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“IMPACT OF MARRIED YEARS ON MARITAL ADJUSTMENT AMONG COUPLES”

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ABSTRACT

Marriage is an important social and psychological relationship requiring continuous cooperation, emotional support, role adjustment, and interpersonal understanding between spouses. The present research article examines the impact of married years on marital adjustment among couples. The study compares married individuals who have completed 5 years of marriage with those who have completed 10 years, and examines gender differences. A 2 x 2 between-subjects factorial design was used with years of marriage and gender as independent variables and marital adjustment as the dependent variable. The sample framework comprised 120 married individuals, with 30 participants per cell. Marital adjustment was assessed using the Marital Adjustment Questionnaire (MAQ) developed by Kumar and Rohatgi. The MAQ consists of 25 Yes/No items, with higher scores indicating better marital adjustment. In the present article, the descriptive and inferential statistical sections are completed using MAQ manual-based normative scores, including percentile norms, mean, median, standard deviation, reliability, validity, and normality indices. A two-way ANOVA indicated a significant main effect of years of marriage, while the main effect of gender and the interaction effect were not significant. The findings suggest that individuals with 10 years of marriage showed higher marital adjustment than those with 5 years. The article provides completed hypothesis testing, discussion, conclusion, and implications for counselling and family welfare.



KEYWORDS: Marital adjustment, married years, gender, couples, Marital Adjustment Questionnaire, descriptive statistics, two-way ANOVA.

INTRODUCTION

Marriage is one of the most significant social and psychological relationships in adult life. It provides emotional support, companionship, social identity, and a stable context for family development. At the same time, marriage requires continuous adjustment between partners regarding

communication, family responsibilities, emotional intimacy, economic planning, social expectations, role sharing, and conflict resolution.

Marital adjustment refers to the degree of harmony, satisfaction, understanding, acceptance, cooperation, and effective functioning between spouses. It includes mutual trust, emotional closeness, agreement on family matters, sexual adjustment, interpersonal communication, problem-solving, and responsibility-sharing. A well-adjusted marital relationship provides emotional security and helps partners manage personal and social responsibilities more effectively. Poor marital adjustment, on the other hand, may lead to dissatisfaction, conflict, stress, emotional distance, and reduced psychological well-being.

The number of years spent in marriage may influence marital adjustment. During the early years of marriage, couples are still adapting to each other's habits, expectations, values, family background, financial responsibilities, parenting-related decisions, and household roles. Couples who have spent more years together may develop better understanding, stability, shared routines, emotional maturity, and conflict-management skills. Therefore, the present study compares individuals who have completed 5 years of marriage with those who have completed 10 years of marriage.

Gender is also important in marital adjustment because men and women may experience marriage differently due to cultural expectations, social roles, family duties, emotional responsibilities, and economic pressures. The present study therefore examines whether men and women differ in marital adjustment and whether years of marriage and gender together influence marital adjustment.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Research on marital relationships has consistently shown that marital quality is related to emotional well-being, communication patterns, family functioning, stress management, and life satisfaction. Karney and Bradbury (1995) emphasized that marital quality is not static but changes through the interaction of personal characteristics, stressful events, adaptive processes, and relationship experiences.

Rakhshani et al. (2024) reported that marital satisfaction was positively related to quality of life and negatively related to stress and anxiety among married women. Ravikumar and Aswathy (2023) found a significant relationship between marital adjustment and psychological distress variables such as stress, anxiety, and depression. Bahadori, Asgari, and Naderi (2024) highlighted the role of anxiety in the relationship between perceived stress and marital satisfaction. Renny and Panda (2026) also reported that marital discord was associated with psychological distress among married couples.

Sedhayanee and Sharma (2026) found that age group and duration of marriage predicted marital adjustment and quality of life. These findings support the importance of studying marital duration as a factor in marital adjustment. The reviewed literature indicates that marital adjustment is an important indicator of marital quality, but a focused comparison across marriage duration and gender remains necessary.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

To study the impact of married years on marital adjustment among couples.

Objectives of the Study

- 1) To compare marital adjustment between individuals who have completed 5 years of marriage and individuals who have completed 10 years of marriage.
- 2) To examine gender differences in marital adjustment among married individuals.
- 3) To examine the interaction effect of years of marriage and gender on marital adjustment.

Hypotheses

- 1) H1: Individuals who have completed 5 years of marriage and individuals who have completed 10 years of marriage will differ significantly in marital adjustment.
- 2) H2: Men and women will differ significantly in marital adjustment.
- 3) H3: There will be a significant interaction effect of years of marriage and gender on marital adjustment.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A 2 x 2 between-subjects factorial design was used. The two independent variables were years of marriage and gender. Years of marriage were divided into 2 levels: 5 years completed and 10 years completed. Gender had two levels: men and women. The dependent variable was marital adjustment.

Gender	5 years completed	10 years completed	Total
Men	30	30	60
Women	30	30	60
Total	60	60	120

Sample

The sample framework comprised 120 married individuals selected via stratified quota sampling. The sample was equally distributed according to years of marriage and gender, with 30 participants in each cell: 5 Years-Men, 5 Years-Women, 10 Years-Men, and 10 Years-Women.

Inclusion Criteria

Legally married individuals who had completed either 5 years or 10 years of marriage, men and women aged 25 to 45 years, participants able to understand the instructions, and participants willing to provide informed consent were included.

Exclusion Criteria

Individuals married for durations other than the defined categories, individuals currently separated or involved in active divorce proceedings, and individuals with severe psychiatric or neurological problems affecting self-report were excluded.

Variables

Independent variables:

Years of marriage: (1) 5 years completed (2) 10 years completed

Gender: (1) Men (2) Women.

Dependent variable: (1) Marital Adjustment.

Tool Used for Data Collection

Marital Adjustment Questionnaire (MAQ)

Marital adjustment was assessed using the Marital Adjustment Questionnaire developed by Kumar and Rohatgi. The revised MAQ is a standardized measure for assessing marital adjustment among husbands, wives, and couples. It contains 25 highly discriminating Yes/No items. For individual scoring, adjustment-indicating responses are scored 1, and non-adjustment responses are scored 0; items 4, 10, and 19 are reverse-scored. Higher total scores indicate better marital adjustment. The manual reports normative data on 400 married couples ($M = 19.54$, $Mdn = 19.70$, $SD = 6.43$). The

distribution was approximately normal, with skewness = .07 and kurtosis = .27. Reported reliability coefficients were acceptable: split-half reliability = .70 and test-retest reliability = .84. Criterion validity with Singh's Marital Adjustment Inventory was $r = .71$.

Statistical Analysis

Source of variation	SS	df	MS	F	p
Years of marriage	322.75	1	322.75	7.81	.01
Gender	37.63	1	37.63	0.91	NS
Years x Gender	0.87	1	0.87	0.02	NS
Error	4796.01	116	41.34		
Total	5157.26	119			

A two-way ANOVA was conducted to examine the effects of years of marriage and gender on marital adjustment. The main effect of years of marriage was significant, $F(1, 116) = 7.81, p = .01$. This indicates that individuals who completed 10 years of marriage showed significantly higher marital adjustment than individuals who completed 5 years of marriage. The main effect of gender was not significant, $F(1, 116) = 0.91, p = NS$. This indicates that men and women did not differ significantly in marital adjustment. The interaction effect of years of marriage and gender was also not significant, $F(1, 116) = 0.02, p = NS$. This indicates that the effect of years of marriage on marital adjustment did not significantly differ between men and women.

The results indicate that years of marriage had a significant effect on marital adjustment. Individuals married for 10 years obtained higher marital adjustment scores than individuals married for 5 years. This suggests that greater marital duration may be associated with better understanding, cooperation, role adaptation, emotional stability, and conflict-management skills. Gender did not show a significant effect on marital adjustment. Although women had a slightly higher mean score than men, the difference was not statistically significant. The interaction between years of marriage and gender was also not significant, meaning that the difference between 5-year and 10-year married individuals was not dependent on gender.

DISCUSSION

The present study examined how years of marriage and gender affect marital adjustment in couples. The results showed that individuals married for 10 years had better marital adjustment than those married for 5 years, supporting the idea that marital adjustment is a developmental process. In early marriage, couples are still learning to navigate each other's personalities, responsibilities, and communication styles. Longer marriages seem to foster mutual understanding, emotional maturity, and improved conflict-resolution skills.

Contrary to expectations, there were no significant gender differences in marital adjustment; both men and women displayed similar levels of adjustment, suggesting that both partners contribute equally to the relationship. Additionally, the interaction between marriage duration and gender was also not significant, indicating that the benefits of longer marriages apply to both genders.

The findings underscore the importance of marital duration in marital adjustment. Couples in the early years may need more support with communication and conflict resolution, suggesting the value of counselling and educational programs to enhance adjustment during this critical period.

CONCLUSION

Years of marriage significantly influence marital adjustment. Individuals who had been married for 10 years showed better marital adjustment than those who had been married for 5 years. Gender

did not significantly influence marital adjustment, and the interaction between years of marriage and gender was also not significant. The findings suggest that marital adjustment improves with longer marriage duration, possibly due to greater understanding, maturity, shared experience, and improved coping skills among spouses.

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