

Marital Adjustment and Emotional Empathy in Married Couples

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Abstract

Marital adjustment is the state in which there is feeling of happiness and satisfaction between husband and wife with their marriage and with each other. Marital adjustment refers to a process and outcome which is determined by the amount of differences, interpersonal tensions and personal anxiety, satisfaction, cohesion and consensus and affection expression in marital relationship. Emotional empathy refers to one's vicarious experience of another's emotional experiences and feeling what the other person feels. The present study adopts a between groups design to study the difference between married couples living in same city and married couples living in different cities with respect to marital adjustment and its dimensions and emotional empathy. The study also adopts between group design to study gender difference among the married couples living in same city and married couples living in different cities. Furthermore, the study adopts correlational design to determine the relationship between marital adjustment and emotional empathy among married couples living in same city and married couples living in different cities. Non-probability purposive sampling was used to select a sample of married couples living in same city (N=50) and married couples living in different cities (N=50). Results showed that there were significant differences between married couples living in same city and married couples living in different cities with respect to the satisfaction, consensus, cohesion and affection expression dimensions of marital adjustment and emotional empathy. Significant differences were also found between men and women with respect to the satisfaction and consensus dimensions of marital adjustment and emotional empathy. The study recommends that support and understanding from spouses and better affection expression would help married couples achieve greater marital satisfaction.

Keywords: Marital Adjustment, Emotional Empathy, Married couples, Commuter Marriages, Long-Distance Relationships.

INTRODUCTION

Marriage is complex phenomenon in today's changing society. People marry for various reasons such as love, economic security, companionship, emotional security, to eliminate loneliness, to share common interests and children are few reasons that may lead a person towards marriage (Bowman, 1974). Mazumdar (1996) defines marriage, "As a socially sanctioned union of male and female or as a secondary institution devised by society to sanction the union of male and female for the purposes of establishing a household entering into relations, procreating and providing care for the offspring". Kennedy at al. defined marriage as a system involving spouses who are instrumental to wide range of satisfaction including sex and leisure activities.

According to Landis (1975) certain factors are involved in the development of any love relationship that leads to marriage. a) physical attraction b) satisfaction of certain needs like: someone to understand; to respect the ideals; to appreciate what one wishes to achieve; to understand the moods; to help one make decisions; to stimulate the ambition; to give self-confidence; to look at, to appreciate and admire; to back in difficulties; to relieve the loneliness, c) sharing together the interests and cares, d) same life goals. Coleman and Miller (1975) reiterate that a good marriage makes a person feel adequate, desired, approved and complete to a degree which is not possible in any other form of human relationship

Bagus (2017) explains that married couples lives together and cooperate with each other to look after the family. However, in recent years many married couples are not living together, but live in different cities, they are called commuter marriage. There can be various reasons, one of which is the job. A study conducted by Nastiti & Bagus (2017) on 30 married couples living in different cities showed that wives tend to experience dissatisfaction in the marriage, while the husbands feel happy in the marriage.

According to Alfred Adler (1978) marriage is part of the three tasks such as work, friendship, and love, that the human community sets for every individual. Over the course of life, people learn to establish different relationships, with different values, expectations and commitments. One of those relationships is the marital relationship. Marital adjustment plays an important part in a marital relationship.

Locke & Wallace (1959) defines marital adjustment as: accommodation of husband and wife to each other at a given time. Marital adjustment is a process, the outcome of which is determined by the degree of: a) troublesome marital differences, b) interpersonal tensions and personal anxiety, c) marital satisfaction d) dyadic cohesion, e) consensus on matters of importance to marital functioning. Spanier (1976) defined marital adjustment as “a process and outcome which is determined by the amount of (1) troublesome dyadic difference, (2) interpersonal tensions and personal anxiety, (3) dyadic satisfaction, (4) dyadic cohesion and (5) consensus on matters of importance to dyadic functioning”.

Sinha & Mukerjee (1990) defined marital adjustment as the state in which there is feeling of happiness and satisfaction between husband and wife with their marriage and with each other. It is experiencing satisfactory relationship characterized by mutual concern, care, understanding and acceptance. It is the conception of marriage and the standards of adjustment prevalent in a particular society at a particular time that can influence the marital adjustment. It can also be considered as a state of accommodation. An environment characterized by a tendency in spouses to resolve conflicts and by overall feeling of happiness and satisfaction with marriage and with one another is definitely a condition which reveals a strong marital adjustment (Kapur, 1974).

A study reveals that spouses enter marriage relationship with different beliefs about happiness and differ in their expectations of happiness. Therefore, mutual communication and sharing are the backbone for adjustment in marriage (Tucker & Grady, 1990). Another study among married couples in Manila revealed a high level of marital adjustment among those who communicated well. There was a strong relationship between communication and adjustment. Couples with good communication adjusted themselves better to any problems when compared to couples who had less communication (Sison, 1976). In a couple, when one or both of them stays away from home in different cities, due to their work or studies, these relationships are defined as commuting marital/cohabitation relationships. Commuter

marriage is a marriage between spouses who live apart, usually because of the locations of their jobs, and who regularly travel to be together, as on weekends or holidays (Dixon, 2000).

Govaraets and Dixon (2000) studied marital satisfaction among a sample of 55 married couples living in different cities and 55 married couples living in same city. The results showed There were no differences between both groups or between men and women on levels of marital satisfaction. Results further revealed that the married couples living in different cities were more dissatisfied as they did not spend quality time with their spouses and there was no affection expressed by their partners living in different cities.

Other studies conducted on married couples living in different cities showed that separation challenges the well-being of couples (Bunker et al., 1992; Riggs, 1990; Winfield, 1985). Distance between a couples decreases face-to-face interactions between partners. In commuter marriages, husbands and wives feel lack of companionship and lack of understanding from their spouses (Groves and Wingerd, 1991). Married Couples living in different cities feel dissatisfied as they lack spending quality time and there is lack of appreciation from their spouses Kim, 2001). Another study suggested that long distances tend to decrease involvement of spouses in sharing responsibilities of family and inability to give emotional support in everyday life, wives and husbands feel lack in quality of their married relationship (Sandow, 2014).

Singh and Jaiswal (2006) conducted a study to examine marital adjustment among couples with employed and unemployed women across different education levels. Results revealed that wives employed and educated up to post-graduation or graduation were more adjusted than wives who were unemployed and uneducated. Wives who were uneducated or unemployed were more emotionally dependent on husbands. Hence, marital adjustment was significantly higher in women with education or employment. Jaisri et al. (2013) revealed that among dual career couples, wives have higher level of marital adjustment than their husbands. Aminjafri et al. (2012) reported that finding harmony between one's career and family plays vital role in experiencing greater marital satisfaction.

Another study conducted among 85 rural couples examined the relationship between marital adjustment and couples expressiveness. Results revealed that husbands expressiveness was the sole predictor of the couples marital adjustment (Leanne, 1989). Aleem and Danish (2008) found that work pressure affects marital adjustment and also leads to anxiety, particularly among women. Singh (2004) revealed that dual earning couples shows better marital adjustment. Bradbury et al. (2001) revealed that couples who address their needs especially sexual needs experienced higher marital adjustment. Kerkmann et al., (2000) reported a strong positive relationship between finance and marital adjustment in couples. Fincham et al., (2000) have found that positive attributions to the marital relationship have significant impact on marital adjustment.

Fujihara (1998) conducted a study on 153 married couples which revealed that marital adjustment was significantly correlated with subcategories of social adjustment (1) household adjustment, (2) external family adjustment, (3) work adjustment, (4) social leisure adjustment and (5) general adjustment. Thus, marital adjustment may be a part of social adjustment for women, but it may be separate for men. McCoy & Hill (2007) found that financial problems significantly contributed to lower marital adjustment among married couples. Another study done by Sison (1976) among married couples in Manila showed a high level of marital adjustment among those who communicated well. It was found that there is a relationship between communication and adjustment. Couples, who

communicated more regularly, adjusted themselves better to interpersonal and situation problems while others find it difficult.

Kinunen and Feldt (2004) conducted a study on sample of 600 couples. It was found that economic stress decreased the marital adjustment among couples. It was also found that wives' psychological distress was negatively related to husbands' reports of marital adjustment and vice versa. Results further revealed that unemployment among men led to poor marital adjustment in wives. Another study was conducted to explore the relationship between empathy, forgiveness and marital adjustment among married couples. The sample consisted of 80 couples and the findings indicated that higher levels of empathy have a positive relationship with marital adjustment. The study also reported a positive relationship between forgiveness and marital adjustment. There were significant gender differences between males and females on the domains of empathy in a marital relationship.

Mirzadeh and Fallahchai (2012) examined the relationship between marital adjustment and forgiveness with 200 couples. Results showed that higher levels of forgiveness in couples resulted in better marital adjustment. The study also reported that husbands showed higher marital adjustment than wives. Yunlee (2018) conducted a study to determine marital adjustment among couples living in different cities. The sample consisted of 350 couples. Results revealed that there were lower levels of marital satisfaction in couples living in different places due to their job or business. Additionally, this study found that in commuter couples, wives feel less marital satisfaction compared to their husbands.

Empathy has been defined in emotional terms as well as cognitive terms. The cognitive component refers to the ability to understand other person's point of view without feeling their emotions (Hogan, 1969). The emotional component refers to an individual's ability to understand and share the emotions of others. It could be one person's emotional reactions to others emotional experience (Cohen & Strayer, 1996). Mehrabian and Epstein (1972) defined emotional empathy as one's vicarious experience of another's emotional experiences -- feeling what the other person feels. Emotional Empathy has been found to relate to generally healthy and adjusted personality functioning and to reflect interpersonal positivity and better relationship satisfaction. Empathy would facilitate the maintenance of relationships. As partners try to understand and share their feelings, they feel understood and validated in their relationships. Empathy serves to maintain close relationships and enhances intimate connections between spouses (Mehrabian, 1972).

A study conducted by Fenchem et al. (2004) examined the role of empathy and forgiveness in marital adjustment among married couples. The sample consisted of 80 married couples and the results revealed that marital adjustment facilitated forgiveness and emotional empathy. Further it was reported that empathy was a better predictor of forgiveness and marital adjustment in husbands than in wives. Another study conducted by Cramer and Jowett (2010) examined the relationship between perceived empathy, accurate empathy and marital satisfaction among heterosexual couples. The sample consisted of 149 heterosexual couples. It was found that empathy was positively related to marital satisfaction. Men showed higher levels of empathy than women. Lower empathy levels in women showed lower satisfaction in relationship.

Wastell (2014) examined the relationship between empathy and marital satisfaction among 40 married couples. Results revealed that men scored higher in empathy than women. It was found that men experienced greater marital satisfaction than women. Further it was reported that low empathy levels in women resulted in less marital satisfaction. Bakker and Demerouti (2009) examined the role of empathy in work performance among working couples. The sample consisted of 175 couples. It was found that

higher levels of empathy increased the work engagement. Men were found to be higher in empathy levels than women.

To the best of researcher's knowledge no extensive study has been conducted among married couples living together in same city and living apart in different cities in India. The present study may reveal levels of marital adjustment and emotional empathy among married couples.

Research questions:

1. Is there a difference between married couples living in same city and married couples living in different cities with respect to marital adjustment and its dimensions (dyadic satisfaction, consensus, cohesion and dyadic affection expression) and emotional empathy?
2. Are there any gender differences in married couples living in same city and married couples living in different cities with respect to marital adjustment and its dimensions (dyadic satisfaction, consensus, cohesion and dyadic affection expression) and emotional empathy?
3. Is there a relationship between marital adjustment and its dimensions (dyadic satisfaction, consensus, cohesion and dyadic affection expression) and emotional empathy in married couples living in same city and married couples living in different cities?

Research objectives:

1. To study whether there are any differences between married couples living in same city and married couples living in different cities with respect to marital adjustment and its dimensions (viz dyadic satisfaction, consensus, cohesion and dyadic affection expression) and emotional empathy
2. To study whether there any gender differences in married couples living in same city and married couples living in different cities with respect to marital adjustment and its dimensions (viz dyadic satisfaction, consensus, cohesion and dyadic affection expression) and emotional empathy.
3. To study whether there is a relationship between marital adjustment and its dimensions (viz dyadic satisfaction, consensus, cohesion and dyadic affection expression) and emotional empathy in married couples living in same city and married couples living in different cities.

Hypotheses:

- H1. There will be a difference between married couples living in same city and married couples living in different cities with respect to (A) marital adjustment and its dimensions (A i) dyadic satisfaction, (A ii) consensus, (A iii) cohesion and (A iv) dyadic affection expression and (B) emotional empathy.
- H2. There will be gender differences in (A) marital adjustment and its dimensions (A i) dyadic satisfaction, (A ii) consensus, (A iii) cohesion and (A iv) dyadic affection expression and (B) emotional empathy among married couples living in same city.
- H3. There will be gender differences in (A) marital adjustment and its dimensions (A i) dyadic satisfaction, (A ii) consensus, (A iii) cohesion and (A iv) dyadic affection expression and (B) emotional empathy among married couples living in different cities.
- H4. There will be a relationship between (A) marital adjustment and its dimensions (A i) dyadic satisfaction, (A ii) consensus, (A iii) cohesion and (A iv) dyadic affection expression and (B) emotional empathy among married couples living in same city.

H5. There will be a relationship between (A) marital adjustment and its dimensions (A i) dyadic satisfaction, (A ii) consensus, (A iii) cohesion and (A iv) dyadic affection expression and (B) emotional empathy among married couples living in different cities.

METHOD

Research design

The present study adopts a between groups design to study whether there are any differences between married couples living in same city and married couples living in different cities with respect to marital adjustment and its dimensions (dyadic satisfaction, dyadic consensus, dyadic cohesion and dyadic affection expression) and emotional empathy. The study also adopts between group design to study whether there are any gender differences in marital adjustment and its dimensions (dyadic satisfaction, dyadic consensus, dyadic cohesion and dyadic affection expression) and emotional empathy among the married couples living in same city and married couples living in different cities. Furthermore, the study adopts correlational design to determine the relationship between marital adjustment and its dimensions (dyadic satisfaction, dyadic consensus, dyadic cohesion and dyadic affection expression) and emotional empathy among married couples living in same city and married couples living in different cities.

Sample

Non-probability purposive sampling was used to select a sample of 100 married couples, among whom 50 Married couples were living in same city and 50 Married couples were living in different cities

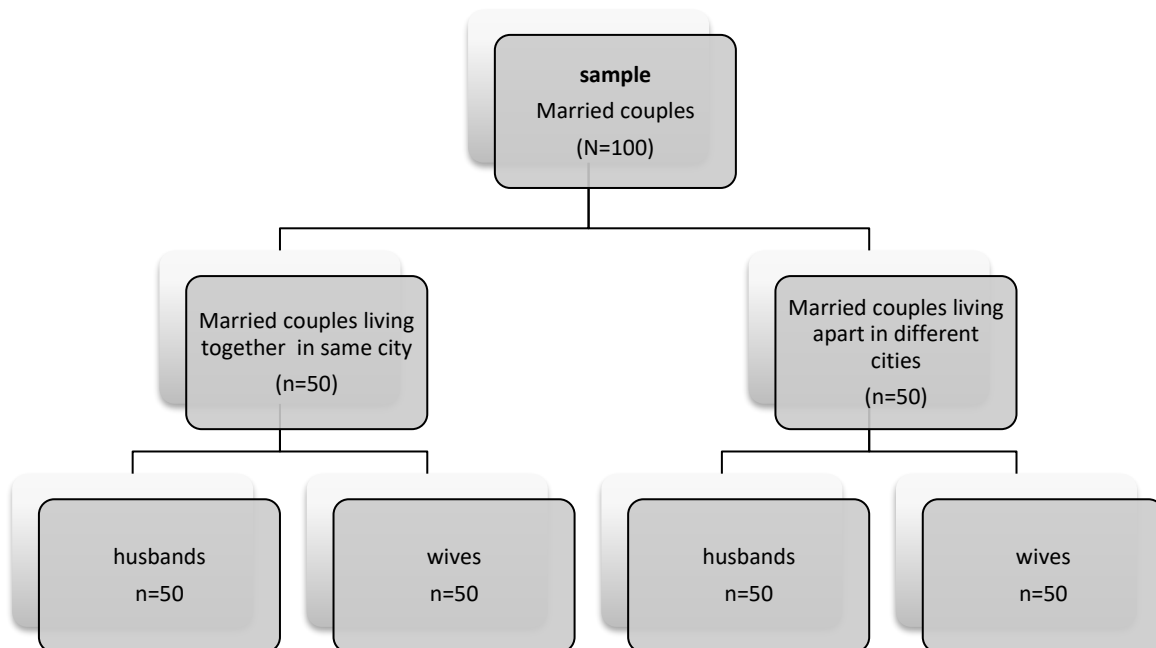


Figure 1: Sample Division

Inclusion Criteria:

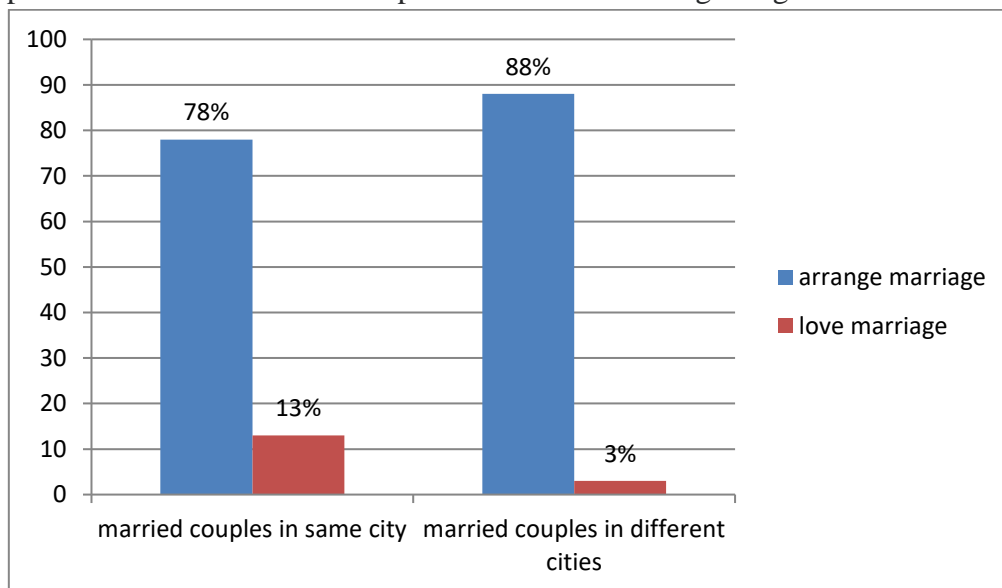
- For married couples living in same city
- 1. Couples must be married for at least 1 year
- 2. Couples without children
- 3. Must know how to read and write English.

- For married couples living in different cities
- 1. Couples must be married for at least 1 year
- 2. Couples staying in different cities for at least 6 months
- 3. Couples without children
- 4. Must know how to read and write English.

Exclusion Criteria:

1. Couples who were in their second marriage

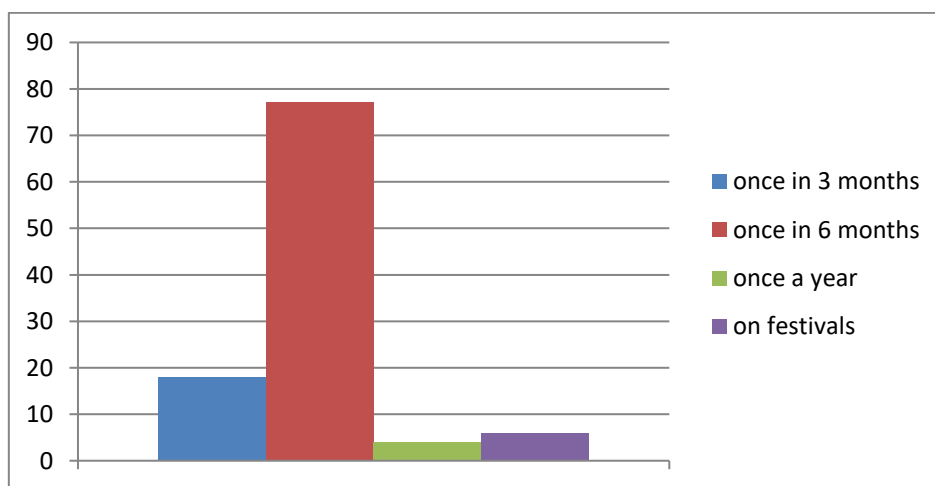
The demographic details of the married couples are shown in the figures given below:



Love and arrange marriage

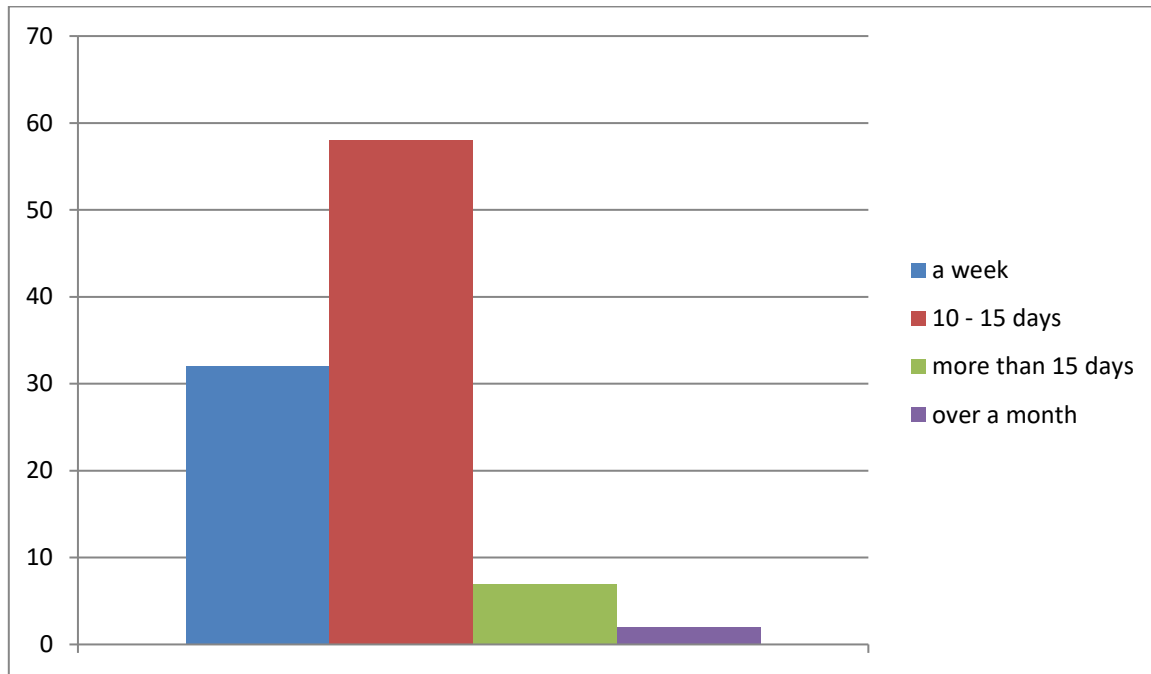
Figure 2: showing the percentage distribution of arrange marriage and love marriage among married couples living in same city and married couples living in different cities.

From the given figure it is evident that 78% had arranged marriage and 13% love marriage among married couples living in same city. It is also seen that 88% had arranged marriage and 3% love marriage among married couples living in different cities.



How often the couples meet

Figure 3: Showing the percentage distribution of how often the married couples living in different cities meet. 18% meet once in 3 months, 77% meet once in 6 months and 4% meet once a year. 6% Couples also reported that they meet on festivals.



Duration of meeting period

Figure 4: Showing the percentage of duration of meeting period among married couples living in different cities. 32% meet for a week, 58% meet for 10-15 days, 7% meet for more than 15 days and 2% meet for duration of over a month.

Instruments:

The study uses 3 instruments: Information Schedule, Dyadic adjustment scale and Index of interpersonal reactivity for Couples.

Information Schedule

Participants were asked to provide their gender, age, education, occupation, type of marriage, years of marriage, duration of staying apart, staying with in laws/family, family information on the Information Schedule.

Dyadic Adjustment Scale

The 32-item Dyadic adjustment scale was developed by Spanier in 1976. It measures marital satisfaction in couples. This questionnaire has four subscales designed to measure four dimensions of marital satisfaction. These dimensions are: dyadic satisfaction, dyadic consensus, dyadic cohesion and dyadic affection expression.

1. Dyadic satisfaction (items 1, 2, 3, 5 and 7) measures the amount of tension in the relationship and extent to which individual has considered ending it. Higher scores indicate satisfaction with the present state of the relationship and commitment to its continuance.
2. Dyadic consensus (items 16 to 23 and 31 and 32) measures to extent of agreement between partners on matters important to relationship;

3. Dyadic cohesion (items 24 to 28) measures the common interests and activities shared by the couple;
4. Dyadic affection expression (items 4, 6, 29 and 30) measures satisfaction in expression of affection and sex in the relationship.

Total score ranges from 0 to 120 is derived by adding scores of all four subscales. The scale has varying response options for different items. For items 1 to 15, it is 6-point Likert type with responses ranging from “Always agree” to “Always disagree”. For items 16 to 22, it is 6-point Likert type with responses ranging from “All of the time” to “Never”. For item 23, it is 5-point Likert type with responses ranging from “Every day” to “Never”. For item 24, it is 5-point Likert type with responses ranging from “All of them” to “None of them”. For items 25 to 28, 6-point Likert type with responses ranging from “Never” to “More often”. For items 29 and 30, responses can be “Yes” or “No”. Item 31 is 7-point likert type with response ranging from “Extremely unhappy” to “Perfect”. Item 32 consists of 6 response statements. The scale has reliability of cronbach’s coefficient alpha 0.90 and construct validity of 0.81. The reliability coefficients for the scales are: dyadic satisfaction - 0.94; dyadic consensus - 0.90; dyadic cohesion - 0.86; and dyadic affectional expression - 0.73. The internal consistency for the scales are: dyadic satisfaction - 0.87; dyadic consensus - 0.91; dyadic cohesion - 0.83; and dyadic affectional expression - 0.70. Higher scores indicate high marital satisfaction (Prouty and Barnes, 2015).

Interpersonal Reactivity Index for Couples

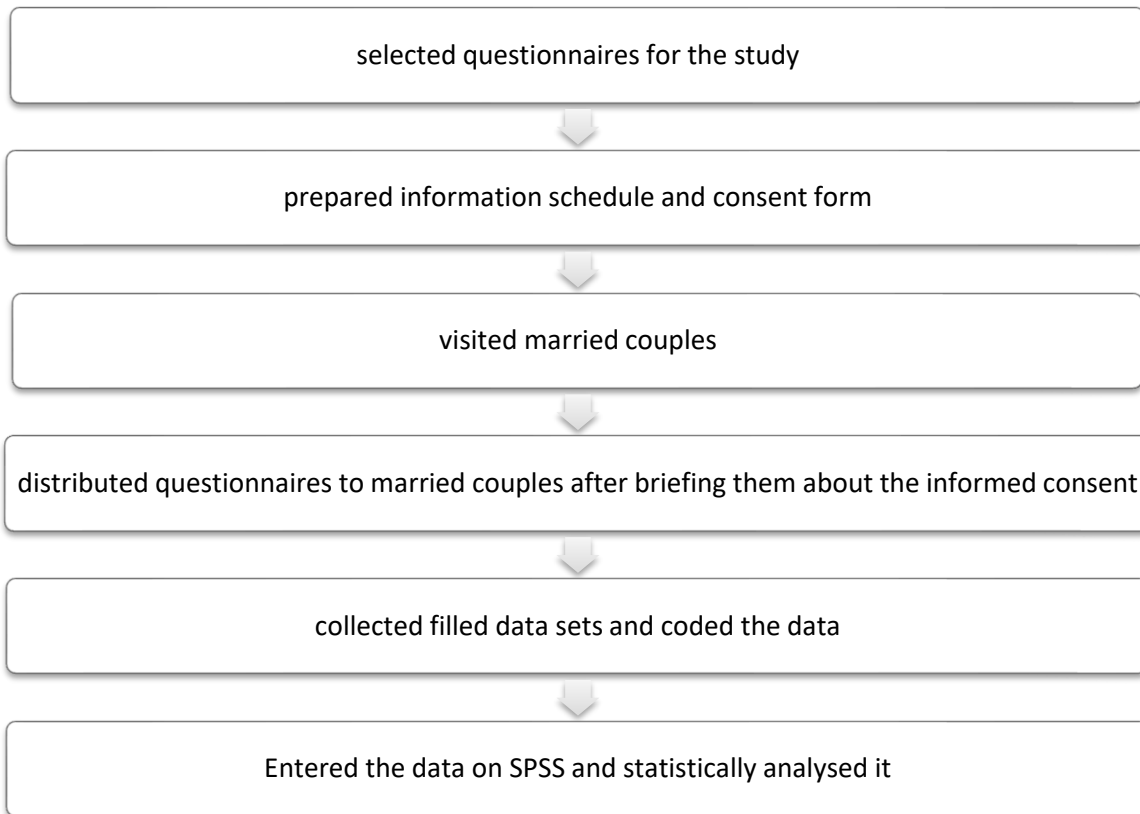
The 13-item Interpersonal reactivity scale for Couples was developed by Peloquin & Lafontaine in 2010. It measures emotional empathy in couples. The scale is a 5-point Likert type scale with 0="Does not describe me well" to 4="Describes me very well". The scale uses reverse scoring for 4 items. Items to be reverse scored are items 2, 6, 7 and 8. The scores for reverse scored items are reversed and all 13 items are added to obtain total score. Higher scores indicate high emotional empathy in relationship. The scale has reliability of cronbach’s coefficient alpha 0.84 and construct validity of 0.71 (Peloquin and Lafontaine, 2010).

Procedure

After selecting the measures, the married couples staying in same city and staying in different cities were identified and approached. During this visit, the couples were briefed about the study and those who consented to participate signed the Informed Consent Sheet.

Later a Demographic Sheet regarding their details was filled by the participants. On the next visit, these married couples (participants) were approached and the questionnaires were handed over to them. Written and oral instructions were given to the participants regarding answering. They were asked to seek clarifications for any doubts. The participants were informed that there is no time limit; however, they were asked to try and complete the questionnaires in approximately 40 -45 minutes. The Participants answered the Questionnaires. The collected data was later analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics and conclusions were drawn.

The following flowchart that follows summarizes the procedure followed.



RESULTS

Variable Studied	Married couples living in Same City (N=50)		Married couples living in Different Cities (N=50)		t
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Marital adjustment	81.40	4.22	85.74	4.14	1.23
Dyadic satisfaction	13.84	1.96	20.68	2.30	-22.59**
Dyadic consensus	43.04	1.80	42.48	1.81	2.18**
Dyadic cohesion	15.37	2.91	14.88	2.70	7.12*
Affection Expression	9.15	1.01	7.70	1.76	-7.33**
Emotional empathy	33.78	3.33	36.18	3.83	-4.72**

Table 1 – Mean, Standard Deviation and t value for marital adjustment and its dimensions and emotional empathy in Married couples living in same city and different cities (N=100)

Note: * $p \leq 0.05$, ** $p \leq 0.01$, $df=198$

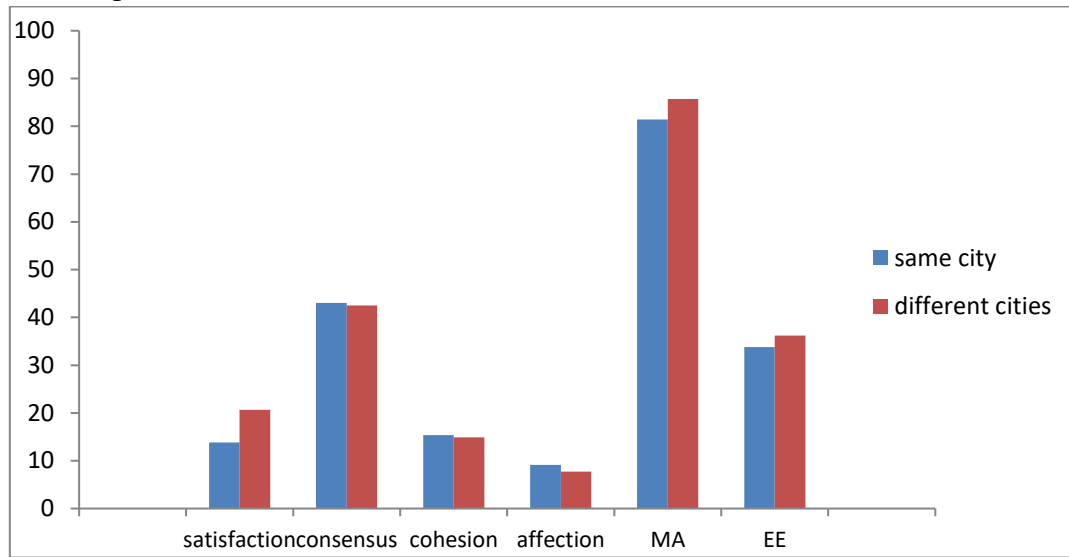


Figure 5: Showing the mean scores of married couples living in same city and different cities with respect to marital adjustment and its dimensions and emotional empathy.

Table 1 indicates a significant difference between married couples living in same city and married couples living in different cities with respect to the satisfaction dimension of marital adjustment ($t = -22.59, p \leq 0.01$). As indicated from the mean scores married couples living in different cities are seen to have reported higher levels of satisfaction ($M=20.68$) as compared to married couples living in same city ($M=13.84$). Hence **hypotheses (A i) was accepted.**

Table 1 also indicates significant difference between married couples living in same city and married couples living in different cities with respect to the consensus dimension of marital adjustment ($t = 2.18, p \leq 0.01$). As indicated from the mean scores in table 1 married couples living in same city are seen to have higher levels of consensus ($M=43.04$) as compared to married couples living in different cities ($M=42.48$). In other words, married couples living in same city reported higher levels of agreement between partners on matters important to the relationship. Hence **hypotheses H1 (A ii) was accepted.**

The findings in Table 1 reveal significant difference between married couples living in same city and married couples living in different cities with respect to the cohesion dimension of marital adjustment ($t = 7.12, p \leq 0.05$). As indicated from the table that married couples living in same city are seen to have higher levels of cohesion ($M=15.27$) as compared to married couples living in different cities ($M=14.88$). In other words, married couples living in same city reported higher levels of common interests and activities shared by the couple. Hence **hypotheses H1 (A iii) was accepted.**

Table 1 also indicates a significant difference between married couples living in same city and married couples living in different cities with respect to affection expression dimension of marital adjustment ($t = -7.33, p \leq 0.01$). As indicated from the table that married couples living in same city are seen to have higher levels of affection expression ($M=9.15$) as compared to married couples living in different cities ($M=7.70$). Hence **hypotheses H1 (A iv) was accepted.**

The findings in Table 1 reveal a difference between married couples living in same city and married couples living in different cities with respect to emotional empathy ($t = -4.72, p \leq 0.01$). As indicated from the table that married couples living in different cities are seen to have higher levels of emotional

empathy (M=36.18) as compared to married couples living in different cities (M=33.78). Hence **hypotheses H1 (B) was accepted.**

No statistically significant difference was found between married couples living in same city and married couples living in different cities with respect to marital adjustment (t= 1.23) with married couples living in same city (M=81.40) and married couples living in different cities (M=85.74). Hence **hypotheses H1 (A) was rejected.**

variable Studied	Men (N=50)		Women (N=50)		t
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
satisfaction	14.34	2.07	13.34	1.72	2.62*
consensus	43.00	1.84	43.08	1.78	-.22
Cohesion	15.34	2.94	15.40	2.90	-.10
affection expression	9.22	1.01	9.08	1.02	.68
marital adjustment	81.90	4.31	80.90	4.11	1.18
emotional empathy	33.68	3.22	33.88	3.46	-.29

Table 2 – Mean, Standard Deviation and t value for marital adjustment and its dimensions and emotional empathy in Married couples living in same city (N=50)

Note: *p≤0.05, df=98

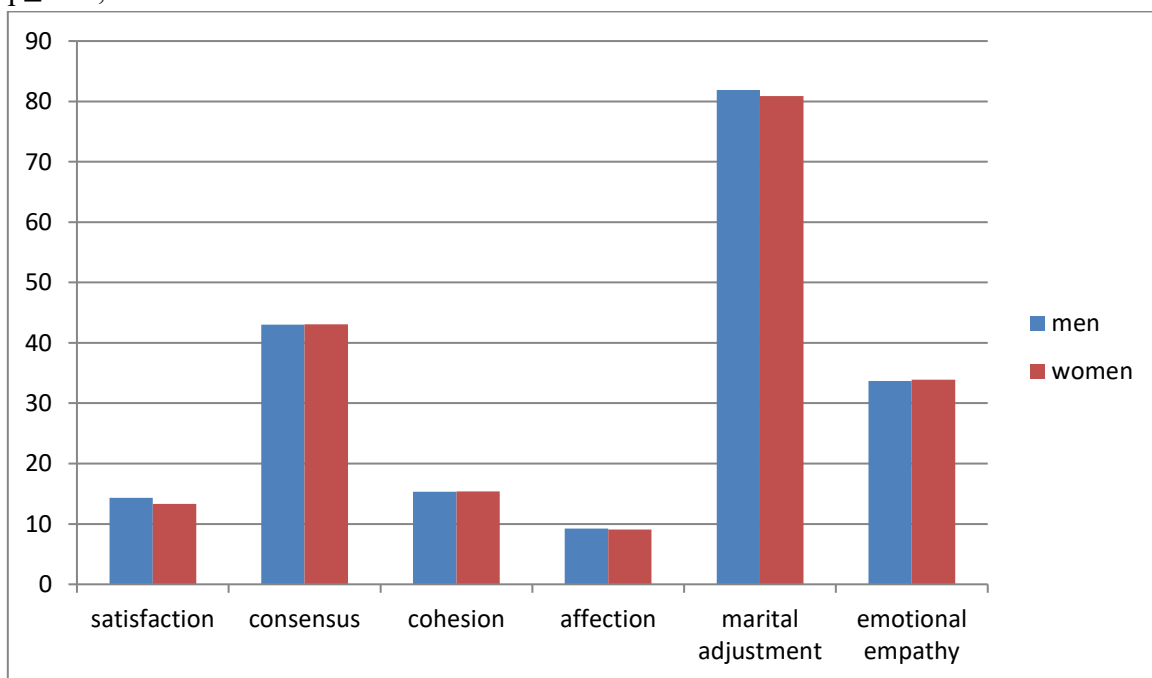


Figure 6: Showing the mean scores of men and women among married couples living in same city with respect to marital adjustment and its dimensions and emotional empathy.

Table 2 indicates a significant gender difference in the satisfaction dimension of marital adjustment ($t=2.62, p \leq 0.01$) among married couples living in same city. As is evident from the mean scores that men are seen to have higher levels of satisfaction ($M=14.34$) than women ($M=13.34$). Hence **hypotheses H2 (A i) was accepted.**

Table 2 also shows that there were no significant gender differences between men and women with respect to marital adjustment and the consensus, cohesion, affection expression dimensions of marital adjustment. It further indicated that there were no differences between men and women with respect to emotional empathy ($p \geq 0.05$). Hence **hypotheses H2 (A ii) (A iii) (A iv) were rejected.**

variable Studied	Men (N=50)		Women (N=50)		t
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
satisfaction	21.20	2.03	20.16	2.46	2.30*
consensus	42.14	1.91	42.82	1.66	-1.89**
cohesion	14.96	2.74	14.80	2.69	0.29
affection expression	7.78	1.71	7.62	1.81	0.45
marital adjustment	86.08	4.40	85.40	3.87	0.82
emotional empathy	35.30	3.85	37.06	3.63	-2.34*

Table 3 – Mean, Standard Deviation and t value for marital adjustment and its dimensions and emotional empathy in married couples living in different cities (N=100)

Note: * $p \leq 0.05$, ** $p \leq 0.01$, $df=98$

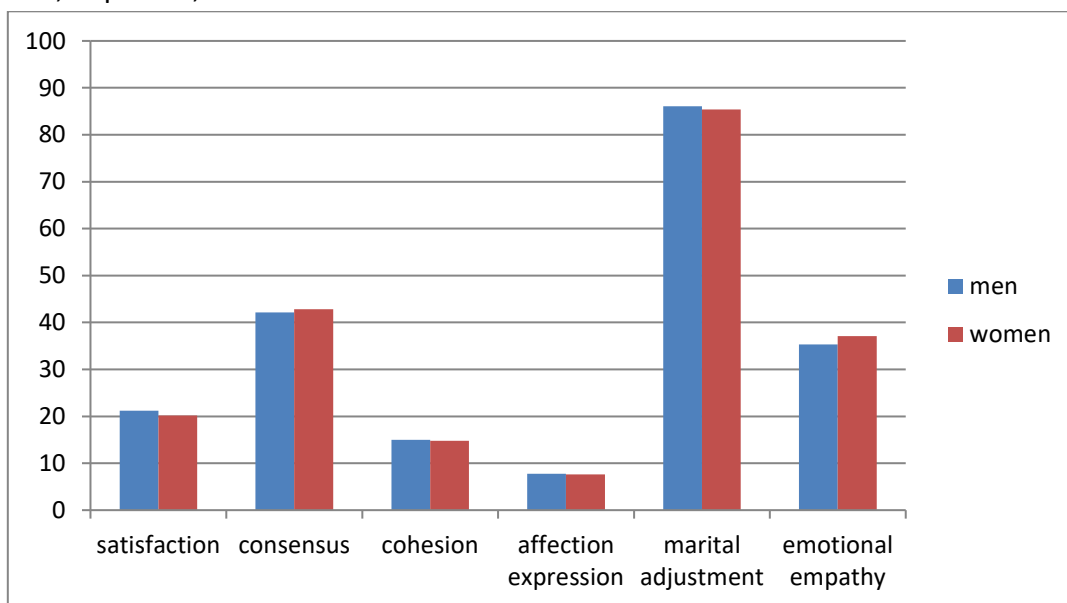


Figure 7: Showing mean scores of men and women among married couples living in different cities with respect to marital adjustment and its dimensions and emotional empathy.

Table 3 indicates a significant gender difference between men and women in the satisfaction dimension of marital adjustment ($t=2.30, p\leq 0.05$) among married couples living in different cities. As indicated from the table that men are seen to have higher levels of satisfaction ($M=21.20$) than women ($M=20.16$). Table 3 also indicates a significant gender difference between men and women in the consensus dimension of marital adjustment ($t=-1.89, p\leq 0.01$) among married couples living in different cities. As is evident from the mean scores that women are seen to have higher levels of consensus ($M=42.82$) than men ($M=42.14$).

The findings in table 3 reveal significant gender differences have been seen with respect to emotional empathy ($t=-2.34$). As is evident from the mean scores women are seen to have higher levels of emotional empathy ($M=37.06$) than men ($M=35.30$).

Table 3 shows that there were no significant differences between men and women with respect to marital adjustment and the cohesion, affection expression dimension of marital adjustment ($p\geq 0.05$).

		married couples living in same city	married couples living in different cities
		emotional empathy	
	marital adjustment	0.168	0.175
	satisfaction	0.126	0.161
	consensus	0.091	0.13
	cohesion	0.071	0.025
	affection expression	0.093	0.068

Table 4 – Correlation between marital adjustment and its dimensions and emotional empathy in married couples living in same city and married couples living in different cities (N=100)

Positive correlations were seen between marital adjustment and its dimensions and emotional empathy. However none of the correlations were significant ($p\geq 0.05$). Hence **hypotheses H4 (A), (Ai), (Aii), (Aiii), (Aiv) and (B) and H5 (A), (Ai), (Aii), (Aiii), (Aiv) and (B) were rejected.**

Summary of Results

Results obtained in the study have been summarized in the following section. The findings of the study reveal:

Significant differences between married couples living in same city and married couples living in different cities with respect to

- Satisfaction
- Consensus
- Cohesion
- Affection expression
- Emotional empathy

No significant differences between married couples living in same city and different cities with respect to

- Marital adjustment

Gender differences between men and women among married couples living in same city with respect to

- Satisfaction

No significant gender differences between men and women among married couples living in same city with respect to

- Marital adjustment
- Consensus
- Cohesion
- Emotional empathy

Gender differences between men and women among married couples living in different cities with respect to

- Satisfaction
- Consensus
- Emotional empathy

No significant gender differences between men and women among married couples living in different cities with respect to

- Marital adjustment
- Cohesion
- Affection expression
- Emotional empathy

DISCUSSION

The objective of the current study was to investigate if there are differences between married couples living in same city and those living in different cities with respect to marital adjustment and its dimensions (dyadic satisfaction, dyadic consensus, dyadic cohesion and dyadic affection expression). The present study also aims to investigate if there are any differences between married couples living in same city and those living in different cities with respect to emotional empathy.

Current study also aims to see if there are any gender differences in married couples living in same city and married couples living in different cities with respect to marital adjustment and emotional empathy. Furthermore, the study also aimed to observe whether there is a relationship between marital adjustment and emotional empathy in married couples living in same city and married couples living in different cities.

The present study indicated significant difference between married couples living in same city and married couples living in different cities, with married couples living in different cities scoring higher than married couples living in same city with respect to satisfaction which is a dimension of marital adjustment. This can be supported by a study conducted by Bunker et al., (1992), who found that married couples living in different cities experienced more satisfaction than those living together. The sample consisted of 90 commuter married couples and 133 married couples living together. It was also reported that married couples living in different residences in different cities reported lower marital distress and greater satisfaction than the married couples living together.

The results indicated a significant difference between married couples living in same city and married couples living in different cities, with married couples living in same city scoring higher than married couples living in different cities with respect to consensus which is a dimension of marital

adjustment. Similarly another study found that couples consensus was higher in couples living together than those living apart. It was also found that men scored higher than women in consensus which is dimension of marital adjustment (Godwin & scanzoni, 1989).

The results also indicated a significant difference between married couples living in same city and married couples living in different cities, with married couples living in same city scoring higher than married couples living in different cities with respect to cohesion which is a dimension of marital adjustment. This finding can be supported by study conducted by Brines and joyner (2000) which found that cohesion was higher in married couples living in the same city. It was also found that men scored higher than women in cohesion. Peterson (1998) found that the non clinical couples were higher on levels of cohesion than clinical couples who were in marriage counselling. Further the results revealed that clinical couples were in disengaged category which was the cause of lower levels of cohesion.

It was also found that there is a significant difference between married couples living in same city and married couples living in different cities, with married couples living in same city scoring higher than married couples living in different cities with respect to affection expression which is a dimension of marital adjustment. This finding can be supported by a study conducted by yedirir and hamarta (2015) who examined relationship between affection expression and marital satisfaction. The sample consisted of 390 married couples living together. It was reported that couples showed higher affection expression which resulted in greater marital satisfaction.

The results of present study also indicated that satisfaction which is dimension of marital adjustment among married couples living in same city was higher in men than women.

Supporting this finding, a study conducted by Fower (1991), sought to explain the gender differences in satisfaction among married couples. The sample included 7261 married couples. The results of this study established that men experience higher satisfaction than women. Amato et al., (2007) conducted a study in United States which included 1000 married couples and it was reported that women reported lower levels of marital satisfaction than men. Similarly another study found that there were gender differences in levels of marital adjustment. It was found that men showed higher levels of marital adjustment than women (Schramm, 2003).

The results of present study also indicated a significant difference between married couples living in same city and married couples living in different cities, with married couples living in different cities scoring higher than married couples living in same city with respect to emotional empathy. This finding can be supported by study conducted by Devoldre et al., (2010), using correlational design that included sample of 128 married couples living in different cities. The findings reported that there was higher level of empathy among couples living apart than couples living in same residence. However, this can be contradicted by another study which found that emotional empathy was higher in married couples living in same city (crammer, 2010). Another study conducted by augelli et al.,(1974) conducted a study to examine empathy in dating couples. Sample included 48 dating couples in same city and different cities. It was found that empathy levels were higher when compared to dating couples living in same city.

Current study indicates that married couples living in same city were more agreeing with partners on important matters and shared interests and activities together. Whereas, couples living in different cities were more satisfied with their marital relationship and were more expressive of affection. In both groups, men were higher on satisfaction dimension. Among couples living in different cities, women showed higher emotional empathy than men.

In the light of the research, the limitations of present study are that the current study looked at marital adjustment of married couples without children and further studies can include married couples with children to see how family environment impacts marital adjustment. Another limitation is that data collected was from various states in India and it would be interesting to see how cultures impact the marital adjustment and emotional empathy in couples.

Recommendations of the study are the research can continue to explore other factors that may contribute to marital adjustment. Further research can include factors such as communication, attachment styles, economic stress and family environment which can include dual earning married couples.

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