

A STUDY ON SOCIAL-PSYCHOLOGICAL ELEMENTS AND MARITAL CONTENTMENT AMONG MARRIED COUPLES

Maryann Zacharias^{1*}, D. Jayachandran¹ and Vincent. E.W¹

¹Department of Psychology, Techno Global University, Shillong, Meghalaya.

*Corresponding Author: E. W. Vincent

Abstract:

Significant difference was found between the husbands and wives on the variable Stress Tolerance. The husbands had more Stress Tolerance than the wives. No significant difference was found between husbands and wives on the variable Altruistic Behavior but the variable emotional adjustment shown significant difference among the husbands and wives. Such as, husbands were more emotionally adjusted than the wives. Whereas the wives had more spirituality than the husbands. No significant difference was reported between the husbands and wives on the variable couple's love. The husbands were happier than the wives in case of variable marital satisfaction. The couples in the age group below 40 had more couple's love than the couples in the age group 60 and above. The studies also find out that couples in urban area had more stress tolerance than the couples in rural area. couples in urban the area had more altruistic behavior than the rural area also they are more residence on the variable emotional adjustment. The couples in the urban area were high Emotional Adjustment than the couples in the rural area. The overall outcomes of the study conclude that the social psychologists elements such as stress tolerance, altruistic behavior, spirituality, emotional adjustment, couple's love and marital satisfaction are more important during the time of pre and post marital counseling to explore how these variables can affect the marital life. So it possible to identify and assess the weak points among the couples and give remedial counseling which may increase marital satisfaction.

Keywords: Marital satisfaction, Stress tolerance, Altruistic behavior, Spirituality, Couple's love

Introduction:

Marriage and established family life are the unique qualities of a human being, which makes them to an integral element of social life. According to Fower (1995), love & marriage is the primary source of individual happiness and meaning in life. These fulfillment, happiness & positive development will be possible only when the relationship between couples is coherent and satisfactory. It is the quality of relationship, in which both of the partners can enjoy life from the companionship characterized by lack of stress and unhappiness (1).

The genesis of marriage and family can be traced to the Holy Bible: God ordained marriage for three purposes: for companionship, pleasure, procreation (2). The prevailing view towards marriage is that it is based on emotional attachment between the partners and entered into voluntarily. Marital Satisfaction is an essential element for successful family life and personal growth. The fulfillment and positive development will be possible only when the relationship between couples is coherent and satisfactory (3). Different factors have significant influence on the marital satisfaction like personality of the partner, nature of job, child rearing responsibility, sexual satisfaction and communication patterns are some of examples.

People marry for various reasons including legal, social, emotional, economical, spiritual and religious. These might include arranged marriages, family obligations, the legal establishment of a nuclear unit, the legal protection of children and public declaration of love (4). Man and women pledge to procreate and up bring children and to live as a pair to the rest of their lives. Although the afore said seems to be an easy process, in reality it is much more than just complicated for many of the couples. In many of the cases what starts as groovy relationship burns away into splinters and ash. This is primarily due to lack of understanding and adjustment between the members (5).

Adjustment problems and divorce rates are increasing day by day (6). Researchers as well as social workers are interested in finding and causes of marital disharmony. Stress is a factor which comes in between couples while doing their daily routines. Stress tolerance is a tolerance of any adverse stimulus, internal or external, that tends to disturb homeostasis (7). The present study concentrates on marital life and the various factors leading to satisfaction among couples. Couple means two people regularly associate with each other or live together.

Methodology

Sample Collection

A Sample is a small which represents all the traits, and characteristics of the population (8). All the items under consideration in any field of enquiry constitute population. The couples were met individually and established a good rapport to make them feel comfortable. A brief introduction to the topic was given and gave a set of eight tools in the order of Stress Tolerance Scale, Altruistic Behavior Index, Emotional Adjustment Inventory, Spirituality Scale, A Measure of Couple's Love, and Marital Satisfaction Inventory. After data collection the data were consolidated. The incomplete forms, which lacked information on several items, were omitted in this process.

Method of sampling

Stratified method was used to select the sample for the investigation. Stratified sampling technique was designed to ensure represent-activeness and avoid bias. This scheme is applicable when the population is composed of subgroups of strata of different sizes. So that a representative sample contain individuals drawn from each stratum. The sample for the study consisted of 500 couples selected from different houses in Kerala sate. Adequate representations were given to factors like sex, area of residence, type of family age, religion, caste, occupation, and monthly income.

Stress Tolerance Scale

The term stress is taken here to mean psychological stress. Psychological stress involves demands on the organism. Factors which helps a person to tolerate stress, or are associated with increased stress tolerance intra individual and extra individual many helps in building resistance. For measuring stress tolerance, the psychological test namely stress Tolerance Scale constructed and standardized has been used the scale consisted of 24 items (9).

Altruistic Behavior Index

Altruistic behavior Index was developed and standardized to assess the altruistic behavior of the people. There were 20 items in the scale with equal number of positive and negative items. The copies of the inventory were distributed to the subjects. There were five choices A 'strongly agree', B 'agree', C 'undecided', D 'disagree', and E 'strongly disagree' for each item. The subjects were asked to read each statement carefully and indicated their answers in the appropriate choices. For positive items, weights of 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 were given for A, B, C, D, and

E respectively. In the case of negative items, the procedure was reversed. The scores of 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 were given for A, B, C, D, and E respectively. The total scores for each subject were obtained by adding the scores for each item. Split-half reliability method was used to estimate the reliability of the test. A correlation coefficient between the two halves was found using “Carl Pearson’s Product-Moment Formula”. The reliability of the whole test was estimated using “Spearman-Brown formula”. The validity of the test was estimated with the help of empirical/criterion related validity. It was found out by correlating the altruistic behavior index with some external criterion.

Emotional Adjustment Inventory

Adjustment refers to the relationship that exists between an individual and his environment, especially his social environment, in the attempt to satisfy his needs. It can be defined as a person’s interaction with his environment. The Inventories were distributed to the subjects of five choices AA “strongly agree”, A ‘agree’, U ‘undecided’, D ‘disagree’, and DD ‘strongly disagree’ for each item. For positive items, weights of 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 were given for AA, A, U, D, and DD respectively. In the case of negative items, the procedure was reversed. The total scores for each subject were obtained by adding the scores for each item. Split-half method was used to find out the reliability of the test. By using Pearson-product moment correlation, the odd-even reliability of the half test was found to be 0.73 (N=50). The reliability of the test was obtained using the Spearman-Brown formula. The inventories were administered in the sample size of 50 subjects along with ‘A measure of Moral Values’.

Spirituality Scale

The present scale was designed to measure the spirituality of people belonging to Hindu, Christian and Islam religions. However it is applicable to the followers or other religious also. The inventories were distributed to the subjects. There were five choices A, B, C, D and E for each item. The subjects were asked to read each statement carefully and indicate their answers in the appropriate choices. For positive items, weights of 5, 4, 3, 2 or 1 were given for A, B, C, D, or E respectively. In the case of negative items, the procedure was reversed. The total scores for each subject were obtained by adding the scores for each item. The split-half reliability of the scale was determined on a sample of 50 people selected randomly. The scores of the odd items and even items were correlated using product-moment formula and a correlation coefficient obtained. The whole test reliability was estimated using Spearman-Brown formula.

The spirituality scale was correlated with Mathew materialism-Spiritualism Scale (10) for estimating the criterion related validity of the scale.

A Measure of Couple's Love

Love relationships will differ from even very good friendships by having higher levels of fascination, exclusiveness, sexual desire, and a greater depth of caring about the other individual also have, however, a greater potential for distress, ambivalence, conflict, and mutual criticism. Statements for the draft scale were prepared on the basis of a detailed review of books, journals, and articles on various dimensions of couple's Love. Initially 50 statements, measuring various aspects of couple's love were written. Then these statements were thoroughly screened and edited. The statements were made as possible and the items which seemed to overlap with one another were revised. Ambiguous and vague items were either modified or replaced by new items. Finally 30 items with 15 positive and 15 negative items were included in the draft scale was adopted for eliciting responses from subjects. Five response categories are given for each statement.

Marital Satisfaction Inventory

Satisfaction is based on the mental satisfaction, sexual satisfaction, and economic satisfaction, if all these three things are in a satisfied level it helps couples to lead a satisfied life. Statements for the draft scale were prepared on the basis of a detailed review of books, journals, and articles on various dimensions of Marital Satisfaction. Finally 30 items with 15 positive and 15 negative items were included in the draft scale was adopted for eliciting responses from subjects. The scoring and valid the score details were measured based on the method describe above methods.

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES

The t test statistical techniques used for the present investigation and Factor analysis.

Result and Discussion

The 't' test was used to compare the couples categorized on the basis of sex, residence, and type of family for the eight psychosocial variables under study.

Comparison of Couples Categorized on the Basis of Sex for the Variable Stress Tolerance:

The details of the 't' test used for the comparison of the male and female couples for the variable Stress Tolerance are given in Table 1 which revealed that the mean values obtained for the variable Stress Tolerance by males (N=500) and females (N=500) were 76.88 and 71.49, and the corresponding standard deviations were 11.06, and 10.28 respectively. The t obtained was 7.98, which was significant at 0.01 levels. It denoted that there was significant difference between male and female couples on Stress Tolerance. From the mean values, it was clear that, the males had higher level of Stress Tolerance compared to females, in their marital life. The ability to withstand stress of husbands were high compared to that the wives. In short, the level of Stress Tolerance was not similar, as far as husbands and wives are concerned. The results support the study conducted by Gilbert et.al about gender wise difference in the variable psychological distress (11).

Comparison of Couples Categorized on the Basis of Sex for the Variable Altruistic Behavior:

The details of the t test used for the comparison of the male and female couples for the variable Altruistic Behavior are given in Table 2. From the Table 2 it was cleared that, means obtained for the variable Altruistic Behavior by males (N=500) and females (N=500) were 74.69 and 74.54, and the corresponding standard deviations were 9.73, and 9.84 respectively. The t obtained was 0.25, which was not statistically significant. Therefore, it was clear that male and female couples had similar level of Altruistic Behavior in their marital life. In married life males and females were adjusted to themselves and they try to help each other. Interest to co-operative each other are the important factor for Altruistic Behavior in couples. The results correlate thereported statement about the Altruistic behavior, spirituality and marital life satisfaction among couples (9).

Comparison of Couples Categorized on the Basis of Sex for the Variable Emotional Adjustment:

The details of the t test used for the comparison of the male and female couples for the variable Emotional Adjustment are given in Table 3. The results revealed that the means obtained by males (N=500) and females (N=500) for the variable Emotional Adjustment were 55.32 and 53.77, and the corresponding standard deviations were 7.27 and 6.86 respectively. The

t obtained was 5.69, which was significant at 0.01 levels. The results showed that there was significant difference between male and female couples on Emotional Adjustment from the mean values. It was clear that, the males have higher level of Emotional Adjustment when compared to females, in their marital life. Marital life has emotions, but the level of emotions is varied. It is based on the couple's adjustment with each other. If persons cannot able to adjust the situations, then they were emotionally disturbed. Here husbands had higher emotional adjustment because emotions do not over rule than the females.

Comparison of Couples Categorized on the Basis of Sex for the Variable Spirituality.

The details of the 't' test used for the comparison of the male and female couples for the variable Spirituality are given in Table 4. The means obtained by males (N = 500) and females (N=500) for the variable spirituality were 143.30 and 148.84, and the corresponding standard deviations were 20.11 and 17.63 respectively. The t obtained was 4.64, which was significant at 0.01 levels. The results showed that there was significant difference between male and female couples on Spirituality. From the mean values, it was clear that, the females had more spiritual behavior than the males. Females have fear of failure about the marital life. That's why females had more Spirituality than the males. One of the reason was wives felt the more presence of God than the husbands.

Comparison of Couples Categorized on the Basis of Sex for the Variable Couple's Love:

The details of the 't' test used for the comparison of the male and female couples for the variable Couple's Love are given in Table 5. Means for the variable Couple's Love obtained by males (N=500) and females (N=500) were 73, 60 and 72.81, and the corresponding standard deviations were 9.20 and 10.53 respectively. The t obtained was 1.26, which is not statistically significant. Therefore it was clear that male and female couples had similar level of Couple's Love in their marital life. Couple's Love is the most important factor in marital life. For the stability of marital life Couple's Love is necessary, and they thought that life partner is a good person. So couples express their love towards each other. The findings support the data about the proposition that attachment and care giving are central, interrelated components of adult love relationships (12).

Comparison of Couples Categorized on the Basis of Sex for the Variable Marital Satisfaction:

The details of the 't' test used for the comparison of the male and female couples for the variable Marital Satisfaction are given in Table 6. The means for the variable Marital Satisfaction obtained by males and females were 72.01 and 69.72, and the corresponding standard deviations were 9.52 and 10.92 respectively. The results indicated that there was significant difference between males (N=500) and females (N=500) for the variable Marital Satisfaction, the t obtained was 3.55, which was significant at 0.01 level. From the mean values, it was clear that, in their marital life males had higher level of Marital Satisfaction when compared to female. Husbands try to cope with the expectation of wives was the reason. This result resembles the direct case study report as the gender differences in marital and life satisfaction, quoted in the review (13). An analytical study, reported early. Whereas, another case study examined the sex role identity, marital power, and marital satisfaction among middle-class couples in India, as quoted in the review is also supported by the present study (14).

Conclusion

Family stress and problems are growing. In this context, the parents can give proper guidance to their children to develop a planned family life to make life more meaningful. The counselors should be aware about the psychological variables such as Stress Tolerance, Altruistic Behavior, Spirituality, Emotional Adjustment, Couple's Love, Money Managing Ability, Happiness, and Marital Satisfaction at the time of pre and post marital counseling and how these variables can affect the marital life which may reduce their marital disharmony, which, in turn, may lead to the welfare of the family and community.

Acknowledgement

Authors thank Techno Global University and Inbiotics for providing all necessary facilities and support during my research work.

List of Tables:**Table 1.**Data of Couples Categorized on the Basis of Sex (male and female) for the Variable Stress Tolerance

Variable	Sex	N	M	SD	t
Stress Tolerance	Male	500	76.88	11.06	7.98**
	Female	500	71.49	10.28	

Note: ** the 't' is significant at 0.01 levels.

Table 2.Data of Couples Categorized on the Basis of Sex (male and female) for the Variable Altruistic Behavior

Variable	Sex	N	M	SD	t
Altruistic Behavior	Male	500	74.69	9.84	0.25
	Female	500	74.54	9.73	

Note: 't' is significant statistically

Table 3.Data and Results of Couples Categorized on the Basis of Sex (male and female) for the Variable Emotional Adjustment

Variable	Sex	N	M	SD	t
Emotional Adjustment	Male	500	55.32	7.27	5.69**
	Female	500	52.77	6.86	

Note: ** the 't' is significant at 0.01 levels.

Table 4.Results of Couples Categorized on the Basis of Sex (male and female) for the Variable Spirituality

Variable	Sex	N	M	SD	t
Spirituality	Female	500	148.84	17.63	4.64**
	Male	500	143.30	20.11	

Note: ** the 't' is significant at 0.01 levels.

Table 5.Data and Results of Couples Categorized on the Basis of Sex (male and female) for the Variable Couple's Love

Variable	Sex	N	M	SD	t
Couple's Love	Male	500	73.60	9.20	1.26
	Female	500	72.81	10.53	

Note: 't' is significant statistically

Table 6.Results of Couples Categorized on the Basis of Sex (male and female) for the Variable Marital Satisfaction

Variable	Sex	N	M	SD	t
Marital Satisfaction	Male	500	72.01	9.52	3.55**
	Female	500	69.72	10.92	

Note: ** the 't' is significant at 0.01 level.

Reference:

1. Fowers .J. et.al; (1992). Couples show marked differences n the level and pattern of relationship quality, *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 24(1), 18-23.
2. Köstenberger, A. J., & Jones, D. W. (2004). *God, marriage, and family*. Crossway.
3. Abdul Azeez, E. P. (2013). Employed women and marital satisfaction: a study among female nurses. *International Journal of Management and Social Sciences Research (IJMSSR)*, 2-11.
4. Bawah.A.A (2003) Women's fears and men's anxieties: The impact of family planning on gender relations in northern Ghana ; *Studies in Family Planning*, 30(1), 54-66.
5. Sinclair. J.M. (2001) *Concise dictionary*, New Delhi: Harper Collins Publishers.
6. Levitt, P. M. (2015). *Marriage and Divorce in Early Twentieth Century Drama*. *The Midwest Quarterly*, 56(2), 139.
7. Paton. J.A. (1999) *The Liverwort Flora of the British Isles*, UK: Harley books.
8. Kothari.C.R. (1986) *Research methodology*, New Delhi: Wiley Eastern Lt.d
9. SanandaRaj.H.S. (1998) *An index of social value and manual*, Thiruvananthapuram: Department of Psychology, University of Kerala.
10. Mathew.V.G (1973) *Mathew item analysis table*, Trivandrum: The Psychology Institute.
11. Gilbert.M.D.etal; (2007) *The relationship between marital characteristics, marital interaction processes, and marital satisfaction*. Springer: Netherlands.
12. Judith.A&Feeney.S. (1996) *Attachment, care giving, and marital satisfaction personal relationships*, *Journal of the International Association for Relationship*. 3(4), 401-416.
13. Kok-Mun.K.G. &Winnee.C. (2008) *Gender differences in marital and life satisfaction*, London: T.A., Constable Ltd.
14. Archana,S&Madhulika.K. (2004) *sex role identity, marital power and marital satisfaction among middle-class couples in India*, *Journal of Sex Roles*, 22; 15-20.