

Exploring Gendered Marital Dynamics in Later Life: A Comparative Analysis of Older Husbands and Wives

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ABSTRACT

The present study, entitled “Exploring Gendered Marital Dynamics in Later Life: A Comparative Analysis of Older Husbands and Wives”, examined gender differences in marital experiences among older married couples aged 50–60 years in urban Hisar, Haryana. A sample of 38 couples (N=76) participated. Standardized tools, the Couple Satisfaction Index, Dyadic Adjustment Scale, Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale, and Perceived Partner Responsiveness Scale, were used to assess couple satisfaction, dyadic adjustment, resilience, and perceived partner responsiveness. The results revealed statistically significant gender differences across all variables. Older husbands reported significantly higher levels of couple satisfaction, while older wives exhibited greater dyadic adjustment, emotional resilience, and perceived partner responsiveness. Chi-square and t-tests confirmed these differences with significance at 5% and 1% levels. The findings highlight that older women, while more emotionally attuned and resilient, contribute substantially to marital balance, whereas older men report greater overall satisfaction. The study calls for gender-sensitive interventions to enhance marital well-being in later life.

Keywords: Old Husbands, Old Wives, Couple Satisfaction, Dyadic Adjustment, Resilience, Perceived Partner Responsiveness, Gender Differences.

INTRODUCTION

Marital Relationships in Later Life

As global populations age, there is growing interest in understanding how marital dynamics evolve in later adulthood. Older married couples, typically aged 50 and above, often report increased emotional stability, lower conflict levels, and a stronger sense of companionship compared to younger couples (Levenson et al., 1993; Bookwala, 2005; Henry et al., 2007). These improvements are frequently attributed to long-term adaptation, shared life experiences, and a shift in emotional priorities (Carstensen, 1992; Lang & Carstensen, 2002). According to socioemotional selectivity theory, older individuals prioritize

emotionally meaningful relationships, such as marriage, leading to higher levels of marital satisfaction (Carstensen, 1992). Longitudinal studies have shown that older couples demonstrate more constructive communication, better conflict management, and greater emotional regulation than younger couples (Gottman & Levenson, 2000; Birditt & Fingerman, 2005; Story et al., 2007).

Conceptual Framework of the Research Study

Dyadic adjustment, resilience and perceived partner responsiveness have been identified as the crucial factors for the couple satisfaction and psychological well-being in the old married couples. This study was performed to do a comparative analysis between old husbands and old wives. Thus, this study focused on trying to answer a few research questions:

- Is there any difference in the level of couple satisfaction among old married husbands and old married wives?
- Why some old married adults were satisfied in their relationship than others?
- What were the key differences in couple satisfaction, dyadic adjustment, resilience and perceived partner responsiveness among old married husbands and old married wives?

Therefore, the already available researches on couple satisfaction in married couples highlights that from a psychological perspective, dyadic adjustment, resilience and perceived partner responsiveness are key factors for couple satisfaction, happiness and well-being in young married relationships.

Gendered Experiences of Older Husbands

Older husbands often derive significant psychological and emotional benefits from their long-term marriages. Emotional support from their spouses during critical life transitions, such as retirement, illness, or bereavement, greatly enhances their overall well-being and life satisfaction (Lee & Ishii-Kuntz, 1987; Umberson et al., 2005; Antill et al., 1996). As men age, they may become more emotionally responsive and invested in their marital relationships, leading to increased couple satisfaction and reduced emotional distress (Bookwala & Jacobs, 2004; Rook, 2000; Johnson, 2000; Vaillant & Mukamal, 2001). The transition out of full-time employment often reduces work-related stress, while the increase in shared time with spouses can enhance emotional closeness and marital contentment (Antonucci et al., 2001; Carr & Springer, 2010; Umberson et al., 2006; Kalmijn, 2007). These evolving marital dynamics underscore the importance of long-term emotional investment, reciprocal support, and adaptive coping in fostering resilience and marital satisfaction in later life.

Marital Dynamics Among Older Wives

In contrast, older wives may experience a more nuanced and complex marital reality. While some women benefit from reduced occupational and child-rearing responsibilities in later life, others face heightened dissatisfaction stemming from unmet emotional needs or increased caregiving responsibilities, particularly when spouses are ill or dependent (Bookwala, 2011; Carr & Boerner, 2009; Pinquart & Sörensen, 2006). Older women are more likely to experience psychological distress associated with caregiving roles and often shoulder a disproportionate share of emotional labour in the marital relationship (Umberson et al., 2005; Umberson et al., 2006). Emotional reciprocity, open communication, and shared meaning are key predictors of marital satisfaction for older wives (Acitelli & Antonucci, 1994; Bookwala, 2011). Despite structural and emotional inequities, many older women continue to derive a strong sense of marital fulfilment through companionship and egalitarian partnerships that foster mutual support and intimacy (Henry et al., 2007; Umberson et al., 2005).

Need for Comparative Analysis

Despite extensive literature on aging and marital satisfaction, the gendered nature of later-life marital dynamics remains underexplored, particularly in non-Western contexts such as India (Antonucci et al., 2001; Bookwala, 2011; Rastogi, 2002). Understanding how older husbands and wives uniquely perceive and experience their marital relationships is essential for gaining deeper insights into couple functioning, emotional well-being, and the psychological aspects of aging. Gender plays a critical role in shaping emotional support, satisfaction, and relational adjustment during later life, as men and women may differ in their expectations, communication styles, and caregiving roles. It aims to compare the marital experiences of older husbands and wives, with a specific focus on emotional support, satisfaction, and dyadic adjustment, offering a culturally relevant perspective within the Indian sociocultural framework.

Rationale of the Study

Marital relationships in later life are shaped by a lifetime of shared experiences, changing health status, retirement, and shifting social roles. However, the way older men and women perceive and experience their marital relationships often differs due to gendered life-course trajectories, emotional expectations, and caregiving responsibilities. While older husbands may benefit from increased emotional support and companionship after retirement, older wives often face compounded caregiving burdens and emotional labour, especially when spouses experience declining health. Despite extensive global literature on marital quality and aging, there remains limited research on the gendered nuances of marital satisfaction among older couples, particularly in non-Western societies like India. Existing studies tend to treat older adults as a homogenous group, overlooking how gender mediates emotional support, satisfaction, and dyadic adjustment in later life. Given the cultural emphasis on family bonds and gender roles in Indian society, understanding these dynamics is crucial. This study seeks to fill the gap by comparing the marital experiences of older husbands and wives (aged 50–60 years) in Hisar, Haryana, providing insights for gender-sensitive interventions in geriatric counselling and family support systems.

Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the level of couple satisfaction among older married husbands and older married wives (aged 50–60 years).
2. To examine gender differences in psychosocial variables such as couple satisfaction, dyadic adjustment, resilience, and perceived partner responsiveness among older married couples.
3. To provide coping strategies and recommendations to enhance couple satisfaction among older married adults who may be at risk of low marital well-being.

Hypothesis to be Tested

H1: There will be a significant difference in couple satisfaction between older married husbands and older married wives.

H2: Old husbands will report significantly higher levels of couple satisfaction compared to old wives.

H3: There will be a significant difference in dyadic adjustment between older married husbands and older married wives.

H4: Old wives will report significantly higher levels of dyadic adjustment compared to old husbands.

H5: There will be a significant difference in resilience between older married husbands and older married wives.

H6: Old wives will possess a significantly higher degree of resilience than old husbands.

H7: There will be a significant difference in perceived partner responsiveness between older married husbands and older married wives.

H8: Old wives will report significantly higher levels of partner responsiveness than old husbands.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Couple Satisfaction in old married couples

Couple satisfaction in older married couples (aged 50 and above) is generally characterized by emotional maturity, companionship, and mutual understanding. **Levenson et al., (1993)** observed that such couples tend to experience fewer conflicts, greater affection, and cooperative behaviours, all contributing to sustained marital satisfaction. According to **Carstensen's (1992)** socioemotional selectivity theory, aging individuals prioritize emotionally meaningful relationships, leading to enhanced marital closeness and appreciation. **Henry et al., (2007)** similarly noted that older couples argue less and emphasize emotional intimacy and mutual respect, which distinguish their interactions from those of younger couples. For older husbands, emotional support from their spouse during life transitions like illness or retirement contributes significantly to their sense of well-being (**Lee & Ishii-Kuntz, 1987**). These men also benefit from reduced work stress and increased time with their partners, resulting in greater satisfaction (**Bookwala & Jacobs, 2004**). In contrast, older wives experience mixed levels of marital satisfaction. While many report contentment due to fewer responsibilities and increased reciprocity (**Bookwala, 2011**), others feel dissatisfied if emotional needs go unmet, especially when caregiving for an ailing spouse (**Carr & Boerner, 2009**). Nevertheless, meaningful companionship and emotional support remain central to relationship satisfaction in later life.

Dyadic Adjustment in old married couples

Older married couples, typically aged 50 and above, often report higher levels of dyadic adjustment due to emotional maturity, long-term shared history, and refined conflict resolution skills (**Gottman & Levenson, 1995**). As external stressors such as work and parenting subside, partners increasingly prioritize emotional intimacy, mutual support, and companionship. **Carstensen's (1992)** socioemotional selectivity theory suggests that older adults seek emotionally satisfying relationships, which enhances marital harmony. These couples demonstrate better emotional regulation and reduced reactivity during conflict, contributing to stable marital adjustment (**Gottman & Levenson, 1992; Story et al., 2007**). Gender differences persist: men tend to report higher marital satisfaction, particularly when receiving both emotional and instrumental support from their wives (**Choi & Marks, 2008**). **Henry et al., (2007)** found that long-term emotional security and spousal support significantly boost men's happiness in later life. However, some older women may feel emotionally unfulfilled if their relational needs are unmet, despite overall satisfaction (**Acitelli & Antonucci, 1994**). **Fowers & Olson (1992)** noted that men often overestimate marital quality, even when conflict is present. Overall, dyadic adjustment in older marriages is shaped by emotional connection, shared values, and differentiated gender expectations over time.

Resilience in old married couples

Older married couples, typically aged 50 and above, often demonstrate heightened resilience due to accumulated life experiences, emotional maturity, and established coping mechanisms (**Henry et al., 2007**). Over time, couples develop shared strategies to manage adversities like illness, retirement, and the empty nest phase, fostering stronger emotional bonds and adaptive responses. **Carstensen's (1992)** socioemotional selectivity theory suggests that older individuals prioritize emotionally meaningful relationships, which enhances marital resilience. During conflicts, they tend to communicate with more empathy and reduced emotional reactivity (**Story et al., 2007**). Older husbands, according to **Choi & Marks (2008)**, derive significant psychological and physical benefits from long-term partnerships, becoming more emotionally reliant on their wives. Resilient marriages are thus especially health-

promoting for men. In contrast, older women often carry caregiving responsibilities, which can test their emotional endurance. While they typically develop strong coping skills through decades of relational and caregiving roles (Antonucci et al., 2001), intense demands, such as caring for a chronically ill spouse can stretch their resilience (Bookwala, 2011). Hoppmann & Gerstorf (2009) highlight that older couples often approach stress as a shared responsibility, enhancing dyadic resilience. As Walsh (2003) emphasizes, resilience is not merely about surviving adversity but about transformation and growth, which is particularly evident in long-term marriages.

Perceived Partner Responsiveness in old married couples

Older married couples (typically aged 50 and above) often report higher levels of perceived partner responsiveness, grounded in shared history, emotional maturity, and deeper mutual understanding. According to Carstensen (1992), older adults tend to prioritize emotionally meaningful connections, leading to greater appreciation of their partner's emotional cues, even if they are subtle or nonverbal. Lang & Carstensen (2002) highlight that such couples often rely on instrumental or implicit expressions of care, fostering emotional intimacy over time. Graham et al., (2006) emphasize that older adults interpret partner actions more positively and are less dependent on overt verbal affirmations. Their greater emotional regulation and acceptance reinforce a sense of being understood and supported. Neff & Karney (2005) note that women often place more value on emotional attentiveness; thus, their satisfaction may be highly influenced by how responsive their partners appear. Conversely, older men derive significant emotional benefits from their partner's availability and care, especially in times of illness or social loss (Bookwala, 2011). In the Indian context, Rastogi & Thergaonkar (2009) observe that perceptions of responsiveness are often shaped by caregiving, sacrifice, and duty. Gender roles influence how responsiveness is expressed and interpreted, with older couples valuing practical acts of devotion as core indicators of partner sensitivity.

METHODOLOGY

The present study entitled, "Exploring Gendered Marital Dynamics in Later Life: A Comparative Analysis of Older Husbands and Wives" was conducted to compare the couple satisfaction after marriage and psychological well-being of the old married husbands and the old married wives. Also to check the satisfaction level of these old adults in their marriage. A systematic procedure was designed for conducting the investigation, analysis and interpretation of the data. The sample for the present study was drawn from the urban areas of Hisar city. Hisar, located in the northwestern part of Haryana, India, presents a unique and contextually rich setting for studying marital dynamics across generations. The sample size comprised of total 38 old married couples (N=78), which included the old married husbands and the old married wives, in the age range of 50-60 years, living in Hisar, Haryana. The sample was divided to have an equal number of old married husbands ($n_1=38$) and old married wives ($n_2=38$).

To carry out this comparative study, only old married husbands and old married wives (50-60 years) in Hisar city were shortlisted. Then, a list of old married couples (50-60 years) was prepared, 76 old married adults, which included 38 old husbands and 38 old wives (50-60 years), who were interested to become a part of this study as a sample were selected purposively. The selected subjects were approached to assess their satisfaction level, happiness status, dyadic adjustment, resilience, and perceived partner responsiveness in correlates of their couple satisfaction.

Criteria for Sample Selection:

- The study was limited to old married couples within the age range of 50-60 years.

- The study was limited to Hisar city.
- The study was limited to old couples belonging to married relationship.

Tools/Measures

The Couple Satisfaction Index (CSI-32), developed by James L. Funk and Ronald D. Rogge in 2007, is a widely used self-report measure designed to assess relationship satisfaction with high precision. Unlike traditional relationship scales, the CSI-32 was developed using Item Response Theory (IRT), allowing it to capture a broad spectrum of satisfaction levels with greater sensitivity. The scale consists of 32 items, with some rated on a Likert scale (e.g., 1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree) and others using bipolar adjectives (e.g., “unsatisfied – satisfied”). The total score ranges from 0 to 161, with higher scores indicate greater relationship satisfaction, while lower scores may suggest distress or dissatisfaction. While there is no strict cutoff, studies suggest that scores below 104.5 may indicate relationship distress. The CSI-32 is widely used in relationship studies, counselling, and therapy to assess and track changes in relationship quality over time, making it a valuable tool for both researchers and practitioners.

The Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) is a widely used self-report questionnaire designed to measure the quality and adjustment of romantic relationships. It was developed by Graham B. Spanier in 1976 and has since been used in research and clinical settings to assess relationship satisfaction, cohesion, consensus, and affectional expression. It consists of 32 items measuring four key dimensions: Dyadic Consensus, Dyadic Satisfaction, Dyadic Cohesion, Affectional Expression. Scores range from 0 to 151, with higher scores indicating better relationship adjustment. A cutoff around 100 often distinguishes distressed from non-distressed couples. The DAS is valuable in couples therapy and research, helping assess relationship dynamics and identify distress.

The Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC) is a psychological assessment tool developed by Kathryn M. Connor and Jonathan R.T. Davidson in 2003 to measure resilience, or an individual's ability to cope with stress and adversity. It was originally designed for clinical and research settings, particularly in relation to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, and depression. In relationship, it helps assess how well partners cope with stress, adapt to challenges, and support each other during difficult times. Resilience in relationships is crucial for overcoming conflicts, life transitions, and external stressors such as financial difficulties, health issues, or family pressures. The CD-RISC consists of 25 items, which are evaluated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 0-4: not true at all (0), rarely true (1), sometimes true (2) often true (3), and true nearly all of the time (4) except for items 2.4 and 6 in which case reverse is applicable these ratings result in a number between 0-100, and higher scores indicate higher resilience. Higher resilience scores suggest that partners are better equipped to manage relationship challenges, communicate effectively, and maintain emotional stability.

The Perceived Partner Responsiveness Scale (PPRS), created by Harry T. Reis and colleagues, evaluates how much individuals feel heard, valued, and supported by their romantic partners. It examines three main aspects: understanding, which reflects a partner's ability to listen and acknowledge one's emotions; validation, which captures feelings of acceptance and respect; and caring, which assesses emotional support and affection. The scale consists of various statements, typically rated on a Likert scale (e.g., 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree), where higher scores indicate stronger perceived responsiveness. Studies suggest that greater partner responsiveness leads to better relationship satisfaction, emotional security, and intimacy, while lower scores may signal relational difficulties. The PPRS is commonly applied in relationship research and therapy to explore how responsiveness influences trust, communication, and long-term stability.

RESULTS

The present study was conducted to assess the level of dyadic adjustment, resilience and partner responsiveness as predictors of couple satisfaction among old husbands and old wives. The study also sought to examine whether factors like dyadic adjustment, resilience and partner responsiveness were affecting the satisfaction levels of old husbands and old wives. Also to assess the levels of couple satisfaction, dyadic adjustment, resilience and perceived partner responsiveness among old husbands and old wives.

Couple satisfaction among old husbands and wives

Table 1.1 and figure 1.1 depict the distribution of the couples across different levels of couple satisfaction as perceived by old married couples. The majority of the couples (67.1%) perceived a high level of couple satisfaction whereas 19.7 percent of couples perceived moderate, and 13.2 percent perceived a low level of couple satisfaction. The majority of old husbands (71.1%) and old wives (63.2%) perceived a high couple satisfaction. 21.1% of old husbands and 18.4% of old wives perceived moderate couple satisfaction. A few of (7.9%) of old husbands and (18.4%) of old wives perceived a low level of couple satisfaction. The distribution of old husbands and wives was significant at a 5 percent level of significance across different levels of couple satisfaction with significant p-value as 0.018 (<0.05). Thus, a high percentage of old husbands (71.1%) couples perceived a high level of couple satisfaction as compared to old wives (63.2%).

Table 1.2 and figure 1.2 present the differences in mean scores in the perception of couple satisfaction by the old married couples. Findings were revealed to be significant ($p<0.05$). According to the results, old husbands (Mean=148.79) reported more couple satisfaction as compared to old wives (Mean=144.92) with a standard deviation of 4.616 and 10.004, respectively. It was hypothesized in the present study that old husbands would have higher couple satisfaction as compared to old wives. Hence, according to the findings, the hypothesis was proved to be accepted.

Dyadic adjustment among old husbands and wives

Table 2.1 and figure 2.1 depict the distribution of the sample in the levels of dyadic adjustment perceived by old married couples. When the data was distributed, it was interesting to note that a major section of the old married couples (55.3%) perceived high levels of dyadic adjustment. However, 10.5 percent of the old husbands and 100 percent of old wives perceived high results in this dimension. 73.7 percent of old husbands perceived moderate level of dyadic adjustment. The total (7.9%), as well as old husbands (15.8%), perceived low dyadic adjustment. The results depicted significant differences in the distribution of dyadic adjustment with significant p-value (0.0001) at 1% level of significance. Thus, most of the old wives perceived significantly high dyadic adjustment as compared to old husbands.

Table 2.2 and figure 2.2 give the differences in mean scores in the perception of dyadic adjustment among old married couples. Findings were revealed to be significant ($p<0.01$) at a 1 percent level of significance with p-value as 0.0001. According to the results, old wives (Mean=133.05) perceived significantly high dyadic adjustment as compared to old husbands (Mean=122.68) with standard deviations of 3.792 and 5.312, respectively. It was hypothesized in the present study that old wives would have higher dyadic adjustment as compared to old husbands. Hence, according to the findings, the hypothesis was proved to be accepted.

Resilience among old husbands and wives

Table 3.1 and figure 3.1 exhibit the distribution of the sample across different levels of resilience as perceived by old married couples. In the total sample, a major proportion (46.1%) of couples reported resilience at a high level followed by 43.4 percent who perceived a moderate level of resilience. Only 10.5 percent of the total sample recorded a low level of resilience. The majority of old husbands (84.2%) reported resilience at a moderate level, whereas most (92.1%) of old wives reported the high dimension. Only 15.8 percent of old husbands and 5.3 percent of old wives reported resilience at a low level. The chi-square value depicted the distribution of both groups across different levels of resilience as perceived by the couples was significant at 1 percent level of significance with p-value as 0.0001. Though the distribution was significant, thus a high percentage of old wives (92.1%) perceived a high level of resilience as compared to old husbands.

Table 3.2 and fig 3.2 present differences in the mean scores of resilience as perceived by old married couples. It revealed that the old husbands (mean scores=73.55) perceived significantly lesser resilience as compared to the old wives (mean scores= 81.61) with a standard deviation of 3.768 and 4.835, respectively. It was hypothesized in the present study that old husbands would perceive lesser resilience levels as compared to old wives. Hence, according to the findings, the hypothesis was proved to be accepted.

Perceived partner responsiveness among old husbands and wives

Table 4.1 and figure 4.1 exhibit the distribution of the sample across different levels of partner responsiveness as perceived by old married couples. Major section of couples (56.6%) perceived a moderate level of partner responsiveness. However, 65.8 percent of old husbands and 47.4 percent of old wives showed moderate results in this dimension. 34.2 percent of old husbands and 5.3 percent of old wives showed a low level of partner responsiveness, whereas 47.4 percent of old wives showed high levels of partner responsiveness. The results depicted significant differences in the distribution of partner responsiveness for both groups as the p-value is $0.0001 < 0.01$. Thus, a high percentage of old wives (47.4%) perceived a high level of partner responsiveness as compared to old husbands.

Table 4.2 and fig 4.2 depict the differences in the mean scores of partner responsiveness as perceived by old married couples. It revealed that the old husbands (mean scores=73.13) perceived significantly lesser partner responsiveness as compared to the old wives (mean scores= 80.58) with a standard deviation of 7.01 and 4.688, respectively. It was hypothesized in the present study that old wives would perceive higher partner responsiveness levels as compared to old husbands. Hence, according to the findings, the hypothesis was proved to be accepted.

DISCUSSION

The results of present study were in line with the previous studies on couple satisfaction by Lee & Ishii-Kuntz (1987), which documented that, men typically value emotional support more as they get older and are more receptive to their partner's emotional demands. Remaining emotionally present and supportive, particularly during illness or retirement, is generally associated with greater pleasure for older males. According to Bookwala (2011), Older women may report lower levels of satisfaction if they feel overworked or neglected emotionally, particularly while their husbands are ill. However, because they have fewer childcare and employment obligations, some women report feeling more satisfied as they age, allowing them to devote more attention to their marriage.

The results of present study were in line with the previous studies on dyadic adjustment by Acitelli & Antonucci, (1994), which documented that, while many women in older relationships report feeling more satisfied, some nevertheless feel emotionally abandoned if their demands for closeness and communication are not addressed. According to Choi and Marks (2008), males tend to report greater levels of marital happiness and adjustment, particularly when their spouses offer both practical and emotional assistance. Men tend to give younger marriages high ratings, even when their spouses express conflict or discontent (Fowers & Olson, 1992). Henry et al., (2007), documented that the security and camaraderie of a long-term marriage are very beneficial to men as they age. When their emotional support is maintained and their health is strong, their marriage happiness frequently rises.

The results of present study were in line with the previous studies on resilience by Walsh (2003), which documented that, Resilience is a systemic process. Older couples are more likely to exhibit growth through adversity, which goes beyond simply weathering misfortune. However, in order to comprehend how men and women experience and contribute to resilience differently throughout their lives, gender-sensitive methods are required. According to Choi & Marks (2008), men become more emotionally dependent on their partners as they age, and they gain a lot from committed, long-term relationships. Research indicates that resilient relationships enhance elderly men's mental and physical health more than they do women's. The results of present study were in line with the previous studies on perceived partner responsiveness by Lang & Carstensen (2002), which documented that, men in older marriages report feeling more grateful for their partner's availability and sensitivity, and they also tend to value emotional support more. Remarkably, older men have more emotional benefits than women from perceived partner attention, particularly when dealing with health issues or social loss (Bookwala, 2011). According to Rastogi & Thergaonkar (2009), perceptions of partner responsiveness are frequently influenced by responsibility, sacrifice, and implicit emotional understanding in collectivist cultures such as India, where gender roles and marital expectations are more traditional. While older couples may see practical caregiving and devotion as the main markers of responsiveness, younger urban couples may anticipate increased mutuality and emotional expressiveness.

SUMMARY

5.1 Salient Findings

1. The distribution of the couples across different levels of couple satisfaction as perceived by old married couples revealed that the majority of the couples (67.1%) perceived a high level of couple satisfaction whereas 19.7 percent of couples perceived moderate, and 13.2 percent perceived a low level of couple satisfaction. The majority of old husbands (71.1%) and old wives (63.2%) perceived a high couple satisfaction. 21.1% of old husbands and 18.4% of old wives perceived moderate couple satisfaction. A few of (7.9%) of old husbands and (18.4%) of old wives perceived a low level of couple satisfaction. The distribution of old husbands and wives was significant at a 5 percent level of significance across different levels of couple satisfaction with significant p-value as 0.018 (<0.05). Thus, a high percentage of old husbands (71.1%) couples perceived a high level of couple satisfaction as compared to old wives (63.2%).
2. The findings of differences in mean scores in the perception of couple satisfaction by the old married couples revealed to be significant ($p<0.05$). According to the results, old husbands (Mean=148.79) reported more couple satisfaction as compared to old wives (Mean=144.92) with a standard deviation of 4.616 and 10.004, respectively. It was hypothesized in the present study that old husbands would

have higher couple satisfaction as compared to old wives. Hence, according to the findings, the hypothesis was proved to be accepted.

3. In the distribution of the sample in the levels of dyadic adjustment perceived by old married couples, when the data was distributed, it was interesting to note that a major section of the old married couples (55.3%) perceived high levels of dyadic adjustment. However, 10.5 percent of the old husbands and 100 percent of old wives perceived high results in this dimension. 73.7 percent of old husbands perceived moderate level of dyadic adjustment. The total (7.9%), as well as old husbands (15.8%), perceived low dyadic adjustment. The results depicted significant differences in the distribution of dyadic adjustment with significant p-value (0.0001) at 1% level of significance. Thus, most of the old wives perceived significantly high dyadic adjustment as compared to old husbands.
4. The findings of differences in mean scores in the perception of dyadic adjustment among old married couples revealed to be significant ($p < 0.01$) at a 1 percent level of significance with p-value as 0.0001. According to the results, old wives (Mean=133.05) perceived significantly high dyadic adjustment as compared to old husbands (Mean=122.68) with standard deviations of 3.792 and 5.312, respectively. It was hypothesized in the present study that old wives would have higher dyadic adjustment as compared to old husbands. Hence, according to the findings, the hypothesis was proved to be accepted.
5. The distribution of the sample across different levels of resilience as perceived by old married couples exhibits that a major proportion (46.1%) of couples reported resilience at a high level followed by 43.4 percent who perceived a moderate level of resilience. Only 10.5 percent of the total sample recorded a low level of resilience. The majority of old husbands (84.2%) reported resilience at a moderate level, whereas most (92.1%) of old wives reported the high dimension. Only 15.8 percent of old husbands and 5.3 percent of old wives reported resilience at a low level. The chi-square value depicted the distribution of both groups across different levels of resilience as perceived by the couples was significant at 1 percent level of significance with p-value as 0.0001. Though the distribution was significant, thus a high percentage of old wives (92.1%) perceived a high level of resilience as compared to old husbands.
6. Differences in the mean scores of resilience as perceived by old married couples, revealed that the old husbands (mean scores=73.55) perceived significantly lesser resilience as compared to the old wives (mean scores= 81.61) with a standard deviation of 3.768 and 4.835, respectively. It was hypothesized in the present study that old husbands would perceive lesser resilience levels as compared to old wives. Hence, according to the findings, the hypothesis was proved to be accepted.
7. The distribution of the sample across different levels of partner responsiveness as perceived by old married couples, revealed that a major section of couples (56.6%) perceived a moderate level of partner responsiveness. However, 65.8 percent of old husbands and 47.4 percent of old wives showed moderate results in this dimension. 34.2 percent of old husbands and 5.3 percent of old wives showed a low level of partner responsiveness, whereas 47.4 percent of old wives showed high levels of partner responsiveness. The results depicted significant differences in the distribution of partner responsiveness for both groups as the p-value is $0.0001 < 0.01$. Thus, a high percentage of old wives (47.4%) perceived a high level of partner responsiveness as compared to old husbands.
8. The differences in the mean scores of partner responsiveness as perceived by old married couples, revealed that the old husbands (mean scores=73.13) perceived significantly lesser partner responsiveness as compared to the old wives (mean scores= 80.58) with a standard deviation of 7.01 and 4.688, respectively. It was hypothesized in the present study that old wives would perceive higher

partner responsiveness levels as compared to old husbands. Hence, according to the findings, the hypothesis was proved to be accepted.

5.2 Copying strategies to improve couple satisfaction among married adults who were at risk.

To promote marital satisfaction and well-being among older married couples, particularly husbands and wives aged 50–60 years, it is essential to adopt coping strategies that foster emotional intimacy, mutual respect, and adaptive communication. Older husbands can benefit from expressing emotions openly, engaging in shared activities, appreciating their spouse's contributions, and maintaining both physical health and empathetic listening. These behaviors reinforce companionship and emotional security. Similarly, older wives are encouraged to practice self-care, assertive communication, and seek social support outside the marital dyad to avoid emotional burnout, especially when caregiving responsibilities are present. Encouraging shared decision-making and involvement in personally fulfilling activities can enhance their sense of autonomy and partnership. Both partners can further benefit from mindfulness practices and patience in adapting to age-related changes. Collectively, these strategies aim to strengthen the marital bond, reduce relational stressors, and promote a sense of shared purpose and fulfilment in later life.

5.3 Conclusion

The present study aimed to assess and compare couple satisfaction, dyadic adjustment, resilience, and perceived partner responsiveness among older married couples aged 50–60 years in Hisar, Haryana. The findings revealed notable gender-based variations in marital well-being among older couples. Older husbands reported significantly higher levels of couple satisfaction, while older wives exhibited greater dyadic adjustment, resilience, and perceived partner responsiveness. These results partially confirmed the hypotheses, highlighting that while older men tend to feel more satisfied in their marriages, women demonstrate stronger emotional adaptability and relational attunement. The findings reflect the influence of lifelong gender roles and socio-emotional development in shaping later-life marital dynamics. Older wives' heightened emotional resilience and responsiveness may stem from their continued investment in nurturing and caregiving roles, while husbands benefit from increased emotional support and companionship in retirement years. The study emphasizes the importance of tailoring couple interventions in late adulthood to address distinct gendered experiences, encouraging empathy, shared responsibility, and emotional connection. Such age- sensitive and gender-sensitive strategies are essential for enhancing marital quality and psychological well-being among older adults navigating the evolving landscape of later-life partnerships.

TABLES AND FIGURS

Table 1.1: Distribution of the sample as the per level of couple satisfaction perceived by old married couples

Couple Satisfaction	Total (N=76)		Old Husbands		Old Wives		Chi-square value	p-value
			(n1=38)		(n2=38)			
	N	%	n1	%	n2	%		
Low	10	13.2	3	7.9	7	18.4	8.065	0.018*
Moderate	15	19.7	8	21.1	7	18.4		
High	51	67.1	27	71.1	24	63.2		

Total sample (N) =76; Old husbands (n1) = 38; Old wives (n2) = 38

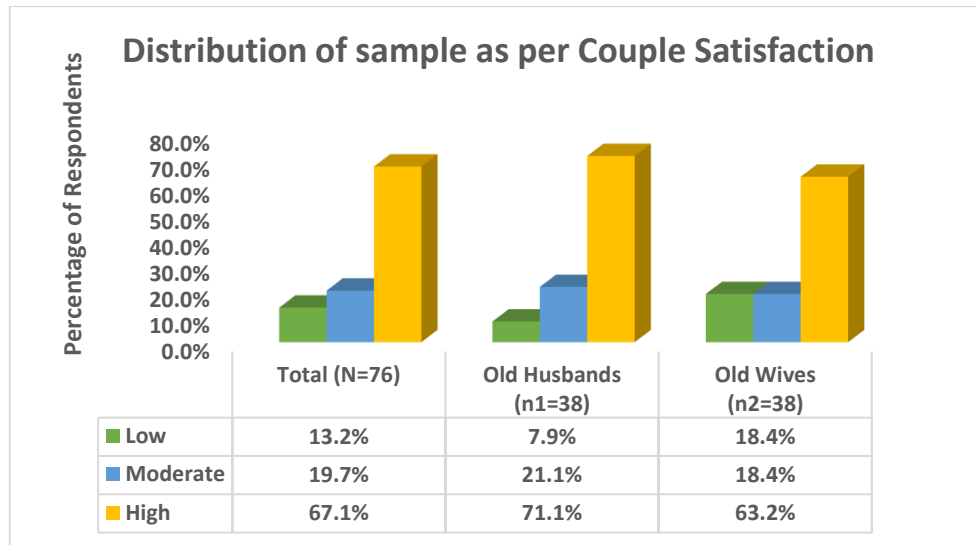


Figure 1.1: Distribution of the sample as per the level of couple satisfaction among old married couples

Table 1.2: Differences in perception of couple satisfaction (Mean \pm SD) by old married couples

Variable	Old Husbands		Old Wives		t-value	p-value
	(n1=38)		(n2=38)			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Couple Satisfaction	148.79	4.616	144.92	10.004	2.164	0.035*

Total sample (N) =76; Old husbands (n1) = 38; Old wives (n2) = 38

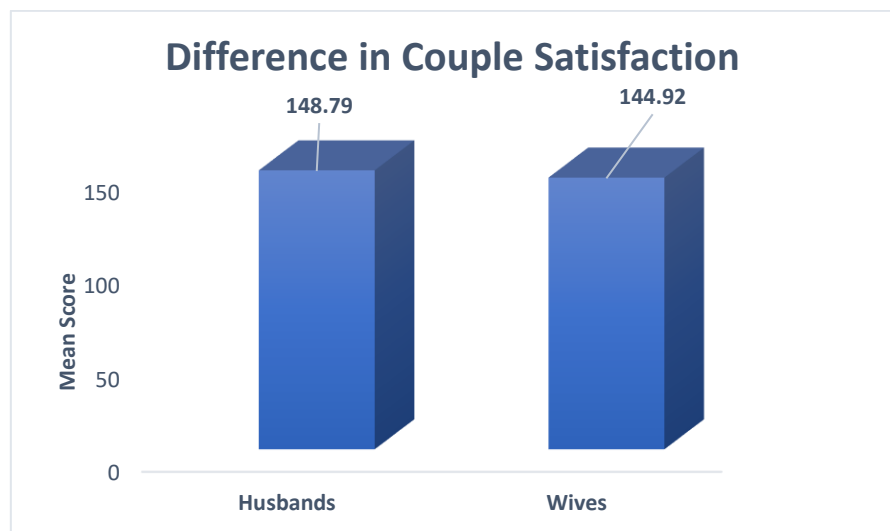


Figure 1.2: Differences in perception of couple satisfaction (Mean \pm SD) among old married couples

Table 2.1: Distribution of the sample as the per level of dyadic adjustment perceived by old married couples

Dyadic Adjustment	Total (N=76)		Old Husbands		Old Wives		Chi- square value	p-value
			(n1=38)		(n2=38)			
	N	%	n1	%	n2	%		
Low	6	7.9	6	15.8	0	0	61.524	0.0001**
Moderate	28	36.8	28	73.7	0	0		
High	42	55.3	4	10.5	38	100		

Total sample (N) =76; Old husbands (n1) = 38; Old wives (n2) = 38

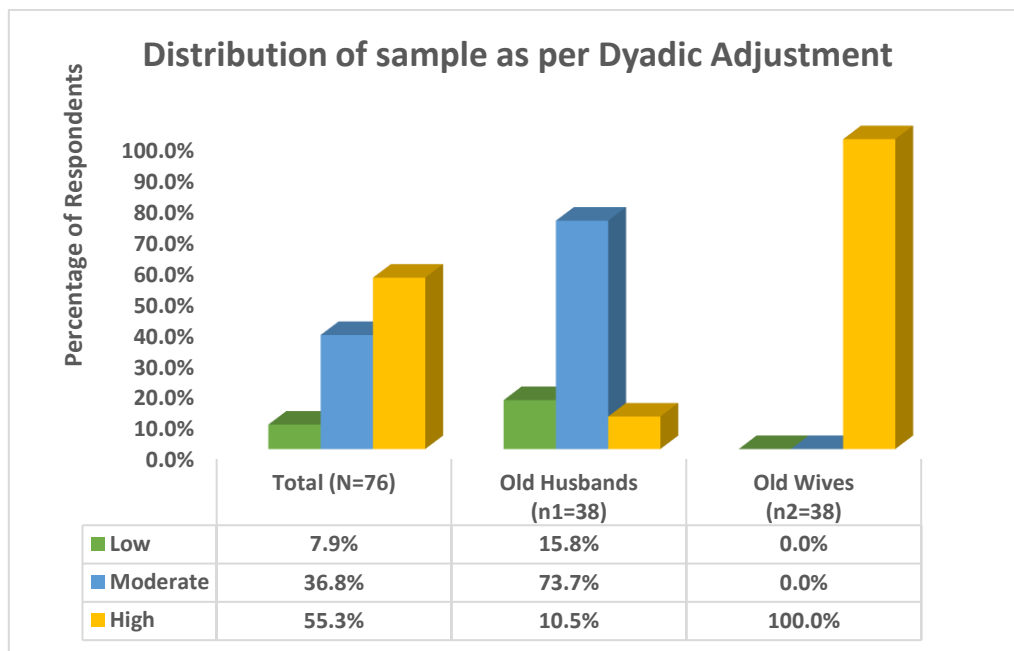


Figure 2.1: Distribution of the sample as per the level of dyadic adjustment among old married couples

Table 2.2: Differences in perception of dyadic adjustment (Mean \pm SD) by old married couples

Variable	Old Husbands		Old Wives		t-value	p-value
	(n1=38)		(n2=38)			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Dyadic Adjustment	122.68	5.312	133.05	3.792	9.793	0.0001**

Total sample (N) =76; Old husbands (n1) = 38; Old wives (n2) = 38

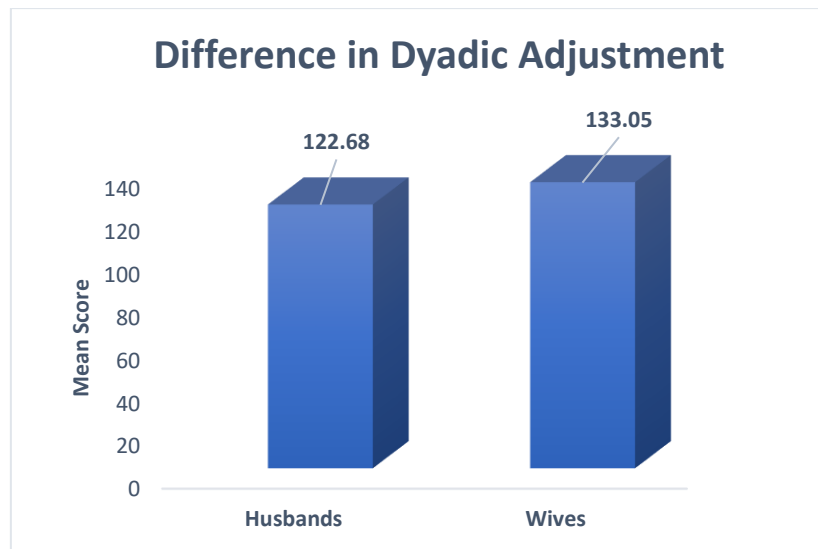


Figure 2.2: Differences in perception of dyadic adjustment (Mean \pm SD) among old married couples

Table 3.1: Distribution of the sample as the per level of resilience perceived by old married couples

Resilience	Total (N=76)		Old Husbands (n1=38)		Old Wives (n2=38)		Chi-square value	p-value
			n1	%	n2	%		
Low	8	10.5	6	15.8	2	5.3	66.121	0.0001**
Moderate	33	43.4	32	84.2	1	2.6		
High	35	46.1	0	0	35	92.1		

Total sample (N) =76; Old husbands (n1) = 38; Old wives (n2) = 38

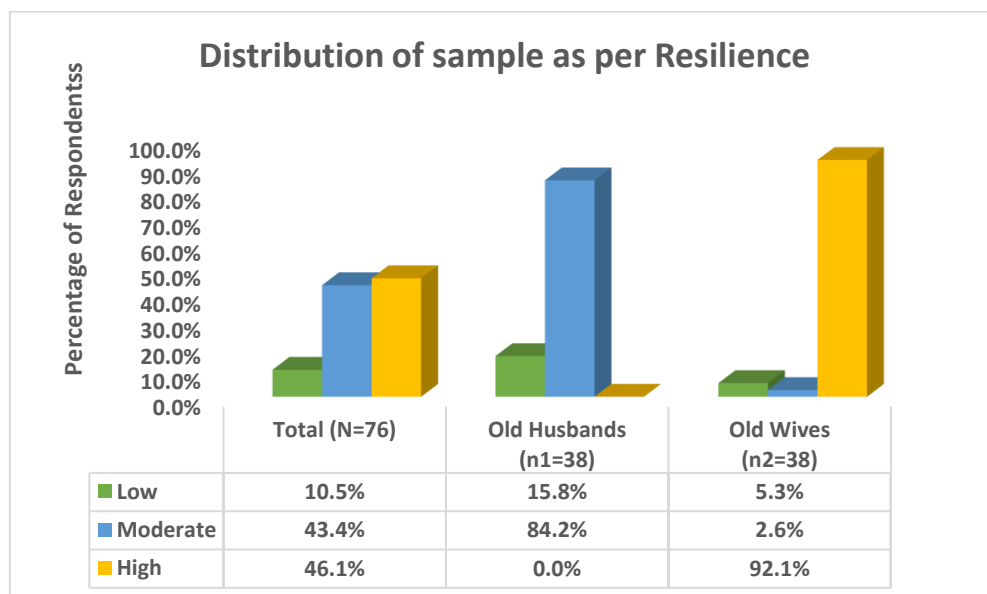


Figure 3.1: Distribution of the sample as per the level of resilience among old married couples

Table 3.2: Differences in perception of resilience (Mean \pm SD) by old married couples

Variable	Old Husbands		Old Wives		t-value	p-value
	(n1=38)		(n2=38)			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Resilience	73.55	3.768	81.61	4.835	8.097	0.0001**

Total sample (N) =76; Old husbands (n1) = 38; Old wives (n2) = 38

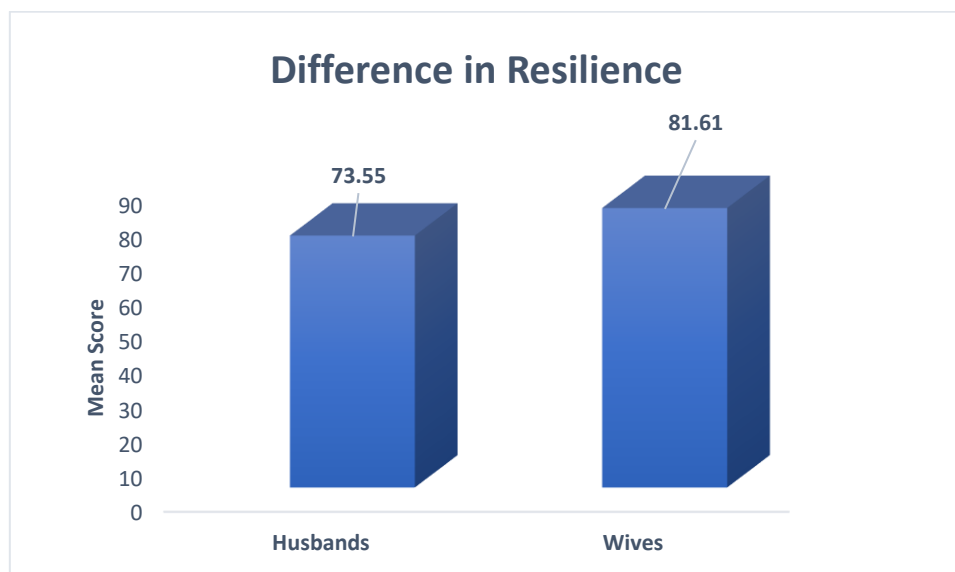


Figure 3.2: Differences in perception of resilience (Mean \pm SD) among old married couples

Table 4.1: Distribution of the sample as the per level of partner responsiveness perceived by old married couples

Perceived Partner Responsiveness	Total (N=76)		Old Husbands		Old Wives		Chi-square value	p-value
			(n1=38)		(n2=38)			
	N	%	n1	%	n2	%		
Low	15	19.7	13	34.2	2	5.3	27.206	0.0001**
Moderate	43	56.6	25	65.8	18	47.4		
High	18	23.7	0	0	18	47.4		

Total sample (N) =76; Old husbands (n1) = 38; Old wives (n2) = 38

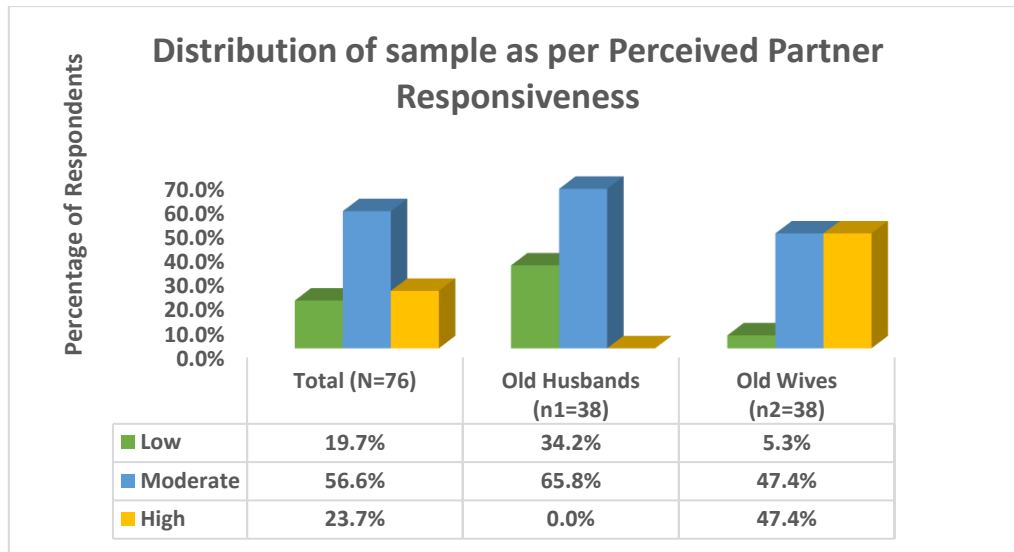


Figure 4.1: Distribution of the sample as per the level of partner responsiveness among old married couples

Table 4.2: Differences in perception of partner responsiveness (Mean \pm SD) by old married couples

Variable	Old Husbands		Old Wives		t-value	p-value
	(n1=38)		(n2=38)			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Perceived Partner Responsiveness	73.13	7.010	80.58	4.688	5.444	0.0001**

Total sample (N) =76; Old husbands (n1) = 38; Old wives (n2) = 38

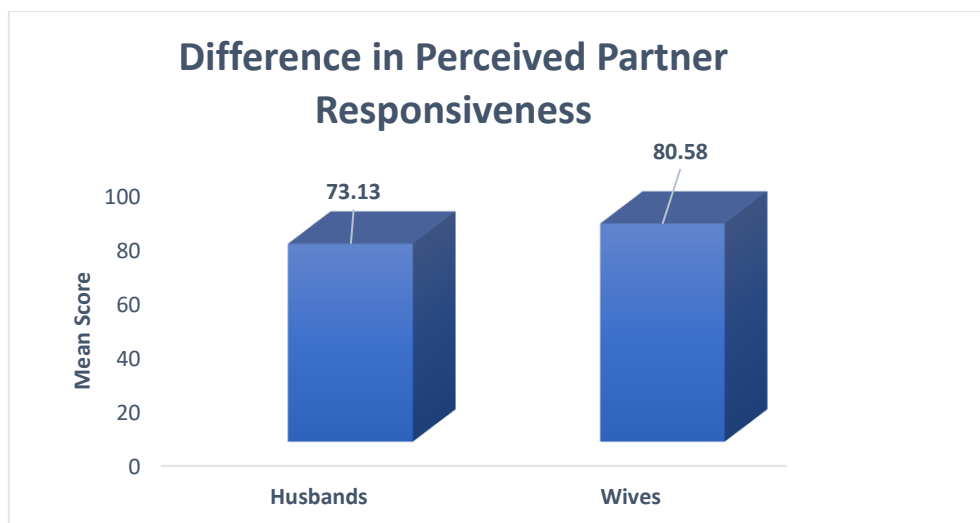


Figure 4.2: Differences in perception of perceived partner responsiveness (Mean \pm SD) among old married couples

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