



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Psychology

SELF ESTEEM AND MARITAL ADJUSTMENT AMONG MIDDLE AGED COUPLES

KEY WORDS: Self-esteem, Marital adjustment, couples, middle age.

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ABSTRACT

The meaning of middle age varies with health, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, cohort, and culture. It is often filled with heavy responsibilities and multiple, demanding roles responsibilities and roles that most adults feel competent to handle. Self-esteem is used to describe a person's overall sense of self-worth or personal value. Marital adjustment is 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. First objective of the study was to find out the relationship between self-esteem and marital adjustment among middle aged couples. Second objective was to find out the self-esteem among middle aged couples. And the third one was to find out the marital adjustment among middle aged couples. The participants for the study consist of 120 middle aged men and women of various housing colonies in Calicut, Kerala. Result shows that there is a significant relationship between self-esteem and marital adjustment.

INTRODUCTION

Middle age, period of human adulthood that immediately precedes the onset of old age. The meaning of middle age varies with health, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, cohort, and culture. The middle years are marked by growing individual differences based on prior choices and experiences, as well as on genetic makeup. Middle age is often filled with heavy responsibilities and multiple, demanding roles responsibilities and roles that most adults feel competent to handle. At the same time, many middle aged adults, having made their mark and raised their children, have an increased feeling of freedom and independence. Middle adulthood can be a time of re-evaluating goals and aspirations and how well they have been fulfilled, and deciding how best to use the remaining part of the lifespan. Middle age is a phase of transition from young age to old age and the fact of finally accepting age is quiet stressful for many.

Self-esteem and marital adjustment, thus affects middle aged men and women. Self-esteem is used to describe a person's overall sense of self-worth or personal value. Self-esteem is often seen as a personality trait, which means that it tends to be stable and enduring.

COMPONENTS OF SELF ESTEEM

According to Branden (1969) there are three key component of self-esteem.

1. Self-esteem is an essential human need that is vital for survival and normal, healthy development.
2. Self-esteem arises automatically from within based on a person's beliefs and consciousness.
3. Self-esteem occurs in conjunction with a person's thoughts, behaviors, feelings, and actions.

The need for self-esteem plays an important role in which depicts self-esteem as one of the basic human motivations. People need both esteem from other people as well as inner self-respect. Both of these needs must be fulfilled in order for an individual to grow as a person and achieve self-actualization. It is important to note that self-esteem is a concept distinct from self-efficacy.

Modern theories of self-esteem explore the reasons humans are motivated to maintain a high regard for themselves. Socio meter theory maintains that self-esteem evolved to check one's social group. According to terror management theory, self-esteem serves a protective function and reduces anxiety about life and death.

Marital adjustment is 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.

Individuals, particularly wives reported increased levels of self-esteem, self-concept, and self-worth were positively correlated with employment. Working women had better marital adjustment and subjective well-being. They had high scores on general health, life satisfaction and self-esteem measures and lower scores on hopelessness, insecurity, and anxiety whereas the housewives had lower scores on negative affect than the working women. Relationships are composed of trust, and sharing of intimate thoughts and feelings. They are built upon trust and sharing and they get stronger from these things. Trust is a critical factor in the success of long-term marriages. Higher rates of relationship problems have been consistently linked to persons suffering from severe psychiatric disorders, including depression, substance abuse and anxiety disorders. In a close relationship there is a need to belong and if that need isn't fulfilled then problems may occur.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To find out the relationship between self-esteem and marital adjustment among middle aged couples.
2. To find out the self-esteem among middle aged couples.
3. To find out the marital adjustment among middle aged couples.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

1. There is no significant relationship between self-esteem and marital adjustment among men and women.
2. There is no significant difference in self-esteem among middle aged men and women.
3. There is no significant difference in marital adjustment among middle aged men and women.

METHOD PARTICIPANTS

The subjects for this study are middle aged men and women. 120 middle aged men and women were selected based on simple random sampling method.

MEASURES USED

1. SELF ESTEEM RATING SCALE (Immanuel Thomas and Dr.H.SamSananda Raj, 1985): The SERS is a 20 item instrument that provides a clinical measure on self esteem. Itensures the reliability of results as it has a high level of internal consistency (alpha of .97). It also has good content and factorial validity.
2. MARITAL ADJUSTMENT QUESTIONNAIRE (Dr. Pramod Kumar and Dr. (K.M) Kanchana Rohatgi 1999): MAQ is a list of 25 statements relating with different aspects of married life.

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES USED

The statistical techniques used for analysing result were bivariate pearson correlation and independent sample t-test.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The present study aims to find out self-esteem and marital

adjustment among middle aged men and women. Result of correlation and t-test is presented here.

HYPOTHESES 1: There is no significant relationship between self-esteem and marital adjustment among middle aged men and women.

TABLE 1 Pearson correlation between self-esteem and marital adjustment among middle aged men and women.

Variables	Self esteem	Marital adjustment
Self esteem		.325* .011
Marital adjustment	.325* .011	

A bivariate correlation was conducted to investigate the relationship between self-esteem and marital adjustment among middle aged men and women. Based on the Pearson's product moment correlation output, there is a relationship between self-esteem and marital adjustment.

[$r = 0.325^*$, $p \text{ value} = >0.05$]. It indicates there will be a relationship between self-esteem and marital adjustment. Table 1 shows that the correlation between self-esteem and marital adjustment is 0.325^* . There is a significant relationship between self-esteem and marital adjustment among middle aged men and women. P value is < 0.05 , so we reject the null hypothesis.

HYPOTHESES 2: There is no significant difference in self-esteem among middle aged men and women.

TABLE 2 Mean, SD, t value of self-esteem among middle aged men and women.

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	Sig (2tailed)
Self esteem	Male	30	72.77	12.119	.610	.544
	Female	30	70.90	11.580	.610	.544

***significant at 0.05 level**

As seen on Table 2 indicates t value of self-esteem among both middle aged men and women is .610. The mean and SD of in self-esteem among middle aged men and women is 72.77 and 70.90 respectively and the mean SD of self-esteem of male and female is 12.119 and 11.580 respectively. The significance is .544, at level of significance 0.05. This result indicates that, there is no significant difference in self-esteem among middle aged men and women. Therefore we accept the hypothesis.

HYPOTHESES 3: There is no significant difference in marital adjustment among middle aged men and women.

TABLE 3 Mean, SD, t value of marital adjustment among middle aged men and women.

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	Sig (2 tailed)
Marital adjustment	Male	30	20.13	2.991	1.829	.073
	Female	30	18.80	2.644	1.829	.073

***significant at 0.05 level**

As seen on Table 3 indicates that t value of marital adjustment among both middle aged men and women is 1.829. The mean and SD of marital adjustment among middle men and women is 20.13 and 18.80 respectively and the mean SD of marital adjustment of male and female is 2.991 and 2.644 respectively. The significance is .073, at level of significance 0.05. Therefore we accept the hypothesis. This result indicates, there is no significant difference in marital adjustment among middle aged men and women.

The result aimed to compare the self-esteem and marital adjustment among middle aged men and women. From this study we found out that there is a significant relationship between self-esteem and marital adjustment. Persons with high self-esteem predicts higher marital satisfaction. There is no significant difference in self-esteem and marital adjustment among middle aged men and women. With the help of independent sample t test

and correlation analysis the variables are statistically analyzed.

CONCLUSION

The middle years are marked by growing individual differences based on prior choices and experiences, as well as on genetic makeup. Middle age is often filled with heavy responsibilities and multiple, demanding roles responsibilities and roles that most adults feel competent to handle. The inter correlation among the components of self esteem and marital adjustment are positively correlated. All the variables are found to be significant at 0.01 and 0.05 level of significance. The study aimed to compare the self esteem and marital adjustment among middle aged couple. From this study we found out that there is a significant relationship between self-esteem and marital adjustment. Persons with high self-esteem predicts higher marital satisfaction.

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