







Interfaith Marriage in Bangladesh: A Comparative Analysis of Past and Present Trends and Sociocultural Aspects

Murshida. Khatun^{1,2}, Amirul. Islam^{2,3*}, Baly. Khatun⁴

¹ Department of Islamic studies, University of Rajshahi, Rajshahi-6205, Bangladesh
² Institute of Natural Resources Research and Development, Rajshahi-6206, Bangladesh
³ Department of Sanskrit, University of Rajshahi, Rajshahi-6205, Bangladesh
⁴ Department of Folklore, University of Rajshahi, Rajshahi-6205, Bangladesh

* Corresponding author email address: amirulislam6430@gmail.com

E d i t o r	R e v i e w e r s
Salami Mutiu Olagoke  Associate Profesor, Head of Counseling Psychology and Guidance Department, Ibn Haldun University, Turkey salami@fpm.upsi.edu.my	Reviewer 1: Hajar Torkan  Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Islamic Azad University, Isfahan Branch (Khorasgan), Isfahan, Iran. h.torkan@khuisf.ac.ir Reviewer 2: Farhad Namjoo  Department of Psychology and Counseling, KMAN Research Institute, Richmond Hill, Ontario, Canada. Email: farhadnamjoo@kmanresce.ca

1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The introductory section provides an overview of marriage definitions and its role across cultures. However, the first sentence introduces multiple definitions from different sources (Khakimovna & Nawaz, 2023; Sen, 2020; Haviland et al., 2016), but these sources could be integrated better to clarify their contributions. Consider rephrasing to show how these sources align or contrast with one another, strengthening the connection between them.

The statement "Marriage is a global, universal culture" is an overgeneralization. While marriage is a global institution, its forms and practices vary significantly across cultures. It would be more accurate to state that "Marriage is a universal institution, though its forms and customs vary across cultures."

The concept of "socially recognized" intimate relationships is mentioned, but no reference is made to the complexities of this recognition in contemporary societies (e.g., legal recognition, same-sex marriages). It might strengthen the argument to include a citation that discusses the evolution of marriage as a social and legal institution (e.g., Merin, 2010; Wilson, 2012).

The mention of "marriage as a contract" should be expanded to include a discussion of the specific legalities associated with marriage in different cultures. This would provide more depth to the argument about marriage being both a social and legal contract.

The mention of "family arranged marriages, child marriages, polygamy, and forced marriages" is useful, but the tone can be perceived as somewhat dismissive. A more objective phrasing, such as "certain regions practice culturally specific forms of marriage, including arranged marriages and polygamy, which are contested in the global discourse on human rights" would be more appropriate.

The discussion on international law and women's rights initiatives in relation to marriage practices is highly relevant. However, the sentence "the aforementioned marriage practices have been included in laws as punishable offenses in various parts of the world" requires specific examples and legal references to support this claim. Consider including case studies or specific international laws to enhance the credibility of this statement.

The use of the phrase "family begins with procreation" could be misleading, as many family structures do not involve procreation. A more inclusive phrasing such as "many societies view marriage as the foundation of family life" would reflect a broader perspective.

The reference to "Bibah" being pronounced differently in various regions (e.g., "Biya" or "Shadi") is helpful but could be expanded with a discussion on regional variations in marriage customs and how these differences reflect local cultural identities.

The sentence "In many countries of the world, the wedding ceremony is over in a day, but the marriage in Bangladesh is not over in a day but never in a month" is unclear. Rewriting it for clarity, e.g., "Unlike in many countries where the wedding ceremony lasts for a day, marriages in Bangladesh often involve multi-day celebrations" would enhance readability.

The section outlines the use of a comparative design, but it would benefit from a clearer explanation of why this design is the most appropriate for the research. What specific aspects of interfaith marriage are being compared, and what variables will be used to assess changes over time?

The data collection methods are described adequately, but there is little mention of how participants were selected. Was purposive sampling used to ensure diverse representation of religious backgrounds, or was it random? Providing this detail will strengthen the methodology.

Response: Revised and uploaded the new document.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The statement "Sex outside of marriage is recognized as illegal and is a sin and crime called adultery" could benefit from clarification. While adultery is considered a crime in some legal systems, it is not universally illegal. Clarify which jurisdictions or legal systems are being referenced.

The paragraph discusses the history and religious dimensions of marriage in Bangladesh. However, the text jumps between various religious practices without fully exploring their cultural context. It would benefit from more detailed analysis of how these religious practices shape marriage customs and societal views on marriage in Bangladesh.

The inclusion of the term "henga" in the context of marriage customs in Sylhet requires further explanation. Is this term used derogatorily by the community, or is it a colloquial term for marriage? Providing some context will improve the clarity of this point.

The explanation of marriage customs in Bangladesh, such as the role of the Qazi in Muslim marriages and the priest in Hindu ceremonies, is informative. However, it would be beneficial to explain how these customs have evolved over time in response to sociopolitical and religious changes.

The mention of "marriages held in Bangladesh have acquired various religious affiliations" could be more specific. Which religions have had the most significant influence on marriage customs in Bangladesh? Consider expanding on the historical and social dynamics that have contributed to the current state of marriage practices in the country.

The mention of using thematic analysis for FGD recordings and interview transcripts is appropriate, but more detail is needed regarding the coding process. How were themes identified, and what steps were taken to ensure the validity and reliability of the analysis?

The historical explanation of dowry customs is interesting, but there is a lack of discussion on the contemporary legal and social implications of dowry in Bangladesh. It would be beneficial to include an analysis of how the Dowry Prohibition Act of 1980 has affected the practice of dowry and the enforcement of this law.

The description of wedding dances in the Sylhet, Mymensingh, and Rajshahi regions is vivid, but it would benefit from deeper analysis. For example, how do these dances reflect the socio-cultural values of the communities? Additionally, discussing the role of music and dance in reinforcing social bonds would provide a richer context.

Response: Revised and uploaded the new document.

2. Revised

Editor's decision: Accepted.

Editor in Chief's decision: Accepted.