



Psychological Well-Being, Life Satisfaction, Gratitude, and Marital Satisfaction among Adults

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ABSTRACT

With adulthood come numerous roles and responsibilities in different spheres of life. Marriage is an important social and relational component in the life of an adult, especially in the Indian context. The extent to which an individual is satisfied with their life, grateful for what they have, and the level of psychological well-being becomes crucial to understand their relationships in the social world. The purpose of the current research is to study the correlation between psychological well-being, life satisfaction, gratitude, and marital satisfaction among adults. Standardized tools were used to measure the psychological well-being, life satisfaction, gratitude, and marital satisfaction of adults. The study was conducted on 45 (M= 7; F= 38) married adults in the age group of 30-50 years. The results found out that there is a positive significant correlation between marital satisfaction and psychological well-being. There is a positive significant correlation between marital satisfaction and gratitude, also a positive significant correlation between marital satisfaction and life satisfaction. Marriage thereby becomes an important decision of one's life, governing different aspects like life satisfaction, gratefulness, as well as psychological well-being, and thus, should be taken with mindfulness and care. An attempt should be made towards making a marriage healthy. Married couples may be helped by pre-marital and post-marital counseling, which can support their communication and help them understand each other.

Keywords: Psychological Well-Being, Life Satisfaction, Gratitude, Marital Satisfaction, Adults

Introduction

"We are never so defenseless against suffering as when we love". –Sigmund Freud

Marriage is an important part and transition in everyone's life. It brings with it a whole new set of changes, some sweet and some challenging. The auspicious vows of marriage involve a promise of being together forever, and about sharing every part of one's life with their spouse. However, what if the 'forever' becomes a troublesome job for couples who aren't satisfied with their marriage? Marital satisfaction is a crucial component of an individual's life, but when the very essence of this satisfaction is missing then it may lead to some other negative impacts. It becomes especially important to view this in light of adults, i.e. 30 to 50 years old, considering that it is the majority's prime of professional, relational, familial, as well as personal growth. In a study by Shek (1995) the findings reveal that the married adults who showed less marital satisfaction showed more psychiatric symptoms and midlife crisis symptoms, had lower levels of purpose in life and life satisfaction and perceived their health as poor when compared with those who showed relatively low marital maladjustment. The research, therefore, indicates that lower marital satisfaction also leads to lower life satisfaction and may also lead to the development of mental health disorders, thereby lower psychological well-being. In research from Kasapoğlu and Yabanigül (2018), it has been found out that marital satisfaction has both direct as well as indirect impacts on life satisfaction. Therefore, suggesting that marital satisfaction predicts life satisfaction in married adults. In a research by Gordon et al., (2011), results show that individuals' felt and expressed gratitude are both significantly related to their marital satisfaction. These studies indicate the immediate need to study the correlation that may or may not exist between psychological well-being, gratitude, life satisfaction, and marital satisfaction amongst adults. It becomes trivial to understand how the correlation & inter-relations of these variables impact the overall scenario of marriage concerning the Asian cultures.

Marital Satisfaction

Marital satisfaction is viewed as "a psychological state regulated by mechanisms that monitor the benefits and costs of marriage to a particular person" (Shackelford & Buss, 2000).

According to Fincham and Beach (2010), marital satisfaction is defined as "attitude an individual has toward their marital relationship."

The importance of marital satisfaction has been suggested in expansion of the happiness of married individuals. It also highlighted the importance of religious beliefs and values in achieving marital satisfaction among urban married Malay individuals (Hoesni & Zakaria, 2019).

In a study by Abreu-Afonso et al., (2021), it has been found via performing structural equation modeling that there are five significant predictors of marital satisfaction, namely, intrinsic motivation; communication; families with young children; families with teenagers; and families with academic or professional status.

Research has suggested a bidirectional influence on marital satisfaction and life satisfaction. It further found out that higher marital adjustment and satisfaction strongly predicted higher life satisfaction amongst middle-aged and older adult couples (BE et al., 2013).

Psychological Well-Being

According to Winefield (2012), "Psychological well-being is about lives going well. It's a combination of functioning effectively and feeling good." Psychological well-being refers to inter-and intra-individual levels of positive functioning that can include one's relatedness with others and self-referent attitudes that include one's sense of mastery and personal growth (Burns, 2016).

In a study by Kumar (2015), it was found out that as the psychological wellbeing increases the marital adjustment also increases and vice versa, among elderly couples in post-prenatal stages of life.

According to research by Walker et al., (2013), individuals' poor psychological well-being and depressive symptoms were related to their levels of marital satisfaction. Here, lower marital satisfaction was predicted by higher scores on depression scale. Thus, this research strengthens the importance of psychological well-being influencing marital satisfaction in older couple relationships.

Life Satisfaction

Shin and Johnson (1978) have defined life satisfaction as "a global assessment of a person's quality of life according to his chosen criteria." Satisfaction with one's life implies contentment with or acceptance of one's life circumstances, or the fulfillment of one's wants and needs for one's life as a whole (Sousa & Lyubomirsky, 2001).

In research by Mehmood and Shaikat (2014), it was found out that depression and self-esteem (components of psychological well-being) predict life satisfaction amongst female university students in the age group of 18 to 24.

According to research life satisfaction is strongly correlated with depression, dimension of depression (Headey et al., 1993).

Research from Ng (2008) found no gender differences in life satisfaction amongst males and females. It also reveals that marital satisfaction significantly predicts life satisfaction in both genders.

Gratitude

Emmons and Shelton (2002) defined gratitude as "a sense of appreciation, thankfulness, and a sense of wonder."

Gratitude is defined as the global score obtained by the participants in the Gratitude Questionnaire-Six Item Form (McCullough et al., 2002).

Gratitude is positively associated with relationship satisfaction and life satisfaction in middle-aged and older adults of the United States and Japan (Robustelli, 2016).

In a study by Algoe et al., (2008) it has been found out that benefactor responsiveness predicted gratitude for benefits, and future relationship outcomes were predicted by gratitude during the week. In essence, it indicates that gratitude may function to promote the formation and maintenance of relationships.

In research from Sigala (2019), results have indicated that gratitude is more relevant than mindfulness to marital satisfaction, for both partners.

Purpose of the Study

The aim is to study psychological well-being, life satisfaction, gratitude, and marital satisfaction in adults.

Hypothesis

1. There will be a positive correlation between psychological well-being and marital satisfaction.
2. There will be a positive correlation between life satisfaction and marital satisfaction.
3. There will be a positive correlation between gratitude and marital satisfaction.

Methodology

Sample

The study was conducted on 45 participants (M= 7; F= 38) from New Delhi and Delhi-NCR. The sample consisted of married adults in the age group of 30-50 years.

Measures

The standardized tools used for this study were:

1. **Psychological Well-Being** (Ryff & Keyes, 1995): The scale measures the overall psychological well-being of an individual, and has 6 subscales namely, Autonomy subscale, Environmental Mastery subscale, Personal Growth subscale, Positive Relations with Others

subscale, Purpose in Life subscale, and the Self-Acceptance subscale. The scale has 18-items in all, on a Likert of 1-7 (strongly agree to strongly disagree).

2. **Life Satisfaction** (Diener et al., 1985): It is a 5-item scale designed to measure global cognitive judgments of one's life satisfaction. It is on a Likert of 1-7 (strongly disagree to strongly agree).
3. **Gratitude** (McCullough et al., 2002): It is a 6-item self-report questionnaire that is used to assess individual differences in the proneness to experience gratitude in daily life. It is on a Likert of 1-7 (strongly disagree to strongly agree).
4. **Marital Satisfaction** (Fournier et al., 1983): It is a 15-item scale consisting of Idealistic Distortion (5-items) and Marital Satisfaction Scale (10-items). It is on a Likert of 1-5 (strongly disagree to strongly agree).

Procedure

The objective of the study was explained to the participant, and standardized scales were given to all of them. The surveys were filled using Google forms. The participants were requested to answer honestly and were assured of the confidentiality of their responses. Each participant was thanked for their cooperation.

Analysis of Data

Results

N, Mean and Standard Deviation data is shown in Table 1. Correlation between Psychological Well-Being, Life Satisfaction, Gratitude, and Marital Satisfaction is shown in Table 2.

Table 1: shows N, Mean and Standard Deviation

	Autonomy	Environmental Mastery	Personal Growth	Personal Relations with Others	Purpose in Life	Self-Acceptance	Life Satisfaction	Gratitude	Idealistic Distortion	Marital Satisfaction
N	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45
Mean	15.0	16.4	17.3	15.1	13.6	17.2	26.7	33.5	17.6	36.1
Standard deviation	4.03	3.35	3.46	4.84	3.91	3.30	6.93	8.71	6.24	10.3

Table 2: shows the correlation between all variables

	Autonomy	Environmental Mastery	Personal Growth	Personal Relations with Others	Purpose in Life	Self-Acceptance	Life Satisfaction	Gratitude	Idealistic Distortion	Marital Satisfaction
Autonomy	—									
Environmental Mastery	0.141	—								
Personal Growth	0.346 *	0.172	—							
Personal Relations with Others	0.125	0.325 *	0.421 **	—						
Purpose in Life	0.119	-0.193	0.328 *	0.321 *	—					
Self-Acceptance	0.121	0.376 *	0.456 **	0.759 ***	0.410 **	—				
Life Satisfaction	0.177	0.529 ***	0.180	0.514 ***	0.057	0.523 ***	—			
Gratitude	0.279	0.105	0.332 *	0.484 ***	0.217	0.400 **	0.265	—		
Idealistic Distortion	0.198	0.307 *	0.144	0.468 **	0.049	0.400 **	0.629 ***	0.432 **	—	
Marital Satisfaction	0.253	0.419 **	0.202	0.528 ***	0.070	0.416 **	0.650 ***	0.497 **	0.843 ***	—

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Discussion of Results

Results found out that there is a positive significant correlation ($r = 0.650, p < .001$) between marital satisfaction and life satisfaction; and a positive significant correlation ($r = 0.629, p < .001$) between idealistic distortion and life satisfaction. In research by Perrone-McGovern et al., (2012) results have shown a high positive significant relationship between marital satisfaction and life satisfaction among gifted adults. The data for this study were collected twice over a time period of 5 –years, and the same results were obtained on both occasions. There is a positive significant correlation ($r = 0.497, p < .001$) between marital satisfaction and gratitude; and a positive significant correlation ($r = 0.432, p < .01$) between idealistic distortion and gratitude. The results of a study by Saeidi et al., (2019) indicate a direct positive effect of gratitude on marital satisfaction among married female teachers. The results were obtained via the method of structural equation modeling.

There is a positive significant correlation ($r = 0.419, p < .01$) between marital satisfaction and environmental mastery. There is a positive significant correlation ($r = 0.528, p < .001$) between marital satisfaction and personal relations with others. There is a positive significant correlation ($r = 0.416, p < .01$) between marital satisfaction and self-acceptance. Research by Perrin (2008) examined depression, anxiety, and marital satisfaction in individuals from a non-clinical and a clinical sample of individuals. The results suggested a significant relation between depression and marital satisfaction, thereby suggesting a significant relationship between psychological well-being and marital satisfaction.

In research from Gove et al., (1983) the results suggest that marital status is the most powerful predictor of the mental health variables considered in the study, thereby again reinforcing the important and significant relationship between psychological well-being and marital satisfaction of an individual. The data further reveals that it is the quality of the marriage and not the marriage per se that links marriage to positive mental health.

Conclusion

Adulthood brings with it numerous roles and responsibilities in different spheres of life. One such important social and relational component of an adult individual's life is marriage. To understand their relationships in the social world, it becomes crucial to understand their gratefulness levels, life satisfaction, psychological well-being, and marital satisfaction. A study was conducted on 45-married adults in the age group of 30-50 years. Standardized tools were administered to measure psychological well-being, life satisfaction, gratitude, and marital satisfaction. The results showed a positive significant correlation between marital satisfaction and psychological well-being. A positive significant correlation between marital satisfaction and life satisfaction. A positive significant correlation between marital satisfaction and gratitude. We can thereby understand the important role of marriage in the mediation of an adult individual's satisfaction with life, gratefulness attitude, and the level of psychological well-being. From these results, we may safely conclude the importance of the decision of marriage, as well as the implications of the same. It should be noted that marriage is a crucial decision and should be taken with utmost caution as well as mindfulness, as it may influence one's gratefulness, life satisfaction, as well as psychological well-being. It also becomes important for couples to regularly maintain a healthy relationship and communication to keep an optimum level of marital satisfaction. One may seek professional help, i.e. marriage counseling in case of turbulences in marriage or misunderstandings, as it would give them a chance to explore the difficulties and return to their optimum marital satisfaction levels.

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