

Relationship between Empathy, Forgiveness and Marital Adjustment in Couples

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Marital adjustment is gaining increasing concern in the modern society. Marital adjustment is a process during which partners in a marriage change and adapt to their new roles accompanying each other acting as a team different to two separate units. Levels of empathy and levels of forgiveness could be factors in determining a relationship with marital adjustment. Marital adjustment is an important predictor and factors like empathy and forgiveness that enhance the marital quality and marital satisfaction in a marriage can be studied as mediators of marital adjustment. High levels of empathy will have a positive relationship with marital adjustment. High levels of forgiveness will have a positive relationship with marital adjustment. Focusing on forgiveness and empathy as having a positive relationship with marital adjustment, it can be said the ability to forgive a partner and the willingness to grant forgiveness is one of the most important contributors to marital adjustment. Empathy between couples means having the ability to feel and understand the thoughts and emotions of the other partner. Having the ability to listen to and relating to the partner's feelings is very important and this has a great impact on how the relationship works thereby affecting the levels of adjustment. **Methods:** The current study aimed at studying the relationship between empathy, forgiveness and marital adjustment in couples. The study was conducted on 80 married individuals, i.e, 40 married males and 40 married females. It was hypothesized that higher levels of forgiveness would have a positive relationship with marital adjustment; higher levels of empathy would have a positive relationship with marital adjustment. It was also hypothesized that there would be significant gender differences in regard of forgiveness and empathy between couples. **Results & Implications:** The study reported that higher levels of empathy have a positive relationship with marital adjustment. On the dimensions of forgiveness also the study reported a positive relationship between forgiveness and marital adjustment. There were significant gender differences between males and females on the domains of empathy and forgiveness in a marital relationship. The study provides an opportunity for further research across age and gender to uncover the possible differences or similarities that may be present. Also it adds to the already existing data pool with equivocal studies.

Keywords: Marital Adjustment, Empathy, Forgiveness, Gender

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Marital adjustment is gaining increasing concern in the modern society. It has always been closely related to stability in a given marriage setting. Marital adjustment is a process during which partners in a marriage change and adapt to their new roles accompanying each other acting as a team different to two separate units. It is also quite important to unite the following-interests and values, thereby maintaining exposed lines of communication and encouraging the expression of each other. With the increasing number of divorces in India it has become really important to understand that there has to be a way out to make marriages work. The marital adjustment can play a very important role in this scenario as we know that people with low marital adjustment tend to walk out of marriages these days instead of finding a way out to make their marriage work. Marital adjustment is an important predictor and factors like empathy and forgiveness that enhance the marital quality and marital satisfaction in a marriage can be studied as mediators of marital adjustment. Levels of empathy and levels of forgiveness could be factors in determining a relationship with marital adjustment. High levels of empathy will have a positive relationship with marital adjustment. High levels of forgiveness will have a positive relationship with marital adjustment. Focusing on forgiveness and empathy as having a positive relationship with marital adjustment, it can be said the ability to forgive a partner and the willingness to grant forgiveness is one of the most important contributors to marital adjustment. In a situation when one partner commits a mistake, the other partner's forgiveness can help resolve problems in the marital relationship. Empathy between couples means having the ability to feel and understand the thoughts and emotions of the other partner. Having the ability to listen to and relating to the partner's feelings is very important and this has a great impact on how the relationship works thereby affecting the levels of adjustment.

REVIEW

Tanya Machedo and Michelle Fernandes (2014) did a study to contrast marital adjustment fulfillment relating with religious inclination in Hindu and catholic couples in south Goa with 100 people in the age section of 21 to 45 years. The Marital Adjustment Questionnaire by Dr. Pramod Kumar and Dr. (KM) Kanchan Rohatgi was utilized to survey conjugal alteration in connection to social, sexual and enthusiastic change. The outcomes demonstrated that there was no huge contrast as to conjugal conformity among Hindu and Catholic couples. Notwithstanding, a huge distinction with respect to sexual alteration was watched. In this manner it was presumed that couples independent of the group to which they had a place, gave more prominent accentuation on an effective marriage. As far as social alteration it was demonstrated that there was no huge distinction between the two groups in Goa.

An examination was contemplated by Maryam Mirzadeh and Reza Fallahchai(2012) on the relationship in the middle of forgiveness and marital adjustment with 200 members was directed. The principle discoveries of this study gave halfway backing to the part pardoning impacts as indicators of conjugal fulfillment in wedded ladies. Further discoveries of the study gave backing to the part of characteristic absolution in foreseeing conjugal fulfillment. Larger amounts of characteristic absolution were discovered to be essentially connected with more elevated

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amounts of adjustment. Finally, forgiveness was additionally found to anticipate later reports of viable clash determination practices. Without a positive forgiveness dynamic, families may not have the capacity to work in a method of second-request change, making the unlucky deficiency of forgiveness a vital element in a family's capacity to adjust and develop.

An exploration ponders by Lorren Toussaint and Jon .R Webb (2005) on the point of gender contrasts in a relationship in the middle of absolution and compassion with 127 members was led. These members completed self report measures on pardoning and sympathy. The aftereffects of the study demonstrated that ladies are more empathetic than men however for forgiveness no gender contrasts were clear. The relationship in the middle of empathy and forgiveness did contrast by sexual orientation .forgiveness was connected with compassion in women however not in males.

Rainer Banse (2004) did research on grown-up connection and marital adjustment with 333 wedded couples. The outcomes adjustment as one of the indicators by the individual's owns connection, the accomplice's connection, and the cooperation between them. Unreliable connection was identified with lower, and secure connection was identified with higher conjugal fulfillment. In particular dyadic structures, the constructive outcomes of secure connection styles and the negative impacts of shaky connection styles were either escalated or debilitated relying upon the attachment style of the accomplice.

METHODS

Purpose of the Study

The study aimed at finding the relationship between empathy, forgiveness and marital adjustment. It was hypothesized that higher levels of empathy and higher levels of forgiveness would have a positive relationship with marital adjustment. It was also hypothesized that there would be significant gender differences in terms of empathy and forgiveness between couples.

Participants

The present study was conducted on 80 individuals. The sample consisted of 40 married males and 40 married females belonging to the Delhi/Ncrregion. t test was computed to find a significant gender differences between males and females on the domains of empathy and forgiveness in couples. Correlation was also computed to see the relationship between empathy and forgiveness with marital adjustment.

Data Analysis

The present study aimed to study the relationship between empathy, forgiveness and marital adjustment in married couples. The sample for the study comprised of 40 married couples(40 males and 40 females). t-test analysis were done to see the significant gender differences between males and females on the domains of empathy and forgiveness and correlation was also

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done to find out the relationship between the levels of empathy and marital adjustment and forgiveness and marital adjustment in males and females separately.

Table 1 Showing Mean, SD and t Value of Empathy between Couples (Male & Female)

	MALE		FEMALE		t
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation	
Empathy	36.60	8.50	45.55	9.48	**4.445

**p<0.01 , *p<0.05

Table 1 shows, mean, standard deviation and t value of empathy between males and females. As observed from the table above the t values of empathy between males and females came out to be 4.445. P is significant at 0.01 levels. By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be extremely statistically significant. This means there are significant differences between males and females on the dimensions of empathy.

Table: 2 – Showing Mean, SD and t Value of Forgiveness between Couples (Male & Female)

	MALE		FEMALE		t
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation	
Forgiveness	208.58	61.19	250.98	54.63	**3.2691

**p<0.01 , * p<0.05

Table 2 shows mean, standard deviation and t values of forgiveness in married males and females. As observed from the table the t values of forgiveness between married males and females is 3.2691. The P value is significant at 0.01 level. By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be very statistically significant. This means that there are significant differences between males and females on the dimensions of forgiveness.

Table 3– Correlation between Empathy and Marital Adjustment in Males

MALES	
CORRELATION COEFFICIENT (r value)	0.931*

Table 3 shows the correlation values of empathy and marital adjustment in males. As observed in the table the correlation coefficient (r value) in males is 0.931. These values lie in the range of 0

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to +1.00 and hence it signifies a positive correlation between empathy and marital adjustment in males.

Table 4- Correlation between Empathy and Marital Adjustment in Females

FEMALES	
CORRELATION COEFFICIENT (r value)	0.875*

Table 4 shows correlation between empathy and marital adjustment in females. As observed in the table above the correlation coefficient (r value) in females is 0.875. These values lie in the range of 0 to +1.00 and hence it signifies a positive correlation between empathy and marital adjustment in females.

Table 5- Correlation between Forgiveness and Marital Adjustment in Males

MALES	
CORRELATION COEFFICIENT (r value)	0.917*

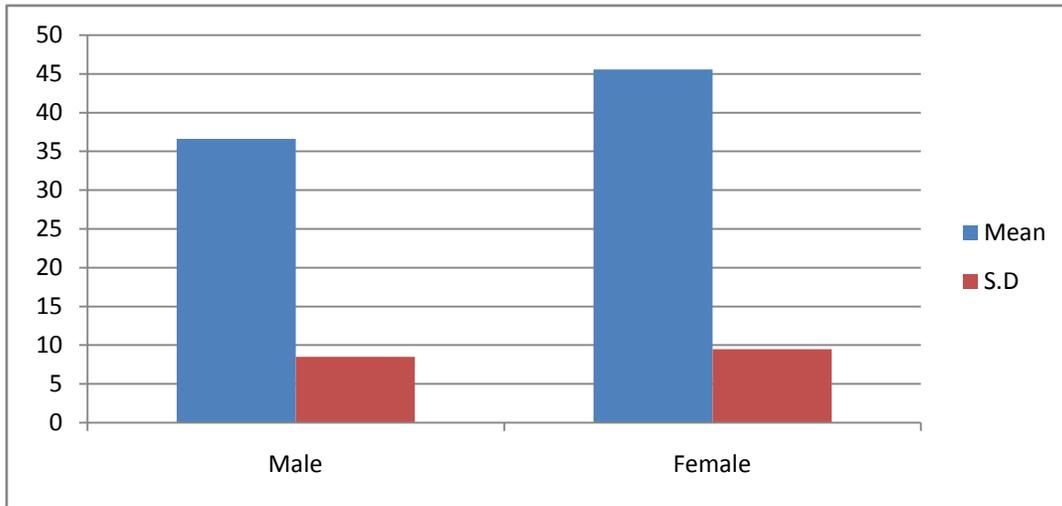
Table 5 shows correlation between forgiveness and marital adjustment in males. As observed in the table the correlation coefficient (r value) in males is 0.917. These values lie in the range of 0 to +1.00 and hence it signifies a positive correlation of forgiveness and marital adjustment in males.

Table 6- Correlation between Forgiveness and Marital Adjustment in Females

FEMALES	
CORRELATION COEFFICIENT (r value)	0.874*

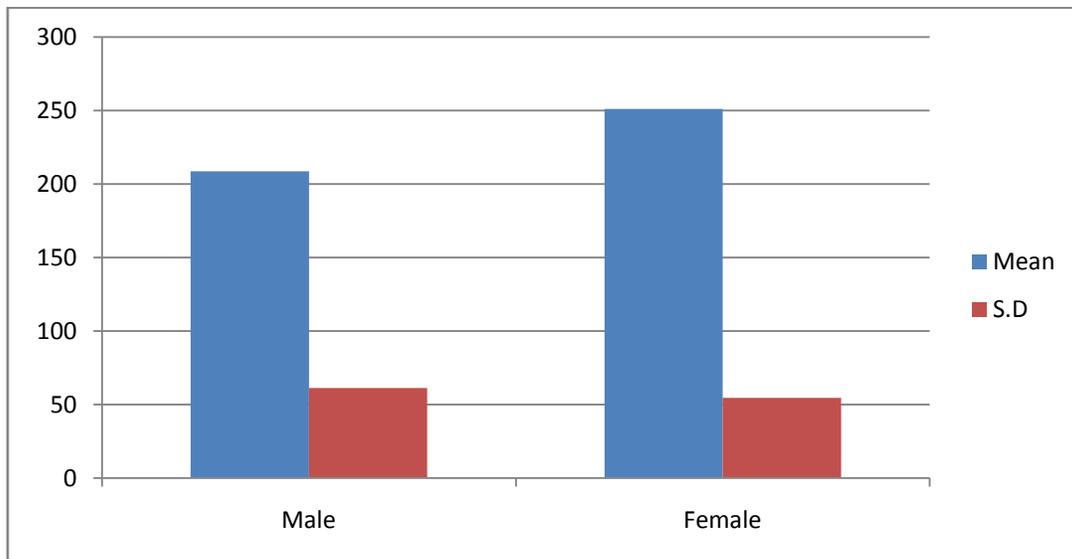
Table 6 shows correlation between forgiveness and marital adjustment in females. As calculated the correlation coefficient (r value) came out to be 0.874. These values lie in the range of 0 to +1.00 and hence it signifies a positive correlation of forgiveness and marital adjustment in females.

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Graph 1 Showing Mean and SD of Empathy between Male & Female

Graph 1 shows the graphical representation of mean and standard deviation of empathy between males and females. As calculated the mean score of males in the domain of empathy came out to be 36.60 and that of females in the same domain has come out to be 45.55. The graph thus clearly shows that empathy of females is higher than that of males.



Graph 2 Showing Mean and SD of Forgiveness between Male & Female

Graph 2 shows the graphical representation of mean and standard deviation of forgiveness between males and females. As calculated the mean score of forgiveness in males came out to be 208.58 and that of females on the same domain came out to be 250.98. The graph thus clearly shows that forgiveness is higher in females than males.

CONCLUSION

Marital adjustment has always been closely related to stability in a given marriage setting. Marital adjustment is a process during which partners in a marriage change and adapt to their new roles accompanying each other acting as a team different to two separate units. It is also quite important to unite the following- interests and values, thereby maintaining exposed lines of communication and encouraging the expression of each other.

The aim of the research is to study the relationship between empathy, forgiveness and marital adjustment in couples.

The marital adjustment questionnaire by Dr. Pramodkumar and Dr. Kanchan Rastogi, is the tool that provides a clear view of the marital adjustment of married males and females. Also the empathy quotient by Baron- Cohen and Wheelwright and The Enright Forgiveness Inventory by Robert D. Enright and Julio Rique have been used as tools to measure the empathy and forgiveness level in these males and females and a relationship between the three variables has also been studied.

The study conducted reveals that supported that higher levels of empathy have a positive relationship with marital adjustment, higher levels of forgiveness have a positive relationship with marital adjustment and there are significant gender differences between males and females on the dimensions of forgiveness and empathy between couples. It has been found that females are more empathetic and forgiving as compared to males.

Further Suggestions

- It Could Be Done As A Qualitative Study (Observations And Interviews) .
- Other Dimensions Can Be Added And Used For Understanding.

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