

Understanding Emotionally Intelligent Spouses: Role of Emotional Intelligence in Marital Adjustment

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ABSTRACT

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is a widely studied concept given its proven effectiveness in helping individuals lean on positive ways to identify and manage their emotions and that of those around them. The factors associated with EI such as emotional self-control, emotional self-awareness or empathy are also crucial requisites for a successful marriage. Hence, the current study aimed to explore EI in the light of understanding how couples adjust in relationships, especially early on, when conflict resolution and effective communication play a vital role in establishing a healthy marriage. Marital adjustment (MA) is a central area of research due to its complex nature and understanding how it is influenced by EI was an area of interest. 80 married individuals (40 males and 40 females) were recruited for the study as participants through a convenient and snowball sampling technique. Data collection was done using two questionnaires: Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS) and the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scales (R-DAS). Additionally, a set of subjective questions were posed along with demographic questions for the deeper understanding of participants. Analysis of the data resulted in key findings indicating: a weak significance in relationship between EI and MA component 'consensus', no significance in relationship between EI with MA components 'satisfaction' and 'cohesion'. While gender differences resulted in women indicating a better relationship between EI and MA as compared to the male participants. Additional findings have been clubbed together in themes, providing a deeper insight into the dynamics of a marital relationship, such as: conflict resolution for marriage or tracing strength in adverse times. This information can serve as a basis for further research or future implications by marriage and relationship experts.

Keywords: *Emotional Intelligence, Marital Adjustment, Marital Quality, Conflict Resolution, Positive Psychology, Indian Married Individuals*

Marriage is considered to be the most sacred relationship in India, with husband and wife forming integral pillars of the family structure. Amidst the latest trends of late marriage and children, nuclear families, both partners working, increased divorce rates, it's important to study how marital quality is being affected. Rather than focusing on situational factors, it is interesting to discern how individual differences in the

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emotional intelligence (EI) of married partners contribute towards quality of their relationship.

Two companions committed in a monogamous relationship, going through all their ups and downs of life together, form a profound emotional connection and can also build a powerful attachment to one another. Research that gravitates towards understanding the delicate balance it takes to work on this bond, as well as positive attributes like 'emotional intelligence' can be inculcated to protect this relationship, which is extremely essential in today's time.

During the COVID-19 global pandemic, a lot of couples found it taxing to live under the same roof constantly, with domestic violence at an all time high. Understanding how marital adjustment was impacted in these times of emotional turmoil is of great value. The main research question that comes up is : did having emotional intelligence act as the superhero for married couples to understand or adjust to each other in these tumultuous times? What is the secret to a healthy marriage?

Although this topic has been researched before, this study aims to focus only on couples who have been married less than 7 years. The reason being the fact that the need to adjust to one another is at it's peak, with many challenges, such as, cohabitation, relationships with in laws, family planning, and building careers being some of the highlights of this duration. It is also important to note that arranged marriages are very common in Indian culture, wherein you must adjust to a person you may not have known for long, who may carry a completely different set of values and beliefs as you, which is no easy feat.

A longitudinal study at Harvard, on happiness, followed 724 men since they were teenagers in 1938. They found that a happy marriage is one of the main contributors of long term happiness, holding this as the truth, we must work towards finding how we make this relationship a healthy one.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence (EI), also known as Emotional quotient (EQ), is the capability of individuals to recognise their own emotions and those of others, accurately discerning between different feelings and labelling them appropriately, use emotional information to guide thinking and behaviour, and manage and/or adjust emotions to adapt to environments or achieve one's goal.

Emotional intelligence is the ability to identify and manage your own emotions and the emotions of others. It is generally said to include at least three skills: emotional awareness; the ability to harness emotions and apply them to tasks like thinking and problem solving; and the ability to manage emotions, which includes regulating your own emotions and cheering up or calming down other people. Being equipped with emotional intelligence enables one to learn to acknowledge and understand feelings in ourselves and in others and appropriately respond to them. Effectively applying this information and utilising the energy of emotions can positively impact our daily life and work.

Mayer and Salovey (1993) defined emotional intelligence as the ability to monitor one's own and other's feelings and emotions to discriminate among them, and to use this

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information to guide one's thinking and action. Cooper and Sawaf (1997) defined emotional intelligence as the ability to sense, understand and effectively apply the power and acumen of emotions as source of human energy, information, connection and influence.

Emotional intelligence forms the juncture at which cognition and emotion meet, it facilitates our capacity for resilience, motivation, empathy, reasoning, stress management, communication, as well as our ability to read and navigate a plethora of social situations, including conflict. EI matters, and if cultivated correctly, affords one the opportunity to live a more fulfilled and happy life.

Emotional Intelligence and its Components

Emotional intelligence (EI) is generally said to identify and manage one's emotional level or status and of others. It involves emotional problem solving, emotional awareness, and many other qualities related to our emotions. An emotionally intelligent person knows his/her emotional drawbacks along with emotional strengths. Though the term emotional intelligence had been discussed since 1964 it gained popularity and acceptance in 1995 after the publication of the book named "Emotional Intelligence" by Daniel Goleman (Schutte & Malouff, 2011).

One of the factors that contribute significantly to building appropriate mental health is Emotional Intelligence. Salovey and Mayer (1995) first defined Emotional Intelligence. They defined EI as an ability of a person to monitor his/her own and others' emotions (Salovey, Mayer, Goldman, Turvey, & Palfai, 1995).

This ability helps an individual to restrain negative feelings such as self-doubt, anger, anxiety, and stress. The sensitivity, empathy, emotional quotient, and resilience of people positively contribute to overcoming the crisis and stress in life. The more is the defense system like resilience and positive psychology, the less the possibility to suffer from depression and stress affecting mental well-being (Davydov et al., 2010).

Research shows that emotions, properly managed, can drive trust, loyalty, and commitment which induce gain in productivity, innovations, and achievements at individuals, as well as the organizational level (Cooper, 1997). This is a category of social intelligence that can be learned, developed, and improved and which lets people recognize their emotions along with others, enabling them to choose appropriate thinking and action.

Daniel Goleman emphasizes some factors associated with EI which are emotional self-control, adaptability, positive outlook, achievement orientation, emotional self-awareness, organizational awareness or social awareness, conflict management, empathy, etc. To develop inspirational leadership balance of these qualities is needed most. Self-rating and external feedback systems help to assess EI properly in organizational culture. Before Daniel Goleman, EI was considered to be a trait but now it is established as an ability that can be developed by practice and training. According to Goleman EI is not an innate quality but an acquired ability (Goleman, 2001).

For many decades of years, emotion and cognition are treated as two completely separate concepts. But the concept of EI revolutionizes and established the fact that emotion and cognition are interdependent and interlinked. EI is all about perception and expression in which appraisal plays a pivotal role. There are mainly three models of EI – performance-

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based ability model, self-report ability model or trait model, and self-report mixed model (Gutiérrez-Cobo et al., 2017).

The performance-based ability model was developed by Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso and it is also known as the four branch model. They suggested that EI is the ability to perceive emotion, use emotion to facilitate thought, understand emotions and manage emotions. Perception of emotion is the ability to identify different emotional expressions, which can be verbal or non-verbal. The second branch helps us to evoke thinking and ultimately enhances the power of decision-making. The third branch helps us to understand and analyze emotions and finally classify them in their particular category which helps us in our future actions. The fourth branch deals with emotional self-management which can only be attained after gaining sufficient self-knowledge (Salovey et al., 2003)

Marital Adjustment

Marital adjustment has been a central area of discussion that attracts attention of researchers in the area of relationship counselling. The importance given to studies about this subject are related with the possibility of marital problems, maladjustment and its impact on well-being of married individuals, the relation of marital happiness and life satisfaction (Bayraktaroğlu & Çakıcı, 2013). While marital adjustment provides continuity of the marriage, marital maladjustment and discord might lead to numerous other problems. Emery, R., Hetherington, E. and DiLalla, L (1984) found that the main reason reported by married individuals experiencing discord was interpersonal problems, leading to poor marital adjustment among majority of them.

In another study by Badgujar (2014), it was found that couples that had a love marriage had better marital adjustment than couples that had an arranged marriage. Along with this passionate love, marital love, trust and marital adjustment were found to be positively correlated. Problems experienced in marriage not only cause health problems but also causes difficulty in child rearing, development of problematic attachment between children and parents, conflicts between siblings, and divorce. Studies show that adjustment is also affected by interpersonal communication, empathy and problem solving abilities. The above literature explains the relevance of situational factors which significantly influence the dyadic or marital adjustment.

Stages of Marriages and their Importance

Every married couple experiences at least 3 stages that include, romantic love, distraction and disillusionment, and adjustment. The adjustment stages can be either done with contentment or with resignation (Harris, 2015).

The years prior to the marriage and a couple of years after the marriage consists of stage 1. In this stage, the feeling of romance and passion is high among the partners. In the next stage, couples become disillusioned the reality of the situation struck them hard and they try hard to stay happy and focused. In this phase, couples start balancing their work-life with children, finances, and other activities. The quality of time spent with each other decreases in this stage and eventually the communication also decreases resulting in communication gap creation (Harris, 2015).

Stage 3 eventually happens as couples decide whether or not they would like to continue their marriages. The fact is that over 40 percent of couples finally plan to break their marital

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unions. The majority prefer to adapt with happiness or resignation to marriage, the latter resigning themselves to the fact that their relationships are probably not going to get any better. However, many the married couples decide to work on their marital friendships by working on their knowledge and skills about relationships (Harris, 2015).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Emotional intelligence is an umbrella term that usually describes an individual's ability to understand and effectively apply the power of emotions. The individual differences in emotional intelligence among married individuals contribute significantly to maintaining the quality of their relationships. The concept of marital adjustments has been studied for a very long period mainly because this is the key protecting factor in any given marriage (Arshad et al., 2015).

In India, marriages are considered as one of the sacred relationships where husband and wife form two pillars in the integral family structures. However, the latest trends of late marriages, nuclear families, and changes in the working scenarios have greatly affected marital quality. Hence, it was become important to study the role of EI in the maintenance of marital quality among Indian married couples. Previous studies have shown that emotional intelligence is associated with marital adjustments (Batool & Kbalid, 2009).

The quality of marriage depends mainly on several theoretical concepts associated with emotional intelligence. The recognition capacity, understanding, and emotional management are strongly associated with emotional intelligence. The structure of EI as described by Salovey and Mayer stressed the point that by understanding the emotional need of others, emotionally intelligent people can control better their emotions. Moreover, this can also prove to be important in marriage therapy. Emotional intelligence can be taught and with improvement in their skills, they can communicate better among themselves (Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

Marital satisfaction of couples' intimate relationships requires communication skills that include paying attention to other's viewpoints, being sensitive and aware of other person's emotional needs, and empathizing with the experiences of their partners (Nasiri Zarch et al., 2014).

The marital adjustments and quality of the married life in couples are often considered the same as happiness and satisfaction. The marital adjustment can significantly affect the quality of the marriage. Since adjustments are a part of relationships of marital partners instead of sentiments experienced by both. Such signs of adjustment as a dispute, disagreement, communication, and working together on various tasks may contribute differently to the feelings of the marital partners in separate marriages, or even different to the feelings of the spouse in the same marriage. Marital adjustment is relatively linked to the same marital satisfaction and adjustment literature; both lit up (A.a & Akram, 2009)

Emotional Intelligence and Marital Adjustment

Many studies done across various cultures have provided significant evidence that Emotional Intelligence and marital adjustment are notably linked. We often find that EI has been suggested to be a primary factor in adjustment to life in general and workplace in particular (Goleman,1995). Later on, Goleman (1998) proposed a strong relation between EI and successful conflict resolution in interpersonal relationships. He stressed the importance

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of 'empathy' in romantic relationships. The trend of broken marriages and divorce has pushed researchers to study the role of emotional intelligence in marital relationships, as it emphasises the positive steps that can be taken to achieve secure relationships. How emotional forces between husband and wife operate is the leading factor affecting marital quality. Rifts in marital life are more likely to develop if one or both partners have deficient emotional intelligence.

Fitness (2001) has given paramount importance to EI in intimate relationships, especially to the positive association between emotional clarity and marital happiness, deeming a successful marriage as an "emotionally intelligent marriage". He goes on to suggest that, higher EI might enable people to more effectively manage delicate emotional negotiation (e.g., seeking and granting forgiveness), and that happiness in a relationship may depend upon each partner's ability to cope constructively with conflict, coupled with understanding and managing negative emotions like anger and hate. According to Fitness, the ability to 'say sorry' and practice forbearance needs certain emotional skills, like empathy, self-control, and a highly serviceable understanding of human needs and feelings.

Bricker and Rudnick (2005) found that self-reported overall emotional intelligence is significantly correlated with marital satisfaction. The study also reported that appropriate interpersonal skills were needed to resolve conflict and foster intimacy between partners. These skills have shown to be important in determining successful marital outcome.

Lavalekar (2007) explored the core traits of EI, namely; openness to criticism, self-management and empathy of married partners in Maharashtra and found to affect the marital relationship positively.

Joshi and Thingujam (2009) after research on 60 married couples in India concluded that emotionally intelligent couples are more capable of handling and adjusting to their marital life. In their communication style, they are better able to understand spoken and unspoken words. Their ability to effectively deal with their own and others' emotions make them able to manage their conflicts. By "utilizing emotions", they can create happiness for their spouse.

Batool and Khaild (2012) conducted a study in Pakistan to show whether emotional intelligence predicts marital quality. The results revealed that emotional intelligence significantly predicts marital adjustment. The findings show a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and indicators of marital quality, the components of which are marital adjustment and conflict resolution. Some of the factors that were salient predictors of marital quality were interpersonal skills, empathy, optimism, and impulse control.

It is possible to describe marital adjustments as the mental state between couples in which there is a general feeling of pleasure and happiness contentment with their marriage. It, therefore, calls for a satisfactory experience. Spousal partnership, characterized by shared interest, treatment, comprehension, and acceptance (Arshad et al., 2015).

The different characteristics of marital satisfaction will be identified, such as the agreement between partners on matters important to the relationship, satisfaction with the current state of the relationship and commitment to its continuation, the expression of affection and sex in

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the relationship, and the mutual interests and activities of the couple. Marital adjustment is described as the situation in which there is a feeling of contentment in both partners (Hashmi et al., 2007).

The concept of marital adjustments was theorized long back. A total of 14 assumptions regarding marital adjustments was made in a model provided by Burgess and Cottrell in 1939. It involves different adjustments in marriages that involve the extent of the partner's satisfaction in their marriage (King, 1952).

In another study, the role of EI in newlywed couples was investigated. In this study total of 100 heterosexual couples were included. Two scales namely Mayer–Salovey–Caruso emotional intelligence test (MSCEIT), and the Schutte self-report inventory (SSRI) was recruited. The EI measured in this study showed “actor effects” but failed to show any “partner effects”. This study thus showed that EI cannot predict romantic love. Whereas in dyadic tests, skill-based and self-report measures demonstrate the same pattern of a relationship with romantic love, measure-dependent are the magnitudes of outcome relationships as well as the correlations of EI with verbal ability. EI was not linked to marital partners, thereby presenting no proof of assortative mating for EI (Zeidner & Kaluda, 2008). Pandey and Anand (2010) reported that the EI of the wife is significantly associated with the health of the husband. In this study, 32 couples were included and their EI, marital adjustments, and health were investigated using a self-reported questionnaire. This study reported that the subjective well-being of the participants was correlated with emotional intelligence. Marital adjustment of a spouse was positively associated with a higher level of EI. This study reported that both the partner's EI is correlated well with the health and the subjective well-being of the counterpart (Pandey & Anand, 2010).

Dilder et al (2012) have pointed out that many factors affect marital adjustments including career decisions, religious commitments, and other factors. All these components together had a significant impact on the marital adjustments. In their study, they have also stressed emotionally intelligent couples tend to be more adjusted in their personal life and try to understand each other with more ease. They have also shown that perception of emotion and its regulation is important to live a happy and content life. Couples who are low in emotional intelligence face more problems. Communication and cohesion between the partners are also important to live a happy and healthy life (Dildar et al., 2012)

Role of Spouse's EI level and Marital Adjustment

In a study, Mary and Adhikari (2012) have evaluated the relationship between EI and marital quality and the sections of the EI that can predict the marital quality among couples in Bangalore, India. In this study total of 44 heterosexual couples were included. The marital quality scale and EI inventory were used for measuring the quality of marriage and EI respectively. This study reported a positive correlation between EI and marital satisfaction. The most common predictor among different domains of EI, interpersonal awareness was the most common one to be associated with marital quality (Mary & Adhikari, 2012).

A study conducted by Tabinda and Amina (2013) reported that emotional intelligence is associated with marital adjustments. In this study, they have also investigated the effect of EI on infertility. In this study total of 120 fertile and 120 infertile women were included. This study reported that in both groups EI is associated with marital adjustments. Moreover,

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fertile women had higher marital adjustment compared with infertile women (Jalil & Muazzam, 2013).

Hajihassani and Sim (2019) in a study investigated the role of marital satisfaction with emotional intelligence in newlywed women in Iran. In this study total of 194 newlywed women were included and their marital satisfaction score, religious orientation score, and EI score were collected. Marital satisfaction and EI showed a significant association. This study reported that EI can predict marital satisfaction among women. This study thus pointed out that understanding factors associated with marital satisfaction can significantly improve the amount of marital satisfaction among newlywed early married women in Iran (Hajihassani & Sim, 2019).

Self-awareness and Marital Quality

Another important component of emotional intelligence is self-awareness. Studies have previously reported that self-awareness and marital success are depended on each other. Self-consciousness and self-disclosure was shown to be associated with marital satisfaction (Batool & Kbalid, 2009)

Lahiji and Reza (2018) investigated the effect of self-awareness of the spouse and its predictive ability for marital satisfaction. In this study, it was reported that marital satisfaction has a significant association with sexual heterosexuality (Ajeli Lahiji & Reza Zakeri, 2018).

Croyole and Waltz (2002) in their study assessed the role of emotional awareness and its effects on marital satisfaction among different couples. Moreover, they have also investigated the responses of these couples in the situations of soft versus hard emotions. In this heterosexual couples (n=56) were included. This study indicated that women are more emotionally aware when compared with their male counterparts. Decreased relationship satisfaction was reported in women with higher emotional awareness. However, this finding was not observed in men (Croyle & Waltz, 2002).

Role of Communication in Marriage

Communication is another factor that can predict marital satisfaction among couples. The expression of feelings toward each other predicts the present quality of the relationships. In a study conducted over a period of 4 years by Karney and Bradbury (1997) among newlywed couples, the association of marital quality was evaluated. They have reported that negative communication in the initial period can predict dissatisfaction at a later stage (Karney & Bradbury, 1997).

Cordova et al (2005) have shown that emotional skillfulness has a significant role in marriages. This study reported that communication of emotions is associated with both partner and self marital adjustments. the intimate safety of both the partners also is associated with emotional skills and marital adjustments. They have also reported that gender has a role in the communication of emotions. Furthermore, it also affects the marital adjustments among couples. This study supported that maintenance of own emotional expressions and one's ability to identify and manage emotions significantly affects the marital adjustments (Cordova et al., 2005).

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Vazhappilly and Reyes (2016) examined communication as the predictor of marital satisfaction. In this study, married couples (n=82) were included and the results were recorded using communication inventory was used for recording the communication between the couples. The Dyadic Adjustment Scale was used for measuring marital satisfaction along with the Locke–Wallace Marital Adjustment Test. Analysis of the data showed that 90.4% of the marital satisfaction variance in the study can be accounted for by communication among couples. This study thus clearly indicated that communication among couples plays a significant role in marital satisfaction (Vazhappilly & Reyes, 2016).

Haris and Kumar (2018) evaluated marital satisfaction and its association with communication. In this study total of 50 couples consisting of 50 men and women were included. The interpersonal communication between all the participants was evaluated using an interpersonal communication inventory. A marital satisfaction scale was used for the determination of marital quality. All the demographic parameters associated with the study results were also evaluated. The study result highlighted the importance of gender on marital satisfaction (Haris & Kumar, 2018).

Optimism and management of emotions and its role in marital adjustments

The role of optimism in healthy marital life was reported in many of the previous studies. A study conducted by Assad et al (2007) indicated that optimism is linked with marital satisfaction for the maintenance of romantic relationships. This happens mainly because of the increase in cooperative problem-solving. In a 2 year interval period, optimism predicted a relative increase in marital satisfaction (Assad et al., 2007).

Optimism helps couples in conflict management and solving problems by looking at the positive aspect. It can also be assumed that optimists see the brighter side of any situation and thus can face any adverse situation with a happy face. This is the main reason behind their well-adjusted marital life. Optimists can be believed to see the brighter sides of conditions and not lose faith even in the face of hardship, which is why they are well adapted and happy in their marital relationships (Batool & Khalid, 2012).

Batool and Khalid (2012) have shown that among the predictors of emotional intelligence empathy, optimism, interpersonal skills, and effective impulse control can significantly be associated with marital adjustments. In this study role of other demographic variables such as age, family system, monthly income, and duration of marriage was not found to be associated with the quality of marriage. In this study, married couples in the range of 3 years to 10 years were included. Further, this study also reported an association of EI with marital adjustments (Batool & Khalid, 2012).

Role of Impulse Control and Empathy in Marital Adjustment

Empathy is the ability to feel the mental state of another person. An emotionally intelligent person must have the power of self-assessment, self-regulation, social awareness, relationship management skills, effective communication, and compassion (Goleman, 2001). In a study conducted among the Italian population, it was reported that empathy is a better predictor of forgiveness. However, this study reported no association of forgiveness with marital quality (Fincham et al., 2002).

Hostility can have a deleterious effect on any relationship. Through psychosocial vulnerability including the deterioration of the quality of close relationships, hostility can

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have varied effects on relationships. Baron et al (2007) reported that the anger and hostility of married couples are related to the quality of the marriage. It was found that the wife's anger was associated with the change in the marital adjustments (Baron et al., 2007).

Importance of EI in Conflict resolution

The importance of EI in conflict management among couples highlighted that couples with lower EI have higher relationship dissatisfaction and have an increased incidence of conflicts. On the other hand, couples with higher EI have lower dissatisfaction and lower conflict incidences. In a study conducted by Stolarski et al (2011), the relationship between conflict management and emotional intelligence was investigated. In this study total of 164 heterosexual couples were included. Self-reported, as well as partner-reported behavior, was recorded. This study hypothesizes that a person with higher EI will have superior conflict resolution skills. Interestingly, this study reported that among women, EI was positively related to conflict management. The EI of women was consistently positively linked to voice's self-report measures and negatively linked to Neglect's self-reports. The use of more proactive or optimistic conflict resolution styles was not declared by emotionally intelligent men; however, their female partners considered them to be more susceptible to using those techniques (Stolarski et al., 2011).

Role of EI in Couple Therapy

Marital therapy is advised to many of the married couples for improvement in their relationship. The marital therapy is done in the context of financial causes, child related problems, issues related with the sexual concerns, and issues of trust or cheating. Many of the therapists believe that lack of EI can be a factor that deteriorates the marital satisfaction (Fitness, 2001). It was also believed that emotionally focused therapies are more effective compared to the non-focused ones. The key changes that happens in therapy is noted when one partner expresses the fear and needs and other partner supports the same feeling (Batool & Kbalid, 2009).

Conclusion

It is evident from the past literature that persons with higher EI have better interpersonal relationships. Emotionally intelligent married couples have a better ability to understand, respect, and honor the self-respect of their partners. This points out that among emotionally intelligent married couples the level of marital adjustments is also higher. The several theories available for EI explained that a person who can understand his or her partner's feeling is called emotionally intelligent (Pandey & Anand, 2010).

The abilities to accurately perceive and identify emotions vary among different individuals. Some individuals can be highly sensitive to other emotions, identifying their partners automatically, such as a slight nonverbal signal like a frown, for example. Others may be utterly indifferent to the feelings of their spouse. They may have no idea that their partner is angry, sad, or jealous, for example.

Finally, they can act in a certain way because they are able to control and handle their own and others' emotions. As per the model of Mayer et al. (2004), a combination of the four branches is required to control, understand and handle one's feelings (Mayer et al., 2004). Therefore, when other variables such as intelligence and personality were accounted for, greater marital satisfaction was attributed to EI. This can be understood by analyzing the basic abilities required for marital satisfaction and adaptation.

METHODOLOGY

Hypothesis of the Study

The following hypothesis are proposed for this study:

1. There will be a significant impact of emotional intelligence on marital adjustment
2. Women with high emotional intelligence will be better adjusted in their marriages as compared to men.

Research design

This is a primary quantitative research, where data was collected directly by asking participants to fill in two psychometric scales online presented in a form along with subjective questions for further contextual understanding. The data collected was checked for reliability by calculating Chronbach's alpha for both psychometric instruments used on the specific sample size. Statistical tools of Pearson's correlation were used to acquire results along with coding subjective questions for themes and stories to be drawn out to better understand the data collected.

Participants

The sample is a total of 80 married individuals (N=80) for this study. This sample is further divided into 40 male and 40 female as only heterosexual couples were approached in the study. The sample was narrowed down by propositioning couples who have been married for less than 7 years. The reason for this is to control the 'duration of marriage' as well as keep 'age' in a similar bracket. The initial years of marriage is a time marked with a lot of change and is also when adjustment is at its peak, as a newly wed couple is working on living together and establishing a unique working dynamic for their relationship. It's very valuable to tap into this phase to understand what role emotional intelligence might play during this crucial time.

Sampling techniques

Convenient sampling technique and snowball sampling was used to gather participants for this study. People were approached that live within my vicinity, as well as those who live in different cities. Those who fit the criteria reached out to other couples with similar demographics. During the pandemic we have all become comfortable with numerous online platforms, making various couples around the country available for this study. While multiple email addresses were collected, when contacted few of them declined to participate in the study due to it's nature of investigation of personal matters. Rest of the couples responded well and showed keen interest in the study.

Understanding the sample pool

Table 1 Frequencies and Percentages of Demographic Variables (N = 80)

Variables		f	Percentages
Gender	Male	40	50%
	Female	40	50%
Age (in years)	23-25	4	5%
	26-28	15	18.7%
	29-31	39	48.75%
	32-34	15	18.7%
	35-37	7	8.7%

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Variables		f	Percentages
Duration of marriage	0-1 years	17	21.25%
	1-2 years	21	26.25%
	2-3 years	15	18.7%
	3-4 years	14	17.5%
	4-5 years	8	10%
	5-6 years	3	3.75%
	6-7 years	2	2.5%
Educational Qualifications	High School Certificate	3	3.75%
	Graduation	43	53.75%
	Post Graduation	34	42.5%
Nature of marriage	Love marriage	57	71.25%
	Arranged marriage	23	28.25%
Family structure	Joint Family	20	25%
	Nuclear Family	60	75%
Courtship duration	0-1 years	26	32.5%
	1-2 years	15	18.75%
	2-3 years	6	7.5%
	3-4 years	6	7.5%
	4-5 years	4	5%
	5 + years	22	27.5%
No of children	No children	66	82.5%
	1 child	11	13.75%
	2 children	3	3.75%

In Table 1, distribution of the demographic characteristics shows that the age of the sample ranged between 23 years to 37 years, 96.25 % having qualification of no less than under graduation, representing nuclear and joint family system, love and arranged marriages and couple with and without children.

Operational Definition of Variables

Emotional intelligence was measured by employing the Emotional Intelligence Scale (Hyde et al., 2002), low scores indicate low level of emotional intelligence and high level of scores indicate high level of emotional intelligence. Here emotional intelligence is considered the independent variable as it is not reliant on any other variable considered in this study.

Marital adjustment in current study can be operationally defined as the score obtained through Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Busby et al., 1995) with higher scores indicating greater relationship satisfaction and lower scores indicating greater relationship distress. This can be considered as the dependant variable as we are trying to find out how it is impacted by Emotional intelligence.

All the demographic data such as qualification, gender, family structure - joint family or nuclear family, type of marriage - love marriage or arranged and number of children can also play a role for future further analysis of the data.

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Research Instruments

The tools employed in order to assess the role of Emotional intelligence on dyadic adjustment in married couples are Emotional Intelligence Scale and Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale, respectively.

The details of both tools have been described below:

- 1. Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (R-DAS):** The dyadic adjustment scale (DAS, Spanier, 1976) scale was revised for distressed and non-distressed couples by Busby, Christensen, Crane, & Larson in 1995. The Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (R-DAS) is a self-report questionnaire consisting of 14 items, on a Likert scale ranging from 0 to 5, in which minimum score was zero and maximum was 69. The higher scores indicated higher satisfaction in relationship whereas lower scores indicated higher distress in relationship. The interpretation of scores was that score between 48 and 69 was indicative of non-distress whereas score between 0 and 47 indicated marital distress. The scale included three categories of consensus (item 1-6), satisfaction in relationship (item 7-10) and cohesion (item 11-14). The Cronbach's alpha reliability of R-DAS was found to be .90. In addition, the discriminant validity was also found to discriminate between 81% of distressed and non-distressed cases successfully. This questionnaire was translated to Hindi using backward-forward translation method to assess the reliability of the instrument in India and standardisation norms have been established.
- 2. Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS):** The Emotional Intelligence scale (EIS) was developed by Anukool Hyde, Sanjyot Pethe and Upinder Dhar in 2002. The EIS contains 34 statements, each to be rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly agree' (5) to 'strongly disagree' (1). The statements relate to the 10 different components of emotional intelligence like self-awareness, empathy, self-motivation, emotional stability, managing relations, integrity, self-development, value orientation, commitment, and altruistic behaviour. The obtainable score ranges from 34 to 170 where higher score indicates higher level of emotional intelligence. There are no negative items. The scale was standardised on executives in the Indian population. The scale has high content validity. The split-half reliability of the scale is 0.88.

Procedure

The participants were well informed about the rationale of the study via information sheets (Appendix A) provided and ethical standards were considered in designing of the study. Participants were reassured that their personal information will remain confidential. After seeking their consent via telephonic communication or email as informed consent forms (Appendix B), the data from the participants was collected using quantitative measures.

In the current times, we are limited by the COVID-19 global pandemic, all data was collected in an online format (Appendix D) as this was the safest standard that could be maintained, all things considered. The questionnaires were sent via email (Appendix C) to both partners to be filled. Couples were treated as individuals, each partner was instructed to rate him/her self on the measures without collaborating with their spouse. Most of the respondents submitted the questionnaires within a few days. One key observation noted during data collection was that female participants were more eager and prompt in their submissions, whereas male participants required more coaxing to be involved in the study.

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After the data was collected, the data was scored and interpreted using the respective scoring manuals. A detailed statistical analysis of correlation was performed and documented. Qualitative information was also analysed and was graphically or pictorially represented.

RESULTS

In order to achieve the goals of the present study, a series of analyses was run. Initially, the reliability of the measures of present study were established by calculating Cronbach's alpha to ensure internal consistency. Then, frequencies and percentages of demographic variables were calculated and have been represented in Table 1 in order to better understand the sample of participants. Pearson's correlations were calculated in order to understand the relationship between variables and better assess the hypothesis.

Reliability Statistics

Table 2

Reliability calculated for 34 items on Emotional Intelligence Scale

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.887	34

Reliability calculated for 14 items on Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.790	14

According to Table 2, the internal consistency of the instruments used have been displayed. Both measures have a high reliability of 0.88 for EIS and 0.79 for RDAS displaying a good correlation between the items on the scale relevant to the answers from the sample. This helps establish an acceptable reliability of the data collected.

Impact of Emotional Intelligence on Marital adjustment

Table 3 *Correlation of Emotional Intelligence for 80 participants and sub components of Marital Adjustment*

Correlations		Total score	Consensus (out of 30)	Satisfaction (out of 20)	Cohesion (out of 19)
Total score	Pearson Correlation (r)	1	(+) .241*	.117	.087
	p-value		.031	.301	.444
	N	80	80	80	80

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

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There is small/weak significant ($.031 < .05$) positive relationship between the Consensus component of MA and EI with $r = .241$, p value = $.031 < .05$. The low effect size of 5.8 % shows the weak impact of EI to influence Consensus. There is no sufficient evidence to suggest that the relationship between EI and sub components of MA exists with regard to the components Satisfaction and Cohesion (respective p values $> .05$). There is no sufficient evidence to say that the relationship does exist between the variables of Emotional Intelligence and Marital Adjustment since the p value $> .05$, resulting in no significant impact of Emotional Intelligence on Marital Adjustment. Therefore, the first hypothesis stands rejected.

Gender differences between Emotional Intelligence and Marital Adjustment

Table 4 Correlation of Emotional Intelligence with overall Marital adjustment for Women

Correlations			
		Total score	Marital Adjustment
Total score	Pearson Correlation	1	.288
	P value (significant at 10%)		.071
	N	40	40
Marital Adjustment	Pearson Correlation	.288	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.071	
	N	40	40
Sex = Female			

Correlation of Emotional Intelligence with overall Marital adjustment for Men

Correlations			
		Total score	Marital Adjustment
Total score	Pearson Correlation	1	-.110
	P value (significant at 10%)		.500
	N	40	40
Marital Adjustment	Pearson Correlation	-.110	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.500	
	N	40	40
Sex = Male			

In the comparisons represented in Table 4, it is displayed that there is positive correlation with $r = 0.288$ between Emotional Intelligence & overall Marital Adjustment for females since p value = 0.071 is significant at the level of significance 10%.

In males there is no sufficient evidence that relationship exist, $r = -0.11$ and p value = 0.5 . While there is no sufficient evidence to prove the second hypothesis, somehow the

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affirmation is correct to say that women in comparison to men show a better relationship between EI and marital adjustment at significance of 10 %

DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

In this section some basic features of the data have been represented for superior understanding. While this study is primarily quantitative, some subjective questions were placed in the survey in order to gather information to understand the data better. Simple themes have been drawn out to give greater context to the results for further discussion. Here we take a closer look at dynamics that occur in marriages and how the data set has responded to the subject matter.

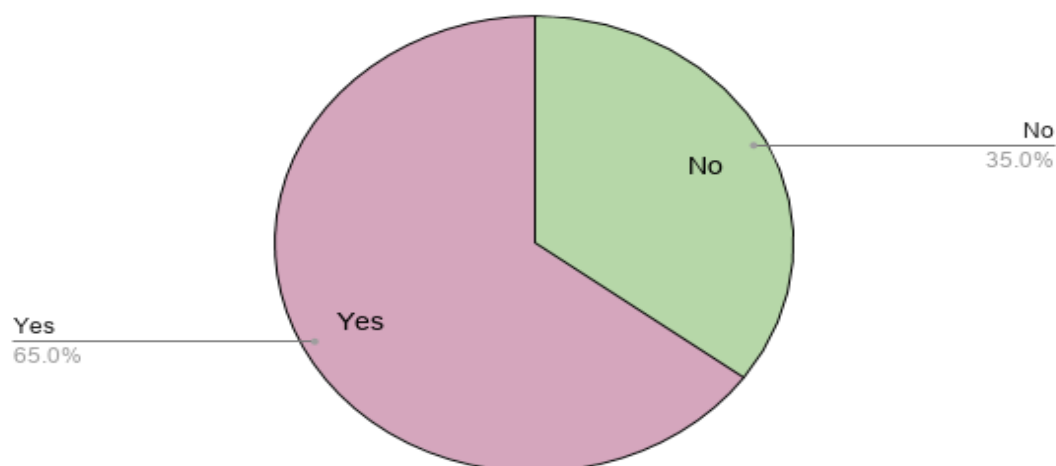
Quality time with family

When individuals were asked if they perceived that their partners/family spent enough time with them, the responses have been graphically presented below in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Perceived time spent with their partner/family?

Participants were asked if they feel that their partner spends enough time with them?



In a research conducted by Glorieux I., Minnen J & Tienoven T. in 2011, the study of quality of life, based on the 'quality' time partners within a household spend together shows the associations between the amount of time spent together and relationship satisfaction. The amount of face-to-face spousal interaction is considered to be critically important for marital quality. Based on this evidence, we can see that out of 80 participants (N=80), 65 percent of individuals feel they spend enough time with their partners, leaning towards better marital quality and adjustment.

Leadership and decision making in the husband-wife dyad

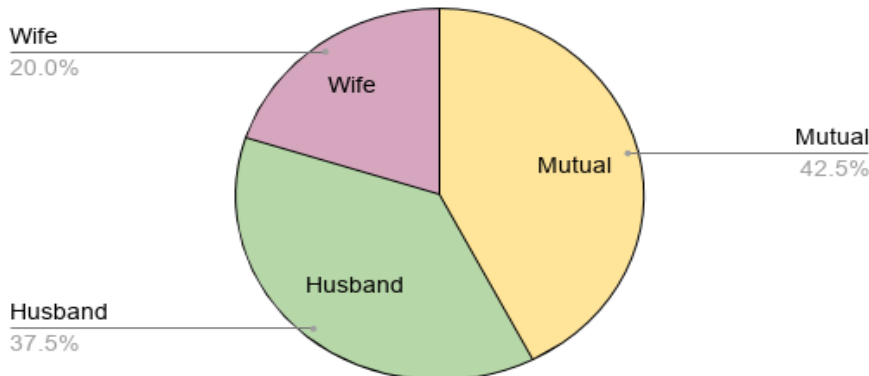
One of the questions positioned in the survey aimed to find out the view of whom the individual participants (N = 80) perceive as the leader in their respective relationships.

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Figure 2

Who is typically the leader in the relationship?

Individual perceptions collated from 80 participants



As the majority of the participants, 42.5% (N = 80), show that they are mutually the leaders in the relationship dynamic. At further investigating, this hints at reciprocal decision making, open communication, each partner having

their own expertise and a healthy working dynamic. This exploration is further represented in Figure 3 when we asked participants how decisions are made in their relationship.

Haris & Kumar in 2018, conducted a study to understand the relationship between marital satisfaction and communication skills among married couples. The sample for the study consisted of 50 couples, (50 wives and 50 husbands) from Kannur district, Kerala. Marital Satisfaction Scale and Interpersonal Communication Inventory were administered on the couples. With the supporting studies, results showed that the interpersonal communications among couples can predict satisfaction of their marital life. The results of the study have an important implication for couples, family counsellors and educators.

Figure 3

How are major decisions made?

A representation of the keywords used to answer this qualitative question



Note: These are the numbers of respondents who offered each of the responses. These are not percentages.

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As seen in Figure 3, when couples in the questionnaire were asked how decisions are made in their marriage, key words that came up most frequently were discussion, together or mutual. This shows the role of effective communication in these marriages. By definition itself, EI explains how we can utilise our emotions to express ourselves better and engage in effective communication and forge stronger relationships, both at work and in personal life. Another key observation, is the trend of equality in marriages that emerges from the findings displayed in Figure 2 & 3.

Conflict Resolution in Marriage

How conflicts are resolved between couples as they learn to adjust in their marriages were of immense merit, so as to grasp if any tools associated with Emotional intelligence are being used to achieve harmony in relationships. Figure 4 displays the answers to how often individuals find themselves quarrelling in the relationship and some relevant answers in quotes to how these disagreements are usually solved in their respective marriages. We see the role of expression and communication increase as quarrels become more manageable in Figure 4.

Figure 4

How often do you and your partner quarrel?	When there are disagreements how are they usually resolved?
1.3 % of people say All the time	"I will try to maintain distance from them "
6.3 % of people say Most of the time	"The ones that are resolved have only been so after traumatic fights, when he sees how I am affected."
15 % of people say More often than not	"Time just heals, we mostly just move on to doing our own things and coming back around. Issues which need discussion are often fiercely debated over. Irrelevant and insignificant issues just resolve itself."
52.5 % of people say Occasionally	"We discuss it before going to bed. We have a rule of not sleeping before finishing our talk. If something is bothering one of us then it's best that we say it out and work out our way through it. "
25 % of people say Rarely	"By mutually discussing everything and explaining our points to each other clearly."

Tracing strengths in adverse times

One of the most interesting questions in the survey pertains to what strengths participants see in their partners in times of adversity. While a question was also situated to acquire responses for weakness in their partners, those do not seem relevant when we are discerning a positive psychology topic, Emotional Intelligence. To interpret the responses, a comparison has been drawn between how the two genders acknowledged this question as represented in Figure 5. Once we know how individuals persevere in difficult life situation

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or in marriage, we can further link if they are using emotional intelligence to overcome these adversities.

Figure 5

Keywords used to describe strengths of respective partners (N=80), shown for 40 males participants and 40 female participants.



Women's perception of men

Men's perception of women

42.5 % of female participants used the keyword 'patient' or 'calm' interchangeably to describe what trait they admire about the way their respective partners handle adversity. While results look similar, you can clearly see gender differences of women taking a more nurturing role, these findings also help understand the results of the second hypothesis of women having higher EI and better adjustment in their marriages.

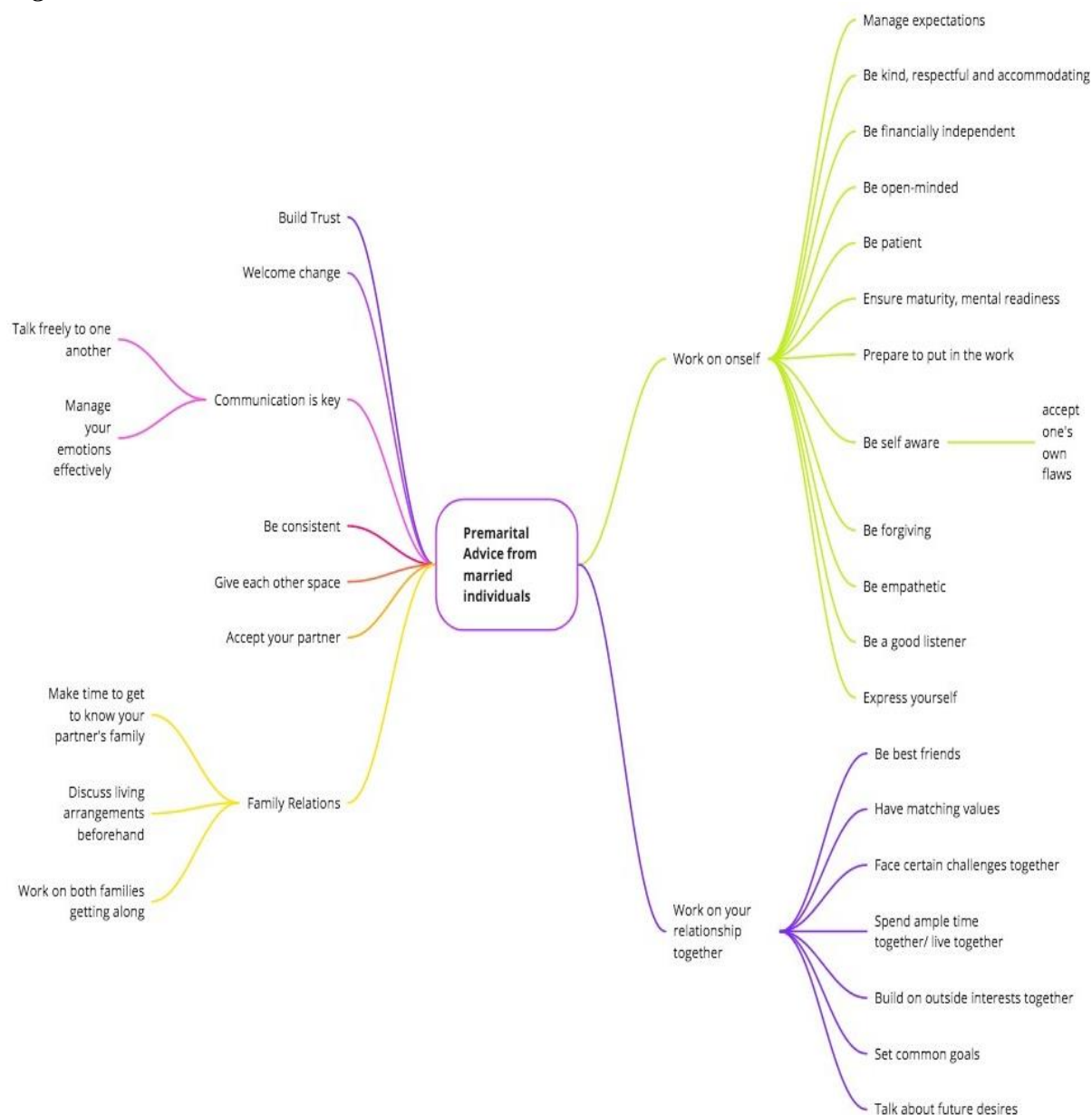
Preparation before marital union

The survey endeavoured to discover what married individuals expect before they enter the union of marriage and how it differs in their perception of the reality of actually being married. Although, some interesting observations were made in the answers provided by the participants, the most valuable information was assembled when participants were asked what advice they would give to persons about to tie the knot. The most befitting way to present this is in the mind map provided in Figure 6 below.

In Figure 6, we can see that in the 'work on oneself' section, many suggestions are associated to building emotional intelligence. Example of which are amplified in recommendations to build one's empathy, self awareness, accepting one's own flaws, improved expression and management of emotions.

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Figure 6



The branches display the most repeated ideas provided by participants for what could improve a marital relationship if done before tying the knot.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND RESEARCH

The present study aims to examine the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Marital Adjustment. The findings presented in the research only forms a solid foundation for further investigation in this arena. Unfortunately, the quantitative research design failed to acquire the results according to the findings in other relevant literature. A multitude of reasons could exist for this to occur, such as, the statements in the Emotional Intelligence Scale were of an organisational nature, directed towards behaviour with fellow colleagues or people that may not be so closely attached to the individual in question. As a matter of fact, we can appreciate that individuals may behave in a different manner at home, in private, where emotions run high with life partners wherein they are very attached, the interaction is

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of a romantic nature. Performance incentives at work are also a considerable reason for people to make an effort towards developing their Emotional Intelligence for better work performance, essentially limiting this behaviour to the workplace.

The gender differences that have been drawn out in analysis run for the second hypothesis, can be explained by early life core values learnt by boys and girls which further predict family versus career orientation. By the age of 6 years, boys expect to prioritise career over family and girls are seen to use more emotionality in their language development and are assumed to take more nurturing roles (Block, Gonzalez, Schrader, Baron, 2018). We must take a closer look at what factors are affecting men that scored high on emotional intelligence, and are displaying associated behaviour at work but exhibiting distress in their marital adjustment.

The findings that have a qualitative nature on the other hand, still point us in the direction to rework this model and further study the phenomenon presented in the research question. A qualitative model, with interview schedules may paint us a clearer picture of the happenings in a marital relationship. A prominent recommendation for this research is to take it forward with a longitudinal approach, thereupon effectively measuring emotional intelligence and its use in the marital bond, utilising tools and intervention plans that help to build emotional intelligence of spouses, then measuring post such training how marital satisfaction may be affected.

This is a stepping stone to understanding parallels that affect marriage, for instance, how does emotional intelligence affect conflict resolution between couples or what interpersonal skills does one build with high EI that are helpful behaviours in a marriage. Taking it one step further, it could facilitate understanding the differences in parenting styles of those with high or low emotional intelligence.

If qualitative research strategies were applied to this research as well, we could further inquire the gender differences in emotional intelligence and its impact on the marital equation between partners, such as, does society allow women to build emotional intelligence more than men? Does toxic masculinity affect men's emotional intelligence levels and how does this play out in a marriage?

If we are able to establish that emotional intelligence does play a key role in marital adjustment in future studies and understand which components of emotional intelligence have the greatest impact on romantic relationships, we could essentially train couples in healthier ways to communicate which is seen to be the key to healthy discourse, that in turn could contribute greatly to couples's therapy processes and strategies.

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Conflict of Interest

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