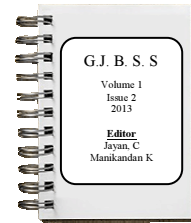




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Marital Adjustment and Emotional Maturity among Dual-Career Couples

Jaisri, M* & Joseph, M. I**

*Research Scholar, Department of Psychology, Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, Kalady, Kerala.

**Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, Kalady, Kerala.

Abstract

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Marital adjustment is the state in which there is an overall feeling in husband and wife of happiness and satisfaction with their marriage and with each other. A happy and well adjusted marital life is the firm basis upon which a stable family is built. In view of the significance of the above, the present study was an attempt to understand marital adjustment and emotional maturity among dual-career couples. The participants were 100 dual-employed couples (N=200) selected from Trichur and Ernakulam districts, Kerala. The results revealed significant difference between the couples. The wives had better marital adjustment and independence than their husbands. Age, type of marriage and number of children of the couples have significant impact on their marital adjustment and emotional maturity.

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Marital adjustment is the state in which there is an overall feeling in husband and wife of happiness and satisfaction with their marriage and with each other. Ernest and Leonard (1939) defined marital adjustment as "the integration of the couple in a union in which the two personalities are not merely merged, or submerged, but interact to complement each other for mutual satisfaction and the achievement of common objectives". Marital adjustment is a process which is created during couples' life because it is necessary for taste conformity, person's traits recognition, behavioural rules creation and relational models formation. Thus, marital adjustment is an evolutionary process between a couple (Lasswell & Lasswell, 1982). The study of past concepts in marital adjustment showed that it is permanently necessary for those processes of acquiring a balanced and functional marital relationship (Bradbury, Fincham & Beach, 2000). 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 (Gong, 2007). 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. It refers to a state of accommodation which is achieved in different areas where conflict may exist. According to Lewis and Spanier (1979), three major factors predict marital qualities are social and personal resources, satisfaction with lifestyle, and rewards from spousal interaction. In general, the more social and personal resources a husband and wife have, the better adjusted their marriage will be. Material and non-material properties of the spouse enhance their marital adjustment. Examples include emotional and physical health, socioeconomic resources such as education and social class; personal resources such as emotional maturity, interpersonal skills and positive self concepts, and the knowledge they had of each other before getting married. It is also found that good relationships and support from parents, friends and significant others contribute to a well-adjusted marriage. Findings are that spouses with similar racial, religious, or socioeconomic background are better adjusted to their marriages. The second factor predicting marital adjustment is satisfaction with lifestyle. Material resources such as family income positively affect both spouses. The third factor in predicting marital adjustment is the reward obtained



from spousal interaction. Rewards from spousal interaction include a positive evaluation of oneself by the spouse, and one's positive regard for things such as the physical, mental, and sexual attractiveness of the spouse. Other rewards from spousal interaction include such aspects of emotional gratification like the expression of affection, respect and encouragement between the spouses, love and sexual gratification, and egalitarian relationships. Summarizing past findings Lewis and Spanier (1979) concluded that "the greater the rewards from spousal interaction, the greater the marital quality". Married couples with effective communication, self disclosure, frequent successful communication, and understanding and empathy, are better adjusted to their marriages (Erickson, 1993). Marital adjustment calls for maturity that accepts and understands growth and development in the spouse. A relationship between couples is not instantaneous but rather a slow progress.

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. Emotions play a vital role in the marital life of an individual and one requires adequate emotional maturity to lead an effective life. Our behaviour is constantly influenced by the emotional maturity level that we possess. Emotions are great motivating forces throughout the span of human life, affecting aspirations, thoughts and actions of an individual. Emotional maturity is not only one of the effective determinants of personality, but it also helps in individual development. It means, in essence, controlling your emotions rather than allowing your emotions to control you. It is a personality trait which is the result of emotional development and the display of emotions appropriate to one's chronological age. 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 the behaviour of an individual. Many factors can influence the process of adjustment like socioeconomic status, family environment, anxiety, frustrations, and so on, but the most important factor is maturity. An emotionally mature individual will be able to lead a mature and well adjusted marital as well as professional life.

Rapoport and Rapoport (1971) coined the term "dual-career," and defined dual career family as an emergent social unit in which both husband and wife hold jobs which are highly salient, have development sequence and require a high degree of commitment". Within the dual career family, the husband and the wife must negotiate a redefinition of traditional sex roles to cope with the associated stress of their career and family obligations. Continued rise in this population has sparked interest in its various outcomes such as the physical and psychological distress or well-being spurred on by the increased stress experienced from the inevitable role strain felt by both partners in dual-career families (Sekaran, 1985). However, many benefits of dual-careerhood also have been brought out in many studies. Dual-career partners utilize their shared work and organizational experiences to help them function more effectively at home (Hertz, 1986). The number of roles possessed by dual-career partners may provide gratification, security, and increase their purpose in life (Thoits, 1983). Studies on dual-careerists who possess optimum resources such as higher education and solid employment for both partners, with a average salary assess a better marital quality despite the myriad of stressors experienced by both partners (Singh, 2004). Fincham, Gordon, and Gano-Phillips (2000) noted longer term changes and outcomes of marital quality among the dual employed are likely to make positive attributions towards marital satisfaction. Johnson and Booth(1998) has reported high levels of marital quality among couples when they psychologically predispose to cast a positive light on their lives, as it increases their ability to adapt to changes . Although dual career families face with special challenges, researches report some factors that are more important in the families success. They are divided into internal and external factors, internal factors are- couple's behaviour such as: flexibility, relationship, support and mutuality. External factors are those out of family like friendly family career environments, and social supports (Bruse & Mary, 2006). Factors like sexual activity, pain and discomfort, work capacity, social support, physical environment, positive feelings and opportunities for acquiring new



information and skills have significant roles in marital adjustment. When adjustment is low in dual career couples, it shows the working effect on family roles. Thus, paying attention to harmony of career and family roles can increase spouses' relationship quality level in family style there by leading a better adjusted life (Aminjafari, Padash, Baghban & Abedi, 2012). Though there has been a tremendous increase in the number of women entering the labour force as well as in the number of dual-career families in our society, the impact of dual-career on the spouses and the families is not much explored. So, the present study focuses on the marital adjustment and emotional maturity of dual-career families.

Objectives

1. To examine whether there are significant differences in marital adjustment and emotional maturity between the husbands and the wives of dual-career families.
2. To examine whether there are significant differences in marital adjustment and emotional maturity among the different groups of dual-career couples categorized on the basis of type of marriage, age, and number of children.
3. To examine the relationship between marital adjustment and emotional maturity in dual-employed couples.

Method

Participants

The participants for the study consisted of one hundred dual-career couples (N=200) selected from Trichur and Ernakulam districts of Kerala, using purposive sampling. The age of the couples ranged from 20 to 50 years. The subjects were taken from different institutions such as schools, colleges, government offices, banks, hospitals and business enterprises. Only dual-employed couples were included with a minimum educational qualification of SSLC.

Instruments

1. Marital Adjustment Inventory (MAI). The Marital Adjustment Inventory developed by Singh (1974) was used to measure the general marital adjustment of the couples. It has two forms, Form -A for husbands and Form -B for wives consisting of 10 items in each. Each question is answered either in 'yes' or 'no' by choosing one point out of the ten points on the rating scale which ranges from +10 (most favorable) to +1 (least favourable). The scores of all the ten items are summed to obtain the score for general marital adjustment. Each question has a maximum score of 10 and a minimum score of 1. A higher score indicates better marital adjustment.
2. Emotional Maturity Scale (EMS). The 'Emotional Maturity Scale' developed by Singh and Bhargava (1990) was used to measure the emotional maturity of the couples. The scale has 48 items measuring the following five dimensions of emotional maturity- emotional stability, emotional progression, social adjustment, personality integration, and independence. The items of the scale are in question form demanding information for each in either of the five options (Very much =5; Much=4; Undecided=3; Probably=2; and Never=1). The total score on the scale is indicative of emotional maturity, a higher score indicating less emotional maturity.
3. Personal Data Sheet. A personal data sheet was used to collect information on relevant socio-demographic characteristics of the participants like age, education, occupation, income, religion, number of children, tenure of marriage, and age at marriage.

Procedure

The couples were met individually and after getting their informed consent, the research instruments were given to them and were allowed to complete this at leisure. The collected data were analyzed using the statistical techniques of 't' test, one-way ANOVA, Scheffe's F and Pearson's correlation coefficient.



Results and Discussion

The mean and the standard deviation of the scores obtained by the husbands and the wives in marital adjustment and emotional maturity are given in table 1. From the table, it is clear that there is significant difference between the husbands and the wives in marital adjustment, the wives having better adjustment than the husbands. In our culture, the wives/women are assumed to have a more submissive role and are more accomodative than the husbands/men. Perhaps this may be helping them to have better marital adjustment. Previous studies have come out with somewhat similar findings. Hardsly and Betz (1979) have reported high levels of marital adjustment especially in wives who are highly educated and who have high income. Houseknecht and Macke (1981) also have reported that females with high level education make use of their training and career to adjust better to marital life. In the case of the present sample also it may be noted that the wives have high educational qualification.

The results with regard to emotional maturity revealed significant difference in the level of independence between the husbands and the wives. The wives (Mean=14.81) have higher independence than the husbands (Mean=15.88). However, there is no significant difference between the husbands and the wives the other dimensions as well as in total emotional maturity indicating that both the groups have more or less the same emotional maturity levels. Women of the present generation are much independent and social, may be due to the increase in their exposure to the labour market and the outside world. Today's wives are more independent and have power to control and take decisions by their own judgement. Working women take active part in important decisions in the family like husbands job, change in residence, children's schooling and education (Wood, 1974).

Table 1

Mean, SD and 't' value of Marital adjustment and Emotional maturity by Spouse

Variables	Husbands (N=100)		Wives (N=100)		t
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Marital adjustment	58.79	17.04	70.03	16.51	4.74**
Emotional stability	18.57	8.53	19.11	5.73	0.52
Emotional progression	18.09	7.15	17.12	5.67	1.06
Social adjustment	18.12	6.14	18.96	4.88	1.07
Personality integration	15	5.86	13.99	3.46	1.48
Independence	15.88	3.26	14.81	2.89	2.45*
Total emotional maturity	85.24	26.92	83.65	17.66	0.49

*p< .05 **p<.01

The results based on the type of marriage of the couples- arranged marriage or love marriage and their marital adjustment and emotional maturity is presented in table 2. The comparisons based on the type of marriage of the couples revealed no difference in marital adjustment; however, with regard to emotional maturity significant differences between the two groups in the dimension of emotional stability and personality integration were noted. The couples who had arranged marriage have lower scores both in emotional stability and personality integration than the love marriage group. This indicates that arranged married couples have better emotional stability and personality integration, and these couples are stable in different emotive situations. They have good capacity to dispose of problems and face one's day-to- day problems effectively. Allendorf and Ghimire's (2012) study on marital quality in arranged married couples report high level of marital quality in them, factors like caste, occupation, age at marriage and number of children had little association with the couples marital quality.

Table 2

Mean, SD and 't' value of Marital adjustment and Emotional maturity by type of Marriage

Variable	Arranged marriage(N=79)		Love marriage(N=21)		t
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Marital adjustment	63.97	17.73	68.19	16.91	1.03
Emotional stability	18.49	6.73	21.81	10.53	1.99*
Emotional progression	17.49	5.73	18.62	10.99	0.76
Social adjustment	18.63	5.03	17.76	8.99	0.67
Personality integration	14.21	4.22	16.95	8.15	2.49*
Independence	15.25	2.98	16.14	4.12	1.24
Total Emotional maturity	83.64	19.82	91.29	39.86	1.46

*p<.05

Marital difficulties for many couples occur early in marriage which consequently affects their marital adjustment and emotional well being. The strife weakens with time, as the couples grow older together they adapt to each other's differences and handle their marital relationship in a mature manner. The marital process of interpersonal trust, desired spousal behaviour, emotional maturity and the like which are highly associated with marital adjustment increase with age (Quinn & Odell, 2008). To examine whether there is significant differences between the groups of couples based on their age in marital adjustment, and emotional maturity the participants was categorised into three groups based on their age as Group-I 20-29 years age, 30-39 years age as Group-II, and 40-50 years age as Group-III. The differences among these groups on marital adjustment and emotional maturity were tested using one-way ANOVA. In cases where significant F-values were obtained, further comparisons of the group means scores were carried out using Scheffe's test.

Table 3

Summary of ANOVA of Marital adjustment and Emotional maturity by Age

Variables	Between groups		Within groups		F
	Sum of squares	Mean squares	Sum of squares	Mean squares	
Marital adjustment	334.61	167.308	61731.764	313.359	0.53
Emotional stability	117.09	88.54	10311.78	52.34	1.69
Emotional progression	89.31	44.65	8208.48	41.66	1.07
Social adjustment	94.24	47.12	6049.43	30.70	1.53
Personality integration	138.10	69.05	4509.89	22.89	3.01*
Independence	65.24	32.62	1871.95	9.50	3.43*
Total emotional maturity	2496.57	1248.28	100314.81	509.21	2.45

*p<.05

The results of the one -way ANOVA of marital adjustment, emotional maturity by age of the couples presented in table 3 revealed no significant difference between the three age groups of couples in marital adjustment. This signifies that the age of the couple do not significantly influence their marital adjustment. In the case of emotional maturity and age of the couples, the obtained results revealed significant differences in the dimensions of personality integration and independence. This indicates that age has an influence on the personality integration and independence of the couples.

To know which group significantly differ on personality integration and independence, comparisons of means scores of the groups were made using Scheffe's test and the results are presented in table 4. The results indicate that the Group I (Mean=14.98) and Group II



(Mean=14.89) differ significantly ($F=6.99$, $p<.05$) on their personality integration. The mean score of the younger couples (20-29 years) indicated better personality integration (Mean=12.93) and independence (Mean=14.39) than the older couples (personality integration-Mean=14.89, independence-Mean=15.92) However, the groups did not significantly differ in independence.

Table 4

Comparison of mean scores (Scheffe's F) of Personality integration and Independence by Age

Age	Personality integration	Independence
Group I - Group II	0.026	0.013
Group II - Group III	0.029	0.034
Group I - Group III	6.99*	0.007

* $p<.05$

The results of the one- way ANOVA (table 5) for marital adjustment and number of children the couples had revealed significant difference ($F=6.68$ $p<0.01$). This signifies that number of children have an impact on the marital adjustment of the dual –employed couples. However, the Scheffe's F (table 6) did not reveal significant difference between the different groups. The group means revealed that the highest mean score in marital adjustment is obtained by the couples having no children (Mean=81.21) and the least score is obtained by the couples having one child (Mean=59.11). The couples with no children have a higher score indicating better marital adjustment. The couples with no children do not have the extra responsibility of taking care of the children and therefore they have more time for themselves as well as for each other, whereas the couples with children have more involvement with the children than themselves. In cases where the spouses are employed, the only family time they get will be spent with the children, therefore the couple time is lacking. Previous studies also have reported that childless wives have higher levels of marital adjustment and emotional quality than the mothers with children (Abbott & Brody, 1985). The one- way ANOVA carried out for emotional maturity for the groups of couples based on number of children revealed that none of the F-values obtained are significant. These results indicate that number of children is not having any impact on the emotional maturity of the couples.

Table 5

Summary of one-way ANOVA of Marital Adjustment by Number of Children

Variable	Between groups		Within groups		F
	Sum of squares	Mean squares	Sum of squares	Mean squares	
Marital adjustment	5764.134	1921.378	56302.24	287.25	6.68**

** $p<.01$

Table 6

Comparison of mean scores (Scheffe's F) of marital adjustment by Number of Children.

Number of children	No children - One child	No children - Two children	No children - Three children
Marital adjustment	0.099	0.566	0.038

One of the important factors in leading a happy and harmonious family for the dual career families is to be able to balance family and career; this requires the couple to have a good mental, physical and emotional well being. One thing that influence spouse ability in adjustment with marriage is emotional maturity. The emotional maturity determines the person's ability to adjust with the emerging problem in the marriage. Emotional maturity has been found to have related to better marital adjustment (Dean & Bruton, 2012). Therefore an



attempt was made in this study to understand the relation between emotional maturity and marital adjustment between the husband and the wife and the couples.

Table 4

Correlations of Marital adjustment and Emotional maturity

Variables	Marital adjustment		
	Husband (N=100)	Wife (N=100)	Total (N=200)
Emotional stability	-.249*	.027	-.119
Emotional progression	-.276**	-.118	-.219**
Social adjustment	-.201*	.177	-.010
Personality Integration	.022	-.090	-.051
Independence	.066	-.052	-.044
Total score in emotional maturity	-.156	.054	.134

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

The coefficient of correlations obtained between marital adjustment and emotional maturity among the couples reveal that none of the correlations obtained between the maturity dimensions and marital adjustment are significant for the wives. However, in the case of husbands, significant negative correlations are obtained between marital adjustment and the maturity dimensions of emotional stability, emotional progression and social adjustment. Emotional progression is having significant negative correlation with marital adjustment for the total sample also. Since a higher score in emotional maturity means poor maturity these significant negative correlations indicate that as emotional maturity increases marital adjustment also increases. These results, in general, indicate that emotional maturity is having significant relationship with the marital adjustment of husbands, but this relationship is negligible in the case of the wives. In our culture, the husbands are having an upper hand in family and marital life while the wives though employed and earning members are having or assuming a submissive role. However, Kitamura, Aoki, Fujino, Ura, Watanabe, Watanabe, and Fujihara (1998) have reported that the correlation between marital satisfaction and social adjustment were stronger for women.

Conclusion

From the results obtained in the present study, it may be concluded that the wives showed better adjustment and were more independent. Couples who had arranged marriages had better emotional stability and personality integration. The younger couples had better personality integration and independence than the older couples. Neither the type of marriage nor the age of the couples has any influence on their marital adjustment. The relationship between marital adjustment and emotional maturity was significant in the case of husbands. However, wide generalizations, solely based on the results of this study, should be made with caution because of the limited sample size. The increase in women population entry into the labour market has changed the family system from the traditional single earner to dual - earning family. This has positively brought in change in all the aspects of family development as women have proved to have better marital adjustment and emotional maturity despite the pressure they face in balancing both the domains- home and work.

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