

MARITAL ADJUSTMENT AND TRUST AMONG MARRIED COUPLES

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The present study aimed to investigate the difference between male and female partners on marital adjustment and studied the relationship between marital adjustment and trust among the married couples. Purposive sampling procedure was adopted. The sampling consisted of 50 married couples (50 men and 50 women) from the urban population, who were married for 5 to 10 years. The sample was administered 'Marital adjustment questionnaire' by P. Kumar and K. Rohatangi and 'Trust scale' by Remple and Holmes. The data collected was scored and analyzed using independent sample 't' test and Pearsons correlation. The findings indicate that there was a significant positive correlation between marital adjustment and trust. However there was no significant gender difference on the two variables. Qualitative research in the future would help to gain insight into factors affecting trust in marital relationship, which in turn can help professionals bring about awareness among married couples towards a better adjustment in married life.

Key words: Marital adjustment, trust, and married couples

“Trust is built in very small moments in which one person turns towards 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 it is the deepest concept of soul mate. Marriage is an institution which runs on trust, sacrifices, bond of togetherness, self beliefs. Marriage is the beginning—the start of the family, is a life-long commitment .It also provides 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, adjustment. It also teaches us to be more responsible in life, face and live in adversities to build families and raising children. Those of you who have children know that every day that goes by is about selfless acts in nurturing children.

Marriage used to be good 2-3 decades ago when there used to be trust between partners. Today, everyone has freedom and job demands have increased requiring to travel to far and wide distances. Many take the undue advantage of this freedom and have premarital and post marital affairs which had led to the question of trust. This percentage of infidelity is on the rise. So society is failing to affirm the vital institution of marriage on many level--legal, societal, for this reason, marriage is under assault, with high rates of divorce and out-of-wedlock births pummelling the traditional family. We need to promote and protect marriage to secure a healthier society. Therefore, the public policy implications are clear: The government must promote marriage as a fundamental societal benefit. Marriage must remain the standard for family life in the society.

Marital Adjustment

Landis (1954) writes, "Marriage and family are not optional; they are necessary. They meet man's deepest needs." Marriage provides a person an opportunity for a secure and protected satisfaction of his needs for companionship, affection and sexual expression. It involves the most intimate type of emotional relationship between the two individuals (Coleman, 1964). Many marriages suffer because the two partners fail to develop a relationship that is characterized by acceptance, trust, care, concern, love, admiration and sharing of role responsibilities.

Trust

Trust is an important concept in human relationships, even more in close interpersonal romantic relationships (e.g., romantic partners, married couples etc). The trust scale is from Rempel and colleagues (1985) measures trust in close relationships.

The trust scale distinguishes between three different dimensions of trust.

1. Predictability: Predictability emphasizes the consistency and stability of a partner's specific behaviors, based on past experience.
2. Dependability: The dispositional qualities of the partner, which warrant confidence in the face of risk and potential hurt (e.g., honesty, reliability etc).
3. Faith: Feelings of confidence in the relationship and the responsiveness and caring expected from the partner in the face of an uncertain future.

Marriage

Marriage is also called matrimony or wedlock, is a socially or ritually recognized union or legal contract between spouses that establishes rights and obligations between them, between them and their children, and between them and their in-laws. The definition of marriage varies according to different cultures, but it is principally an institution in which 18 interpersonal relationships, usually sexual, are acknowledged. In some cultures, marriage is recommended or considered to be compulsory before pursuing any sexual activity. When defined broadly, marriage is considered a cultural universal.

Husband

A husband is the male partner in a marital relationship. The rights and obligations of the husband regarding his spouse, others, and his status in the community and in law vary between cultures and have varied over time. In monogamous cultures, a man is expected not to have more than one spouse (whether a wife or another husband) at the same time, and vice versa. This is enforced by legal codes which outlaw bigamy.

Wife

A wife is a female partner in a continuing 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 be applied to such a woman only when her marriage has come to an end following a legally recognized divorce or the death of her spouse.

Need for the study

The current study aimed to measure the levels of marital adjustment and trust among the male and female partners of married couples. A good level of marital adjustment helps the couple to stay happy together for long years and also develop trust over the partner in various aspects.

Objective of the study

The objective of the study was to find difference in the level of marital adjustment and trust between male and female partners of married couples. The study also aimed at finding out if there was any relationship between Marital Adjustment and Trust.

Hypothesis

- There is no gender difference between male partners and female partners on marital adjustment.
- There is no gender difference between male partners and female partners on Trust.
- There is no relationship between Marital Adjustment and Trust among married couples.

Review of literature

Gottman, John M.; Krokoff, Lowell J., 1989, conducted two longitudinal studies of marital interaction were conducted using observational coding of couples attempting to resolve a high-conflict issue. It was found that a different pattern of results predicts concurrent marital satisfaction than predicts change in marital satisfaction over 3 years. Results suggest that some marital interaction patterns, such as disagreement and anger exchanges, which have usually been considered harmful to a marriage, may not be harmful in the long run. These patterns were found to relate to unhappiness and negative interaction at home concurrently, but they were predictive of improvement in marital satisfaction longitudinally. However, three interaction patterns were identified as dysfunctional in terms of longitudinal deterioration: defensiveness (which includes whining), stubbornness, and withdrawal from interaction. Hypotheses about gender differences in roles for the maintenance of marital satisfaction are presented.

Rempel, John K.; Holmes, John G.; Zanna, Mark P., 1985, tested a theoretical model of interpersonal trust in close relationships with 47 dating, cohabiting, or married couples (mean ages were 31 yrs for males and 29 yrs for females). The validity of the model's 3 dimensions of trust—predictability, dependability, and faith—was examined. Ss completed scales designed to measure liking and loving, trust, and motivation for maintaining the relationship. An analysis of the instrument measuring trust was consistent with the notion that the predictability, dependability, and faith components represent distinct and coherent dimensions. The perception of intrinsic motives in a partner emerged as a dimension, as did instrumental and extrinsic motives. As expected, love and happiness were closely tied to feelings of faith and the attribution of intrinsic motivation to both self and partner. Women appeared to have more integrated, complex views of their relationships than men: All 3 forms of trust were strongly related, and attributions of instrumental motives in their partners seemed to be self-affirming. There was a tendency for Subjects to view their own motives as less self-centred and more exclusively intrinsic than their partner's motives.

Research design

The present study investigated the difference between male and female partners on marital adjustment and trust. The study also investigated the relationship between marital adjustment and trust among the married couples. Hence, it adopted a correlational research design.

Sample

Purposive random sampling procedure was adopted.

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: this questionnaire consists of 25 highly discriminating ‘Yes-No’ type items which measures marital adjustment. If desired, area wise scoring can also be done. It consists of 3 areas – Sexual, Social and Emotional. The sexual area consists of 4 items, social area has 9 items, and emotional area has 12 items in marital adjustment.

2. Trust Scale by Rempel and Holmes: This scale measures trust within close interpersonal relationship. The scale consists of 18 statements. Response is based on a 7-point Likert scale – Strongly Disagree, Moderately Disagree, Mildly Disagree, Neutral, Mildly Agree, Moderately Agree, Strongly Agree. The statements of the scale fall under 3 areas of trust – Predictability, Dependability and Faith. There is equal number of positive and negative statements present in the scale. Reliability and Validity of the scale is well established.

Procedure: Data for the study was collected from married couples. After taking their consent and building rapport, their demographic details were obtained in the data sheet prepared for the purpose. Subsequently, Marital Adjustment Questionnaire and Trust Scale were administered. The obtained data was scored, interpreted and analyzed using the Scoring key and Norms. Pearson’s rho was used to find the relationship between Marital Adjustment and Trust among Married Couples; Mean comparison was done to check gender difference among male and female partners on Marital Adjustment and Trust.

Results and discussion

The obtained data was organised and classified according to the objectives made in the research study. The analysis of data was done by applying a ‘t’ test to find out if there was a significant difference in marital adjustment and trust among married couples. The data was further analysed by computing correlation coefficient by Pearson’s Product moment method to find if any significant relationship existed between the variables.

Table 1 Mean, SD of Male and female partners on Marital Adjustment

	Males		Females		‘t’ value
Marital Adjustment	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
	18.46	3.42	18.60	3.97	0.188 NS

p<0.05, NS: Not significant

An examination of table 1 reveals that Males obtained a mean of 18.46 on Marital Adjustment, with a standard deviation of 3.42. The females have obtained a mean of 18.60 on Marital Adjustment, with a standard deviation of 3.97. The ‘t’ value was found to be 0.188 which is statistically not significant. Thus, the null hypothesis which states – “There is no gender difference between male partners and female partners on marital adjustment” is accepted.

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

Trust	Males		Females		't' value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
	88.44	16.74	83.96	16.42	0.145 NS

p<0.05, NS: Not significant

An examination of table 2 reveals that Males obtained a mean of 88.44 on Trust, with a standard deviation of 16.74. The females have obtained a mean of 83.96 on Trust, with a standard deviation of 16.42. The 't' value was found to be 0.145 which is statistically not significant. Thus, the null hypothesis which states – “There is no gender difference between male partners and female partners on trust” is accepted.

Table 3 Pearson's Product Moment correlation between Marital Adjustment and Trust among married couples

Marital Adjustment	Correlation co-efficient value
Trust	0.412**

**p<0.01

An examination of table 3 reveals that the Pearson's product moment correlation between Marital Adjustment and trust is 0.412 which is significant at 0.01 level. Thus, the null hypothesis which states – “There is no relationship between Marital Adjustment and Trust among married couples” is rejected.

Findings

- There is no significant gender difference between male and female on marital adjustment.
- There is no significant gender difference between male and female on trust.
- There was a significant positive correlation between the variables.

Limitations of the study

- The study was restricted to urban population.
- The sample size was small and hence the findings can not be generalized to the larger population.
- Factors of socio economic status was not considered.

Implication of the study

- Premarital counseling.
- Working on trust can save marriages heading towards divorce.

Scope of the study

- Different socio economic status and socio cultural background can be included in the study.
- Qualitative research in future would help to gain insight into factors affecting trust in marital adjustment.
- Findings can help professionals bring about awareness among married couple towards a better adjustment in married life.

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