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MARITAL ADJUSTMENT AND TRUST AMONG MARRIED COUPLES

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Abstract

The purpose of the present study was to examine the difference between male and female partners in marital adjustment and to investigate the relationship between marital adjustment and trust among married couples. Purposive sampling method was used. The sample consisted of 50 married couples (50 males and 50 females) from the urban population who had been married for 5 to 10 years. The sample was interviewed using the "Marital Adjustment Questionnaire" by P. Kumar and K. Rohatangi and the "Confidence Scale" by Remple and Holmes. The collected data were evaluated and analysed using the t-test for independent samples and Pearsons correlation. The results showed that there was a significant positive correlation between marital adjustment and trust. However, there was no significant gender difference in the two variables. Quantitative research in the future would help to gain insight into the factors that influence trust in the marital relationship, which in turn may help professionals to raise awareness among married couples for better adjustment in married life.

Key words: Marital adjustment, trust, and married couples

Introduction

“Trust comes in very small moments when a person turns to their partner when they are in need, when our partner responds positively by being there for us, that builds trust.” -*John Gottman*

Marriage is not a ceremony, but the deepest concept of soul mate. Marriage is an institution based on trust, sacrifice, togetherness and self-conviction. Marriage is the beginning— of a family, a lifelong commitment, and an opportunity to grow in selflessness as you serve your spouse and children. Marriage is more than a physical union; it is also a spiritual and emotional union. It teaches us the basic quality of sharing, tolerance and adjustment. It also teaches us to be more responsible in life, to face and live with adversity in order to create families and raise children. Those of you who have children know that every day that passes is marked by selfless acts in raising children.

Marriage was good 2-3 decades ago when there was trust between partners. Today, everyone has freedom, and professional demands have increased, so you have to travel far. Many use this freedom in an inappropriate way and have pre-marital and post-marital affairs that have challenged the trust. The percentage of infidelity is on the rise. Society is thus failing to affirm the vital institution of marriage on many levels -- legal and societal. Because of this, marriage is under attack, with high divorce rates and out-of-wedlock births hitting the traditional family. We need to promote and protect marriage to ensure a healthier society. The policy implications are therefore clear: the government must promote marriage as a fundamental social good. Marriage must remain the norm for family life in society.

Marital Adjustment

Landis (1954) writes, "Marriage and family are not optional; they are necessary. They satisfy man's deepest needs." Marriage offers man the possibility of a safe and secure satisfaction of his needs for companionship, affection, and sexual expression. It involves the most intimate type of emotional relationship between two individuals (Coleman, 1964). Many marriages suffer because the two partners fail to establish a relationship characterized by acceptance, trust, caring, concern, love, admiration, and shared responsibility.

Trust

Trust is an important concept in human relationships, especially close interpersonal romantic relationships (e.g., lovers, married couples, etc.). Rempel and colleagues' (1985) trust scale measures trust in close relationships.

The trust scale distinguishes between three different dimensions of trust.

Predictability: predictability emphasizes the consistency and stability of a partner's specific behaviours based on past experience.

Reliability: the partner's dispositional characteristics that warrant trust in the face of risks and potential violations (e.g., honesty, dependability, etc.).

Belief: feelings of trust in the relationship and the responsiveness and caring expected of the partner in the face of an uncertain future.

Marriage

Marriage is also called matrimony and is a socially or ritually recognized union or legal contract between spouses that creates rights and obligations between them, between them and their children, and between them and their in-laws. The definition of marriage varies by culture, but it is basically an institution in which interpersonal relationships, usually of a sexual nature, are recognized. In some cultures, marriage is recommended or considered mandatory before engaging in sexual activity. In a broad definition, marriage is considered a cultural universal.

Husband

The husband is the male partner in a marital relationship. The husband's rights and duties with respect to his wife and others, and his position in the community and before the law, vary from culture to culture and have changed over time. In monogamous cultures, a man is expected to have no more than one wife (or other man) at a time, and vice versa. This is enforced by legal provisions that prohibit bigamy.

Wife

A wife is a female partner in a permanent marital relationship. A wife may also be referred to as a spouse. The term continues to be applied to a woman who has separated from her partner and ceases to apply only when her marriage has been terminated by a legally recognized divorce or the death of her spouse.

Need for the study

The purpose of the present study was to measure the degree of marital adjustment and trust between male and female partners of married couples. A good level of marital adjustment contributes to a couple remaining happy together for many years and developing trust in their partner in various areas.

Objective of the study

- To find out the difference between women and men on marital adjustment.
- To find out the difference between women and men on marital trust.
- To find out the relation between marital adjustment and marital trust.

Hypothesis

- Marital adjustment would be higher in women as compare to men.
- Marital trust would be higher in women as compare to men.
- There is no relationship between marital adjustment and trust among married couple.

Review of literature

Gottman, John M.; Krokoff, Lowell J., 1989, conducted two longitudinal studies of marital interaction in which they observed couples attempting to resolve a conflictual problem. It was found that a different pattern of outcomes predicted concurrent marital satisfaction than did change in marital satisfaction over 3 years. The results suggest that some patterns of marital interaction, such as disagreements and the exchange of anger, that are normally considered harmful to a marriage may not be harmful in the long run. These patterns were found to be concurrent with dissatisfaction and negative interaction at home, but they were predictive of improvement in marital satisfaction over the long-term. However, three interaction patterns were identified as dysfunctional in terms of long-term deterioration: Defensiveness (including whining), stubbornness, and withdrawal from interaction. Gender differences in the maintenance of marital satisfaction are hypothesised.

Rempel, John K.; Holmes, John G.; Zanna, Mark P., 1985, tested a theoretical model of interpersonal trust in close relationships with 47 couples who were dating, cohabiting, or married (mean age was 31 years for men and 29 years for women). The validity of the 3 trust dimensions of the model—predictability, reliability, and confidence—was examined. Subjects completed scales measuring sympathy and love, trust, and motivation to maintain the relationship. An analysis of the instrument measuring trust revealed that the predictability, reliability, and trust components represented distinct and coherent dimensions. Perceptions of intrinsic motives in the partner emerged as a dimension, as did instrumental and extrinsic motives. As expected, love and happiness were closely related to feelings of belief and attribution of intrinsic motives to self and partner. Women seemed to have a more holistic, complex view of their relationships than men: all three forms of trust were closely related, and attribution of instrumental motives to the partner seemed to be self-affirming. Subjects tended to view their own motives as less egocentric and more exclusively intrinsic than their partner's motives.

Research design

This study examined the difference between male and female partners in marital adjustment and trust. The study also examined the relationship between marital adjustment and trust among married couples. Therefore, a correlational research design was chosen.

Sample

Purposive random sampling method was used.

Variables

Independent variable – Gender, Marriage.

Dependent variable – Marital adjustment and Trust.

Demographic details of the sample

Group	Married Couple	
Sample size	50 Married Couples (100 members)	
Gender	Male - 50	Female - 50
Geographical locale	Urban	

Tools

- 1. Marital Adjustment Questionnaire (MAQ) by P. Kumar and K. Rohtagi (1976):** This questionnaire consists of 25 highly discriminating "yes-no" items to measure marital adjustment. If desired, a domain-specific score can also be administered. It consists of 3 domains—sexual, social, and emotional. The sexual domain consists of 4 items, the social domain consists of 9 items, and the emotional domain consists of 12 items on marital adjustment.
- 2. Trust Scale by Rempel and Holmes (1986):** This scale measures trust within close interpersonal relationships. The scale consists of 18 statements. Responses are based on a 7-point Likert scale: strongly disagree, moderately disagree, slightly disagree, neutral, slightly agree, moderately agree, strongly agree. The statements in the scale fall under 3 areas of trust – predictability, reliability, and credibility. There are equal numbers of positive and negative statements in the scale. The reliability and validity of the scale is well documented.

Procedure

Data for the study were collected from married couples. After their consent and the establishment of a relationship, their demographic data were recorded in the data sheet prepared for this purpose. Then, the marriage adjustment questionnaire and the trust scale were completed. The collected data were evaluated, interpreted and analysed using the scoring key and norms. Pearson's rho was used to determine the relationship between marital adjustment and trust among married couples; a comparison of means was conducted to examine the gender difference between male and female partners in marital adjustment and trust.

Results and discussion

The data obtained were organised and classified according to the objectives of the research study. The analysis of the data was done by applying a t-test to determine if there was a significant difference in marital adjustment and trust between the married couples. The data was further analysed by calculating the correlation coefficient using Pearson's Product Moment method to find out if there is a significant relationship between the variables.

Table 1 Mean, SD of male and female partners on marital adjustment

Marital Adjustment	Male		Female		t' Value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
	18.46	3.42	18.6	3.97	0.188NS

p<0.05, NS: Not significant

An examination of Table 1 shows that males obtained a mean score of 18.46 on marital adjustment, with a standard deviation of 3.42. Females obtained a mean score of 18.60 on marital adjustment, with a standard deviation of 3.97. The 't' value was found to be 0.188, which is not statistically significant. Thus, the null hypothesis, which states that there is no gender difference between male and female partners in marital adjustment, is accepted.

Table 2 Mean, SD of Male and female partners on Trust.

Marital Adjustment	Male		Female		t' Value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
		88.44	16.74	83.96	16.42

p<0.05, NS: Not significant

An examination of Table 2 shows that males had a mean of 88.44 on trust and a standard deviation of 16.74. Female respondents obtained a mean of 83.96 with a standard deviation of 16.42. The 't' value was found to be 0.145, which is not statistically significant. Thus, the null hypothesis which states that there is no gender difference between male and female partners in terms of trust" is accepted.

Table 3 Pearson's Product Moment correlation between marital adjustment and trust in married couples

Marital Adjustment	Correlation co-efficient value
Trust	0.412**
**p<0.01	

An examination of Table 3 shows that Pearson's product-moment correlation between marital adjustment and trust is 0.412, which is significant at the 0.01 level. The null hypothesis, which states that there is no relationship between marital adjustment and trust among married couples, is thus rejected.

Findings

- There is no significant gender difference between men and women in marital adjustment.
- There is no significant gender difference between men and women in trust.
- There is a significant positive correlation between the variables.

Limitations of the study

- The study was limited to urban populations.
- The sample size was small, so the results cannot be generalized to the entire population.
- Socioeconomic status factors were not considered.

Implication of the study

- Premarital counselling.
- Working on trust can save marriages headed for divorce.

Scope of the study

- Various socioeconomic statuses and sociocultural backgrounds may be included in the study.
- Qualitative research would help in the future to gain insight into factors that influence trust in marital adjustment.
- The findings may help professionals raise awareness among spouses to improve marital adjustment.

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