

THE STUDY OF MARITAL ADJUSTMENT OF PARENTS OF DIFFERENTLY ABLED CHILDREN

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Abstract

Marital adjustment is 'the state in which there is an overall feeling of happiness and satisfaction in husband and wife with their marriage and with each other'. By definition Olson and Gorall (2003): Olson and Gorall described marital adjustment as the ability of couples to adapt to the challenges and changes that arise in their relationship over time, including effective problem-solving, communication, and mutual support. The main purpose of present research was to study and compare various dimensions of Marital Adjustment and overall Marital Adjustment of Parents of Differently abled Children. 60 parents, 30 Mothers and 30 Fathers of differently abled children were randomly selected from various Early Intervention Centre and Community, Rehabilitation Centre of Ahmedabad City. The study utilized the Marital Adjustment Questionnaire (1999) scale by Dr. Pramod Kumar and Dr. Kanchan Rohatgi: Use this tool to measure the marital adjustment of parents. The Data was analysed by t-test. Results reveals that significant difference was found between Fathers and Mothers of Differently Abled children in relation to Sexual life and Emotional life of Marital Adjustment. Father's of differently abled children exhibit higher levels of marital adjustment in the sexual aspect of their relationship compared to Mothers of differently abled children. Mothers of differently abled children exhibit higher levels of marital adjustment in the Emotional aspect of their relationship compared to Father of differently abled children. Overall, the Marital Adjustment of Father and Mothers of differently abled children is the same.

Keywords: Differently abled children, Early Intervention Centres, Marital Adjustment, Emotional Life, Sexual Life, Social Life

INTRODUCTION

Marital adjustment describes the accommodation of spouses to each other. Factors contributing to levels of marital adjustment include marital satisfaction, cohesion, agreement, affection, and conflict. Well-adjusted couples are expected to have long-lasting, stable marriages, whereas poorly adjusted marriages are expected to experience instability and/or to end in divorce. Marital adjustment is 'the state in which there is an overall feeling in husband and wife of happiness and satisfaction with their marriage and with each other'.

The term 'Differently Abled' refers to a diverse range of needs often caused by a medical, physical, mental or developmental condition or disability. They can include cognitive difficulties, physical or sensory difficulties, emotional and Behavioral difficulties, and difficulties with speech and language. The journey of parenting, especially for parents of differently abled children, is laden with unique challenges that often extend beyond the conventional roles and responsibilities of parenthood. These challenges can significantly impact the marital relationship, introducing layers of stress, shifts in role dynamics, and intensified emotional demands. In the context of marital adjustment, the relationship between parents raising differently abled children can be influenced by various dimensions, including social, sexual, and emotional aspects, each of which plays a critical role in the quality and resilience of the marital bond.

This study examines the marital adjustment of parents of differently abled children through these three dimensions to provide a more comprehensive understanding of their relational dynamics. The social dimension explores how the demands of caregiving affect the couple's social life, including opportunities for mutual social interaction and external support, which can either buffer or strain the relationship. The sexual dimension delves into how physical intimacy and marital satisfaction are affected, often due to stress, time constraints, and shifts in emotional availability. Finally, the

emotional dimension assesses how partners provide and receive emotional support, maintain empathy, and manage stress, all of which are essential for nurturing marital harmony amidst the caregiving journey.

By examining these specific dimensions, this research seeks to highlight the multi-faceted impact of raising a differently abled child on the marital relationship. Through a detailed analysis, the study aims to identify the unique challenges, coping strategies, and resilience factors that contribute to marital adjustment. Ultimately, this research hopes to provide valuable insights and resources that support parents in enhancing their marital bond while meeting the demands of raising a differently abled child.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Dr Manjula V and Sahla Mumthaz PM (2022) studied marital adjustment among parents of children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and how the child's level of ADHD is affecting parent's emotional intelligence and marital adjustment. Parents completed a range of questionnaires in Kerala-wide study of 30 parents of children with ADHD. The relationship between emotional intelligence and marital adjustment and child level of ADHD were tested using correlational method. A positive correlation was found between emotional intelligence and marital adjustment among the parents and there was no effect of child's level of ADHD on parent's level of emotional intelligence and marital adjustment.

Karadeniz, Gülçin & Balkan, İdil & Gazioglu, Nesteren & Duman, Nesrin & Elmas, Esra & Eyrenci, Aslı & Tug, Sureyya. (2015) studied Marital Adjustment among Parents of Children with Developmental Disabilities. The main aim of this study was to compare the marital adjustment between parents of children with developmental disabilities and parents of same-aged children without disabilities. The sample of the study consist of two groups of the parents (74 parents in each group) that are living in Istanbul, having 5-8year old children from an ongoing marriage. Participants completed demographic questionnaire and Dyadic Adjustment Scale. Results revealed that there is no significant differences between family groups in their marital adjustment ($p>.05$). With regard to differentiation of the scores of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) among different gender groups, no significant difference was found.

Ms. Harshita Goyal and Ms. Sneha Narayan (March 2024) Explored the Role of Emotional Intelligence in Marital Adjustment A complicated interpersonal relationship based on shared life experiences, emotional closeness, and mutual support is represented by marriage. Emotional intelligence, or emotional quotient, or EQ is defined as the capacity to recognize, utilize, and control your own emotions to reduce stress, communicate clearly, sympathize with others, overcome obstacles, and diffuse conflict. The process of knowing one another and functioning as partners rather than as two separate people is known as marital adjustment, which is how married couples adapt to their newly defined roles. This study clarifies the complex relationship between emotional intelligence and marital adjustment by thoroughly examining empirical research, theoretical frameworks, and practical consequences. It takes a complex effort and a variety of elements, including differences in emotional intelligence, to achieve marital satisfaction and adjustment. Research has shown that individuals with higher emotional intelligence tend to have better marital adjustment. The study emphasizes how emotional intelligence improves empathy, effective communication, and conflict resolution in couples. The findings' implications for couples looking to enhance their marital adjustment are also covered.

Zahra alayia *, Teymor AhmadiGatabb , Ali Babaei Zad Khamen studied the relationship between parents' marital adjustment with children's physical and psychological health. To do this, 154 students (80 girls and 74 boys) were selected randomly through cluster sampling from the azad university. Dyadic Adjustment Scale was used for measuring parents' marital adjustment and S-F36 Health Survey Questionnaire was used to measure children's General Health. The results of regression analysis showed that these components were mostly significant in relation with physical and psychological health of children: Fathers's and Mothers's dyadic satisfaction and Fathers's rearing style The relationship between parents' marital adjustment, parents' rearing style and health of children in azad university Zahra alayia *, Teymor AhmadiGatabb , Ali Babaei Zad Khamence Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences 30 (2011) 1969 – 1975 Available online at www.sciencedirect.com 1877-0428 © 2011 Published by Elsevier Ltd. Selection and/or peer-review under responsibility of the 2nd World Conference on Psychology, Counselling and Guidance. doi: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2011.10.382 Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences 00

Sara Miftari Sadiki studied comparing marital adjustment among parents of children with special needs and parents of children with normal development. Methodology: The research sample was purposefully selected and divided into two groups (15 parents of children with special needs and 15 parents of children with normal development). Both groups of parents are from Gostivar, North Macedonia. MAT questionnaire, consisting of 15 items, was applied. Result: It resulted with reliability coefficient Alpha Cronbach 0.71. The t-test results (30) =3.32; p show that there are statistically significant differences concerning the marital adjustment among parents of children with special needs and parents of children with normal development. Moreover, based on ANOVA with sig=0.01, statistically significant differences were found regarding the educational level of parents with children with special needs and those of children with normal development.

F J Floyd¹, D E Zmich studied the quality of the parents' marital bond and their ability to work together in the parenting role were examined for the parents of school-aged children (ages 6-18) with mild and moderate mental retardation (n = 38) and a comparable group of parents of typically developing children (n = 34). Significantly more negative functioning for the parents of mentally retarded children was observed during marital interactions, and parent-child interactions but was not reflected in their self-reports of marriage and parenting, suggesting that expectations about marital and parenting strains may modulate negative sentiments for these parents. Across both groups, marital quality and the parenting partnership, together with child behavior problems, accounted for 23% to 53% of the variance in parenting confidence and in aversive parent-child exchanges. Negative marital interaction was a particularly important predictor of aversive parent-child exchanges.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

In present study the researcher has tried to study and compare various aspects of Marital Adjustment such as Social, Sexual, Emotional aspect and overall Marital Adjustment between Fathers and Mothers of differently abled children.

OBJECTIVES

1. To assess and compare the Social Aspect as one of the dimensions of Marital Adjustment of Fathers and Mothers of differently abled children.
2. To assess and compare the Sexual Aspect as one of the dimensions of Marital Adjustment of Fathers and Mothers of differently abled children.
3. To assess and compare the Emotional Aspect as one of the dimensions of Marital Adjustment of Fathers and Mothers of differently abled children.
4. To assess and compare the overall Marital Adjustment of Fathers and Mothers of differently abled children.

HYPOTHESIS

Ho₁ There is no significant difference between Father and Mothers of differently abled children in relation to the social aspect of Marital Adjustment.

Ho₂ There is no significant difference between Father and Mothers of differently abled children in relation to the sexual aspect of Marital Adjustment

Ho₃ There is no significant difference between Father and Mothers of differently abled children in relation to the Emotional aspect of Marital Adjustment

Ho₄ There is no significant difference between Father and Mothers of differently abled children in relation to the Overall Marital Adjustment.

METHOD

❖ Sample:

Total 60 parents of Differently Abled Children (30 Father and 30 Mothers) were randomly selected from different Institutes such as Early Intervention Centres and Hospital for Mental Health.

❖ Tool:

In present research for data collection the Marital Adjustment Questionnaire (1999) by Dr. Pramod Kumar and Dr. Kanchan Rohatgi was used which assess various aspects of Marital Adjustment such as Sexual Adjustment, Social and Emotional. This scale has demonstrated strong reliability and validity in previous research. This tool measured various aspects of Marital Adjustment levels among parents.

❖ Administration and Scoring:

The required permission was taken from the organisation to collect data. Objectives of the research were explained to Authority of the organisation. Permission was taken from the authority before meeting each parent. Each parent was explained the confidentiality of the entire research. Written consent was taken from each parent. During each data collection every aspect was explained in details. After establishing the rapport with each participant of the research, emotional intelligent test was administered in individual setting. After completion of data collection scoring of Marital Adjustment scale was done as per the Scoring Key of manual of this scale. Data was arranged in appropriate tabulated form for Data Analysis.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Mean, SD and t-test was used for data analysis. Each hypothesis was tested at 0.01 and 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table showing Mean SD and t-value of Various aspects of Marital Adjustment of Fathers and Mothers of Differently Abled Children

Dimension of Marital Adjustment	Group	N	Mean	SD	"t"	Level of Significance
Social Adjustment	Fathers	30	14.77	1.50	0.19	NS
	Mothers	30	14.87	2.30		
Sexual Adjustment	Fathers	30	6.13	1.98	2.36	0.05
	Mothers	30	4.52	2.98		
Emotional Adjustment	Fathers	30	14.33	5.96	2.93	0.01
	Mothers	30	18.33	4.48		
Overall Adjustment	Fathers	30	35.23	5.91	1.85	NS
	Mothers	30	38.23	6.59		

S Above Table explains Mean SD and t- value of Various aspects of Marital Adjustment of Fathers and Mothers of Differently Abled Children.

The t-value of Fathers and Mothers in Social life is 0.19 which is not significant, so the null hypothesis "There is no significant difference between Father and Mothers of differently abled children in relation to the social aspect of Marital Adjustment" is accepted. Results indicate that there is no significant difference in the level of marital adjustment in the social aspect between Mothers and Father of differently abled children. Mean scores of Social Life of Fathers and Mothers of differently abled children are 14.77 and 14.87 with SD 1.50 and 2.30 respectively.

The t-value of Fathers and Mothers on sexual life is 2.36 which is significant at 0.05, so the null hypothesis "There is no significant difference between Father and Mothers of differently abled children in relation to the sexual aspect of Marital Adjustment" is rejected. It means significant difference exists between Fathers and Mothers of differently abled children in relation to Sexual Aspect of Marital Adjustment. Mean scores of Sexual life of Fathers and Mothers are 6.13 and 4.52 with SD 1.98 and 2.98 respectively. Results indicate Father of differently abled children may exhibit higher levels of marital adjustment in the sexual aspect of their relationship compared to Mothers of differently abled children.

The t-value of Fathers and Mothers in Emotional aspect of Marital Adjustment is 2.93 which is significant at 0.01 level, so the null hypothesis "There is no significant difference between Father and Mothers of differently abled children in relation to the Emotional aspect of Marital Adjustment" Is rejected. It means significant difference exists between Fathers and Mothers of differently abled children in relation to Emotional aspect of Marital Adjustment. Mean scores of Emotional of Fathers and Mothers are 14.33 and 18.33 with SD 5.96 and 4.48 respectively. Results indicate Mothers of differently abled children may exhibit higher levels of marital adjustment in the Emotional aspect of their relationship compared to Mothers of differently abled children.

The t-value of Father and Mothers on Overall Marital Adjustment is 1.85 which is not significant, so the null hypothesis "There is no significant difference between Father and Mothers of differently abled children in relation to the Overall Marital Adjustment" is accepted. It means significant difference does not exist between Fathers and Mothers of differently abled children in relation to overall Marital Adjustment. Mean scores of Overall Marital Adjustment of Fathers and Mothers are 35.23 and 38.23 with SD 5.91 and 6.59 respectively.

In examining marital adjustment among parents of differently abled children, research reveals nuanced differences in how Mothers and Father navigate aspects of their relationship under unique pressures. Findings indicate that Father may exhibit higher levels of marital adjustment in the sexual aspect of their relationship compared to Mothers. Studies show that Father may feel more satisfied than Mothers with the sexual side of their relationship. Father often views physical intimacy as a way to stay connected and relieve some of the stress that comes with caring for a differently abled child. In many cases, society also encourages men to see physical closeness as a key part of a happy marriage. Meanwhile, Mothers, who often take on most of the daily caregiving tasks, may feel more tired and stressed, which can affect their interest or satisfaction with the sexual aspect of the relationship. Additionally, cultural expectations sometimes lead Father to prioritize physical intimacy as an outlet for emotional support. In contrast, Mothers, who frequently take on primary caregiving responsibilities, may experience greater stress and fatigue, which can impact their focus on the sexual aspect of marital satisfaction.

On the other hand, Mothers of differently abled children tend to demonstrate higher marital adjustment in the emotional dimension. This may be linked to the central role they often play in managing the child's daily needs, which intensifies their capacity for emotional connection and communication within the family. Women are frequently socialized to value emotional closeness and, in this context, often build strong emotional support systems that foster resilience in the marriage. This emotional adjustment can help Mothers navigate the complex challenges associated with caregiving, enhancing their overall marital satisfaction.

In the social aspect of marital adjustment, there is no significant difference between Mothers and Father of differently abled children. Both parents seem to experience similar levels of satisfaction in their social lives, likely due to shared interactions and community connections related to caregiving. The challenges they face in raising a differently abled child can encourage a collaborative approach, leading to a similar social experience for both. This shared social support network helps maintain stability and satisfaction, allowing both parents to feel equally supported and understood by each other and by their community.

When it comes to overall marital adjustment, research also shows no significant difference between Mothers and Father. Despite individual variations in sexual and emotional aspects, the overall quality of their partnership remains balanced. The shared responsibilities of caregiving can strengthen their bond, fostering a sense of teamwork and purpose. For parents of differently abled children, working together to support their child's needs creates a mutual understanding and respect that contributes to overall marital satisfaction, helping them face challenges as a united front.

CONCLUSION

- Significant difference does not exist between Fathers and Mothers of differently abled children in relation to the social aspect of overall Marital Adjustment.
- Significant difference exists between Fathers and Mothers of differently abled children in relation to Sexual Aspect of Marital Adjustment. Results indicate Father of differently abled children may exhibit higher levels of marital adjustment in the sexual aspect of their relationship compared to Mothers of differently abled children.
- Significant difference exists between Fathers and Mothers of differently abled children in relation to Emotional aspect of Marital Adjustment. Mothers of differently abled children may exhibit higher levels of marital adjustment in the Emotional aspect of their relationship compared to Father of differently abled children.
- Significant difference does not exist between Fathers and Mothers of differently abled children in relation to overall Marital Adjustment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Provide couple counseling sessions to address differences in emotional and sexual aspects of marital adjustment.
- Organize support groups for mothers and fathers to enhance emotional resilience and mutual understanding.
- Conduct workshops on improving intimacy and communication in marital relationships.
- Promote joint activities and shared responsibilities to strengthen overall marital adjustment.

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