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Marital Well-Being in Middle Adulthood: The Interplay of Social Support, Resilience, on Marital Satisfaction

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Abstract: ***This research investigates how resilience and social support impact the satisfaction of married individuals in their middle adulthood residing in India. Marriage is a legal union between two people, and as individuals enter middle adulthood, they encounter various challenges and life circumstances. Each life stage presents its own set of obstacles, making it essential for individuals to rely on each other and their social networks for support. Resilience, defined as the ability to bounce back from adversity or significant stress. It is crucial in navigating challenges, while a strong social support system aids in coping and adaptation.***

Data was gathered through an online survey from 250 married individuals, focusing on their resilience, social support, and marital satisfaction. Statistical analysis revealed that both resilience and social support significantly influence marital satisfaction. The study found a strong correlation between resilience, social support, and marital satisfaction, indicating that those with higher resilience and stronger social support tend to experience greater marital satisfaction. Interestingly, the analysis suggests that resilience may play a more prominent role in marital satisfaction than social support. Therefore, it can be concluded that resilience and social support are crucial factors in determining marital satisfaction for individuals.

Keywords: Marital Satisfaction, Marriage, Resilience, Social Support, Mental Health

I. INTRODUCTION

Marriage is a legal or formally recognized union of two people as partners in their personal relationships. It is often seen as a life cycle of shared experiences and developing dynamics, which constitutes an essential aspect of adult lives. Middle adulthood, also called midlife, is the time in life when people are in their 30s to early 50s. This is a time of big changes in both your body and your feelings. In middle adulthood, people often start to think differently and focus more on their own personal growth and thinking about themselves. According to developmental psychologists, middle adulthood is marked by several key developmental tasks that individuals must navigate to achieve a sense of fulfillment and satisfaction. These tasks include:

1) *Establishing generativity:* This involves finding ways to contribute to society and leave a positive legacy for future generations.
2) *Maintaining intimacy:* This includes developing close ties with family, friends, and romantic partners.
3) *Coping with loss:* This entails coming to grips with both the death of loved ones and one's own mortality. It is crucial to remember that the experience of middle adulthood varies greatly based on culture, social background, and individual personality qualities.

In middle age, being happy in marriage is important for people's overall happiness. This time in life involves many changes, like feeling stressed in midlife, raising teens, and preparing to stop working. During difficult times, a happy marriage can give you emotional support and a strong base to deal with the challenges of middle age. Research shows that people who are happier in their marriages have less stress, better mental health, and are more satisfied with their lives. This can make middle adulthood a more enjoyable and fulfilling time. Social support means feeling like someone is looking out for you, being able to get help from others, and being part of a group of people who are helpful and caring. Having family and friends to help you when things are tough is what social support is all about. These connections are important for you to be able to handle your daily life, whether you need help during a tough time or just want to be with people who care about you. Research shows that having strong relationships with other people is connected to being healthy and feeling good. Resilience means being able to quickly recover from problems or difficulties. People who have this characteristic can bounce back from mistakes, difficult times, and sad events. Resilience is something that can be learned and strengthened with practice, and it's not something that stays the same.

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It is common knowledge that stress and difficult life situations can cause mental illness. Just like this, people have always been fascinated by how some people can respond well to tough situations.

In today's world, it's clear how important it is to be strong and have people to help you during midlife. Studies have found that social support and resilience in middle age affect each other in a complicated way. Having close friends, family, and community ties can help protect you from the stress of this stage of life. These partnerships help people deal with the challenges of midlife by giving them both emotional and practical help. Friends and family can help with your emotions, and a supportive spouse or partner can help with money problems. Middle-aged people are getting different kinds of support from their friends and family because of the internet. Online communities, social media, and virtual networks give new ways to connect and find help. For people in their middle age who have children and friends living far away, the internet can be very helpful. Nevertheless, it is important to consider the benefits of online support compared to the potential negative effects, like feeling lonely or being harassed online. Modern research is looking at how to deal with these problems, which shows how tricky it can be to get help and stay strong in middle age in today's world. By studying how social support and resilience, and marital satisfaction, we can learn how to help middle-aged couples have better marriages. These actions can help many people in a big way, including individuals, couples, and families. Having a good marriage is good for your mind and body. Improving happiness in marriage during middle age can help people feel better overall and may also lower medical bills for stress-related illnesses.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Resilience means being able to bounce back or recover from tough times. Resilience can moderate this relationship and improve marital satisfaction, Irshad et al. (2023)[8]. Similarly, in couples raising a child with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), the resilience of the partners positively correlates with their assessment of marriage satisfaction. Openness, perseverance, and determination to act increase the level of task-oriented coping, which contributes to marital satisfaction, Gagat-Matuła (2022)[6]. The association between marital satisfaction and resilience has also been a subject of interest in the literature. The literature suggests that resilience is a complex phenomenon influenced by a combination of individual, interpersonal, and environmental factors. Building resilience may involve developing coping skills, fostering supportive relationships, and cultivating a sense of purpose and meaning in life. The association between marital satisfaction and resilience has also been a subject of interest in the literature. Machisa et al., (2018)[9] found that higher marital satisfaction is significantly associated with lower anger, depression, anxiety, and PTSD among women survivors of intimate partner violence. Drumm et al. (2014)[4] highlighted spiritual coping strategies as a means of resilience among intimate partner violence survivors, suggesting the potential role of spirituality in promoting marital satisfaction and resilience. The impact of couple resilience on marital satisfaction is not well-established, as previous studies have not explored the interaction effect between couples. Positive relationship behaviors, however, have a higher probability of predicting marital satisfaction, especially amongst wives, Edwin Adrianta Surijah et al. (2021)[5]. Social support means the help and resources people get from their friends, family, and community. Social support has also been linked to better physical health outcomes, such as lower blood pressure and reduced risk of cardiovascular disease. As such a study conducted by Arifain et al. (2021)[1] suggests that there is a significant relationship between social support and marital satisfaction among working women in Selangor, Negeri Sembilan, and Melaka. However, according to Rostami et al. (2013)[10], the relationship between social support and marital satisfaction in medical staff in Iran, suggesting that social support, especially from spouses, is important for marital satisfaction. A study was conducted by Bradley and Hojjat (2016)[2], indicated that resilience has a direct effect on marital satisfaction, and affect and social support were each shown to indirectly impact satisfaction through resilience. One study by Cohen and Wills (1985)[3] proposed a model of social support that distinguishes between perceived support (i.e., the belief that support is available if needed) and received support (i.e., actual support that is provided in times of need). The researchers found that perceived support was a stronger predictor of well-being than received support. Another study by House et al. (1988)[7] examined the effects of social support on mortality rates and found that individuals with strong social support networks had lower mortality rates than those with weak social support networks, even after controlling for other factors such as age, sex, and health status.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Problem

This study aims to investigate the interplay between social support and resilience on marital satisfaction in middle adulthood. This research seeks to illuminate the complex relationships between these critical elements of middle-aged adults' lives and, in doing so, contribute to a deeper understanding of marital well-being during this pivotal life stage.

B. Objectives

To understand if social support and resilience have an impact on marital satisfaction

C. Hypothesis

1) Null Hypothesis (H0): There is no significant relationship between social support, resilience, and marital satisfaction among adults aged 40-60 during middle adulthood.
2) Alternative Hypothesis (H1): There is a significant positive relationship between social support, resilience, and marital satisfaction among adults aged 40-60 during middle adulthood.

D. Variables

1) Social Support: Social support refers to the emotional, instrumental, and informational assistance, as well as the sense of belonging and connection, provided by one's social network, including family, friends, and community.
2) Resilience: Resilience is the capacity to adapt, withstand, and recover from adversity, stressors, or life challenges while maintaining psychological and emotional well-being.
3) Marital Satisfaction: Marital satisfaction refers to the overall contentment, happiness, and fulfilment that individuals experience within their marital or long-term committed relationships.

E. Instruments

1) Social support- Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support
2) Marital Satisfaction- The Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS)
3) Resilience- The Brief Resilience Scale

F. Sample

Employ a stratified random sampling technique to ensure a diverse sample of adults aged 40-60 who are currently in marital relationships.

G. Procedure

The questionnaire was through google forms consisting of informed consent from the participants. The google form contained basic demographic details of the participants. The google forms was circulated to various online platforms and offline as well to collect data from the desired age group of individuals. After the collection of data, it was analysed and interpreted.

H. Techniques

Sample was selected through stratified random sampling technique.

I. Inclusive Criteria

1) Participants need to be either married or involved in a committed relationship of substantial duration.
2) Aged 40-60.
3) Participants are required to express their willingness to take part in the study.

J. Exclusive Criteria

1) Individuals who are divorced.
2) Individuals who are widow and/or widower.
3) Participants who demonstrate reluctance to take part.

K. Research Design

This research study has a correlational design to study the impact of social support and resilience on marital satisfaction in middle adulthood.

L. Statistical Analysis

Linear Regression analysis was used to explore the predictive power of social support and resilience on marital satisfaction. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) assessed the overall significance of the regression model. Additionally, correlation analysis examined the relationships between marital satisfaction, social support, and resilience. These analysis provided insights into the interplay between psychosocial factors and marital satisfaction, offering a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics within marital relationships.

IV. RESULTS

Table 1:
Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Study Variables

Correlations

		Marital Satisfaction	Social Support	Resilience
Marital Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1	.407**	.429**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	250	250	250
Social Support	Pearson Correlation	.407**	1	.187**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.003
	N	250	250	250
Resilience	Pearson Correlation	.429**	.187**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.003	
	N	250	250	250

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

Fig 1- Shows the Pearson correlation between Marital Satisfaction, Social Support and Resilience.

Table 2:
One-Way Analysis of Variance of the study variables

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2279.509	2	1139.754	51.719	.000[b]
	Residual	5443.275	247	22.038		
	Total	7722.784	249			

a. Dependent Variable: Marital Satisfaction

b. Predictors: (Constant), Resilience , Social Support

Fig 2- Shows the ANOVA model for the variables Marital Satisfaction, Social Support and Resilience.

Table 3:
Model summary for the variables

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.543[a]	.295	.289	4.694	1.555

a. Predictors: (Constant), Resilience , Social Support

b. Dependent Variable: Marital Satisfaction

Fig 3- Shows the Model Summary

According to the Fig 1, the results suggest that there is a significant positive correlation between marital satisfaction and social support ($r = .407$, $p < .01$). Similarly, there is a significant positive correlation between marital satisfaction and resilience ($r = .429$, $p < .01$). It can be concluded from these results that individuals with stronger resilience and social support are more likely to report a high level of satisfaction in their marriages. There is also a significant positive correlation between social support and resilience ($r = .187$, $p < .01$). This implies that people who can perceive higher levels of social support may also be more resilient. (see table 1)

The Simple Linear Regression model, wherein Marital Satisfaction is the dependent variable and Resilience and Social Support are the predictors. According to the fig 2, it was found that there was a significant contribution to predicting marital satisfaction, $F(2, 247) = 51.719$, $p < .001$. A large proportion of the variance in marital satisfaction was accounted for by a regression model with high effect values. ($\eta^2 = .293$).

The ANOVA table shows the results of the analysis of variance. It assesses whether the regression model is statistically significant in predicting Marital Satisfaction. According to fig 3, The R Square value (coefficient of determination) indicates that approximately 29.5% of the variance in Marital Satisfaction can be explained by the predictors. It can be inferred that Resilience and Social Support as predictors significantly predicts Marital Satisfaction. Resilience and Social Support together account for approximately 29.5% of the variance in Marital Satisfaction. Both Resilience and Social Support have statistically significant contributions to predicting Marital Satisfaction, as indicated by the significant F-value in the ANOVA table. The Durbin-Watson statistic suggests no significant autocorrelation in the residuals, indicating that the model's assumptions are met. Overall, the findings suggest that Resilience and Social Support are important factors in predicting Marital Satisfaction.

V. DISCUSSION

The outcomes of this study give strong evidence for a positive correlation between social support, resilience, and marital satisfaction. The analysis of variance (ANOVA) indicated that the regression model as a whole significantly predicts Marital Satisfaction, with Resilience and Social Support collectively explaining a substantial portion of the variance. Additionally, the model summary provided further insights into the strength and direction of the relationships between the variables. Research has consistently shown a positive relationship between Marital Satisfaction and Social Support. Couples who perceive higher levels of social support, whether from friends, family, or community networks, tend to report greater satisfaction within their marriages. Numerous studies have demonstrated the importance of Resilience in predicting Marital Satisfaction. This suggests that the null hypothesis has been rejected and the alternate hypothesis has been accepted.

The findings confirm previous research emphasizing the relevance of social support networks in fostering marital well-being and individual resilience in overcoming adversities. Several studies have reported that individuals with higher levels of Resilience reported greater Marital Satisfaction. This relationship can be explained by the fact that Resilience enables individuals to cope effectively with stressors, including those within the marital relationship, thereby enhancing their satisfaction with their marriage. Several other factors may affect an individual's marital satisfaction in middle adulthood like effective communication skills, conflict resolution skills, financial stability, parenting responsibilities, life stages transition and individual characteristics. However, this study revealed that 29% of marital satisfaction was predicted by individual resilience and social support. Furthermore, the considerable predictive value of both social support and resilience on marital satisfaction underscores the need for treatments that target these components in order to improve marital quality.

VI. CONCLUSION

The study investigated the factors influencing marital satisfaction, focusing on the roles of social support and resilience. Through a series of statistical analyses, including multiple regression, analysis of variance (ANOVA), and correlation analysis, the relationships between marital satisfaction, social support, and resilience were examined. Descriptive statistics were utilized to summarize the characteristics of the variables, providing insights into their central tendency and variability. Meanwhile, inferential statistics, such as regression analysis and ANOVA, allowed for the testing of hypotheses and the assessment of the significance of the relationships between variables. Correlation analysis further explored the associations between marital satisfaction, social support, and resilience.

The findings of the study highlight the importance of both social support and resilience in predicting marital satisfaction. Positive correlations were observed between marital satisfaction and both social support and resilience, indicating that individuals with stronger social support networks and greater resilience tend to report higher levels of marital satisfaction

These results underscore the interconnectedness of psychosocial factors in shaping marital relationships. Interventions aimed at enhancing social support networks and fostering resilience skills may prove beneficial in promoting marital well-being and reducing marital distress.

A. Limitations

It is essential to recognize the limitations of the study, such as its reliance on self-report measures and the potential for common method bias. Future research could employ longitudinal designs or experimental approaches to further elucidate the causal relationships between social support, resilience, and marital satisfaction. The data was collected through online method which may result in biases or misinterpretation of the questions. Since the questionnaires weren't long enough, detailed information about the variables wasn't collected.

B. Suggestions for further research

More research in this area might focus on longitudinal studies, allowing for a dynamic examination of the causal links between social support, resilience, and marital pleasure across time. Complementing quantitative data with qualitative research approaches would give more in-depth understanding of the subjective sensations and mechanisms at play. Cultural comparisons may reveal differences in the impact of social support and resilience across various cultural contexts, offering information on culturally particular norms and practices that influence marital dynamics. Creating and assessing intervention programs to boost couples' social support and resilience may lead to evidence-based ways to enhancing marital satisfaction. Furthermore, looking into possible moderators and mediators of these associations, such as personality traits and coping techniques, might provide a more comprehensive understanding of the interactions between these factors. Additional research can delve into this topic to investigate whether couple resilience has any discernible influence. It would be beneficial to explore various forms of social support and determine which types have the most significant effect on marital satisfaction. Furthermore, it could be valuable to examine whether marital satisfaction affects resilience and social support. This could provide insights into the dynamic relationship between these variables and offer avenues for further exploration in understanding marital dynamics in middle adulthood.

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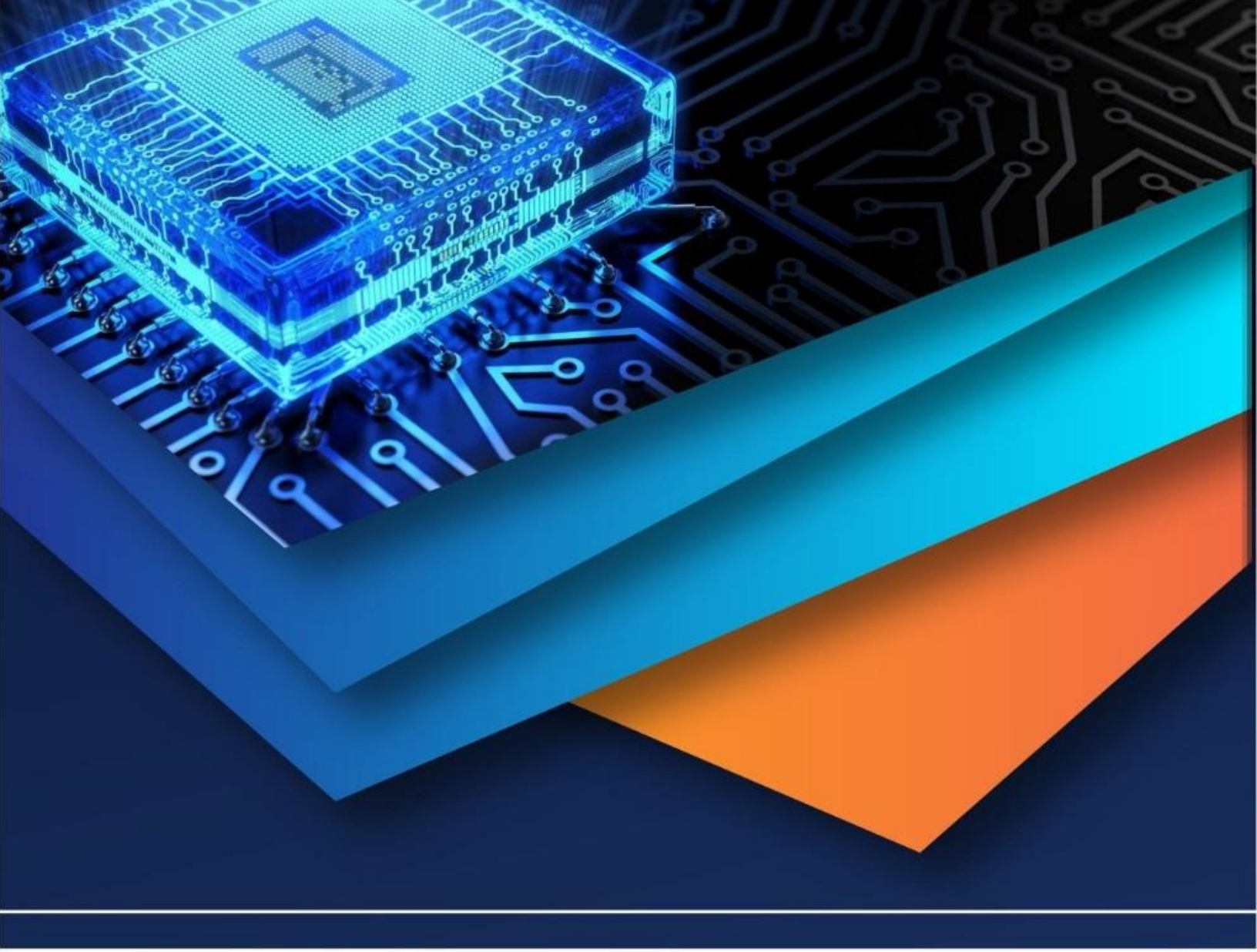
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