

# A STUDY OF MENTAL HEALTH AND MARITAL ADJUSTMENT AMONG GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES

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## **Abstract**

*This research paper investigates the relationship between mental health and marital adjustment among government employees. The unique occupational stressors, such as job stability, bureaucratic challenges, and high workloads, create conditions that may affect the mental well-being of government employees. This, in turn, impacts their marital adjustment, including communication, conflict resolution, and emotional satisfaction. The study explores these dynamics and suggests interventions aimed at improving both the mental health and marital harmony of government employees.*

## **Keywords:**

*mental health, marital adjustment, government employees, occupational stress, marital satisfaction*

## **Introduction**

Mental health is a critical component of overall well-being, influencing how individuals think, feel, and behave in daily life. It also plays a significant role in interpersonal relationships, particularly in marriage. Marital adjustment, the process by which couples adapt to one another to maintain a functional and satisfying relationship, is closely linked to mental health. Poor mental health, characterized by issues such as anxiety, depression, and chronic stress, can strain marital relationships, leading to communication breakdowns, emotional withdrawal, and increased conflict. In the context of government employees, the relationship between mental health and marital adjustment takes on unique dimensions. Government employees are often subject to

distinct occupational stressors that set them apart from their counterparts in other sectors. These stressors include job security concerns, rigid bureaucratic systems, political interference, the need to follow hierarchical protocols, and frequent job transfers or relocations. Many government positions, particularly those in high-stakes sectors like law enforcement, healthcare, and public administration, come with added pressure, such as public scrutiny, deadlines, and policy shifts. Such occupational demands can significantly affect the mental health of government employees, often leading to issues like burnout, anxiety, and depression. These mental health challenges, in turn, can spill over into their personal lives, affecting their ability to maintain balanced, harmonious marital relationships. Poor mental health can result in a decreased capacity to engage in effective communication, reduced emotional intimacy, and difficulties in resolving conflicts. Given the long working hours and constant pressures, the ability to maintain a healthy work-life balance becomes challenging, which can further exacerbate marital discord. Several studies have explored the impact of occupational stress on mental health in different professions, but there has been relatively less focus on the government sector. Similarly, while a wealth of research has examined the dynamics of marital adjustment, the intersection between mental health and marital satisfaction in government employees remains underexplored. Understanding how mental health influences marital adjustment among government

employees is essential because of the far-reaching implications. Not only does poor marital adjustment affect the personal happiness and emotional stability of employees, but it can also lead to lower job satisfaction and reduced productivity. On the other hand, strong marital support systems can serve as a buffer against workplace stress, improving both mental health and professional performance.

This study seeks to fill this gap by investigating the relationship between mental health and marital adjustment among government employees. By examining how the demands of government jobs impact mental well-being and how these mental health issues influence marital satisfaction, this research aims to provide valuable insights into the personal and professional lives of government employees.

**The primary objectives of this research are to:**

1. Explore the prevalence of mental health issues among government employees.
2. Examine how these mental health challenges affect marital adjustment.
3. Identify factors that may moderate or exacerbate the relationship between mental health and marital satisfaction.
4. Propose interventions and strategies to help government employees manage their mental health and improve their marital relationships.

This study is particularly relevant in the current socio-political climate, where government employees are under increasing pressure to meet public expectations, adapt to policy changes, and navigate the complexities of bureaucratic systems. Understanding the impact of these pressures on mental health and marital life is critical for developing supportive policies and programs that can benefit both employees and their families.

### **Literature Review**

1. **Mental Health Among Government Employees:** Government employees often face high levels of job-related stress due to the nature of their work. Factors such as bureaucratic inefficiency, unclear job expectations, political pressure, and limited opportunities for upward mobility contribute to stress. Research by Verma et al. (2018) indicates that government employees report higher levels of workplace stress compared to their counterparts in the private sector. Chronic stress, if left unaddressed, often manifests as anxiety, depression, or burnout, significantly affecting an individual's mental health.
2. **Marital Adjustment and Its Determinants:** Marital adjustment is defined as the process by which married partners accommodate each other to maintain a functional relationship. According to Olson and Fowers (1993), marital satisfaction depends on effective communication, emotional intimacy, and conflict resolution skills. Stress and mental health issues can adversely impact these factors, leading to poor marital outcomes. The stress experienced at work may reduce emotional availability, increase irritability, and hinder constructive communication between spouses, thus affecting marital adjustment.
3. **The Interplay Between Mental Health and Marital Adjustment:** Numerous studies have shown that mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, and stress can impair marital functioning. For example, Whisman (2007) found that individuals with poor mental health are more likely to experience marital dissatisfaction. Furthermore, Rhoades et al. (2011) demonstrated that marital discord can exacerbate mental health issues, creating a negative feedback loop. In government employees, where job-related stress is often

chronic, the impact on marital adjustment may be more pronounced.

### **Methodology**

This study uses a mixed-method approach to explore the relationship between mental health and marital adjustment among government employees. The combination of both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods provides a comprehensive understanding of the factors affecting mental health and marital satisfaction. The methodology includes the study sample, instruments used, data collection procedures, and analytical techniques employed to assess the findings.

1. **Research Design** The study adopts a cross-sectional design, where data were collected at a single point in time from government employees across various departments. This approach allows for the examination of correlations between mental health status and marital adjustment without requiring long-term follow-up. The mixed-method design was chosen to provide both statistical data (through surveys) and deeper insights (through interviews) into the personal experiences of the participants.

### **2. Sample Selection**

#### **Sample Size**

The study included a sample of 200 married government employees, both male and female, who were recruited from different departments such as education, healthcare, law enforcement, public administration, and public works. The diversity in departments ensured that the sample reflected a broad range of job roles and responsibilities, providing insights into the general government workforce rather than a specific segment.

#### **Sampling Technique**

Stratified random sampling was used to ensure that the sample represented various subgroups within the population. The

employees were stratified based on the following factors:

- **Department:** Representation from multiple government sectors.
- **Gender:** Equal representation of male and female participants.
- **Years of Service:** Inclusion of employees with varying lengths of service, from 1 year to over 20 years.
- **Marital Duration:** Participants from different stages of marriage, ranging from newlyweds (1–5 years) to couples married for over 20 years.

Participation was voluntary, and all participants were informed of the study's purpose and their right to withdraw at any time.

### **Data Collection Methods**

#### **Quantitative Data: Surveys**

Standardized instruments were used to quantitatively measure both mental health and marital adjustment. These surveys allowed for the analysis of correlations between mental health scores and marital satisfaction levels.

1. **Mental Health Assessment:** The General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12) was employed to measure the mental health status of the participants. This self-report questionnaire evaluates the severity of mental distress and identifies potential psychiatric disorders. The GHQ-12 includes questions related to depression, anxiety, social dysfunction, and loss of confidence. The responses are scored on a 4-point Likert scale (0 = not at all, 3 = much more than usual), with higher scores indicating poorer mental health.
2. **Marital Adjustment Assessment:** The Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) was used to measure marital satisfaction and adjustment. The DAS includes subscales for:
  - **Dyadic Satisfaction:** Measures overall satisfaction with the marriage.

- **Dyadic Cohesion:** Assesses the level of closeness and shared activities.
- **Dyadic Consensus:** Examines agreement on important issues such as finances and parenting.
- **Affectional Expression:** Measures emotional and physical expressions of affection between spouses.

Each item on the DAS is rated on a 5-point Likert scale, with higher scores indicating better marital adjustment.

**Qualitative Data:** Semi-Structured Interviews

In addition to the surveys, in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a subset of 30 participants. The interviews allowed participants to provide detailed, personal accounts of how their work environment, mental health challenges, and marital relationships intersected. The following themes were explored during the interviews:

- Experiences of work-related stress and its impact on personal life.
- Changes in communication patterns with their spouse due to mental health issues.
- Perceived support from their spouse in coping with work stress.
- Conflict resolution strategies and how mental health influenced these interactions.

Each interview lasted approximately 45–60 minutes and was conducted either in person or via video conferencing, depending on the participant's preference. The interviews were recorded (with participant consent) and later transcribed for analysis.

**Data Analysis**

**Quantitative Analysis**

The quantitative data collected from the surveys were analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). The following statistical techniques were employed:

1. **Descriptive Statistics:** Measures of central tendency (mean, median) and variability

(standard deviation) were calculated to summarize the mental health and marital adjustment scores of the participants.

2. **Correlation Analysis:** Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to assess the strength and direction of the relationship between mental health (GHQ-12 scores) and marital adjustment (DAS scores). A negative correlation was expected, where higher mental health distress would be associated with lower marital adjustment scores.
3. **Regression Analysis:** To further investigate the predictive relationship between mental health and marital adjustment, a multiple regression analysis was conducted. Mental health was used as the independent variable, and marital adjustment was the dependent variable. Control variables such as age, years of service, and length of marriage were included to account for potential confounding factors.
4. **Comparative Analysis:** The marital adjustment scores of participants from different departments (e.g., education vs. law enforcement) were compared using one-way ANOVA to determine if occupational roles influenced marital satisfaction differently.

**Qualitative Analysis**

The qualitative data from the interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis. The transcriptions were coded manually, and themes were identified that related to how work-related stress and mental health challenges influenced marital relationships. The coding process involved several steps:

1. **Familiarization with the data:** Reading and re-reading the transcripts to identify recurrent themes.
2. **Generating initial codes:** Assigning short labels to specific segments of text that

related to work stress, mental health, and marital adjustment.

3. **Searching for themes:** Grouping the codes into broader themes, such as emotional withdrawal, communication breakdown, and coping strategies.
4. **Reviewing themes:** Ensuring the themes accurately represented the data and identifying sub-themes where necessary.
5. **Defining and naming themes:** Creating a clear definition for each theme and sub-theme to present the qualitative findings coherently.

The qualitative data enriched the quantitative findings by offering in-depth insights into personal experiences, emotions, and coping strategies.

#### **Ethical Considerations**

Ethical approval was obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) before conducting the study. Participants were assured of confidentiality, and all personal information was anonymized in the research report. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection, and they were informed about their right to withdraw from the study at any point.

#### **Limitations**

While the study provides valuable insights into the relationship between mental health and marital adjustment among government employees, it has certain limitations:

- **Cross-sectional design:** The study does not capture long-term trends or changes in mental health and marital adjustment over time.
- **Self-report bias:** The reliance on self-reported data may introduce bias, as participants might underreport mental health issues or marital dissatisfaction due to social desirability.
- **Limited generalizability:** Although the sample was diverse in terms of

department and demographic factors, the findings may not be fully generalizable to all government employees or to other employment sectors.

#### **Results**

The results indicate a significant negative correlation between poor mental health and marital adjustment. Employees who reported high levels of stress, anxiety, or depression also reported lower levels of marital satisfaction. Several themes emerged from the qualitative interviews, such as:

- **Workplace Stress and Emotional Withdrawal:** Many participants indicated that work stress led to emotional exhaustion, which reduced their ability to engage in meaningful conversations with their spouse.
- **Communication Breakdown:** Poor mental health often led to communication difficulties, with many employees reporting that they became irritable or withdrawn, thus negatively affecting their marital relationship.
- **Conflict Resolution:** Couples where one or both partners were experiencing mental health issues found it more challenging to resolve conflicts, leading to increased tension and arguments.

Despite these challenges, some participants identified positive coping strategies such as open communication, seeking professional help, and support from family members as factors that helped mitigate the negative impact of poor mental health on their marriages.

#### **Discussion**

The findings of this study suggest that mental health plays a crucial role in marital adjustment among government employees. The high-stress work environment in the government sector seems to contribute significantly to mental health issues, which in turn affect marital

satisfaction. These findings are consistent with previous research that shows a strong link between occupational stress, mental health, and marital functioning.

However, this study also highlights the importance of support systems and coping mechanisms. Government employees who actively engaged in stress management techniques, sought counseling, or maintained open communication with their spouses reported better marital adjustment despite facing mental health challenges.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. **Workplace Interventions:** Government institutions should implement mental health support programs such as counseling services, stress management workshops, and flexible work arrangements to help employees manage work-related stress.
2. **Marital Counseling:** Providing access to marital counseling services, especially for employees dealing with significant job stress, can help improve marital adjustment.
3. **Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs):** Establishing comprehensive EAPs that focus on mental health and relationship management can benefit government employees and their families.
4. **Training for Supervisors:** Supervisors should be trained to recognize signs of stress and mental health issues in their subordinates and provide necessary support or referrals.

### Conclusion

This study highlights the strong relationship between mental health and marital adjustment among government employees. The unique occupational stressors faced by this group significantly affect both their mental well-being and their marital satisfaction. Addressing mental health issues through workplace interventions and providing marital counseling

support can help improve outcomes for both government employees and their spouses.

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