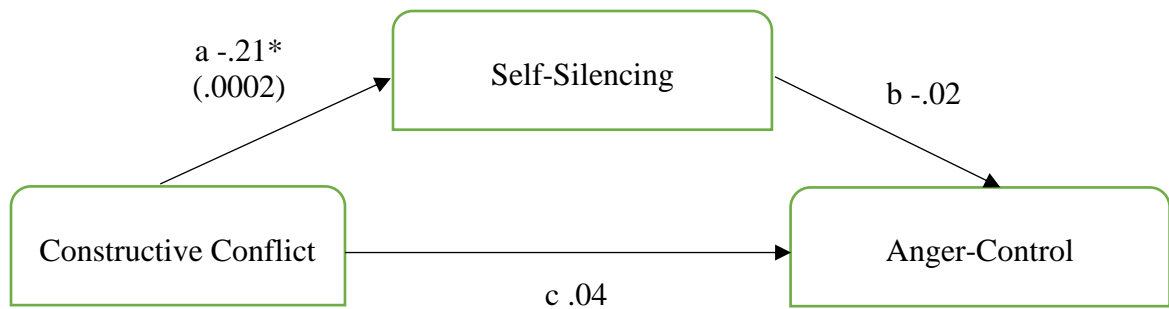
**Table 20**

*Mediation analysis of Constructive Conflict on Anger-Control through Self-Silencing (N=300).*

Predictors	Anger-Control			
	Model 1	<i>B</i>	Model 2	
			95% CI	
			UL	LL
(Constant)	72.83*	14.27	11.30	17.25
CC	-.21*	.04	-.12	.25
STS		-.02	-.04	.03
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.04	.003		
<i>F</i>	13.97	.44		
$\Delta R^2$		.43		
$\Delta F$		13.53		

\*  $p < 0.05$  level

*Note: CC=Constructive Conflict, STS=Silencing the Self.*



*Figure 4.* Mediation analysis of constructive conflict on anger-control through self-silencing.

The above model and figure describe the relationships amongst the variables. In Model 1 it is apparent that there is a significantly negative relationship between the variables constructive conflict and self-silencing. When put together in Model 2 however, the relationship of constructive conflict and anger-control through self-silencing does not appear to be significant.

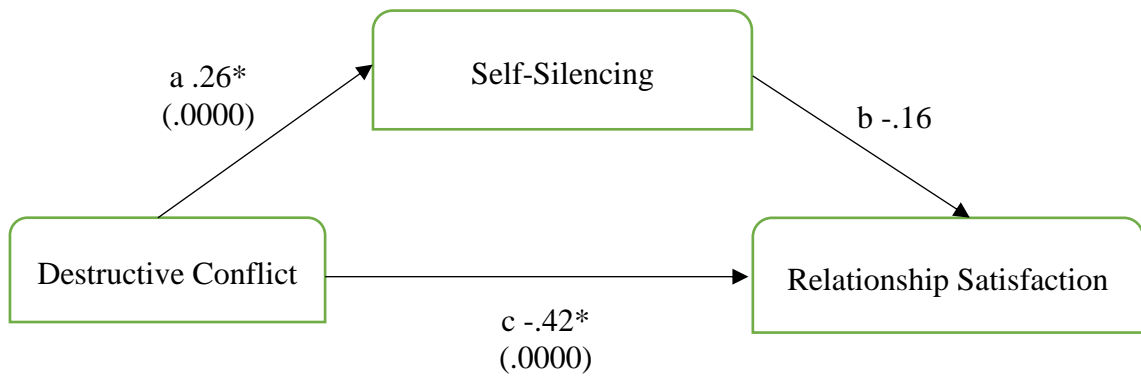
**Table 21**

*Mediation analysis of Destructive Conflict on Relationship Satisfaction through Self-Silencing (N=300).*

Relationship Satisfaction				
Model 2				
Predictors	Model 1	<i>B</i>	95% CI	
			UL	LL
(Constant)	60.17*	146.03*	132.43	159.63
DC	.26*	-.42*	-3.34	-2.04
STS		-.16	-.54	-.12
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.06	.24		
<i>F</i>	21.75	47.97		
$\Delta R^2$		-.18		
$\Delta F$		26.22		

\*  $p < 0.05$  level

*Note: DC= Destructive Conflict, STS=Silencing the Self.*



*Figure 5.* Mediation analysis of destructive conflict on relationship satisfaction through self-silencing.

The table and figure describe the relationships between the variables destructive conflict, self-silencing and relationship satisfaction. Model 1 describes a significantly positive relationship between destructive conflict and self-silencing, indicating that the former predicts the latter, with 6% variances. Model 2 shows the relationships between the three variables put together and they do not indicate a significant mediation through self-silencing as the relationships become negative as well.



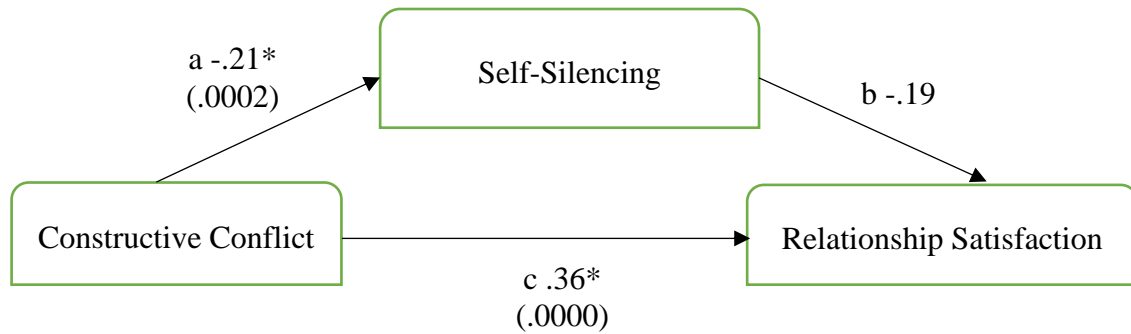
**Table 22**

*Mediation analysis of Constructive Conflict on Relationship Satisfaction through Self-Silencing (N=300).*

Predictors	Relationship Satisfaction			
	Model 1	<i>B</i>	Model 2	
			UL	LL
(Constant)	72.83*	106.*	88.24	123.89
CC	-.21*	.36*	2.82	5.07
STS		-.19	-.62	-.18
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.04	.20		
<i>F</i>	13.97	37.84		
$\Delta R^2$		-.16		
$\Delta F$		-23.87		

\*  $p < 0.05$  level

*Note: CC= Constructive Conflict, STS= Silencing the self.*



*Figure 6.* Mediation analysis of constructive conflict on relationship satisfaction through self-silencing.

The above table and figure display the relationships between the variables constructive conflict, relationship satisfaction and self-silencing, Model 1 displays a negatively related significant relationship between constructive conflict and self-silencing. Model 2 indicates a non-significant relationship of the variables when put together.

## 4.6 Mean Differences

**Table 23**

*Mean differences across gender on Destructive Conflict, Constructive Conflict, modes of Anger Expression, Relationship Satisfaction and Self-Silencing (N=300).*

	Female (n=150)				t	p	95% CI		Cohen's d
	Male (n=150)		M	SD			LL	UP	
	M	SD							
DC	5.10	3.85	6.77	4.16	-3.67	.01	-2.61	-.79	0.41
CC	7.6	2.25	6.86	2.50	2.69	.01	.20	1.30	0.32
AI	17.5	5.59	17.77	5.74	-0.42	.67	-1.56	1.01	0.05
AO	11.41	3.91	12.65	3.81	-2.78	.01	-2.12	-.36	0.32
AC	14.52	3.80	13.89	3.92	1.41	.16	-.25	1.50	0.16
RS	112.35	22.12	104.26	28.67	2.73	.01	2.30	13.91	0.31
STS	63.47	11.51	66.31	13.28	-1.97	.049	-5.66	-.02	0.23

*Note: DC= Destructive Conflict, CC= Constructive Conflict, AI= Anger-In, AO=Anger-Out, AC= Anger-Control, RS= Relationship Satisfaction and STS= Silencing the Self.*

The table 23 displays mean differences among males and females along the research variables. The table displays significant differences for destructive conflict, for females, males scoring higher on constructive conflict, for anger-out it was observed that females expressed more anger-out than males and that males expressed more relationship satisfaction than females. It was also observed that females self-silence more than males.

**Table 24**

*Mean differences across family type on Destructive Conflict, Constructive Conflict, modes of Anger Expression, Relationship Satisfaction and Self-Silencing (N=300).*

	Nuclear (n=160)		Joint (n=140)		t	p	95% CI		Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD			LL	UP	
DC	5.70	3.95	6.17	4.24	-1.018	.31	-1.41	.45	0.11
CC	7.40	2.26	7.10	2.55	1.117	.26	-.24	.86	0.12
AI	17.82	5.74	17.42	5.60	0.616	.53	-.90	1.70	0.07
AO	11.61	3.92	12.50	3.84	-1.973	.05	-1.77	-.002	0.23
AC	14.23	3.78	14.17	3.97	0.147	.88	-.81	.94	0.01
RS	108.35	26.01	108.25	25.83	0.031	.97	-5.81	5.99	0.003
STS	64.91	12.70	64.85	12.30	0.038	.97	-2.80	2.90	0.004

\*  $p < 0.05$  level

*Note: DC= Destructive Conflict, CC= Constructive Conflict, AI= Anger-In, AO=Anger-Out, AC= Anger-Control, RS= Relationship Satisfaction and STS= Silencing the Self.*

The table 24 displays mean differences among two groups of family types, nuclear and joint. The table portrays differences amongst the groups on the variables, there is a significant difference between joint family and nuclear family systems on mode of anger-out mode of expression.

## 4.7 ANOVA

**Table 25**

*One-Way analysis of differences between different durations of marriage and research variables (N=300).*

	1 (n=147)		2 (n=68)		3 (n=57)		4 (n=25)		5 (n=3)		F	p
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
DC	6.17	4.06	5.85	4.41	5.42	4.02	6	3.76	4.66	4.16	0.42	.79
CC	7.05	2.38	7.28	2.44	7.70	2.31	7.2	2.52	5.67	3.78	1.08	.36
AI	18.25	5.58	16.19	5.75	17.89	5.58	17.8	5.19	11.67	6.35	2.47	.45
AO	12.12	3.68	11.93	4.15	11.91	3.94	12.36	4.31	7.33	4.04	1.18	.32
AC	14.35	3.92	13.94	3.93	14.15	3.62	14.36	3.83	12.67	7.09	0.26	.91
RS	106.52	25.27	108.98	26.05	111.84	26.77	108.32	25.75	102.33	44.41	0.49	.74
STS	65.79	12.69	64.13	11.23	66.24	11.83	60.72	13.28	51.33	25.32	2.03	.09

*Note: DC= Destructive Conflict, CC= Constructive Conflict, AI= Anger-In, AO=Anger-Out, AC= Anger-Control, RS= Relationship Satisfaction and STS= Silencing the Self. 1=0.6-10, 2=11-20, 3=21-30, 4=31-40, 5=41-50*

The table indicates a one-way analysis of differences between different duration of marriage groups, ranging between 0-6, 7-10, 11-20, 21-30, 31-40, 41-50 years. No significant findings were observed among the variables regarding duration of marriage.



**Table 26**

*One-Way analysis of differences between different age groups and research variables (N=300).*

	1 (n=121)		2 (n=84)		3 (n=57)		4 (n=38)		F	p
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
DC	6.72	3.96	4.86	4.15	6.17	4.23	5.31	3.70	3.88	0.01
CC	6.98	2.46	7.36	2.39	7.49	2.27	7.34	2.46	0.75	0.52
AI	18.29	5.61	16.78	6.01	18.10	5.22	16.74	5.48	1.63	0.18
AO	12.47	3.54	11.58	4.31	11.74	3.67	12.03	4.35	0.98	0.39
AC	14.29	3.76	14.31	4.25	14.21	3.25	13.68	4.25	0.27	0.84
RS	104.97	26.17	111.37	23.74	110.21	24.87	109.28	30.45	1.18	0.31
STS	66.11	13.05	64.83	12.03	64.08	9.33	62.31	15.45	1.01	0.39

*Note: DC= Destructive Conflict, CC= Constructive Conflict, AI= Anger-In, AO=Anger-Out, AC= Anger-Control, RS=Relationship Satisfaction and STS= Silencing the Self. 1=25-35, 2= 36-45, 3=46-55, 4=56-65.*

The above table represents the differences of the research variables along age groups. Differences among the groups are evident however the differences are not significant, with the most evident group showing differences appears to be the age group 1 (25-35) showing most difference along destructive conflict variable. The differences along self-silencing are also apparent with group 1 showing the highest rates of self-silencing out of all the groups.

## **CHAPTER-5**

# **SUMMARY, FINDINGS, DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Summary**

The purpose of the current study was to explore the relationships between marital conflict, self-silencing, modes of anger expression and relationship satisfaction among married individuals, with a look into the impacts that marital conflict has on anger expression and relationship satisfaction and the role of self-silencing in these relationships. The relationship of these variables with reference to demographic variables were also explored.

The research comprised of two parts, in the first part, the scales and subscales were translated and adapted by using the technique of forward and backward translations and then pilot testing respectively, on a sample of 50 married individuals ranging from ages 25-65. After this the results were deemed acceptable, the next phase was begun which involved testing of the research hypotheses on the newly translated items.

Previous research indicates that the process of self-silencing is deemed as a generally negative system of behaviors which involve a repression of an individual's own self and their desires in hopes to avoid certain outcomes such as conflict or other relevant negative behavior outcomes. In domestic settings this can be particularly seen as ways for a spouse to avoid escalation in terms of conflict or outward and perhaps aggressive expressions of anger and how this might impact relationship satisfaction is of interest to this research.

## 5.2 Findings

Firstly, relationship patterns were assessed among the research variables. It was observed that there was a significantly positive relationship between anger-out and destructive conflict, destructive conflict had a significantly positive relationship with anger-in, while constructive conflict was not observed to have had a significant positive relationship with anger-control. Further it was found that there was a significantly negative relationship between destructive conflict and relationship satisfaction and it was also found that there was a significantly positive relationship between the variables of self-silencing and anger-in and lastly it was seen that there was a significantly negative relationship between relationship satisfaction and self-silencing.

Next the analysis revealed that self-silencing did not appear to significantly mediate the relationships between marital conflict, anger expression and relationship satisfaction.

Whilst assessing differences across demographic variables it was observed that females significantly self-silenced more than men. It was also found that females expressed more anger-out mode of expression than men. However no significant gender differences were observed on anger-in and anger-control mode of anger expression. No significant differences were found across duration of marriage, similar to this, no significant differences were observed among different age groups for relationship satisfaction, however, it was observed that group 2 displayed higher levels of relationship satisfaction. Lastly, no significant differences were observed between joint and nuclear family systems on self-silencing, however it was found that individuals in joint family systems experienced significantly higher anger-out.

### 5.3 Discussion

Firstly, the relationships between the variables were assessed. Looking at the first hypothesis, it was hypothesized that destructive conflict would be positively related with anger-out mode of anger expression. The findings show that destructive conflict has a positive association with anger-out mode of anger expression ( $\beta = .21$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Tamir, Mitchell and Gross (2008) found that even when anticipating conflict as well as during conflict, the experience of and the expression of anger may increase respectively. Burman, Margolin and John (1993) similarly state that while it is understood that the experience and expression of anger occurs as the couple enters conflict, however, it has also been observed that there is a reciprocation of anger among the couples, especially with those involved in couples that are verbally and physically aggressive behavior patterns. Finally, it was found that 60% of couples involved in destructive conflict situations, 5% of them expressed verbal and physical aggression (Tiruwork, Tamiru & Tolla, 2021). To summarize the words of Greenberg and Goldman and Jenkins (2008, 2000), anger is an identifying emotion of relational conflict which not only intensify rapidly in conflict situations but also has the tendency to evolve in context to intimate relations.

Next, we looked into the relationship between anger-in and destructive conflict and hypothesized that the relationship would be positive and discovered similar findings to support the hypothesis ( $\beta = .14$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Anger-in refers to a suppression of anger, in involves withholding of anger and while this may appear to be a positive aspect, it is anything but. There's a difference between anger-in and anger-control, with the latter involving a regulation and positive expression of anger involved in conflict resolution, compromise and understanding/accepting tactics. Anger-in is a suppression of angry feelings and expression which becomes toxic the longer it is withheld.

All people are different, similarly they react differently to situations of conflict, while some might reciprocate anger, others may suppress for a multitude of reasons. Attempting to understand anger with reference to context is highly important in terms of couples and their interactions as it differs from situation to situation (Deffenbacher, 2013). Caughlin and Scott (2010), identified a pattern involving anger-in during destructive conflict situations where one party tends to practice a demand-withdraw pattern which involves a partner complaining and expressing frustrations while the other party engages in a withdrawal, where they do not retaliate, instead they withdraw from the conflict situation entirely, creating an avoidance and repression of feelings of frustrations and anger. Mace (1976) theorized that perhaps individuals in intimate relationships felt that their anger in the relationship needs to be restricted and that people need to withdraw and push their feelings down for a various number of reasons. To further understand how destructive conflict and anger-in might be related, an insight into different cultural studies may be important as with certain cultures, specifically East-Asian and South-Asian, couples may be involved in more culture specific processes of regulating their anger in marital situations.

In a comparison study by Schouten, Boiger, Kirchner, Uchida and Mesquita (2020), samples were taken from both Belgian and Japanese populations (couples) and they were put into a ten-minute conflict situation, followed by a rating of their emotions and suppression of emotions every 30 seconds, the results reported a significant difference in suppression for anger amongst Japanese and Belgian couples with the former expressing more anger-in. Matsumoto (2008) expresses similar findings for negative disengaging emotions (in this case anger) having higher rates for anger-in in Japanese populations. What this correlation explains, specifically in context to Pakistani society and culture in regards to marriage is that there is an intertwined system

of submissive beliefs, a way of life involving a pacifist approach to emotions and conflict resolution. It provides evidence for such processes during destructive conflict where couples may disengage or go into avoidance and express anger-in form of anger expression. This means that when confronted with destructive conflict situations, people may stay silent and not retaliate out of fear of abandonment (Gottman, 1998).

The next hypothesis was that of a positive relationship between constructive conflict and anger-control. While the results indicate a positive relationship direction, it does not appear to be significant. While we know that there is evidence for improvement in marital function when conflicts are dealt with appropriately i.e., constructive conflicts, this is why there was a division in conflict types in an attempt to understand how different types of conflicts function in terms of anger, relationship satisfaction and self-silencing as there are many positive functions of conflict (Coser, 1967). In this matter, anger-control is of paramount importance as it becomes the means through which constructive conflicts may progress in function. Gottman (1992), gave a specific name and typology to the type of couples who are involved in constructive conflict and controlled anger expressions, he called them the “Validating couples” and explained how this type of couple demonstrates involvement in conflict situations in calm and composed manners as their primary concern is to tackle the conflict while validating the emotions and experiences of their spouses/partners, this means that these couples also practice controlled anger expressions as well.

In a monitored case of therapy for teaching anger-control tactics and development of alternative responses to conflict situations, it was seen that after the therapy sessions, the couples reported overall improved approaches to conflict, meaning they engaged in more constructive conflict behaviors and developed a better handle on their anger expressions verbal and physical out-ward expressions (Margolin,

2007). Khosravipour et. al, (2011), found anger control and management to be an important predictor for violent conflict situations, where the lack of acted as an indicator for increased instances of destructive conflict encounters. A reason for why the results of this hypothesis may have been insignificant might also be due to cultural differences as in the current study sample, withdrawal and suppression of anger is more common than actually addressing issues, the patriarchal patterns in marriage tend to dictate a dominance from men in terms of anger and destructive conflict while the women are expected and involved in practices of either suppression or control as their roles in marital contexts are attributed to being passive.

The hypothesis of a negative relationship between destructive conflict and relationship satisfaction is a very common occurrence however, it's always interesting to see how much it is reported in patriarchal societies as in certain cases there is a general underreporting of relationship satisfaction as it may be considered a betrayal to the marriage to say anything against it. It was not the case for this research as the results provided a significantly negative relationship between destructive conflict and relationship satisfaction ( $\beta = -.35, p < 0.001$ ). In a study by Tolla (2021), with a sample from Bahir Dar City, Ethiopia, it was evident that where people practiced frequent destructive conflict tactics, the relationship satisfaction between the married couples significantly decreased. Similarly, Gesell, Niklas, Schmiedeler and Segerer (2020) uncovered that in couples where there are more destructive conflict processes, there is increased relationship dissatisfaction and where there are instances of constructive conflict there is higher reporting of relationship satisfaction. It is widely understood that destructive conflicts are a great negative affect on relationship satisfaction and subsequently it's quality (Cohan & Bradbury, 1997). Kathryn (2018), studied the relationship between conflict resolution styles and marital satisfaction and found that



those couples who were involved in destructive conflict significantly reported lower relationship satisfactions.

As reported by Qadir, Silva, Prince and Khan, the entire aspect of marital satisfaction in Pakistan's "conservative, patriarchal Islamic" society are of high importance and demand repeated insights as the trends regarding patriarchal societies are ever changing, especially in recent years where change seems to be gradually taking place for a less intense patriarchal control over the roles in a marriage. As reported, women in Pakistan tend to view marriage differently as compared to those in the west, this causes a variation in what is reported and how it may contradict western literature (Qadir, Silva, Prince and Khan, 2005).

Finally, we come to the variable of self-silencing and assess its relationships with other research variables. The hypothesis states that there is a positive relationship between self-silencing and anger-in, the results support this hypothesis with a positive and significant relationship ( $\beta = .14, p < 0.05$ ). Both variables are inhibitive in nature, one is a form of self-sacrificing behaviors where the needs of others are given importance over the needs of oneself and the other where the expression of anger is put aside and not healthily dealt with due to a multitude of reasons.

In research by Tan and Carfagnini (2008), on self-silencing, anger and depressive symptoms among women, they also found that there was a significantly positive relationship between anger-in and self-silencing. Theory regarding self-silencing was initially developed around women and thus most of the literature reports self-silencing on women. Brody, Haaga, Kirk and Solomon (1999), also found that anger-in and self-silencing were significantly related, as it was understood to their sample that self-silencing and suppression of anger was the only way to save the relationship. This is also why in Pakistan we may find a dominant number of couples

engaging in self-silencing behaviors, as in conservative societies there really is no focus on correctly addressing conflicts in marriages, the role is provided for the woman to be submissive and silent as a successful marriage is given more importance and duty than anything else in a married couple's life, sometimes completely denying the existence of individual desires as the view suddenly becomes collective, the couple are seen as a collective with one's duty towards the other, if a man earns, he earns for his family, his success is mostly attributed to be a need rather than a drive for achievements in career and for women, their marriage is their new duty, so in instances where the partner's happiness and agreement becomes of paramount interest, the occurrence of self-silencing behaviors and anger-in expressions of anger become more and more frequent.

It was hypothesized that there will be a negative relationship between self-silencing and relationship satisfaction, the regression analysis revealed a significantly negative relationship between the variables ( $\beta = -.27$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). It is understood that where there are instances of severe suppression of one's own desires that there will be a sense of dissatisfaction regarding the relationship as the individual engaging in self-silencing behaviors will not feel a sense of fulfillment and perhaps highly underappreciated. Vazquez (1998) reported the results of Hispanic married women and expressed how the women who self-silenced greatly also reported a dissatisfaction with their relationship.

Uebelacker, Coutnage and Whisman (2003), also had similar findings of significant correlations between self-silencing and marital dissatisfaction as did Harper, Melinda and Welsh (2007), who reported significant negative relationships between relationship satisfaction and self-silencing. Other than the last, it can be observed how most literature is found to be self-silencing for women, while that does not mean that men don't self-silence, the body of literature is majorly for western countries, which

leaves room for new findings among men and women in conservative, collective societies such as ours. What is important for our research is that the design includes a sample of men and women in equal amounts, so to find significant relationships between the variables is of importance.

The main hypothesis for the study was that self-silencing mediates the relationship of marital conflict, with anger expression and relationship satisfaction. To assess this, different models were constructed to analyze the mediation effects of self-silencing. The first model (figure 2) displays how destructive conflict as a predictor with anger-out being the outcome variable and self-silencing mediating this relationship. While the results did indicate that destructive conflict predicts both self-silencing and anger-out, however the mediation effect of self-silencing was not found to be significant. Whiffen, Foot and Thompson (2007) conducted similar research on self-silencing as a mediating link between marital conflict and depression in which they found both men and women who assessed their relationships to be in states of conflict, also experienced anger-in, in attempts to hide their anger as to not add to the conflict and went along with their partner's desires, with this they found that self-silencing mediates the relationship between marital conflict and depressive symptoms, so for them the depression was an outcome of suppressed anger and the anger-in occurred with the self-silencing. An insignificant mediation may have occurred due to a plethora of reasons, the interpretation of such means that it does not have a causation, it does not have an effect on the relationships between the rest of the variables. While we do see that destructive conflict did predict self-silencing and as seen in table 20, self-silencing not only decreases when put together with destructive conflict and anger-out but also turns negative, indicating that where there is anger-out, the self-silencing is decreasing as well. This may explain an entirely different aspect in the conservative society's

marital roles, it may suggest that in instances of conflict, an outward expression of anger is occurring and there, self-silencing is lessened. However, there is not enough evidence to conclude this as the values were insignificant.

In an attempt to further explore the mediating effects of self-silencing, the variable was also put together with constructive conflict and anger-in, where again, we can see (Table 19) how the mediator path becomes insignificant, it was found that while constructive conflict did predict a decrease in self-silencing, put together the values did not provide significant answers. This might have occurred due to a lack of constructive conflict practices in the population in general, indicating that the people are actually self-silencing more and not making attempts to improve upon their conflicts. Similarly, instead of anger-in, anger-control was put into the equation with constructive conflict and the findings were again, similar, constructive conflict indicated a decrease in self-silencing but put together with anger-control, the paths as well as the overall effect became insignificant.

Next, relevant to the study variables, self-silencing model (figure 5) was developed to see whether it mediates the relationship between destructive conflict and relationship satisfaction, it was found that there was a negative significant relationship between relationship satisfaction and destructive conflict, however, again, with self-silencing it was found that the effect was insignificant. The directions imply that destructive conflict decreases where the relationship satisfaction is high, this is the same with self-silencing decreasing where relationship satisfaction is high. Due to the lack of information, it will not be appropriate to draw conclusions of effects and causations.

Further, we put together the relationships of constructive conflict with relationship satisfaction with self-silencing as a mediator. While a positive significant relationship was found between constructive conflict and relationship satisfaction,

suggesting that where there is a practice of constructive conflict, relationship satisfaction will occur with reduced instances of self-silencing. However, again, due to the results being insignificant, there is not enough information to draw formal conclusions in regards to the mediation effects of self-silencing.

The gender differences on the research variables were assessed next. It was hypothesized that females will self-silence more than men, the independent samples t-Test results indicate that there are significant differences between males and females, with females scoring higher on self-silencing than men. The entire theory of self-silencing was developed with women in mind as self-silencing was assumed to be highly present in women (Jack, 1991). So despite having originated with gender specificity, self-silencing has presented itself among both men and women in different ways (Cramer & Thoms, 2003; Ussher & Perz, 2010). The differences may occur specifically due to societal roles.

Interestingly enough, despite the gendered nature of the silencing the self-theory, there are various researches that describe self-silencing to be just as prominent amongst men, Page and Stevens (1996), uncovered in their sample of college students, men scored higher on self-silencing measures than women. Similarly for Thompson (1995), also reported that men involved in long-term relationships reported more self-silencing behaviors. For the results of the current research we may conclude that there are significantly higher reports of self-silencing amongst women, the reason for that again is with how gender roles influence self-silencing, especially with conservative societies, a man may even be seen as being less masculine for self-silencing (Medeiros & Rubinstein, 2015). Gilligan (1982), explains how the assumption of feminine voice is characterized as being dutiful, co-dependent, cares for others, nurtures peace and reduces instances of confrontations in relationships. It was identified how harshly the

feminine voice was silenced by associating very stereotypical, gendered aspects with them, which lead to an internalization of the inequality which subsequently meant that women self-silence.

Jack (1991) has explained how self-silencing manifests as an outcome of societal roles, for Pakistani society, this becomes highly relevant as the predisposed gender roles and expectations from married women and women in general are very much prevalent. There are multitudes of researches where men have shown to self-silence more than women (Gratch et al., 1995; Harper, Dickson & Welsh, 2006, Ussher & Perz, 2010), despite that, it does not mean that the theory for women is incorrect as this majority of study all comes from individualistic societies where the hold of patriarchal rules isn't as harsh. To add to this, research suggests that women's compliance and conformity to gender roles significantly predicts self-silencing in women (Witte & Sherman, 2002).

It was further hypothesized that anger-out mode of anger expression would be higher in males rather than females. Contrary to the hypothesis, it was found that anger-out was higher in females. An interesting finding, especially in context of culture. As suggested by Cox (2000), women usually are prone to withholding and suppressing anger unless the situation requires it because when the situation allows women to outwardly express anger, then women do in fact act on their feelings. Shingo and Ota (2021), also had similar significant findings with women expressing more anger than their spouses. Similarly, the Southwest Missouri State University (2000) surveyed 200 men and women and found that women did in fact act on their anger and expressed anger-out more or less the same. It should also be kept in mind that the research samples was collected during times of self-isolation when COVID-19 was at it's peak, which may explain why married women scored high on anger-out, having been limited to

staying indoors with limited socializations and a collection of other stressors such as more chores at home, adjustment to a new constricted way of life, uncertainty of disturbance in income and a general fear of COVID, it is possible that expressions of anger may have changed during this time, which may well explain why women were expressing more anger-out.

Conversely it was hypothesized that women engage in more anger-in and anger-control expressions of anger, as we saw that that was not the case with the previous hypothesis. Further, from the t-Test (table 23) it was found that there were no significant differences between the genders in terms of anger-in and anger-control. In a study by Thomas (1989), similar results were reported where there were no gender differences in anger-in and anger-control. Kring (2010) understands that in general, gender differences are not widely found in regards to anger-expression, (including anger-in and control), usually the self-report measures of anger expression conclude a lack of significant differences in anger-expression (Burrowes & Halberstadt, 1987; King & Emmons, 1990). With reference to the current research significant COVID stressors should also be kept in mind which may have impacted the experience and expression of anger among married men and women.

Individuals in long term marriages were hypothesized to self-silence less than those in their early years of marriage. Over-all differences were found to be non-significant for all duration of marriage groups. While there is a significant lack of literature on the variation of self-silencing behaviors across different durations of marriage or even comparisons between older couples and newlyweds, this can be explained in context to the Pakistani society and its views on marriage. Unlike in western societies, the roles identified for married couples do not relax or change the longer they stay married, the patterns of self-silencing remain more or less the same

throughout the duration of marriage. As mentioned by Shum (1996), there is a difference between what is valued in Western and Asian cultures in regards to what women experience and the experience of feelings of guilt, self-sacrifice and a suppression of one's own desires is reinforced in Asian cultures.

It was hypothesized that older age groups will report lower relationship satisfaction levels. The reason this hypothesis was considered was to assess whether there are differences for South-Asian cultures in regard to relationship satisfaction. The ANOVA revealed no significant differences along age groups however a difference can be observed in the mean scores of the youngest age group (25-35) and the oldest age group (56-65). As an important aspect of married life in general, relationship satisfaction plays a primary role in how the relationship will progress or develop in later years if it continues and stays in-tact. As Kurdek (1998) suggests that things tend to change once the "honey-moon" period is over and a sense of boredom starts to take over and the flaws in partners start to become more and more apparent. By this pattern, it has been observed that initial high levels of relationship satisfaction tend to disintegrate over time and satisfaction decreases over the course of the relationship (Aron, Norman, Aron & Lewandowski, 2002). There are also certain researches that claim that there are no significant consistent changes in marital satisfaction (Burr, 1970; Rollins & Feldman, 1970), however, in general it has been assessed and the results indicate that a third of elderly couples experience a decline in marital satisfaction, when compared with their early years (Yarrow, Blank, Quinn, Youmans and Stein, 1971), with other research even suggesting that marital satisfaction reaches an all-time low in later years of life (Kiecolt-Glaser, Kennedy, Malkoff, Fisher, Speicher & Glaser, 1998). The lack of significant differences in age groups along marital satisfaction may also be



explained by the presence of self-silencing behaviors that have been shown to have negative impacts on relationship satisfaction.

Lastly, it was hypothesized that individuals in joint-family systems will tend to self-silence more than those in nuclear family systems. No significant differences were found for self-silencing respective of family systems. Interestingly however, it was found that there is a significant difference among joint family system and nuclear family system on anger-out mode of anger expression where married individuals in joint family systems expressed more anger-out than those from nuclear family systems. The concept of joint and nuclear family systems is relevant to South-Asian cultures where there are differences in terms of married life as a whole and their entire relationship system and the hierarchy of the household. A good explanation of how these experiences may differ culturally is provided by Jack and Ali (2010). They describe how in Nepal they have very strict gender roles and how Nepal's society is ruled by patriarchal ideals. They also deem self-silencing to be a strong attribute for their traditional "good woman" and that this woman is expected to serve and take care of the husband's immediate family as well as him i.e. in a joint family system. Here self-silencing is reinforced and highly appreciated. So while we have an insight of how women are expected to be in joint-family systems, there is still a severe lack of literature on issues and factors involved in intimate relationships in South-Asian cultures.

When we consider patriarchal societies, there are instances of increased self-silencing in joint-family systems as there is not one authoritarian figure in the family as it would be with people in nuclear families. Interestingly enough there's a flip side to this as well where the husband's family might actually be very accommodating and the wife might not feel as alone with people on her side, still even then, she may have to self-silence to some extent to avoid disappointing her new family.

## **5.4 Conclusion**

It was found that self-silencing did not significantly mediate the relationship between destructive conflict and anger-out, destructive conflict and relationship satisfaction. Destructive conflict was found to have a significant positive relationship with anger-out and a positive significant relationship with anger-in. Constructive conflict and anger-out were found to have a non-significant positive relationship. Destructive conflict also reported to have a significantly negative relationship with relationship satisfaction. Further it was found that self-silencing had a significant positive relationship with anger-in and a significantly negative relationship with relationship satisfaction, indicating most relationship patterns to have been theoretically consistent. Looking into gender differences, it was found that women significantly expressed more anger-out than men while female's high scores assumption on anger-in and anger-control was found to be insignificant in terms of gender differences. Assumptions of lesser self-silencing in terms of longer marriage durations was also found to be insignificant. There were also no differences found among age groups in terms of relationship satisfaction. Lastly, insignificant differences were found on self-silencing across family systems.

## **5.5 Limitations and Suggestions for future research**

Possibly the biggest issue for the research was that the data was collected during COVID-19's first and second waves when the virus was at its peak, which meant that not only were the people hesitant in participating and accepting the forms out of fear of contact with the virus but this also impacted marital relationships as a whole.

There was also a reluctance in filling out online forms as the usage of the internet for older participants in particular as well as for those who lacked not only the

resources but also the knowledge on how to fill out the forms on their cell-phones or on their computer systems.

Another limitation of the study can be observed in the sampling technique as probability sampling was used to collect data which brings about an issue of generalizability of the findings.

Furthermore, the study is cross sectional which leaves room for experimental or longitudinal research.

The data was collected on self-report measures, which tends to be associated with common method variance.

Other background factors might be included such as number of children, comparisons of couples raising children, without children and those whose children have become independent.

An important factor missed in this research was that the research was conducted on married individuals instead of couples, married couples may provide more consistent and constructive results to the research as well as positively add to marital research in general.

## **5.6 Implications**

A further understanding in terms of specific aspects of marital life were explored with context to Pakistani society. The most important insight that this research provides is that of self-silencing behaviors and how these behaviors affect different parts of a married couple's life from how they express anger to how self-silencing may affect their relationship satisfaction. The enforcement of patriarchal ideals in the society were greatly highlighted while studying self-silencing, not only just for women but for men as well. Where a great many researches indicate self-silencing for men, the results from

this research stayed true for the general theoretical assumptions for Jack's Silencing the Self theory (1991).

The research also provided an interesting look into anger-expressions in marital relationships and how they exist by themselves and their relationship with self-silencing. There isn't a great amount of literature for anger-expression with context to Pakistan, this research may help with the lack of literature there. Further, anger expressions are usually studied with aggression or violent outbursts in mind, when anger is studied, usually the emphasis is on either extreme edge of the line, where it is no anger expressed or violent anger is expressed, this research help bridge the gap and reports on relevant findings for anger-expressions in Pakistani house-holds.

An important aspect explored in this research is that of marital conflict, while is a vast collection of researches for marital conflict, even in Pakistan, there are not as many that view constructive conflict separately from destructive conflict and the many different relationships it has with the research variables.

Possibly one of the most important outputs of this research is the translation of the many various subscales and scales into urdu, which will make it easier for researchers to conduct surveys in the national language of Pakistan. This will also help people understand and correctly provide information on the relevant subjects.

Over-all the results gained from the research provide an insight into different aspects of the everyday Pakistani married individual's life and the different processes involved in specific areas of marriage that being, self-silencing, anger-expressions, marital conflict and relationship satisfaction.

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