

Relationship between emotional maturity and marital adjustment among couples

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Emotions play key role in families functioning and marital life. Thus, emotional maturity may be considered a basis in marital adjustment and a happy marital life. As such, the present study is an attempt to understand the relationship between marital adjustment and emotional maturity in Indian cultural context. For this purpose hundred (100) couples (husband & wife) with at least graduation qualification from Varanasi district of Uttar Pradesh were randomly sampled to check the predictability of the various measures of quality of marital life (marital consensus, affection expression, marital satisfaction, marital cohesion, & overall marital adjustment), each measure at a time as criterion (dependent variable) by the facets of 'emotional maturity' (emotional instability, emotional regression, social maladjustment, personality disintegration & lack of independence) as predictors (independent variables). Step wise (back ward) regression analysis was applied and results revealed that emotional instability, social maladjustment and personality disintegration facets of emotional maturity most predicted the overall marital adjustment in married couples.

Keywords: emotional maturity, marital adjustment, couples

Marital adjustment has long been a popular topic in studies of the family, probably because the concept is believed to be closely related to the stability of marriage (Broman, 2005). Gong (2007) said that marital adjustment is a process where its consequences are determined with couples' problematic conflicts, interpersonal tension and anxiety, couples' satisfaction, unity, cohesion and intellectual collaboration about marital important problems. Therefore, adjustment is a multidimensional concept which considers a person's relationship with his/her spouse and has objective characteristics (Broman, 2005). Marital adjustment or quality can be either an individual or a dyadic property. Well-adjusted marriages are expected to last for a long time, while poorly adjusted ones end in divorce and separation. According to Schneider (1960) material and non-material properties of the spouse enhance their marital adjustment like emotional and physical health, socioeconomic resources such as education and social class; personal resources such as emotional maturity, interpersonal skills and positive self-concept, and the knowledge they had of each other before getting married. It has also been reported that good relationships and support from parents, friends and significant others contribute to a well-adjusted marital life. A number of studies have determined the important factors influencing long-term relationship between husband and wife (Stutzer & Frey, 2006; Hawkins et al., 2008; Waller & Peters, 2008).

Emotions play a vital role in the marital life of an individual and one requires adequate emotional maturity to lead an effective life. Our behavior is constantly influenced by our emotional maturity levels. Emotional maturity means controlling your emotions rather than allowing your emotions to control you. Emotional maturity is the ability of the person to assess a situation or relationship and act according to what is best for oneself and for the other person in the

relationship. It usually reflects increased emotional adjustment, emotional stability, and the attainment of emotional self-regulation. Emotional maturity is very intimately related to adjustment, well-being and behaviour of an individual. Emotional maturity allows the individual to gain perspective of a situation before reacting impulsively. Emotions greatly influence marital life of an individual and adequate emotional maturity is required to lead a successful and satisfied married life.

Very few studies have been carried out on the relationship between emotional maturity and marital adjustment / satisfaction variables and the available studies report contradictory findings (Saffarpour & Sharifi, 2013; Moradzadeh, 2015). As such, the present study aimed to elucidate the predictability of the various components of quality of marital life as measured by marital adjustment (marital consensus, marital cohesion, affectional expression & marital satisfaction), each component at a time, as criterion (dependent variable) by the various facets of emotional maturity (emotional instability, emotional regression, social maladjustment, personality disintegration, & lack of independence) in Indian cultural context, and it is hypothesized that emotional maturity (emotional instability, emotional regression, social maladjustment, personality disintegration, & lack of independence) factors would substantially predict the various facets of quality of marital life (the measures of the dependent variables).

Method

Participants

One hundred (100) couples (husband & wife) with at least graduation qualification from Varanasi district of Uttar Pradesh were purposefully sampled for the conduct of the present study. A number of extraneous variables like age of the spouses, their educational qualification, ecological background (rural & urban), and socio-economic status were recorded with the objective to equate / match the sample to obtain a representative sample for the conduct of the study.

Instruments

The married couples (men & women) were individually administered the following behavioural measures: (i) Emotional Maturity Scale (Singh & Bhargava, 1990) and (ii) The Marital Adjustment Scale (Singh et al., 2010).

The Marital Adjustment Scale (MAS; Singh et al., 2010): The DAS is designed to measure marital adjustment (applicable to unmarried couples as well) have a standardized assessment of couple's relationship (Spanier & Cole, 1976; Spanier & Thompson, 1982; Spanier & Filsinger, 1983). The Hindi version of DAS (MAS; Singh et al., 2010) as employed in the present study (Spanier & Filsinger, 1983) consists of 32 - items which yields scores on four subscales; (i) Dyadic Consensus (DC; the degree to which the couple agree on matters of importance to the relationship), (ii) Dyadic cohesion (DCH; the degree to which the couple engages in activities together), (iii) Dyadic satisfaction (DS; the degree to which the couple is satisfied with the present state of relationship & is committed to its continuance); and (iv) Affectional expression (AE; the degree to which the couple is satisfied with the expression of affection & sex in the relationship). The DAS has been successfully standardized in Hindi version in the Indian cultural context the Marital Adjustment Scale (MAS; Singh et al., 2010).

Emotional Maturity Scale (EMS; Singh & Bhargava, 1984): This scale had 48 questions related to the following 5 categories: emotional regression, emotional instability, social maladjustment, personality disintegration and lack of independence. The test-retest reliability has been estimated at 0.75 and sub factors of emotional maturity -emotional unsatability, emotional regression, emotional maladjustment, personality disintegration and lack of independence simultaneously estimated internal consistency .75, .63, .58, .86 and .42.

Procedure

First of all, good rapport was established with the respondents, kept relaxed and pleasant in order to elicit the most frank or candid answers possible, advised not to dwell for any length of time on any given item, to give his overall reaction, were informed that there is no right or wrong answer to any item, and encouraged to respond rapidly and the way they really feel. The two behavioural measures, MAS and EMS, were filled in by the respondents in a random manner to find anonymous response of the respondents.

Results and discussion

The study aimed to check predictability of the various facets of quality of marital life (marital consensus, affection expression, marital satisfaction, marital cohesion, & overall marital adjustment), each measure at a time as criterion (dependent variable), by 'emotional maturity' (emotional instability, emotional regression, social maladjustment, personality disintegration and lack of independence) as predictors (independent variables). At this juncture, a foreword is felt desirable to be appended regarding the interpretation of the findings. That is, The R² values and the resulting F ratios (at each stage of deletion of the predictors) account for precision and clarity of the findings.

The obtained results with regard to relationship between the facets of quality of marital life and emotional maturity demonstrated that all the facets quality of marital life (marital consensus, affection expression, marital satisfaction, & marital cohesion) correlated

significantly negatively with all facets of emotional maturity (emotional instability, emotional regression, social maladjustment, personality disintegration & lack of independence), and the correlations varied from -0.217 to -0.674 ($p < 0.01$).

The results of step wise (backward) regression analysis (vide Table - 1) may summarily be concluded as follows: (i) all measures of emotional maturity (emotional instability, emotional regression, social maladjustment, personality disintegration & lack of independence) emerged to predicted (a) a total of 29.40 % of variance, (b) emotional instability, social maladjustment, personality disintegration and lack of independence (deleting emotional regression) emerged to predict a total of 29.00 % of variance of marital consensus (ii) emotional maturity (emotional instability, emotional regression, social maladjustment, personality disintegration & lack of independence) emerged to predicted (a) a total of 49.50 % of variance, (b) emotional instability, emotional regression, social maladjustment, and lack of independence (deleting personality disintegration) emerged to predict a total of 49.50 % of variance, (c) emotional instability, emotional regression, social maladjustment, (deleting personality disintegration & lack of independence) emerged to predict a total of 49.20 % of variance of marital satisfaction, (iii) all measures of emotional maturity (emotional instability, emotional regression, social maladjustment, personality disintegration & lack of independence) emerged to predicted (a) a total of 18.60 % of variance of marital cohesion. (b) emotional instability, emotional regression, social maladjustment, and lack of independence (deleting personality disintegration) emerged to predict a total of 18.60 % of variance of marital cohesion, (c) emotional regression, social maladjustment, and lack of independence (deleting emotional instability & personality disintegration) emerged to predict a total of 18.50 % of variance of marital cohesion, and (d) emotional regression and social maladjustment, (deleting emotional instability, lack of independence & personality disintegration) emerged to predict a total of 18.50 % of variance of marital cohesion, (iv) all measures of emotional maturity (emotional instability, emotional regression, social maladjustment, personality disintegration & lack of independence) emerged to predict (a) a total of 12.90 % of variance of affectional expression, (b) emotional instability, emotional regression, Social maladjustment and Lack of independence (deleting Personality Disintegration) emerged to predict a total of 12.80 % of variance of affectional expression, (c) emotional regression, social maladjustment and lack of independence (deleting emotional instability & personality disintegration) emerged to predict a total of 12.40% of variance of affectional expression, (d) emotional regression and Social maladjustment (deleting emotional instability, lack of independence & personality disintegration) predicted a total of 11.70 % of variance of affectional expression and (e) emotional regression (deleting emotional instability, social maladjustment, lack of independence & personality disintegration) predicted a total of 11.10 % of variance of affectional expression, (v) all measures of emotional maturity (emotional instability, emotional regression, social maladjustment, personality disintegration & lack of independence) emerged to predicted (a) a total of 45.70 % of variance of overall marital adjustment, (b) emotional instability, social maladjustment, personality disintegration and lack of independence (deleting emotional regression) emerged to predict a total of 45.60 % of variance of overall marital adjustment, (c) emotional instability, social

maladjustment and personality disintegration (deleting emotional regression & Lack of independence) emerged to predict a total of

45.00% of variance of overall marital adjustment.

Table 1: Predictability of marital consensus as criterion dependent variable, by emotional maturity, emotional instability, emotional regression, social maladjustment, personality disintegration & lack of independence as predictors independent variables

Dependent Variable	Predictors	RR	R Square	Adjusted R Square	df	F-ratio
Marital Consensus	LI, EU, ER, SM, PD	0.542	0.294	0.275	5/194	16.129**
Marital Satisfaction	LI, EU, SM, PD	0.539	0.290	0.276	4/195	19.926**
Marital Cohesion	LI, EU, ER, SM, PD	0.704	0.495	0.482	5/194	38.056**
	LI, EU, ER, SM	0.703	0.495	0.484	4/195	47.743**
	EU, ER, SM	0.701	0.492	0.484	3/196	63.182**
Affectional Expression	LI, EU, ER, SM, PD	0.431	0.186	0.165	5/194	08.850**
	LI, EU, ER, SM	0.431	0.186	0.169	4/195	11.116**
	LI, ER, SM	0.431	0.185	0.173	3/196	14.877**
Overall Marital Adjustment	ER, SM	0.430	0.185	0.176	2/197	22.308**
	LI, EU, ER, SM, PD	0.359	0.129	0.107	5/194	05.756**
	LI, EU, ER, SM	0.358	0.128	0.110	4/195	07.163**
	LI, ER, SM	0.352	0.124	0.110	3/196	09.235**
Overall Marital Adjustment	ER, SM	0.342	0.117	0.108	2/197	13.061**
	ER	0.333	0.111	0.106	1/198	24.642**
	LI, EU, ER, SM, PD	0.676	0.457	0.443	5/194	32.694**
Overall Marital Adjustment	LI, EU, SM, PD	0.675	0.456	0.445	4/195	40.870**
	EU, SM, PD	0.671	0.450	0.441	3/196	53.391**

** Significant at 0.01 level; LI = lack of independence, EU = emotional instability, SM = social maladjustment, ER = emotional regression, PD = personality disintegration

In conclusion, lack of independence, emotional instability, social maladjustment and personality disintegration facets of emotional maturity best predicted the marital consensus aspect of marital adjustment; emotional instability, emotional regression and social maladjustment facets of emotional maturity were the preeminent predictors of marital satisfaction aspect of marital adjustment; emotional regression and social maladjustment facets of emotional maturity substantially predicted the marital cohesion aspect of marital adjustment; emotional regression facet of marital adjustment most predicted the affectional expression aspect of marital adjustment; and finally, emotional instability, social maladjustment and personality disintegration facets of emotional maturity prominently predicted the overall marital adjustment in married couples.

These observations find corroborative evidences from studies on the relationships between emotional maturity and marital outcomes (Asoodeh et al., 2010; Dwight Dean, 1966; Moradzadeh, 2015). Dwight Dean (1966) found that the husband's emotional maturity (self rated) correlated 0.28 with his marital adjustment score. Husband's emotional maturity as rated by his wife independently and confidently correlated 0.52. The wife's emotional maturity (self rated) correlated with marital adjustment score 0.35 and her emotional maturity rated by her spouse correlated 0.39. Marital adjustment scores correlated with each other 0.59. Similarly, Moradzadeh (2015) mentioned marital satisfaction, has a significant

relationship with the emotional instability and people having higher level of emotional maturity can better manage the internal relationships of the family and help to boost the positive self-image of the family members. However, contradictory reports are also available and Mosavi and Iravani (2012) investigated the relationship between emotional maturity and marital satisfaction and results indicated a negative correlation between emotional maturity and marital satisfactions.

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