

Marriage & Household Demographics

The Husband-Wife Age Gap in Pakistan: Consistent for 35 Years, Slowly Narrowing

The average Pakistani husband is about 4-5 years older than his wife. There's also a real trend: the gap has narrowed gradually, from 6.5 years in 1990-91 down to roughly 5 years in every survey since 2017. That's a genuine, if modest, shift toward more age-equal marriages over three decades, visible across nearly 30 years of separate survey rounds, not just one.



Mean Husband-minus-wife age gap

Source: Gallup & Gilani Pakistan
(www.gallup-international.com;
www.gallup.com.pk www.gilanifoundation.com)



(Also emailed*/faxed separately)



PRESS RELEASE

Big Data Analysis Marriage & Household Demographics

The Husband-Wife Age Gap in Pakistan: Consistent for 35 Years, Slowly Narrowing

(Islamabad), 15th September 2026

Gallup Pakistan Digital Analytics checked this across eight independent national surveys, spanning 1990-91 to 2024-25, to see how reliable a single number would really be — and to build a large enough combined sample to trust the answer.

Across the eight surveys, we observed a combined total of over 214,000 husband-wife pairs: PDHS 1990-91 (6,308 couples), PSLM 2004-05 (64,599 couples), HIES 2007-08 (13,455 couples), PDHS 2017-18 (14,495 couples), HIES 2018-19 (21,227 couples), PHPS Baseline in Punjab (20,794 couples), HIES 2024-25 (25,432 couples), and LFS 2024-25 (48,091 couples).

Across all of them, the finding held up remarkably well: the average Pakistani husband is about 4-5 years older than his wife. This has been true across demographic health surveys, labour force surveys, and household expenditure surveys alike, despite each being fielded independently, by different teams, using different questionnaires and different sampling designs.

There's also a real trend: the gap has narrowed gradually, from 6.5 years in 1990-91 down to roughly 5 years in every survey since 2017. That's a genuine, if modest, shift toward more age-equal marriages over three decades, visible across nearly 30 years of separate survey rounds, not just one.

A few patterns stood out beneath the national average. The gap is meaningfully wider in KP and Balochistan (around 5.2 years) than in Punjab and Sindh (around 4.5 years). It's meaningfully narrower among more educated wives — 3.8 years for wives with higher education, versus 4.7-4.9 years for everyone else. Urban and rural households look almost identical nationally, which was less expected than the education and province differences.

One honest caveat: while the average gap was remarkably stable across all eight surveys, the share of couples where the wife is actually older varied a lot more, from under 2% in some surveys to over 12% in others. That inconsistency is worth flagging rather than glossing over, and likely reflects differences in survey design rather than a real difference in marriage patterns.

The husband-wife age gap in Pakistan, verified across eight independent surveys

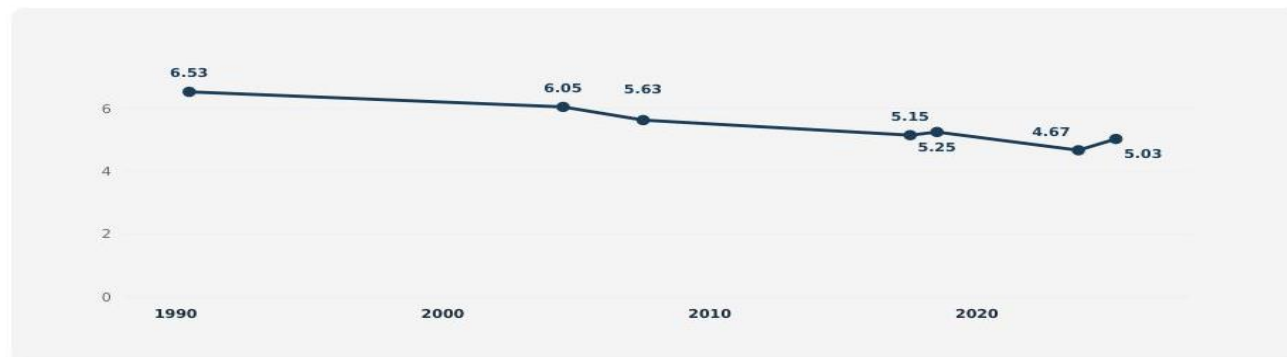
A gradual decline since 1990, but wide variation in how often wives are actually older

ABOUT THIS ANALYSIS

Computed independently from eight national surveys spanning three different instruments (PDHS, PSLM, HIES, LFS, PHPS) and 35 years, using each survey's own household/couple structure. Demographic breakdowns use PHPS (Punjab, education) and HIES 2024-25 (province/region, national).

The gap has declined gradually since 1990

Mean husband-minus-wife age gap, by survey year



Six surveys, one consistent average — but not a consistent share of wife-older couples

Husband's age minus wife's age, in years

Survey	Year	N couples	Mean gap	Median gap	% wife older
PDHS	1990-91	6,308	6.53	5.0	3.9%
PSLM	2004-05	64,599	6.05	5.0	1.8%
HIES	2007-08	13,455	5.63	5.0	4.1%
PDHS	2017-18	14,495	5.15	4.0	7.1%
HIES	2018-19	21,227	5.25	4.0	6.5%
PHPS (Punjab)	Baseline	20,794	4.46	4.0	12.5%
HIES	2024-25	25,432	4.67	4.0	11.4%
LFS	2024-25	48,091	5.03	4.0	3.5%

The average gap shows a gradual, consistent decline across survey years, but the share of couples where the wife is older ranges from 1.8% to 12.5% — a genuinely wider spread than the averages suggest. This likely reflects real differences in survey design rather than a behavioral difference across time or place, and should be read with more caution than the mean/median figures.

Where the gap is bigger, and where it's smaller

Mean age gap, by province and by wife's education (national, unless noted)

BY PROVINCE (HIES 2024-25)		BY WIFE'S EDUCATION (PHPS, Punjab)	
Balochistan	5.23 yrs	Primary/Middle	4.87 yrs
KP	5.19 yrs	No education	4.72 yrs
Punjab	4.49 yrs	Matric/Inter	4.72 yrs
Sindh	4.45 yrs	Higher education	3.82 yrs

6.53 → ~4.9

Mean gap, 1990-91 to recent surveys, across eight independent national surveys

1.8-12.5%

Share of couples where the wife is older — genuinely variable across surveys

-0.9 yrs

Gap for wives with higher education, vs. wives with no education

The gap is meaningfully wider in KP and Balochistan than in Punjab and Sindh, and meaningfully narrower among more educated wives — but nearly identical between urban and rural households nationally (HIES 2024-25: rural 4.45 yrs, urban 5.06 yrs), suggesting geography and education matter more here than the usual urban/rural divide.

Sources: Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey (PDHS) 1990-91 and 2017-18; PSLM 2004-05; Pakistan HIES 2007-08, 2018-19, and 2024-25 (all PBS); Pakistan Labour Force Survey (LFS) 2024-25; Punjab Health and Population Survey (PHPS) Baseline. All figures computed independently by GDAP from each survey's own household/couple records.



Opinion Poll from Gallup Pakistan
The Pakistani Affiliate of Gallup
International



GILANI RESEARCH
FOUNDATION

Tuesday, 15th September 2026

(3 Pages, English version Only)

Gilani Research Foundation is a not-for-profit public service project to provide social science research to students, academia, policymakers, and concerned citizens in Pakistan and across the globe.

Gilani Research Foundation is headed by Dr. Ijaz Shafi Gilani who pioneered the field of opinion polling in Pakistan and established Gallup Pakistan in 1980. Currently, Dr. Gilani, who holds a Ph.D. from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and has taught at leading universities in Pakistan and abroad, is Chairman of Gallup Pakistan.

If you have any further questions regarding this poll, please feel free to contact us.

*Best Regards,
Gallup Pakistan*

Disclaimer: Gallup Pakistan is not related to Gallup Inc. headquartered in Washington D.C. USA. We require that our surveys be credited fully as **Gallup Pakistan** (not Gallup or Gallup Poll). We disclaim any responsibility for surveys pertaining to Pakistani public opinion except those carried out by **Gallup Pakistan, the Pakistani affiliate of Gallup International Association.**

For more details about the Gallup International Association and to stay connected, please visit:

 Official Website: www.gallup-international.com

 Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/gallup_international

 Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/people/Gallup-International-Association/100089179655116/>

 LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/gallup-international-association>



Daily Gilani Poll
2026



of Gallup Pakistan
(1980-2026)