

The Role of Trust and Conflict Resolution Style in Relationship Satisfaction Among Late Adulthood

Nishanth. V¹, Manoj.R², Shalini.R³

¹Student, Department of Psychology 1st, Dr. MGR Educational & Research Institution

²Head Of the Department, Department of Psychology 2nd, Dr. MGR Educational & Research Institution

³Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology 3rd, Dr. MGR Educational & Research Institution

Abstract

This study understands how the trust and conflict resolution styles play an important role in relationship satisfaction among late adult people who were in relationships for very long span of time will contribute to wellbeing, security and happiness during changes like retirement, health and shifting of family role. Relationships satisfaction involves emotional connection between the partners, mutual communication, fair support and effective problem solving. So, when partners have trust confidence and honesty between them will provide emotional safety and intimacy that will lead to enhance satisfaction. The style of Conflict resolution shape their relationship quality by providing few important strategies like Cooperation, compromise and open discussion which will improve satisfaction and closeness by avoiding hostility and withdrawal. When trust and conflict resolution are being connect together to assess, higher trust reduced healthier communication during disagreement. In a quantitative study of correlational research conducted in tamilnadu with 150 adults who have been married and has been in the aged between 50 to 65 the tools included in the study are standardized measures of trust, conflict resolution style and relationship satisfaction scale where used. Results were provided a strong and linear correlation between trust and relationship satisfaction ($r=0.567$) and a moderate correlation between conflict resolution and relationship satisfaction ($r=0.376$), and enhanced the importance of both the variables choose in the study in sustaining healthy in late adulthood.

Keywords: Trust, Conflict resolution style, late adulthood, Relationship satisfaction

Introduction

In a stage of late adulthood healthy and people who are in long term relationship play a very important role in increasing emotional well-being and satisfaction in life has those individuals go through many transitions in their life such as retirement changes in their health and shifting of roles in their social life or lose of loved ones or some people important in their lives. In previous researches and articles reports has been revealed and provided awareness that a smaller number of conflicts in older adult has and increased relationships satisfaction and happiness than younger adults, these factors are due to improved emotional regulation and lot of life experience. In a happy relationship some of the factors are very important such as their emotional bounding, a proper communication, honesty, support and problem solving these stays as a basic foundation to provide high level of relationship satisfaction. Many articles

and researches published in SAGE journals shows that people in older age have high level of trust with connection to greater intimacy, a sense of secure feeling and overall happiness for both men and women. Trust act has a protective mechanism helping the partners to stay calm during stressful situation and recover more effectively from a very unhealthy disagreement. Conflict resolution styles also play a very important role in relationship quality and providing satisfaction in their relationship by helping partners feel value and understood, whereas some of the negative strategies like low closeness will lead to increased tension and reduce their happiness. Research continuously with reports that couple who positively face disagreements by joining together will experience increased satisfaction their relationship. When compare to younger adults, people in the late adulthood are tend to use more positive, calm and positive Conflict techniques and that will lead to positive behavioral approach in their partners. Despite many research, some studies only assess how trust and conflict resolution shape satisfaction in relationship among the people of older adult particularly in western sides such as India, where the structure of family pattern and cultural Norma varies a lot. By understanding about these factors, it is very essential in developing cultural related mental health approaches. Therefore, this study focuses on exploring about how trust and conflict resolution influence relationship satisfaction in late adulthood.

Review of literature

Gonzalez-Ortega et al. (2021) done a study to find how attachment styles connect to the ways of handling disagreement and overall satisfaction in couples of young Spanish partners. A sample of 405 mixed gender were included in the study. Paired analysis method was used to calculate the date collected from the samples. The study has provided with the findings that avoidance in attachment has a strong correlation with reduced relationship well-being when compare to anxious attachment style. People with avoidance attachment style make themselves to avoid and escape from the situations but people with anxious attachment style involve in situation but they have some sense of tension. In summing up together, unstable attachment form a unhelpful coping strategies during conflicts along with low level of happiness.

Tehrani et al., (2020) conducted a study to assess the relationship between personality and conflict management styles. The samples of 5337 participants were selected to do the study. Data were analyzed using regression analysis and from those results it was found that people who has traits like neuroticism and agreeableness is connected with avoidance style, while extroversion, openness and conscientiousness is linked with compromise and collaborative style. Dominant style is link with extroversion but in a unhealthy pattern, agreeableness is linked with control style.

Buhler et al., (2021) lead a study to review exciting research by focusing a change in relationships satisfaction over a period of time. From 165 groups, 165039 individuals were selected as a sample. From a structured analysis method data where interpreted the result showed that a reduced in satisfaction between ages 20 to 40, Increased satisfaction in the age of 65. During observation of couples who were in a relationship in a very long time were noticed their level of happiness were decreased during the starting period and increased around the year 20.

Methodology

Aim:

A study is to identify the relationship between role of trust and conflict resolution style in relationship satisfaction among late adulthood.

Objectives:

- To study the level of trust, conflict resolution styles, and relationship satisfaction among late adulthood.
- To identify the level of trust and different conflict resolution styles (positive problem solving, conflict engagement, withdrawal, and compliance) among late adulthood.
- To find the relationship between trust and relationship satisfaction among late adulthood.
- To find the relationship between conflict resolution styles and relationship satisfaction among late adulthood.
- To examine the combined role of trust and conflict resolution styles in predicting relationship satisfaction among late adulthood.

Hypothesis:

H0: There is no significant relationship between trust, conflict resolution and relationship satisfaction among late adulthood.

Research design:

The present study falls under quantitative correlation research design to identify the relationship between the role of trust and conflict resolution style in relationship satisfaction among late adults. Trust and conflict resolution was the independent variable while relationship satisfaction was the dependent variable.

Sampling Design

The design of the sampling of the present study is based on the convenience sampling technique. In the present study, male and female late adults are considered as participants. This technique is chosen based on the easy accessibility of the participants and time constraints.

Sample size

A total of 150 late adults who were between the age of 50 and 60 years was used as a sample in this study.

Inclusive criteria:

- The participants who were in the age group ranging from 50-65 years were selected to this study.
- Both the Male and female population were included in this research.
- Married couples who were in their late adulthood period were also included.

Exclusive criteria:

- The participants below 50 years and above 65 years were not included for the study.
- Unmarried people will not be included in the sample.
- Samples were limited to the people of Tamil Nadu.

Data Collection

- Data will be collected through offline questionnaires distributed to the participants.
- Participants will provide demographic information, followed by responses to the three standardized scales.

Tool used:

1. Trust scale (Rempel and Holmes 1986)
2. The conflict resolution style inventory (Kurdek 1994)
3. Burns relationship satisfaction scale (Burns, D.D. 1993)

Tool description and procedure:

1. The Trust Scale is a self-report method developed by Rempel and Holmes (1986) to measure trust in close personal relationships, especially romantic and marital relationships. It defines trust in terms of three different dimensions: 1) partner's behavior is predictable, 2) partner is trustworthy according to one's own experience, and 3) partner will continue to provide care and concern for each other in the future. There are 17 items in this scale, which is a 7-point Likert Scale with one end being strongly disagree and the other end being strongly agree. Reliability of 0.75
2. The Conflict Resolution Style Inventory (CRSI) is also another self-report instrument that was developed by Kurdek (1994) that measures the styles of resolving conflict most frequently used in close, interpersonal relationships, especially in long-term or marital relationships. The CRSI is designed to measure 4 different styles of resolving conflict: 1) Positive Problem Solving (cooperative/collaborative styles); 2) Conflict Engagement (hostile/verbally aggressive styles); 3) Withdrawal (avoiding/withdrawing emotionally from your partner); and 4) Compliance to their partner's needs. This 16-item scale is based on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from never to always. Cronbach's alpha of 0.79 and 0.89
3. The Burns Relationship Satisfaction Scale (BRSS) was developed by David D. Burns in 1993 to be a shorter way for people to report how satisfied they are within intimacies/relationships. The BRSS consists of seven items, each of which is rated on a seven-point Likert-type scale. The Sum of the scores for each of the four variables signifies the amount of satisfaction in your relationship. Reliability in Cronbach's alpha of 0.85.

Statistical analysis:

Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) was used to perform Pearson's correlations.

Result

This chapter discusses the results and interpretation of the analysis done to understand the role of trust and conflict resolution style in relationship satisfaction among late adults.

Table 1

Descriptive statistics showing the mean and standard deviation of the role of trust and conflict resolution style in relationship satisfaction among late adults.

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Trust	75.34	9.924	150
Conflict resolution	45.41	8.820	150
Relationship satisfaction	26.77	7.780	150

The descriptive table shows the mean and standard deviation for the variables. Trust scale (Rempel and Holmes, 1986) has a sample N=150, mean=75.34 and standard deviation=9.924. The conflict resolution inventory scale has a sample N=150, mean=45.41 and standard deviation=8.820. Burns relationship satisfaction scale has a sample N=150, mean=26.77 and standard deviation=7.780. Overall, the results indicate positive level of comparison between trust, conflict resolution and relationship satisfaction among late adulthood.

Table 2

Correlational analysis showing the relationship between Trust and Relationship satisfaction among late adult.

Variables	Pearson correlation	R value	Decision
Trust	1	.567**	Rejected (H ₀)
Relationship Satisfaction			

***Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)**

Pearson's correlation values are shown in Table 2, which indicates a positive correlation between Trust and Relationship Satisfaction ($r = 0.567$, $p < 0.01$). This correlates to a higher level of Trust correlates to a higher level of Relationship Satisfaction for Late Adults. Since there is an established correlation between these two variables, Trust and Relationship Satisfaction for Late Adults, support is given to the claim of a significant relationship exists. In other words, the null hypothesis (H₀: There is not a significant relationship between Trust and Relationship Satisfaction Late Adults) is rejected due to Statistical data indicates a significant relationship between the levels of Trust and Relationship Satisfaction for Late Adults at the 0.01 level of significance. In summary, this study has evaluated the association between Trust and Relationship Satisfaction of Late Adult pe

Table 3

Correlational analysis showing the relationship between Conflict resolution and Relationship satisfaction among late adult.

Variables	Pearson correlation	R value	Decision
Conflict Resolution	1	.376**	Rejected (H ₀)
Relationship Satisfaction			

***Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)**

The Conflict resolution variable and Relationship satisfaction were found to be positively correlated ($r = 0.376$) at the 0.01 significance level. Older adults perceive that their level of conflict resolution affects both their own and their partner's level of relationship satisfaction. Therefore, there is evidence of a correlation between Conflict resolution and Relationship satisfaction among older adults. As a result, due to the statistical significance of this relationship, the H₀ (the null hypothesis that there is no statistically significant relationship between Conflict resolution and Relationship satisfaction for older adults) has been rejected. The relationship between Conflict resolution and Relationship satisfaction was an area of study for the purposes of this research.

Discussion

The present study investigated the relationship between trust, conflict resolution, and relationship satisfaction in late adulthood. According to the descriptive statistics, the participants showed moderate to high levels of trust, conflict resolution skills, and relationship satisfaction, suggesting that most couples in late adulthood have stable and positive relationships. These findings are in line with Bühler et al.'s (2021) study, in which relationship satisfaction tends to be stable or increase in late adulthood because of

the development of emotional maturity, commitment, and the number of experiences shared by the couple throughout their relationship. Trust is crucial in maintaining long-term relationships since it evokes feelings of emotional security, trustworthiness, and trust in each other in both members of the relationship. From the data analyzed it is found to a high-level positive interaction between trust and relationship satisfaction, is indicated by a significant correlation, $r=0.567$, $p<0.01$, suggesting that trust is positively linked with relationship satisfaction in older adults. Similar findings have been shown in previous studies. In addition, Acitelli et al. (1999) found that positive thoughts about the relationship and relational identity were essential in increasing the level of satisfaction in relationships. A positive correlation was observed in the findings of the study between conflict resolution and satisfaction in relationships ($r=0.376$, $p<0.01$). To promote joy and a sense of peace while resolving conflict between partners, couples should always try to employ positive approaches when working through conflicts in romantic relationships. Conflicts arise in all types of romantic relationships; hence, partners should employ three key techniques in resolving the conflicts they experience in their romantic relationship: open and honest communication, a willingness to compromise, and being solution focused. Support from Kulik, et al. (2016) provide further evidence to support the idea that when cooperative methods are used to resolve conflicts by partners there is a direct relationship in their satisfaction level in their marriage (older couples). In comparison, trust was found to have a stronger relationship with relationship satisfaction than conflict resolution. The data presented here suggest that trust represents the foundation of stability in marriage during the late to mid-aged years. This research also cooperated with previous researches supporting the main important idea that both trust and effective resolution of conflicts are crucial factors to have a satisfying and healthy relationship for couples at that stage of life. From this it is easy to bring awareness and enhance the intervention for the people in late adulthood.

Conclusion

The findings in both trust and constructive conflict resolution contribute significantly (0.01) level to late adult relationship satisfaction. In a long-term relationship, it is found to be a strong connection and interaction in people who are in long term relationship. During late adulthood, couples must also deal with life transitions like retirement, health issues, changing family roles, and an increased sense of emotional security and trust with each other. Conflict resolution also positively influences satisfaction although the impact may be indirect by further strengthening trust and emotional safety. Experience in togetherness, stability, companionship is noted to support the well-being of the relationship during later life stages. Thus, interpersonal dynamics, particularly trust and the optimal use of conflicts, are vital predictors of relationship satisfaction in late adulthood.

Limitations

There were some issues with how the data was collected (self-reported) and its potential for bias from social desirability. Additionally, there were limited sample size and geographic location of responses (only Tamil Nadu) that raised questions about how well the findings reflect larger populations. Causal relationships between the variables cannot be determined from the cross-sectional design of this study. Here, only two relational variables (trust and conflict resolution) were examined; communication patterns; emotional intimacy; personality traits; or health status were not measured. Some of the unique cultural factors of Indian marriages (e.g., collectivistic culture; family involvement) are not discussed in this

literature review, but are very important to understand how marriage relationships impact physical and mental health.

Recommendations

- As this research has included only cross-sectional study, in future prolonged studies can be made.
- Sample population can be increased to assess whether it produces and changes or not and to increase intervention.
- Qualitative research studies can be made to increase the
- Research in a more effective manner.

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