

Marital Adjustment and Life Satisfaction among Married Men and Married Women

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Abstract: *The study was done with the aim to measure the “Marital Adjustment and Life Satisfaction among married men and married women”. 100 married individuals aged between 25 to 50 years married for more than 3 years were selected through snowball sampling across India. The data was collected using Google form from the sample for the study. The Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Busby, et. al. 1995) and Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, et. al.1985) were used to measure marital adjustment and life satisfaction. It was hypothesized that gender differences will be seen in marital adjustment and life satisfaction and there will be significant correlation between the two variables. The results of the study indicated a significant difference between marital adjustment and life satisfaction among married men and women across India. The findings also indicated a significant correlation between marital adjustment and life satisfaction.*

Keywords: Marital Adjustment, Life Satisfaction

1. Introduction

A central consideration in human relationship is married life through which biological, psychological and social needs are satisfied (Özgüven, 2000). In individuals life the degree of wants and needs experienced be it physically and psychologically determine the satisfaction with life (Rice 1984). There are several domains of life when an individual's wants and needs exist for example as a parent, spouse, friend or employee (Biddle 1979). Satisfaction of life, work and specific sides of non-work are believed to be an extension of our activities and sentimentality towards varying walks of life. Indication of activities such as physical or leisure shows a strong positive relationship, as a better predictor towards life satisfaction (Mannell and Dupuis 1996)

Marital adjustment between husband and wife is the space they share with each other at a given time. Marriage life is also accompanied with the presence of marital stressors in which both partners develop ways to cope, establish an emotional bond with each other. Also, the benefits and costs perceived with marriage and the partner, reflects the mental state in an individual's life, if the perceived benefits are higher, the level of satisfaction between the partners in their marriage would be higher. (Stone & Shackelford, 2007).

Overall, Life satisfaction explains the well-being of a person's state of happiness, health and wealth (Morris, 2001). The general evaluation of an individual's life satisfaction infers the subjective nature of well-being. (Diener, 1984, p.544). From various studies it has been confirmed higher level of satisfaction is seen in married couples than single or divorced individuals. (Diener, Gohm, Suh, & Oishi, 2000).

2. Review of Literature

Demerouti, E., Bakker, A. B., Nachreiner, F., & Schaufeli, W. B. (2000). conducted a study related to burnout model and life satisfaction amongst nurses. The sample of the study included 109 German nurses. The tools to measure

included a scale of life satisfaction based upon Rice (1984) consisted of 4 items and the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI) constructed for the study measuring two dimensions, namely exhaustion and disengagement. The results of the study stated that job demands and job resources have an strong effect on exhaustion and disengagement and facilitating burnout between work conditions and life satisfaction. Their findings have helped towards the existing knowledge of burnout while providing guidelines that aim to prevent reduction of burnout among nurses.

Rice, R. W., Near, J. P., & Hunt, R. G. (1980) submitted a qualitative review of empirical research of more than 350 job-satisfaction/life-satisfaction relationships reported in 23 studies varying different variables. The findings of the data were based on conceptual and methodological concerning at a general level between work and nonwork relationship. The scale for overall review included male in mid 30's and females in mid 20's The review designated a zero order relationship between the variable of job satisfaction and life satisfaction. The correlation showed drop to low teens for specific facets of life satisfaction such as marital or leisure.

Fernández-Ballesteros, R., Zamarrón, M. D., & Ruiz, M. Á. (2001) designed a study on “The contribution of socio-demographic and psychosocial factors to life satisfaction”. The study involved 507 Spanish populations in terms of gender and aged 65 and over. The participants were interviewed at their home. The outcome of the study indicated income and education the two socio-demographic variables had directly and indirectly predisposed life satisfaction. The results were conferred via the activity theory of ageing.

In another interesting comparative study on attitudes of employees by Nagarathnamma et al., (1997) investigating the job and life satisfaction in public and private organization. The sample was taken from public and private sector organization consisting of 360 employees. The tools administered included job satisfaction scale and life satisfaction inventory. The results revealed a

significant relationship between job satisfaction and life satisfaction for both public and private sector employees. Public sector employees expressed greater satisfaction both with their jobs and life in comparison to private sector workers.

Möller, A. T., & Van Zyl, P. D. (1991) conducted a study on 46 married couples to measure their relationship beliefs, interpersonal perception, and marital adjustment. The tools administered included Relationship Belief Inventory consisting of five subscales: Disagreement is destructive (D); Mindreading is expected (M); Partners cannot change (C); Sexual perfectionism (S); and The sexes are different (MF) (RBI; Eidelson & Epstein, 1982) and the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS; Spanier, 1976). The results of the study indicated significant correlations between the DAS score and the D and S subscales of the RBI. The results of the study also indicated individual perception of their spouses relationship beliefs.

In a longitudinal study on “Marital adjustment and emotional symptoms in infertile couples: gender differences” conducted for a period of 4 yearlong by Tüzer, V., Tuncel, A., et. al. (2010) included population sample comprising total of 120 (60 couples), individuals men and women diagnosed with infertility. Three tools of instrument were used for the study that is Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) and Spielberger State and Trait Anxiety Scales (STAI-S and STAI-T) were used to assess the individual emotional symptoms. Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) was used to measure the marital adjustment status of the couples. The results of the study indicated significant gender differences in affectional expression and sexual satisfaction domains of DAS. The study also revealed the predictive power on anxiety and depressive symptoms of infertile men, when infertility is due to male factor.

3. Objectives

- i. To investigate the difference among married men and women in their marital adjustment status.
- ii. To examine the gender difference among married individuals with life satisfaction.
- iii. To find an association between marital adjustment and life satisfaction.

4. Hypotheses

- H1: Gender differences will be significant in marital adjustment.
 H2: Gender differences will be significant in life satisfaction.
 H3: There will be correlation between marital adjustment and life satisfaction.

5. Methodology

5.1. Sample

The sample was collected through snowball sampling technique using Google forms. The sample size was 100

married individuals (70 females, 30 males), aged between 25 to 50 years married for more than 3 years.

5.2. Tools

The data were collected using The Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Busby, et. al.1995) and Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, et. al.1985).

5.2.1. The Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Busby, et. al.1995) is a self report questionnaire that assesses seven dimensions of couple relationships. The scale consists of 14 items on a 5 or 6 point scale rating system. The scale has three main categories including Consensus in decision making, values and affection, Satisfaction in the relationship with respect to stability and conflict regulation and Cohesion through activities and discussion.

5.2.2. Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, et. al.1985) is a 5 item scale designed to measure global cognitive judgments of one’s life satisfaction. A 7 point scale that ranges from 7 strongly agree to 1 strongly disagree.

5.3. Statistical Analysis

The data were analysed using Pearson product moment correlation and t-test using SPSS to compute the hypotheses.

5.4 Results and Interpretation

This study was aimed to investigate the difference between the gender of married individuals to distinguish the marital status or adjustment and their effect on satisfaction with life. It was hypothesized that there will be difference present between the gender in terms of marital adjustment and life satisfaction; also there will be significant correlation between marital adjustment and life satisfaction. The results of the study are as follows:

Table 1: Indicating Gender Differences in Marital Adjustment

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
MA	Male	30	45.60	10.779	1.968
	Female	70	50.60	8.353	.998

Independent Samples Test			
t-test for Equality of Means			
	t	df	sig.
MA	-2.266	98	.028

(p<0.05)

The above tables indicate the gender differences present in marital adjustment. Mean standard deviation and t-test was calculated to see the difference between male and female participants. A t score of -2.266 was found at df (98). The value of t-test score is statistically significant (.028, p<0.05) and hence it can be stated that marital adjustment differ in male and female married individuals.

It can also be seen that the mean score (50.60) of females is higher than the mean score of (45.60) males, and so it can be concluded that females have significantly higher marital adjustment than males. Hence, the stated hypothesis is accepted.

Table 2: Indicating Gender Differences in Life Satisfaction

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
LS	Male	30	24.60	6.078	1.110
	Female	70	27.47	5.730	.685

Independent Samples Test			
t-test for Equality of Means			
	t	df	sig.
LS	-2.202	98	.032

($p < 0.05$)

The above tables indicate the gender differences present in life satisfaction. Mean standard deviation and t-test was calculated to see the difference between male and female participants to their satisfaction with life. A t score of 2.202 was found at df (98). The value of t-test score is statistically significant (.032, $p < 0.05$) and hence it can be stated that life satisfaction differ in male and female married individuals. It can also be seen that the mean score of female (27.47) is comparatively higher than the mean score of males (24.60), which shows that females have better level of life satisfaction than males. Hence, the stated hypothesis is accepted.

Table 3: Indicating the correlation between marital adjustment and life satisfaction

		MA	LS
MA	Pearson Correlation	1	.310**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.002
	N	100	100
LS	Pearson Correlation	.310**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	
	N	100	100

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

To compute the correlation between marital adjustment and life satisfaction, Pearson product moment correlation method was calculated using SPSS. The correlation between the two variables was found to be significant (.310** at 0.01 level (2 tailed)). Marital adjustment is positively correlated to life satisfaction. Hence, it indicates greater stability and satisfaction in the relationship towards marital adjustment in relation to life satisfaction. Hence, the stated hypothesis is accepted.

6. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the gender differences and associations between marital adjustment and life satisfaction among married individuals. A total of 100 married individuals were studied. The first objective of the study aimed at knowing the difference between male and female married individuals marital adjustment. The second objective aimed to evaluate gender difference in life satisfaction. The third objective aimed at the relationship between marital adjustment and life satisfaction. The findings of the study relating to the hypotheses were found to be acceptable.

Marriage is a bond of unconditional love where accepting flaws of each other and adjusting to it, not being judgemental yet showing compassion of togetherness and living a healthy relationship. The results of the study indicating healthy marital adjustment among the gender shows one of the most important factors. One of the reason that may be associated with it is, the coping strategies used as a choice in marriage. Satisfied couples use active coping strategies such as problem-solving and positive re-evaluation (Sabourin et. al.1990).

From the results of marital adjustment indicating the difference, it was seen that females have a higher level of stability in terms of adjustment than male participants. It may be the way females, self-perceive themselves where they are believed to be strong, adjusting to various home situations, maintain interdependent construal's, balance and take responsibility varying various roles as a daughter, wife, daughter in law, mother, etc. It could be also that traditional gender roles promoted and raised by the families to follow the norms of the society. A similar finding to difference in gender showed higher marital adjustment supporting (Diener's, 1984) bottom up approach to subjective well-being, in which positive functioning in a specific domain such as marriage leads to higher satisfaction with life in general.

Life satisfaction is conceptualized as one the most important contributor in an individual's life depicting one's goals, desires, sense of living a satisfying life, having a balanced functioning nature to day to day living. The objective of the study evaluating the gender difference in life satisfaction showed higher level of satisfaction in females than male participants. A probable explanation is that individuals view life and weigh more positively to the needs and desires met and goals being attainable. It could be also said that females on a daily basis face a lot of challenges, balancing work and home, handling family life that makes them stronger not only physically but mentally also to handle stress in a better manner. This is also consistent with the study by Bradley & Corwyn (2004) stating that life satisfaction is reflected to the extent when the basic needs are met and diversity of goals in life are achievable, indicating more goals achievable, level of life satisfaction will also increase. A similar relevant finding relating to higher level of life satisfaction among women was found by Calasanti, T. M. (2009) et. al. depicting that women have average level of life satisfaction at all age levels, it was also found that

increase in age, overall satisfaction decreased, whereas increase in personal income overall satisfaction increases.

Life satisfaction is also influenced with various other condition or indicators that include the place and people we live with, environmental, interpersonal factors, finding happiness in little things, financial security, positive individual identify, high self-esteem, coping strategies with life stressors, healthy sick free life, positive thought processes, social relationships are all important indicators for a healthy positive life satisfaction.

Pearson Product Moment Correlation using SPSS was used to find out the relationship between marital adjustment and life satisfaction among married individuals. The results of the study indicated a positive correlation showing higher stability in marital adjustment will have higher level of satisfaction with life. These could be due various factors relating to age difference between the couple showing maturity in decision making, sharing and giving personal space for each other, respecting flaws and appreciating partner's achievements. This is also indicated in an relevant study by Akhani et al. (1999) on marital adjustment and life satisfaction among the women of early and late marriage. The findings of their study proved their hypothesis, that women's age at marriage hold significance in the marital adjustment. The women who marry with an advance age have better marital adjustment than women of early marriage.

The results are also consistent with Ryff and Singer's (2000) interpersonal flourishing model, in which relational well-being is essential to human thriving. Consistent with this model, interpersonal flourishing in marriage (marital adjustment) appears to be an important predictor of one's own individual flourishing (satisfaction with life) over time. The study of the literature review also supports the results of the current study. As Hashmi et al. (2007) also derived that marital adjustment is defined as the condition in which there is usually a feeling of pleasure and contentment in husband and wife and with each other.

Another potential explanation is that people with high life satisfaction may view their partners in a very favourable or idealistic fashion; idealization of and positive illusions about partners have been associated with improved relationship quality over time (e. g., Murray, Holmes, & Griffin, 1996).

7. Conclusion

The aim of current study was to find out the gender difference and relationship of marital adjustment and life satisfaction among married individuals. This research approved that females have high level of marital adjustment and life satisfaction compared to males. The present study included a sample of (N= 100) 70 females and 30 males, married for more than 3 years. The participants were selected across parts of India from 25 to 50 age group. Pearson Correlation and t-test were used for statistical analysis. The research findings indicate that there is a positive correlation ($r=.31$, significant at $p.01$) between marital adjustment and Life Satisfaction. The

research further shows that there is significant difference (significant at $p.005$) between males and females on marital adjustment and life satisfaction.

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