

STRESS TOLERANCE, EMOTIONAL ADJUSTMENT, AND MARITAL SATISFACTION AMONG COUPLES : AN ANALYTICAL STUDY

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Paper

ABSTRACT

The present study was intended to find out the level of stress tolerance, emotional adjustment, and marital life satisfaction among couples. The study further aimed at finding out the difference between male and female members and also studying the differences among the three religious groups namely Hindus, Christians and Muslims for the above variables. Stratified sampling method was used to select the sample for the study. The sample consisted of 500 couples. The statistical techniques used were t test, one-way ANOVA, Duncan test, and Pearson r. The results showed that there was significant difference between males and females, and also among the different religious groups for the variables stress tolerance, emotional adjustment and marital life satisfaction. The results further showed that three existed significant correlations among the variables at 0.01 level.

INTRODUCTION

Psychological variables such as stress tolerance, emotional adjustment, and marital life satisfaction have a major role in couples who want to lead a happy family life. Stress tolerance refers to a person's ability to withstand stress without becoming seriously impaired (Carson, Butcher, & Mineka, 1995). Stress is a factor which comes to play in couples while engaged in their daily routine or any other activity. The ability to tolerate stress is a key factor who want to lead a smooth life. Emotional adjustment is a person's adjustment to emotions such as love, joy, anger, jealousy, anxiety, guilt, depression and shame (Lazarus, 1976). These emotions are quite natural in everyday life. But these emotions lead to problems among couples. So they need adjustment to these emotions in their daily life. Positive adjustment to these emotions help to lead a good life and negative adjustment will lead to problems and later to divorce.

This study intends to understand stress tolerance, emotional adjustment, and marital satisfaction among couples. The term 'marital satisfaction' indicates the gratification of a desire in couples (Heffman, 1994). The term 'couple' means a man and a woman married or an intimate relationship (Nigel, 1999).

HYPOTHESES

1. There will not be any significant difference between couples categorized on the basis of sex for the variables

stress tolerance, emotional adjustment and marital life satisfaction.

2. There will not be any significant differences among couples categorized on the basis of religion (Christian / Hindu / Muslim) in their stress tolerance, emotional adjustment and marital life satisfaction.
3. There will be significant correlations among stress tolerance, emotional adjustment and marital life satisfaction.

METHODOLOGY

The plan and procedure or methodology for the investigation is presented below under various headings.

Sample

Stratified sampling method was used to select the sample for the investigation. Stratified sampling technique was designed to ensure representativeness and avoid bias (Garrett, 1969). This scheme is applicable when the population is composed of subgroups or strata of different

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sizes. The sample for the study consisted of 500 couples. Adequate representations were given to factors like sex, and religion (Christian / Hindu / Muslim). Details of the sample are presented in Tables 1, and 2.

Variables and Tools

The major variables in the study were stress tolerance, emotional adjustment, and marital life satisfaction. The tools used were Stress Tolerance Scale (Reshmi & Sananda Raj, 1999), Emotional Adjustment Inventory (John & Sananda Raj, 1997), and Marital Life Satisfaction Inventory (Sananda Raj & Abraham, 2006).

Data Collection Procedure

The data were collected from different villages and towns in Kerala by administering the psychological tests.

Statistical Techniques

The major statistical techniques used for the analysis of the data were *t* test, one-way ANOVA, Duncan test, and Pearson product-moment correlation *r*.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The *t* Test Results and Discussion

a. Sex Difference

Comparison of Couples Categorized on the Basis of Sex for the Variable Stress Tolerance, Emotional Adjustment and Marital Life Satisfaction:

Test of Tenability of Hypothesis 1:

Table 1

DATA AND RESULTS OF COMPARISON OF COUPLES CATEGORIZED ON THE BASIS OF SEX FOR STRESS TOLERANCE, EMOTIONAL ADJUSTMENT AND MARITAL LIFE SATISFACTION

Sl. No.	Variable	Sex	N	Mean	SD	<i>t</i>
1	Stress Tolerance	Males	500	76.88	11.06	7.98**
		Females	500	71.49	10.28	
2	Emotional Adjustment	Males	500	55.32	7.27	5.69**
		Females	500	52.77	6.85	
3	Marital Life Satisfaction	Males	500	72.01	9.52	3.55**
		Females	500	69.72	10.92	

Note: ** the *t*-value is significant at 0.01 level.

The results indicated that there was significant difference between males and females on stress tolerance, since the *t* obtained was significant at 0.01 level. From the mean values, it is clear that, the males had a higher level of stress tolerance compared to females. There was significant difference between males and females on emotional adjustment at 0.01 level. The mean values of both the groups indicated that males had a higher level of emotional adjustment than females. For the variable marital life satisfaction, the results indicated that there was significant difference between males and females, since the *t* obtained was significant at 0.01 level. From the mean values, it is clear that the males had higher marital satisfaction compared to females.

On the basis of the above findings, Hypothesis 1, viz., "There will not be any significant difference between couples categorized on the basis of sex for the variables stress tolerance, emotional adjustment and marital life satisfaction" is rejected.

The Results of ANOVA and Discussion

Religious Groups Difference:

Comparison of Couples Categorized on the Basis of Religious Groups on Stress Tolerance, Emotional Adjustment and Marital Life Satisfaction:

Table 2

COMPARISON OF COUPLES CATEGORIZED ON THE BASIS OF RELIGIOUS GROUPS (CHRISTIAN / HINDU / MUSLIM) FOR STRESS TOLERANCE, EMOTIONAL ADJUSTMENT AND MARITAL LIFE SATISFACTION

Sl. No.	Variable	Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Squares	F
1	Stress Tolerance	Between Groups	677.626	2	338.813	2.805#
		Within Groups	120410	997	120.772	
		Total	121087	999		
2	Emotional Adjustment	Between Groups	171.396	2	85.698	1.667#
		Within Groups	51266.7	997	51.421	
		Total	51438.1	999		
3	Marital Life Satisfaction	Between Groups	1810.33	2	905.167	8.658*
		Within Groups	104232	997	104.546	
		Total	106043	999		

Note: ** the F-value is significant at 0.05 level.

Note: # the F-value is not significant statistically.

The analysis of variance was done, for comparing the different religious groups for the variables stress tolerance, emotional adjustment and marital life satisfaction. The details are given in Table 2.

From Table 2, it is seen that there is no significant difference among couples categorized on the basis of religion, namely, Hindu, Christian, and Muslim, in their stress tolerance and emotional adjustment, since the F-ratios were 2.805 (df = 2, 997), and 1.667 (df = 2, 997) respectively. Therefore it is concluded that couples belonging to different religious groups have relation in their stress tolerance and emotional adjustment. The results further reveal that there are significant differences in the marital life satisfaction of the three religious groups, since the F-ratio obtained for the variable marital life satisfaction was 8.658, which was statistically significant at 0.01 level. Post hoc comparisons, for identifying where the differences existed, gave the following results:

Table 3
RESULTS OF DUNCAN PROCEDURE FOR
MARITAL LIFE SATISFACTION

Sl. No	Group	N	Mean	1	2	3
1	Christian	269	72.97	..	..	*
2	Hindu	652	74.49	..	..	*
3	Muslim	79	75.85	..	..	..

Note : * Indicates significant difference between the groups compared.

Table 3 reveals that there are significant differences in marital life satisfaction among the religious groups. The mean score obtained for Muslims is 75.85, for Hindus 74.49 and for Christians it is 72.49. The results show that Christians have almost similar marital life satisfaction when compared with Hindus. But Muslims have significantly higher level of marital life satisfaction than Christians and Hindus. Therefore this study shows that couples of different religious groups have differences in their marital life satisfaction, in two out of the three comparisons.

On the basis of the above findings Hypothesis 2, viz., "There will not be any significant differences among couples categorized on the basis of religion (Christian / Hindu / Muslim) in their stress tolerance, emotional adjustment and marital life satisfaction" is accepted in the case of two variables, namely, stress tolerance and emotional adjustment.

Correlation Analysis

Correlations among Stress Tolerance, and Emotional Adjustment, Marital Life Satisfaction:

Table 4

CORRELATION AMONG THREE VARIABLES OF THE STUDY

No.	Variables	1	2	3
1.	Stress Tolerance	..	.388**	.122**
2.	Emotional Adjustment	..	..	.321**
3	Marital Satisfaction	..	..	..

Note : **Correlation coefficient is significant at 0.01 level.

The details of correlation between the three variables stress tolerance, emotional adjustment and marital life satisfaction are presented in Table 4.

Correlation between Stress Tolerance and Emotional Adjustment

The correlation between stress tolerance and emotional adjustment obtained on the sample of 500 couples was found to be .388, which is significant at 0.01 level. This r is interpreted as low relationship between the variables. Hence, the relation between stress tolerance and emotional adjustment is positive. The results show that, when emotional adjustment increases the ability to tolerate stress will also increase, to a small extent.

Correlation between Stress Tolerance and Marital Life Satisfaction

Stress tolerance was found to correlate with marital satisfaction in 500 couples, and the r obtained was .112, which is significant at 0.01 level. This r is interpreted as negligible relationship between the variables. The relation between stress tolerance and marital satisfaction is positive.

Correlation between Emotional Adjustment and Marital Satisfaction

The variables emotional adjustment and marital satisfaction were subjected to correlation analysis and the coefficient was found to be .321, which is significant at 0.01 level. This r is interpreted as low relationship between the variables. The relation between emotional adjustment and marital satisfaction is positive. Here the results show that when emotional adjustment increases, marital life satisfaction will also increase to a small extent.

On the basis of the above findings, Hypothesis 3, viz., "There will be significant correlations among stress tolerance, emotional adjustment and marital life satisfaction", is accepted.

MAJOR FINDINGS

The following are the major findings of the present study:

1. There exist significant differences between male and female in stress tolerance, emotional adjustment, and marital life satisfaction. Males had more stress tolerance, emotional adjustment, and marital life satisfaction than females.
2. There exist no significant differences among the couples categorized on the basis of religion namely, Christians, Hindus, and Muslims in the variables stress tolerance, and emotional adjustment but a significant difference does not in marital life satisfaction.
3. There exist significant correlations among the variables stress tolerance, emotional adjustment, and marital life satisfaction.

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person to be aware of his own abilities and as well as his / her own students. It is very certain that this aspect of understanding the learner in terms of his / her multiple abilities will go a long way in imparting quality education to learners.

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WEBSITES

1. <http://www.pbs.org>
2. <http://www.thirteen.org>

Be the Best Whatever You Are

If you can't be a pine on the top of the hill
Be a scrub in the valley--

But be the best little scrub by the side of the rill;
Be a bush if you can't be a tree.

If you can't be a bush be a bit of the grass,
And some highway some happier make;

If you can't be a muskie then just be a bass--
But the liveliest bass in the lake!

We can't all be captains, we've got to be crew,
There's something for all of us here.

There's big work to do and there's lesser to do,
And the task we must do is the near.

If you can't be a highway then just be a trail,
If you can't be the sun be a star;

It isn't by size that you win or you fail..
Be the best of whatever you are!

- Douglas Malloch

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