

**MARITAL SATISFACTION AND DYADIC COPING AMONG WORKING AND
NON-WORKING MARRIED WOMEN**

*Dissertation submitted to The University of Kerala in partial fulfilment of the requirement for
the award of the Degree of*

Master of Science in Counselling Psychology

Submitted by

STEPHY MARIA PETER

(Reg. No.: LC24PCP14)

Under the Guidance of

Dr Jesline Maria M. Mamen

Assistant Professor



**DEPARTMENT OF COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY
LOYOLA COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES (AUTONOMOUS)
(2024 – 2026)**

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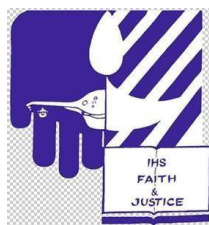
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LOYOLA COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

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Sreekariyam, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the Dissertation entitled “Marital Satisfaction and Dyadic Coping Among Working and Non–Working Married Women” is an authentic work carried out by Stepthy Maria Peter, under the guidance of Dr. Jesline Maria M. Mamen, Asst: Professor, Department of Counselling Psychology, during the fourth semester of the MSC Counselling Psychology programme in the academic year 2024 – 2026.

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DECLARATION

I, Stephy Maria Peter, do hereby declare that the dissertation titled “Marital Satisfaction and Dyadic Coping Among Working and Non – Working Married Women” submitted to the Department of Counselling Psychology, Loyola College of Social Sciences (Autonomous), Sreekariyam, under the supervision of Dr.Jesline Maria M. Mamen Assistant Professor Department of Counselling Psychology, for the award of the degree of Master of Science in Counselling Psychology, is a Bonafide work carried out by me. No part thereof has been submitted for the award of any other degree in any University.

Place: Sreekariyam

Date: 10-07-2026

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Table of Contents

List of Tables

List Of Appendices

Abstract

Chapter No.		Page No.
I	Introduction	1-7
II	Literature Review	8-21
III	Methodology	22-31
IV	Result and Discussion	32-48
V	Summary and Conclusion 49	-61

References

Appendices

List of Tables

Table	Table Name	Page
No.		No.
1	<i>Descriptive Statistics Shapiro–Wilk Tests of Normality for Dyadic Coping and Marital Satisfaction by Group.</i>	32
2	<i>Distribution of Marital Satisfaction Levels among Working and Non-Working Married Women.</i>	34
3	<i>Distribution of Dyadic Coping Levels among Working and Non-Working Married Women.</i>	35
4	<i>Mann–Whitney U Comparison of Marital Satisfaction between Working and Non-Working Married Women.</i>	36
5	<i>Mann–Whitney U Comparison of Dyadic Coping between Working and Non-Working Married Women.</i>	37
6	<i>Spearman’s Rank-Order Correlation between Dyadic Coping and Marital Satisfaction among Working Married Women .</i>	38
7	<i>Spearman’s Rank-Order Correlation between Dyadic Coping and Marital Satisfaction among Non-Working Married Women .</i>	38
8	<i>Kruskal–Wallis Comparison of Marital Satisfaction across Duration-of-Marriage Groups.</i>	39
9	<i>Kruskal–Wallis Comparison of Dyadic Coping across Duration-of-Marriage Groups .</i>	40
10	<i>Dwass–Steel–Critchlow–Fligner Pairwise Comparisons for Dyadic Coping across Duration-of-Marriage Groups .</i>	40

List of Appendices

No.

Appendix.

1

Informed Consent Form

2

Socio-Demographic Data Sheet

3

Dyadic Coping Inventory

4

Enrich Marital Satisfaction Scale

Abstract

Marriage is an important social institution that contributes to the psychological well-being and quality of life of individuals. With the increasing participation of women in the workforce, understanding marital satisfaction and dyadic coping among working and non-working married women has become increasingly important. The present study aimed to assess and compare marital satisfaction and dyadic coping among working and non-working married women, examine the relationship between these variables, and explore differences across duration of marriage. A quantitative, cross-sectional research design was adopted. The sample consisted of 134 married women, including 70 working and 64 non-working women, selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using a socio-demographic information sheet, the ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale, and the Dyadic Coping Inventory. The findings revealed no significant difference in marital satisfaction between working and non-working married women, whereas working married women demonstrated significantly higher dyadic coping. A significant positive relationship was found between dyadic coping and marital satisfaction among both groups. Marital satisfaction did not differ significantly across duration-of-marriage groups, while dyadic coping showed a significant difference across the groups. The findings highlight the importance of strengthening dyadic coping through counselling and couple-based interventions to promote healthy and satisfying marital relationships.

Keywords: Marital satisfaction, dyadic coping, working married women, non-working married women.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Marriage is one of the oldest and most important social institutions and serves as the foundation of family and society. It is a socially recognised union between two individuals who share emotional, social, and economic responsibilities. Families formed through marriage contribute to the development and stability of society and play a vital role in the socialisation of future generations. In India, marriage has traditionally been regarded as a sacred sacrament, deeply influenced by cultural, religious, and social values. The institution of marriage has long emphasised family commitment, mutual support, and continuity of family traditions.

Historically, the roles and responsibilities of men and women within marriage were largely shaped by patriarchal norms. Women's identities were closely associated with their roles as wives and mothers, and they were expected to be obedient to their husbands, care for children, preserve family honour, and fulfil religious and household responsibilities. Compared to men, women had limited access to education, property rights, decision-making, and personal freedom. Although these experiences were not universal, they reflected the reality of many women in traditional Indian society.

Over time, significant social changes such as urbanisation, industrialisation, education, economic development, and changing attitudes towards gender equality have transformed women's roles both within the family and in society. Increasing educational opportunities and employment have enabled many women to challenge traditional gender roles and participate actively in social and economic life. However, marriage continues to be strongly influenced by cultural and family values in India, with arranged marriages remaining more common than love or inter-caste marriages. As women increasingly pursue higher education and career opportunities, the age at marriage and parenthood has also gradually increased (Williams, 2003).

Marriage has traditionally been viewed as an important source of emotional security and psychological well-being. Earlier perspectives suggested that marriage itself benefited men, whereas women's well-being depended more on the quality of their marital relationship. Women were considered more likely to benefit from marriages characterised by emotional support, mutual understanding, and satisfaction (Bernard, 1972; Gove et al., 1983). However, these assumptions were later questioned, as research demonstrated that the quality of the marital relationship influences the psychological well-being of both husbands and wives (Barnett et al., 1994). Conversely, unhappy or conflict-ridden marriages may negatively affect the mental health and overall well-being of both partners (Williams, 2003).

Sociologist Jessie Bernard (1972) argued that marriage affects men and women differently because of unequal gender expectations within society. According to Bernard, women often experience greater pressure to prioritise household responsibilities, childcare, and the needs of their families over their own personal and professional aspirations. She further suggested that women's domestic work is frequently undervalued despite its importance to family functioning. As a result, women may experience emotional strain and reduced well-being within marriage. Bernard described this situation as a "double bind," where women are expected to be devoted wives and mothers while simultaneously sacrificing their own needs. She also proposed that as gender roles become more equal, marriage has the potential to become a more satisfying institution for both partners (Bernard, 1972). Similarly, Gilligan (1982) observed that women are often socialised to value relationships, caregiving, and family responsibilities, leading many to prioritise marital harmony even when they experience personal stress.

In contemporary society, increasing numbers of married women participate in paid employment while continuing to fulfil family responsibilities. Employment provides opportunities for financial independence, personal growth, increased self-confidence, and greater participation in family decision-making. Financial independence may also enable

women to make independent choices regarding their personal and marital lives (Williams, 2003). At the same time, many women continue to choose or remain in the role of homemakers, dedicating themselves to household management, childcare, and caregiving. Both working and non-working women make valuable contributions to family functioning, although their daily experiences and responsibilities differ considerably.

Previous research has often assessed marital quality primarily through overall marital satisfaction. However, marital relationships are complex and involve several interpersonal processes beyond satisfaction alone (Glenn, 1998; Umberson et al., 1996). Some researchers have suggested that men may experience certain benefits from marriage regardless of its quality (Acitelli & Antonucci, 1994). In contrast, women's marital experiences appear to be more closely influenced by the quality of the relationship, including communication, emotional support, conflict resolution, and shared coping. Therefore, understanding both marital satisfaction and dyadic coping provides a more comprehensive understanding of marital relationships. In view of the changing roles of women in contemporary society, the present study aims to examine marital satisfaction and dyadic coping among working and non-working married women and to understand how these variables differ between the two groups.

Marital Satisfaction

Marital satisfaction refers to how a person feels about their marriage. According to Fincham and Beach (2010), it is the attitude an individual has about their relationship. In research, it is important to identify why some marriages are happy or unhappy and the factors that improve or reduce marital satisfaction (Fincham & Beach, 2010). Understanding the factors affecting marital relationships would help couples build healthier relationships by avoiding the behaviours that damage relationships and improve communication (Fincham & Beach, 2010). According to Blood and Wolfe (1960), marital satisfaction tends to decrease over time; couples

who were initially happy about the marriage became less happy. However, Rollins and Feldman (1970) argued that marital satisfaction was lower during the early years of marriage because of financial problems, childcare issues, and career development, but it improved with time as the couples adjusted to married life.. Because later children become independent and couples understand each other better than earlier, this improves satisfaction. Bossard and Boll (1995) believed that marital satisfaction does not change significantly over time. Good communication is considered one of the strongest predictors of marital satisfaction. Research by Stafford, Dainton, and Haas et.al (2000) , Stafford, and Semic (2002) found that couples who regularly maintain their relationship are happier, more satisfied, and more committed.

Dyadic Coping

In the late 80s, Bodenmann and his colleagues started researching stress and close relationships by conducting numerous experimental, cross-sectional, longitudinal, and retrospective studies. The results revealed that external domains of stress, including work, family, friends, neighbours, and recreation, significantly predicted relationship quality, relational satisfaction, communication, partners' adjustment, stability of relationships, and the likelihood of divorce. Specifically, existing systems only recognised communication aspects of coping dyads.

Hence, Bodenmann introduced the concept of dyadic coping, which was defined by the Transactional Stress Theory of Lazarus and Folkman (1984) and later modified using a systemic approach. Dyadic coping refers to actions taken by one member of a couple to communicate to his/her partner the fact that he/she is experiencing stress following some activating event, the meaning that this event has for him/her, and responses that both partners can make to mitigate the effect of these stressors. There are three types of dyadic coping, namely, common dyadic coping, supportive dyadic coping, and delegated dyadic coping. Common dyadic coping is employed when couples cope with stressors together using a combination of problem-focused and emotion-focused efforts. Supportive dyadic coping

involves such behaviours as seeking and receiving help from partners, providing support, and expressing empathy.

According to the Transactional Stress Theory, dyadic coping can also be problem-focused or emotion-focused, and positive or negative. For example, negative supportive dyadic coping includes behaviours such as overt hostility, ambivalence, or superficial support, which fail to accept the fact that one partner might require help, support, or attention. Delegated dyadic coping is another type of supportive dyadic coping when one partner actively takes over some responsibilities from his/her partner to help him/her cope with stress.

Married Women and Work

Working women constitute an increasingly important segment of contemporary society, contributing significantly to the economic, social, and developmental progress of the nation. In recent years, women's participation in the workforce has steadily increased due to higher educational attainment, economic necessity, career aspirations, and changing societal attitudes towards gender roles. In addition to their professional responsibilities, many working women continue to fulfil traditional family roles as wives, mothers, and caregivers. Balancing multiple roles often exposes them to various occupational and family-related stressors, making effective coping and supportive marital relationships essential for their psychological well-being. At the same time, employment may provide opportunities for financial independence, social interaction, personal growth, and enhanced self-esteem, all of which can positively influence relationship quality. Therefore, understanding the marital experiences of working women, particularly their marital satisfaction and dyadic coping, is important for promoting healthy family relationships and overall well-being.

Non-working women, often referred to as homemakers, play a vital role in maintaining the functioning and well-being of the family. Although they are not engaged in paid employment outside the home, they contribute significantly through household management, childcare,

caregiving, and supporting the emotional and social needs of family members. Their responsibilities are often continuous and demanding, requiring effective organisation, patience, and emotional resilience. Despite their substantial contributions, non-working women may experience challenges such as financial dependence, limited social interaction, reduced opportunities for personal development, and increased domestic responsibilities, which can influence their psychological well-being and marital relationship. At the same time, spending more time with family members may strengthen emotional bonds and provide greater opportunities for family involvement. Therefore, examining marital satisfaction and dyadic coping among non-working married women is essential for understanding the unique experiences and challenges they encounter within the marital relationship.

Need for the study

Marriage is considered as one of the important social institutions in India. It plays an important role in psychological well-being and overall quality of life of married individuals. Satisfying marriages can contribute to better mental health and healthy family functioning. Married couples often experience different kind of challenges during their life. How they cope those together is significant in maintaining relationship quality. Positive dyadic coping improves communication, emotional intimacy and satisfaction. On the other hand poor dyadic coping may lead to conflict and dissatisfaction. Working women often experience stress due to dual responsibilities involving employment and household duties. Non-working women also undergo different stressors such as care giving responsibilities, household management and financial dependence.

These diverse life conditions may influence both dyadic coping and marital satisfaction. According to the National Crime Records Bureau of India, 48.9% of housewives committed suicide; the reports indicate family issues as a major problem. This study helps to evaluate the present situation of Working and Non-Working women in terms of marital satisfaction and

dyadic coping. The findings of this study will help to get a better understanding of the relationship between Marital satisfaction and dyadic coping and may provide information which will help the professionals to develop interventions to encourage healthy marriage relationships.

Statement of the Problem

Marriage is a vital aspect of the social and emotional life of women. The changes in the family structure, the rising number of women in the workforce, and different domestic needs contribute to the variations in the experience of married women. The association between women's experiences and their levels of marital satisfaction and dyadic coping strategies can help understand the mechanisms of healthy functioning and prevent social issues. For this reason, this research is intended to explore marital satisfaction, dyadic coping, and their connection, as well as the differences between working and non-working married women.

Delimitations of the Study

The study was conducted within the Kerala context. Data were collected from participants across seven districts: Thiruvananthapuram, Kasaragod, Alappuzha, Kottayam, Malappuram, Pathanamthitta, and Wayanad. The study included married women aged between 21 and 55 years. A total of 134 women participated in the study, comprising 70 working married women and 64 non-working married women.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A review of literature means a survey of the theoretical background and research work already undertaken in relation to the problem. It helps in identifying the research problem, variables, developing objectives, hypotheses and research design. It also provides an integrated perspective of the problem and highlights the gap in knowledge that needs to be filled by the proposed study. In addition, it provides justification for the research and explains the relevance of the study.

This chapter contains a review of the literature related to marital satisfaction and dyadic coping. The whole review is divided into three broad sections. The first section includes the theoretical review of the study. It presents the conceptual background along with the existing theories relevant to the study. The second part of the chapter deals with the empirical review of the study. The whole empirical review is based on the findings of various researchers who have conducted studies on similar problems. This part summarises the significant research findings relevant to the variables such as marital satisfaction and dyadic coping. The studies included for the review are published journal articles of recent times having a time frame of 10 to 15 years. However, if any of the classic theories were relevant to the study, it has also been included for review. The review highlights that dyadic coping positively influences marital satisfaction. However, studies conducted on working and non-working married women on these variables in the Kerala context are limited. Therefore, based on the research gap identified through the literature review, the rationale and relevance of the current study have been discussed.

Theoretical Review

The theoretical review will involve discussing the main concepts, definitions, and theories relating to the study variables of marital satisfaction and dyadic coping. It will present the conceptual model linking the variables under study.

Theories on Dyadic Coping

Equity Theory

Equity Theory, proposed by Walster et al. (1978), suggests that individuals compare their contributions (such as time, love, and support) to their gains or outcomes. Individuals examine whether what they receive is fair relative to what they give. A relationship feels equitable when individuals are satisfied with their outcomes. In relationships, people prefer rewards to punishments, and society encourages fairness. Fairness has been identified as a critical factor influencing the quality and stability of intimate relationships (Hatfield & Traupmann, 1979). According to Equity Theory, individuals who perceive inequity in their relationships experience psychological distress (Hatfield & Traupmann, 1979). People attempt to restore balance when they recognize unfairness. In marriage, there may be two types of partners: the under-benefited partner, who gives more and receives less, and the over-benefited partner, who contributes less and receives more. An under-benefited partner may experience resentment, frustration, anger, and dissatisfaction. An over-benefited partner may face guilt and discomfort. Therefore, equity in relationships leads to higher satisfaction in marriage.

The Systemic Transactional Model

Earlier, the stress models by Richard Lazarus and Susan Folkman explained stress as an individual experience. The systemic transaction model was an extension of this theory; the Systemic Transactional Model (STM) developed by Bodenmann (1995), explains how couples handle stress together. It defines interdependence as a core assumption that partners are interdependent and their emotions and experiences influence one another. Thus, stressful

situations often become shared experiences within the relationship. The other assumption is stress spillover or stress crossover; one partner's stress can often turn into the other partner's stress. There are different types of dyadic coping. Supportive dyadic coping means the partners support each other, which includes emotion-focused support and problem-focused support. Emotion- focused support means comforting each other, expressing love for one's partner, and providing emotional understanding, etc.

Problem- focused support means giving practical support and guidance. The second type is delegated dyadic coping, which refers to individuals taking on some responsibilities to reduce their partner's stress. The third one is common dyadic coping, which means partners face challenges together or find solutions together. The fourth type is negative dyadic coping, which means blaming the stressed partner, mocking or criticising how the partner handled the situation, and showing emotional detachment or minimising the seriousness of the stress. Sometimes, it can involve mutual blaming as well.

This theory suggests that negative coping has detrimental effects on relationship quality. The theory focuses on the concept of we-stress, viewing stress as our problem rather than seeing it as an individual issue. The two major functions of dyadic coping include reducing stress and strengthening relationships by fostering trust, intimacy, commitment, and a sense of togetherness. Positive dyadic coping increases marital satisfaction, while negative dyadic coping reduces the quality of marital satisfaction. Common dyadic coping is considered an important predictor of marital satisfaction. This also shows why some couples continue to be satisfied in spite of stress, while others do not.

Theories on Marital Satisfaction

Family System Theory

Family Systems Theory was developed from the work of several family therapists and researchers. Murray Bowen developed Bowen family systems theory. This theory suggests that "the interactions between family members are viewed as essential in understanding the behavior and emotions of individuals"(Johnson & Ray, 2016). According to this theory, individuals are interconnected; one person's behavior and emotions influence others, such as family members. So the problem is viewed in a systemic view rather than an individual problem. Repeated interaction patterns between family members often maintain problems and adaptive behaviours. Circular causality is considered an important concept. Which means in families, one's behavior influences another person's behaviour, and that person's response again influences the first person.

Therefore, one individual alone cannot be blamed for a problem. The problem is maintained due to the interaction patterns among family members. The concept of a triangle describes the situation in which a third person is drawn into a problem between two people. In observer-imposed punctuation, individuals view the starting of the problem differently every one may think the other person started the problem. The Recursive processes describe repeated behavior patterns that later became the stable pattern of the family. And the communication involves not only verbal interactions but also silence, facial expressions and other nonverbal behaviours, etc. This theory says conversation reveals how people interpret their relationships. The interaction pattern can show how couples manage stress. Every family may have unwritten rules that determine how family members behave. First-order cybernetics focuses on observing and understanding interaction patterns that maintain the problem within the family system. Second-order cybernetics shows that even the therapist or researcher can also influence the family. The context suggests that problems should be understood within the relationship and

situational circumstances in which they occur. Thus, the partners are interconnected, and the couple's interaction patterns affect the quality of the relationship. Positive interaction patterns enhance marital satisfaction, whereas negative interaction patterns reduce marital satisfaction.

Attachment Theory

John Bowlby developed attachment theory, which was later expanded by Mary Ainsworth . This theory introduces the internal working model, a framework of thoughts, feelings, and expectations regarding relationships that develops through internalizing a history of interactions with the attachment figure in infancy and early childhood (Burkhart & Borelli, 2017). The aims of the attachment system include proximity maintenance, a secure base, and a safe haven. Proximity maintenance describes the need to stay close to the mother or caretaker and the difficulty or expression of sadness when they are away. A secure base means that a mother's presence gives the child the confidence to explore and learn about the world. In a safe haven context, the child rushes to the mother for protection in times of danger. Maternal sensitivity, transmission, reflective functioning, and micro-behavioral synchrony determine childhood relationships.

Similar to childhood dynamics, in a romantic relationship, the adult considers their partner as a major attachment figure and expects them to serve as a safe haven during difficulties and a secure base for personal growth. In childhood, the mother or caretaker is meant to provide protection, and the child receives it, but in adult relationships, it is usually reciprocal, "such that both partners serve as caregivers and receivers (Burkhart & Borelli, 2017). The presence or memories of the partner help to reduce stress, and it is also associated with increased levels of oxytocin and endorphins. As long as they live together, their emotions and physiological states become synchronized. In adult relationships, there are different attachment styles that form from perceptions about oneself (model of self) and perceptions about others (model of others). Modern research determines this based on two criteria: attachment anxiety and

attachment avoidance. Attachment anxiety shows hyperactivating strategies; people with this style of attachment constantly fear being abandoned by their partner. They consider small changes a serious threat. On the other hand, attachment avoidance shows deactivating strategies.

These individuals learned that expressing problems leads to being ignored in childhood experiences. Therefore, they don't show their pain outwardly and believe in excessive self-reliance. The dyadic dynamics explain the anxious-avoidant trap, which refers to the relationship between a person with attachment avoidance and attachment anxiety. Sometimes, they both tend to perceive things negatively. Thus, having a secure attachment style, which involves asking for help from the partner during difficulties and being a safe and supportive system for each other, is important in determining marital quality. Secure attachment leads to higher marital satisfaction and coping ability.

Empirical Review

The empirical review entails summarizing the results of previous studies on the topic of marital satisfaction and dyadic coping, with a focus on working and non-working married women. The empirical review will highlight the research results, contradictions, and research gaps that motivate the current study.

Studies on Marital satisfaction Among Married Couples

Cobb and Sullivan (2015) conducted a study involving 191 newlywed couples in the United States to establish whether premarital relationship education predicted change in satisfaction during the first 27 months of marriage. The researchers measured marital satisfaction on several occasions using self-report assessments. The results showed that participants who received premarital education had higher levels of satisfaction with their marriages at the beginning. However, the rate of decline of satisfaction was similar among couples who received premarital relationship education and those who did not. The study concluded that premarital education

had a positive effect on the initial level of satisfaction but not on its rate of decline over time. The study did not control for several variables, including dyadic coping, occupation, and gender.

Lavner et al. (2016) conducted a longitudinal study on 431 newly married couples who were first married in the United States. It aimed to determine the connection between communication and marital satisfaction. Communication level was evaluated in the laboratory through marital tasks, whereas marital satisfaction was measured through self-reporting scales. The results revealed that satisfied couples demonstrated higher levels of positive communication compared to dissatisfied ones. However, communication was a limited predictor of subsequent changes in satisfaction. Thus, the study concluded that improving communication may not be enough to promote long-term satisfaction. The study's limitation is that it was done among newly married couples, and the results might not generalize to other populations.

James (2018) carried out a cross-sectional study to determine the effect of emotional intelligence on marital satisfaction among 250 married individuals. In this study, the Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test was administered to assess the level of emotional intelligence, while the ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale was used to determine the degree of satisfaction with marriage. The study found that emotional intelligence had a significant effect on marital satisfaction, which implies that higher emotional intelligence scores predicted higher levels of satisfaction with marriage. This conclusion was drawn based on the analysis of data using descriptive and inferential statistics. However, the study has several weaknesses, including its cross-sectional design and the use of purposive sampling.

Raina and Maity (2018) conducted a comparative cross-sectional study to assess the satisfaction level of married couples with self-choice and arranged marriages. The researchers selected 120 married participants (60 couples) in Bangalore, India, using a convenience

sampling technique and asked them to complete a standardized marital satisfaction scale. Raina and Maity (2018) found that couples who opted for self-choice marriages were more satisfied with their relationships than those who opted for arranged marriages (p. 45). However, multiple participants in the latter group also expressed a high level of satisfaction with their arranged relationships. The researchers concluded that communication, comprehension, adjustment, and respect influence the relationship satisfaction of married couples, irrespective of the type of marriage. However, the study's limitation includes the use of a convenience sample and the cross-sectional design, which might affect the accuracy and generalizability of the results.

Williamson and Lavner (2020) conducted a longitudinal study on the marriages of 431 racially diverse newlywed couples from low-income neighborhoods in the U States to establish patterns and changes in spousal satisfaction during the first 4.5 years of marriage. The results indicate that the majority of the participants had high levels of satisfaction with their spouses while a small proportion remained dissatisfied throughout the period. The researchers found that psychological, emotional, and financial resources predicted changes in marital satisfaction over time. However, the study results cannot be generalized due to the selected sample, which may not represent the rest of the population.

Studies on Dyadic Coping Among Married Couples

Lebert-Charron et al. (2018) conducted a cross-sectional study among 530 heterosexual married couples in France to assess the connection between dyadic coping and relationship satisfaction. The researchers used the Dyadic Coping Inventory to measure dyadic coping and the Couples Satisfaction Index to evaluate relationship satisfaction. The results of the study demonstrated that positive dyadic coping predicted higher levels of satisfaction with the marriage, while negative dyadic coping predicted lower levels of satisfaction. The study effectively proves the importance of positive dyadic coping for married couples. However, the

study's limitation is that it was a cross-sectional study, which does not allow establishing causation, and the sample was restricted to heterosexual married couples.

Wollny et al. (2019) have conducted a cross-sectional dyadic study among 136 heterosexual married couples to assess the possible role of dyadic coping as a mediator between participants' trait emotional intelligence (TEI) and relational satisfaction. The researchers used the TEIQue-SF to measure TEI, Dyadic Coping Inventory to assess dyadic coping, and a relational satisfaction scale. The results of the study demonstrated that positive dyadic coping partially mediated the link between participants' TEI and their relational satisfaction. Meanwhile, negative dyadic coping exhibited only a minor influence on the relationship. The researchers concluded that positive dyadic coping plays a crucial role in increasing relational satisfaction. The results were only partially supported by the findings due to the small sample size of the study.

The study by Rusu et al. (2020) was conducted among 240 heterosexual married couples in Switzerland to assess the connections between stress, dyadic coping, and relational satisfaction in the context of a five-year longitudinal study. The authors used the Dyadic Coping Inventory to measure dyadic coping jointly with scales for stress and relational satisfaction. The results demonstrated that supportive, perceived partner support, and common dyadic coping predicted relational satisfaction and served as a buffer against the negative effects of stress. The study discovered that positive dyadic coping plays a critical role in sustaining marriages by being a protective factor. However, the study results cannot be generalized to other populations because of the sample's limitation to a specific culture.

Shujja et al. (2022) performed a cross-sectional dyadic study on 300 heterosexual married couples in Pakistan to assess the connection between dyadic coping, gratitude, and relational satisfaction. The authors used the Dyadic Coping Inventory to measure dyadic coping and the Dyadic Coping-Based Gratitude Scale to evaluate gratitude. The results of the research

revealed that positive dyadic coping predicted higher levels of relational satisfaction, with gratitude fully mediating the relationship between dyadic coping and satisfaction. Therefore, the authors concluded that gratitude plays an essential role in relationships as it makes dyadic coping more effective. However, the authors generalized their results to all heterosexual married couples in Pakistan.

Kanth et al. (2022) conducted a study to assess the psychometric properties of the Tamil version of the Dyadic Coping Inventory (DCI) among 931 married participants in Tamil Nadu, India. Confirmatory factor analysis revealed that the Tamil DCI had good reliability and validity in measuring various aspects of dyadic coping among married couples and concluded that the Tamil version of the DCI is a valid and reliable measure for use in future studies on dyadic coping in India. However, the study has limitations, including the focus on married couples in one region of India, which raises questions about the generalizability of the findings to the broader population.

Studies Comparing Working and Non-working Married Women

Oraon and Kumari performed a comparative cross-sectional study in 2019. The research sample included 240 married women, 120 of whom did not work, whereas the others were employed. The researchers used the Stress Scale to assess stress levels among the participants. The results of the study demonstrated that working women experienced much higher levels of stress due to increased responsibilities related to work and family. Therefore, employing married women leads to higher stress levels, which means that families should take care of such women. However, since the researchers used a convenience sample, and the study was only cross-sectional, the conclusions cannot be fully accurate.

Jha and Singh (2020) performed a comparative study between 160 married women, 80% of whom were employed, while the other 80% were their counterparts. The authors used ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale and WHOQOL-BREF instruments to measure the degree

of satisfaction and quality of life among the studied population. The results showed that working women experienced higher levels of marital satisfaction and better quality of life as compared to non-working women. However, the former also noted a higher number of demands associated with their labour status. The authors conclude by stating that financial independence and a supportive relationship are key contributors to better quality of life. It is important to note that the authors used a convenience sample, which limits the applicability of the results since it cannot represent the entire population accurately.

Pathak and Srivastava (2021) conducted a comparative cross-sectional study among 120 married females in India, of which 60 were employed and 60 were unemployed to assess the levels of depression and life satisfaction. The researchers used the Beck Depression Inventory-II to measure depression and the Satisfaction with Life Scale to determine the level of life satisfaction. The results of the study indicate that unemployed females had higher levels of depression and lower levels of life satisfaction compared to their employed counterparts. The study concluded that employment has a significant influence on levels of depression and life satisfaction among females. However, the study has several limitations, including convenience sampling, which might have led to sampling bias, and the cross-sectional design, which limits the ability to establish causation.

Bhatnagar and Sharma (2021) conducted a comparative cross-sectional study to determine the differences in the level of psychological well-being among 200 married women (100 working and 100 non-working) in India. The researchers used Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale. The results of the study revealed that working women had a higher level of psychological well-being than their counterparts, whereas non-working women scored higher on the family connection dimension. The article concluded that employment contributes to autonomy and psychological well-being, while family support plays a significant role in protecting family

members' well-being. The results were generalized because the study used a convenience sample and self-reported data.

Nagavadiya (2022) conducted a comparative cross-sectional study among 80 married women (40% working and 40% non-working) in India to determine the mental health and depression levels. The Mental Health Inventory and Beck Depression Inventory were used for the analysis. The results of the study indicate that working women demonstrate better mental health status and less depression in comparison to non-working women. The researchers conclude that working is positively associated with women's mental health and wellbeing. The study has some limitations, including the size of the sample and cross-sectional design.

Kuriakose and Abraham (2023) conducted a cross-sectional study among 120 women (60 working and 60 non-working) in Kerala to determine the psychological well-being of the participants during the COVID-19 pandemic. The researchers used Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale to measure the psychological well-being of the participants. The researchers concluded that the working women had higher psychological well-being than their non-working counterparts due to financial independence and social interactions. However, the study has a limitation in using convenience sampling to select the study sample.

Research Gap

Previous studies revealed that positive dyadic coping is significantly related to higher levels of marital satisfaction among the married couples (Lebert-Charron et al., 2018; Wollny et al., 2019; Rusu et al., 2020). In contrast, the studies conducted to compare dyadic coping and other variables, including marital satisfaction, psychological well-being, depression, and quality of life, among working and non-working married women are limited (Jha & Singh, 2020; Bhatnagar & Sharma, 2021; Nagavadiya). However, no previous study has specifically focused on the impact of marital satisfaction on dyadic coping among working and non-working married women in India. Likewise, there is a lack of research on marital satisfaction and dyadic

coping of the married women in Kerala. Hence, this study aims to contribute towards filling this research gap by providing in-depth information on marital satisfaction and dyadic coping of working and non-working married women. The findings of the study will benefit psychologists, marriage counsellors, and family therapists, as well as future researchers, by providing additional empirical data on positive dyadic coping's role in achieving satisfying marriages.

Relevance of the Study

The present study is significant as it examines the relationship between dyadic coping and marital satisfaction among working and non-working married women. While previous research has independently explored marital satisfaction, dyadic coping, and various psychological outcomes among married women, relatively few studies have examined the relationship between these two variables among working and non-working women, particularly within the Indian context. Furthermore, research focusing on this relationship in Kerala remains limited. As increasing numbers of women balance occupational responsibilities alongside family roles, understanding how couples cope with stress together and how these coping strategies influence marital satisfaction has become increasingly important. By comparing working and non-working married women, the present study aims to provide a deeper understanding of the role of employment status in shaping marital relationships and couples' coping processes.

The findings of the study are expected to contribute to both theory and practice. The results may help psychologists, marriage counsellors, family therapists, and mental health professionals better understand the importance of dyadic coping in promoting healthy marital relationships. The findings can also support the development of counselling interventions and couple-based programmes that strengthen communication, collaborative coping, and relationship satisfaction. Additionally, the study may provide useful insights for organisations and policymakers in designing family-friendly workplace policies and support systems that

address the challenges faced by married women in balancing work and family responsibilities. Such initiatives may contribute to improving the overall well-being of married women and promoting healthier family functioning.

Furthermore, this study contributes to the existing body of literature by providing empirical evidence from the Indian, particularly Kerala, socio-cultural context, where research on dyadic coping remains relatively scarce. Marriage and family relationships in India are shaped by unique cultural values, gender roles, and family expectations, making it important to examine these constructs within the local context rather than relying solely on findings from Western populations. The present study is therefore expected to address an important gap in the literature and provide culturally relevant evidence regarding the association between dyadic coping and marital satisfaction among working and non-working married women. The findings may also serve as a foundation for future research examining other psychological, interpersonal, and socio-cultural factors that influence marital relationships and couple well-being across different populations.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

This chapter presents the methodology used to conduct the study of marital satisfaction and dyadic coping of working and non-working married women. The aim, objectives, and hypotheses of the research have been specified. The main aspects of the methodology included the research design, the study participants, the variables used, the sampling strategy, and the research instruments. Additionally, the chapter provides the procedures for conducting the study, the ethical aspects of the research, and the statistical methods used.

Aim of the study

The present study aims to find out the relationship between Marital satisfaction and Dyadic Coping among Working and Non-working married women, and to examine the connection between these two variables within the study sample.

Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the levels of marital satisfaction among working and non-working married women.
2. To assess the levels of dyadic coping among working and non-working married women.
3. To compare marital satisfaction between working and non-working married women.
4. To compare dyadic coping between working and non-working married women.
5. To examine the relationship between dyadic coping and marital satisfaction among working married women.
6. To examine the relationship between dyadic coping and marital satisfaction among non-working married women.
7. To examine the differences in marital satisfaction across the three duration-of-marriage groups (1–5 years, 6–15 years, and 16 years and above) among married women.

8. To examine the differences in dyadic coping across the three duration-of-marriage groups (1–5 years, 6–15 years, and 16 years and above) among married women.

Variables of the study

The primary variables in the present study are marital satisfaction and dyadic coping. Employment status, which classifies participants into working and non-working married women, serves as a categorical independent (attribute) variable in the comparative analysis, with marital satisfaction and dyadic coping treated as dependent variables. In addition, separate within-group correlational analyses examine the direction and strength of the relationship between dyadic coping and marital satisfaction in each group.

Operational Definitions of Variables

Marital Satisfaction

For the current study, marital satisfaction is defined as the extent to which a married woman feels happy and content in relation to her marriage. It is a reflection of her overall happiness with her relationship, including such aspects as communication, understanding, affection, adjustment, and general relationship satisfaction.

Dyadic Coping

In the current study, dyadic coping is defined as the ways through which married couples cope with stress experienced by either one of the partners or by the relationship as a whole. It includes such categories as stress communication, supportive coping, delegated coping, common dyadic coping, and negative dyadic coping.

Working Women

Married women who are currently engaged in paid employment in either the formal or informal sector, working a minimum of 20 hours per week outside the domestic domain. This includes any form of income-generating occupation, whether full-time or part-time, as adapted from the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2023).

Non-Working Women

Married women who are not engaged in any form of paid employment outside the home and whose primary role is the management of household and family responsibilities, including caregiving and domestic work, without involvement in income-generating activities.

Hypotheses of the Study

H1: There is a significant difference in marital satisfaction between working and non-working married women.

H2 : There is a significant difference in dyadic coping between working and non-working married women.

H3: There is a significant relationship between dyadic coping and marital satisfaction among working married women

H4: There is a significant relationship between dyadic coping and marital satisfaction among non-working married women.

H5: There is a significant difference in marital satisfaction across the three duration-of-marriage groups (1–5 years, 6–15 years, and 16 years and above) among married women.

H6: There is a significant difference in dyadic coping across the three duration-of-marriage groups (1–5 years, 6–15 years, and 16 years and above) among married women.

Research Design

The study adopts a quantitative, cross-sectional design integrating comparative and correlational approaches. Because employment status is a naturally occurring, non-manipulated attribute variable inherent to the participants, experimental control or random assignment is not possible; therefore, all findings are interpreted associationally rather than causally. The comparative component addresses between-group differences in marital satisfaction and dyadic coping, while the correlational component examines the within-group

association between dyadic coping and marital satisfaction for the working and non-working groups separately.

Participants

Population

Working and Non -working women within the age range of 21 -55 living in Kerala

Sample

The present study collected data from 134 married women comprising 70 working married women and 64 non-working married women as the sample size. The participants were selected from Kerala through a purposive sampling procedure. Purposive sampling is used to identify participants who fit the study's criteria. The participants needed to be married women, working or not working, based on the study's goals. Thus, the participants who met the inclusion criteria and gave their consent to participate in the study were selected.

Inclusion Criteria

Participants were selected based on the following inclusion criteria. The study included married women aged between 21 and 55 years who voluntarily provided informed consent to participate in the study. Participants were required to be able to read and comprehend the questionnaire independently. The study included both working and non-working married women. Working married women were defined as those engaged in paid employment in the formal or informal sector for at least 20 hours per week outside the home, in accordance with the definition provided by the International Labour Organisation (ILO, 2023). Non-working married women were defined as homemakers who were not engaged in paid employment outside the home and whose primary role was managing household and family responsibilities.

Exclusion Criteria

The study excluded women who were single, divorced, separated, or widowed. Women below the age of 21 years and above 55 years were also excluded from the study. Participants who

did not provide informed consent, were unable to read and understand the questionnaire independently, or submitted incomplete online responses were excluded. Additionally, working women who were employed for less than 20 hours per week in paid work outside the home were not included in the study.

Instruments

The present study used three instruments for data collection. A socio-demographic data sheet was used to collect participants' background information, including age, educational qualification, occupation, type of family, duration of marriage, number of children, monthly family income, and other relevant personal details. Marital satisfaction was assessed using the ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale, a standardized instrument that measures the level of satisfaction experienced within the marital relationship. Dyadic coping was assessed using the Dyadic Coping Inventory (DCI) developed by Bodenmann, which evaluates how couples communicate stress and cope with stressful situations together. Both standardized scales have demonstrated satisfactory reliability and validity and are widely used in research to assess marital relationships and dyadic coping among married individuals.

ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale (EMS)

The ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale (EMS), developed by Blaine J. Fowers and David H. Olson (1993), is a brief self-report instrument designed to assess overall marital satisfaction for research and clinical purposes. Derived from the original ENRICH Inventory, the scale measures marital satisfaction across ten domains of the marital relationship while also assessing idealistic distortion (social desirability) in responses. The EMS consists of 15 items organized into two subscales: the Marital Satisfaction (MS) subscale with 10 items and the Idealistic Distortion (ID) subscale with 5 items. Responses are recorded on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

Administration: The EMS is a self-report instrument that may be administered individually or to both spouses independently. It can be administered using either a paper-and-pencil format or a digital platform. The scale generally requires 5–10 minutes to complete. Participants are instructed to respond independently and honestly to each statement based on their marital relationship.

Scoring: Each item is scored on a five-point scale. Six negatively worded items (Items 2, 5, 8, 9, 12, and 14) are reverse scored before calculating the Marital Satisfaction subscale score. The Marital Satisfaction (MS) score is obtained by summing the ten marital satisfaction items, while the Idealistic Distortion (ID) score is obtained by summing the five idealistic distortion items. The corrected EMS total score is computed by adjusting the Marital Satisfaction score for idealistic distortion using the scoring formula provided by Fowers and Olson (1993). Higher corrected EMS scores indicate greater marital satisfaction.

Reliability: The original developers reported an internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) of .86 for the Marital Satisfaction subscale. Subsequent validation studies have reported similar reliability coefficients ($\alpha = .87$), demonstrating good internal consistency of the instrument.

Validity: Evidence supports the validity of the EMS across multiple dimensions. The scale demonstrated concurrent validity through significant correlations with the Locke–Wallace Marital Adjustment Test ($r = .73$ for individual scores and $r = .81$ for couple scores). It also demonstrated discriminant validity, correctly distinguishing happily married from unhappily married couples with 85–95% accuracy. Furthermore, confirmatory factor analyses have consistently supported the two-factor structure comprising Marital Satisfaction and Idealistic Distortion, providing evidence of construct validity.

Dyadic Coping Inventory (DCI)

The Dyadic Coping Inventory (DCI) was developed by Guy Bodenmann (2008) to assess dyadic coping and stress communication between partners in close relationships. It is a self-

report instrument designed to measure how couples communicate stress and support one another when one or both partners experience stressful situations. The inventory consists of 37 items organized into ten subscales: stress communication by oneself, supportive dyadic coping by oneself, delegated dyadic coping by oneself, negative dyadic coping by oneself, stress communication by the partner, supportive dyadic coping by the partner, delegated dyadic coping by the partner, negative dyadic coping by the partner, common dyadic coping, and evaluation of dyadic coping. Responses are rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Very Rarely) to 5 (Very Often).

Administration: The DCI is a self-report instrument that can be administered individually or in an interview format. It generally requires 10–15 minutes to complete. Participants are instructed to respond honestly to each item based on how they and their partner typically communicate and cope with stress within their relationship.

Scoring: Items are scored on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Very Rarely) to 5 (Very Often). The total DCI score is obtained by summing the scores of Items 1–35 after reverse scoring the negatively worded items (Items 7, 10, 11, 15, 22, 25, 26, and 27). Items 36 and 37 assess satisfaction with dyadic coping and are not included in the total score. Scores for each subscale are calculated by summing the relevant items. Higher total scores indicate more positive and effective dyadic coping. According to the DCI manual, a total score below 111 indicates below-average dyadic coping, scores between 111 and 145 indicate normal dyadic coping, and scores above 145 indicate above-average dyadic coping.

Reliability: The original psychometric evaluation of the DCI demonstrated adequate to high internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from .71 to .92 across the subscales. The overall scale also showed high internal consistency across different language versions, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients of .91 for the German version, .90 for the Italian version, and .90 for the French version.

Validity: The validity of the DCI has been supported through studies conducted across German, Italian, and French samples. Construct validity was established through principal component analyses that confirmed the predicted factor structure of the inventory. Convergent validity was demonstrated by strong positive correlations between stress communication, dyadic coping, and marital quality, while divergent validity was supported by weak correlations with communication pattern measures, indicating that the DCI assesses a distinct construct related to dyadic coping.

Demographic Data Sheet

A socio-demographic data sheet was used to gather background information about the participants. The name /initials are not considered compulsory. Demographic information collected included age, gender, district, education, occupation, type of employment, marital status, family type, duration of marriage, and number of children. The information gathered using the socio-demographic data sheet was used to describe the socio-demographic characteristics of the study sample and to facilitate the interpretation of the results obtained.

Data Collection Procedure

Prior to data collection, ethical approval for the study was obtained from the concerned institutional authority. Participants who met the inclusion criteria were selected using purposive sampling. The purpose of the study was explained to each participant, emphasizing the voluntary nature of participation, their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without any penalty, and the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before administering the study instruments. Data were collected online through Google Forms based on the accessibility and convenience of the participants. The socio-demographic data sheet, the Dyadic Coping Inventory (DCI), and the ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale were administered through the online platform, with uniform instructions provided to all participants. Participants were encouraged to respond honestly and

were informed that there were no right or wrong answers. The questionnaires required approximately 20–25 minutes to complete. The completed online responses were reviewed for completeness before being included in the analysis. Data collection was carried out over a period from 16 May to 3 June 2026. Upon completion of the questionnaires, participants were thanked for their time and cooperation, and any queries regarding the study were addressed.

Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data were coded and analysed using jamovi 2.3.28. Descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean, median, and standard deviation, were computed to summarise the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants and the levels of marital satisfaction and dyadic coping. The normality of the study variables was assessed using the Shapiro–Wilk test. The results of the Shapiro–Wilk test indicated that the study variables did not satisfy the assumption of normality. Therefore, non-parametric statistical techniques were employed for all inferential analyses to ensure consistency and appropriateness of the statistical procedures.

Therefore, non-parametric statistical techniques were employed for inferential analyses to maintain methodological consistency. The Mann–Whitney U test was used to compare marital satisfaction and dyadic coping between working and non-working married women, addressing Objectives 3 and 4 and testing Hypotheses 1 and 2. Spearman's rank-order correlation was used to examine the relationship between dyadic coping and marital satisfaction separately among working and non-working married women, addressing Objectives 5 and 6 and testing Hypotheses 3 and 4. Additionally, the Kruskal–Wallis H test was conducted to examine differences in marital satisfaction and dyadic coping across different duration-of-marriage groups (Objectives 7 and 8; Hypotheses 5 and 6). Where the Kruskal–Wallis test yielded significant results, Dwass–Steel–Critchlow–Fligner pairwise comparisons were performed to identify the specific groups that differed significantly. A significance level of $p < .05$ was

adopted for all statistical analyses. These analyses are consistent with the statistical procedures reported in the results of the present study.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter demonstrates the findings of the study on marital satisfaction and dyadic coping among working and non-working married women. The results are structured according to the objectives and hypotheses of the study. Preliminary analyses, including tests of normality, are presented first to justify the choice of statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics are then reported, followed by the results of the inferential analyses conducted to test the hypotheses. The chapter concludes with a comprehensive discussion of the findings in relation to previous empirical studies and relevant theoretical perspectives.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics and Shapiro–Wilk Test of Normality for Dyadic Coping and Marital Satisfaction by Working Status

Variable	Group	n	M	SD	W	p
Dyadic Coping	Working	70	111.00	20.40	.978	.264
	Non-working	64	103.00	11.30	.924	< .001
Marital Satisfaction	Working	70	30.40	5.13	.976	.207
	Non-working	64	29.30	3.86	.973	.165

Note. Group 1 = working women; Group 2 = non-working women. W = Shapiro–Wilk statistic.

Values of $p < .05$ indicate a departure from normality. M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation

Prior to conducting the inferential analyses, the assumption of normality was examined using the Shapiro–Wilk test. The results indicated that marital satisfaction was normally distributed among both working ($W = .976$, $p = .207$) and non-working married women ($W = .973$, $p = .165$). Similarly, dyadic coping among working married women was normally distributed ($W = .978$, $p = .264$). However, dyadic coping scores among non-working married women significantly deviated from normality ($W = .924$, $p < .001$). Since one of the study variables violated the assumption of normality, non-parametric statistical tests were considered appropriate for the analysis. Consequently, the Mann–Whitney U test was employed to compare working and non-working married women, Spearman's rank-order correlation was used to examine the relationship between dyadic coping and marital satisfaction, and the Kruskal–Wallis H test was used to examine differences across duration-of-marriage groups.

The table also presents the descriptive statistics for dyadic coping and marital satisfaction among working and non-working married women. Working married women obtained a higher mean score on dyadic coping ($M = 111.00$, $SD = 20.40$) compared to non-working married women ($M = 103.00$, $SD = 11.30$). Similarly, the mean marital satisfaction score was slightly higher among working married women ($M = 30.40$, $SD = 5.13$) than among non-working married women ($M = 29.30$, $SD = 3.86$).

Table 2*Distribution of Marital Satisfaction Levels among Working and Non-Working Married Women*

Satisfaction Level	Working f	Working %	Non- working f	Non- working %	Total %
Low	13	18.6	18	28.1	23.1
Moderate	42	60.0	36	56.2	58.2
High	15	21.4	10	15.6	18.7
Total	70	100.0	64	100.0	100.0

Note. f = frequency; % = percentage. Category bands follow the ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale interpretive ranges.

Table 2 presents the distribution of marital satisfaction levels among working and non-working married women. Among the working married women, the majority (42; 60.0%) reported a moderate level of marital satisfaction, followed by a high level of marital satisfaction (15; 21.4%) and a low level of marital satisfaction (13; 18.6%). Similarly, among the non-working married women, the majority (36; 56.2%) reported a moderate level of marital satisfaction, while 18 (28.1%) reported a low level and 10 (15.6%) reported a high level of marital satisfaction. Overall, 58.2% of the participants demonstrated a moderate level of marital satisfaction, followed by 23.1% with a low level and 18.7% with a high level of marital satisfaction. These findings indicate that moderate marital satisfaction was the predominant level among both working and non-working married women.

Table 3

Distribution of Dyadic Coping Levels among Working and Non-Working Married Women

Dyadic Coping Level	Working f	Working %	Non-working f	Non-working %	Total %
Below average / Low	40	57.1	52	81.2	68.7
Average	27	38.6	11	17.2	28.4
Above average / High	3	4.3	1	1.6	3.0
Total	70	100.0	64	100.0	100.0

Note. f = frequency; % = percentage.

Table 3 presents the distribution of dyadic coping levels among working and non-working married women. Among the working married women, the majority (40; 57.1%) demonstrated below-average dyadic coping, followed by average dyadic coping (27; 38.6%), while only 3 (4.3%) demonstrated above-average dyadic coping. Among the non-working married women, the majority (52; 81.2%) demonstrated below-average dyadic coping, whereas 11 (17.2%) demonstrated average dyadic coping and only 1 (1.6%) demonstrated above-average dyadic coping. Overall, 68.7% of the participants demonstrated below-average dyadic coping, 28.4% demonstrated average dyadic coping, and only 3.0% demonstrated above-average dyadic coping. These findings indicate that below-average dyadic coping was the predominant level among the participants, with a higher proportion of non-working married women falling in the below-average category compared to working married women.

Table 4

Mann–Whitney U Comparison of Marital Satisfaction between Working and Non-Working Married Women

Variable	Mann–Whitney U	p	Group	n	Mdn
Marital satisfaction	1817	.060	Working	70	30.3
			Non-working	64	29.0

Note. U = Mann–Whitney U statistic; Mdn = median. Rank-biserial correlation = $-.189$.

A Mann–Whitney U test was conducted to compare marital satisfaction between working and non-working married women. As presented in Table 5, the median marital satisfaction score of working married women ($Mdn = 30.3$) was slightly higher than that of non-working married women ($Mdn = 29.0$). However, the difference between the two groups was not statistically significant ($U = 1817$, $p = .060$). The obtained rank-biserial correlation ($r = .189$) indicated a small effect size. These findings suggest that although working married women reported marginally higher levels of marital satisfaction than non-working married women, the observed difference was not sufficient to conclude that employment status significantly influenced marital satisfaction. Therefore, the hypothesis stating that there is a significant difference in marital satisfaction between working and non-working married women was not supported.

Table 5

Mann–Whitney U Comparison of Dyadic Coping between Working and Non-Working Married Women

Variable	Mann–Whitney U	p	Group	n	Mdn
Dyadic coping	1683	.013	Working	70	107.0
			Non-working	64	102.5

Note. U = Mann–Whitney U statistic; Mdn = median. Rank-biserial correlation = $-.249$.

A Mann–Whitney U test was conducted to compare dyadic coping between working and non-working married women. The results indicated that working married women had a higher median dyadic coping score ($Mdn = 107.0$) than non-working married women ($Mdn = 102.5$). The analysis revealed a statistically significant difference between the two groups ($U = 1683$, $p = .013$). The obtained rank-biserial correlation ($r = .249$) indicated a small effect size. These findings suggest that working married women demonstrated significantly higher levels of dyadic coping than non-working married women. Therefore, Hypothesis 2, which stated that there is a significant difference in dyadic coping between working and non-working married women, was accepted.

Table 6

Spearman's Rank-Order Correlation between Dyadic Coping and Marital Satisfaction among Working Married Women (n = 70)

Variable	1	2
1. Dyadic coping	—	.607***
2. Marital satisfaction	.607***	—

Note. r_s = Spearman's rank-order correlation coefficient; $df = 68$. ** $p^* < .001$.

Spearman's rank-order correlation analysis was performed to examine the relationship between dyadic coping and marital satisfaction among working married women. The analysis revealed a statistically significant, strong positive correlation between the two variables ($r_s = .607$, $p < .001$). This indicates that higher levels of dyadic coping were associated with higher levels of marital satisfaction among working married women. The strength of the correlation suggests that effective dyadic coping plays an important role in enhancing marital satisfaction within this group. Therefore, Hypothesis 3, which proposed a significant positive relationship between dyadic coping and marital satisfaction among working married women, was accepted.

Table 7

Spearman's Rank-Order Correlation between Dyadic Coping and Marital Satisfaction among Non-Working Married Women (n = 64)

Variable	1	2
1. Dyadic coping	—	.266*
2. Marital satisfaction	.266*	—

Spearman's Rank-Order Correlation between Dyadic Coping and Marital Satisfaction among Non-Working Married Women (n = 64)

Spearman's rank-order correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between dyadic coping and marital satisfaction among non-working married women. The findings indicated a statistically significant positive relationship between dyadic coping and marital satisfaction ($r_s = .266$, $p = .034$). Although the relationship was statistically significant, the magnitude of the correlation was weak to moderate, indicating that higher levels of dyadic coping were associated with higher marital satisfaction among non-working married women. Compared to the working group, the association was relatively weaker. Therefore, Hypothesis 4, which stated that there is a significant positive relationship between dyadic coping and marital satisfaction among non-working married women, was accepted.

Table 8

Kruskal–Wallis Comparison of Marital Satisfaction across Duration-of-Marriage Groups ($N = 134$)

Variable	χ^2	df	p	ε^2
Marital satisfaction	2.83	2	.243	0.021

Note. Duration groups: early = 1–5 years ($n = 35$); middle = 6–15 years ($n = 54$); long-term = 16 years and above ($n = 45$). χ^2 = Kruskal–Wallis H statistic; ε^2 = epsilon-squared effect size. This analysis is exploratory.

A Kruskal–Wallis H test was conducted to examine whether marital satisfaction differed across the three duration-of-marriage groups. The results showed that there was no statistically significant difference in marital satisfaction among women who had been married for 1–5 years, 6–15 years, and 16 years and above ($\chi^2 = 2.83$, $df = 2$, $p = .243$). The epsilon-squared effect size ($\varepsilon^2 = .021$) indicated a very small effect, suggesting that duration of marriage explained only a minimal proportion of the variation in marital satisfaction. Thus, the findings indicate that marital satisfaction did not differ significantly across the three duration-of-

marriage groups in the present study. Therefore, Hypothesis 5, which proposed a significant difference in marital satisfaction across the three duration-of-marriage groups, was rejected.

Table 9

Kruskal–Wallis Comparison of Dyadic Coping across Duration-of-Marriage Groups (N = 134)

Variable	χ^2	df	p	ε^2
Dyadic coping	6.32	2	.042	0.048

Note. Duration groups: early = 1–5 years (n = 35); middle = 6–15 years (n = 54); long-term = 16 years and above (n = 45). χ^2 = Kruskal–Wallis *H* statistic; ε^2 = epsilon-squared effect size. This analysis is exploratory.

Table 10

Dwass–Steel–Critchlow–Fligner Pairwise Comparisons for Dyadic Coping across Duration-of-Marriage Groups

Comparison	W	p
Long-term vs. early (3 vs. 1)	2.30	.235
Long-term vs. middle (3 vs. 2)	−1.40	.585
Early vs. middle (1 vs. 2)	−3.47	.038

Note. *W* = Dwass–Steel–Critchlow–Fligner test statistic. Groups: 1 = early (1–5 years); 2 = middle (6–15 years); 3 = long-term (16 years and above).

A Kruskal–Wallis *H* test was conducted to examine the differences in dyadic coping across the three duration-of-marriage groups. The results revealed a statistically significant difference in dyadic coping among the groups ($\chi^2 = 6.32$, *df* = 2, *p* = .042). The effect size was small ($\varepsilon^2 = .048$), indicating that duration of marriage accounted for a modest proportion of the variability in dyadic coping. To identify the specific group differences, Dwass–Steel–

Critchlow–Fligner post hoc pairwise comparisons were performed. The post hoc analysis revealed a statistically significant difference between the early duration group (1–5 years) and the middle duration group (6–15 years) ($W = -3.47$, $p = .038$), whereas the comparisons between the early and long-term groups and between the middle and long-term groups were not statistically significant ($p > .05$). These findings suggest that dyadic coping differed significantly only between women in the early and middle years of marriage. Therefore, Hypothesis 6 was rejected.

Discussion

The present study examined marital satisfaction and dyadic coping among working and non-working married women and explored the relationship between these two variables. The findings showed that working married women obtained a slightly higher mean score on marital satisfaction than non-working married women. However, the difference was not statistically significant. This indicates that employment status alone does not significantly influence marital satisfaction. Although working women reported slightly higher scores, both groups experienced similar levels of satisfaction in their marital relationships.

Marital satisfaction is influenced by many factors that extend beyond employment status. Factors such as communication, mutual understanding, trust, emotional support, commitment, and the ability of spouses to adjust to one another play an important role in determining the quality of a marital relationship. Employment may provide financial independence, opportunities for personal growth, and wider social interaction. At the same time, working women often experience additional responsibilities related to balancing work and family life. Similarly, non-working women may have more time to manage household responsibilities and spend with family members, but they may also experience financial dependence and fewer opportunities for social interaction outside the home. These differences may balance each other,

resulting in similar levels of marital satisfaction among both working and non-working married women.

The present finding is consistent with the findings of Raina and Maity (2018), who reported that marital satisfaction is influenced more by communication, adjustment, mutual respect, and understanding between spouses than by demographic factors. Similarly, Williamson and Lavner (2020) reported that marital satisfaction is shaped mainly by couples' emotional, psychological, and financial resources and tends to remain stable when partners successfully manage the challenges they encounter throughout married life. Although Jha and Singh (2020) found that working married women reported higher marital satisfaction than non-working married women, the present study did not find a statistically significant difference between the two groups. Differences in the characteristics of the participants, family environment, occupational demands, cultural background, and social support available to married women may explain the variation between the findings.

The findings can also be understood with the help of Equity Theory, which states that individuals experience greater satisfaction when they perceive fairness in the relationship. When both partners feel that responsibilities, support, and contributions are shared fairly, they are more likely to experience a satisfying marital relationship. This suggests that marital satisfaction depends more on the perception of fairness within the relationship than on whether the woman is employed or non-working. The findings are also supported by Family Systems Theory, which explains that the family functions as an interconnected system in which the behaviour of one member influences the functioning of the entire family. According to this theory, healthy communication, emotional support, flexibility, and cooperation among family members contribute to positive marital relationships. Therefore, when couples communicate effectively and support one another, they are likely to experience greater marital satisfaction regardless of employment status. The present findings therefore suggest that the quality of the

marital relationship is influenced more by healthy relationship processes than by occupational status.

The current study also compared dyadic coping among working and non-working married women. The findings showed that working married women obtained significantly higher dyadic coping scores than non-working married women, although the effect size was small. This indicates that employment status may have a limited influence on the way couples cope with stress together. Dyadic coping refers to the process through which partners communicate their stress, provide emotional and practical support, and work together to manage stressful situations. Effective dyadic coping helps couples understand each other's needs, solve problems together, and maintain healthy relationships during stressful situations.

The present finding may be understood using Bodenmann's Systemic Transactional Model, which explains that stress within marriage is best managed when both partners communicate openly, respond with empathy, and work together to deal with stressful situations. According to this model, stress is not experienced only by one partner but affects the relationship as a whole. When couples support each other and cope with stress together, they are more likely to maintain positive relationship quality. Working married women may have more opportunities to develop communication, problem-solving, and interpersonal skills through their occupational experiences. These skills may help them communicate more effectively with their spouses and engage in collaborative coping during stressful situations. However, the small effect size observed in the present study indicates that employment status alone explains only a small part of the difference in dyadic coping. Other factors such as communication patterns, emotional maturity, family support, personality characteristics, and the husband's participation in family responsibilities are also likely to influence how couples cope with stress together.

The present findings are consistent with the studies reviewed in the present investigation. Lebert-Charron et al. (2018) reported that positive dyadic coping improves relationship quality and psychological well-being among couples. Rusu et al. (2020) found that constructive dyadic coping contributes to the stability of marital relationships over time. Similarly, Wollny et al. (2019) reported that couples who use positive dyadic coping experience better relationship quality and greater satisfaction. Shujja et al. (2022) also found that supportive dyadic coping promotes marital adjustment and satisfaction by helping couples manage stressful situations together. The findings of the present study are in agreement with these studies, indicating that positive dyadic coping contributes to healthier marital relationships. Although working married women demonstrated higher dyadic coping than non-working married women in the present study, the small effect size suggests that employment status is only one of several factors associated with dyadic coping.

The present study also examined the relationship between marital satisfaction and dyadic coping among working and non-working married women. The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between these variables in both groups. Among working married women, the relationship was strong, indicating that women who reported higher levels of dyadic coping also reported higher levels of marital satisfaction. Among non-working married women, the relationship was also positive and statistically significant, although the strength of the relationship was comparatively weaker. These findings indicate that effective dyadic coping is associated with greater marital satisfaction regardless of employment status.

Marriage involves various stressors such as financial responsibilities, household management, parenting, work-related demands, health concerns, and family obligations. How couples respond to these challenges together plays an important role in maintaining the quality of their relationship. When partners openly communicate their stress, understand each other's feelings, provide emotional and practical support, and work together to solve problems, they

are more likely to experience a satisfying marital relationship. In contrast, ineffective communication and poor coping may increase misunderstandings and conflicts, which can reduce marital satisfaction. The stronger relationship observed among working married women in the present study suggests that collaborative coping may become particularly important when couples have to balance both occupational and family responsibilities.

The findings of the present study are consistent with Bodenmann's Systemic Transactional Model, which explains that stress within marriage should be viewed as a shared experience rather than as an individual problem. According to this model, partners who communicate their stress effectively, respond with empathy, and work together to manage stressful situations develop stronger relationships and experience greater marital satisfaction. Positive dyadic coping therefore strengthens both the couple's ability to deal with stress and the quality of their relationship.

The findings are also consistent with the empirical studies reviewed in the present investigation. Lebert-Charron et al. (2018) reported that constructive dyadic coping enhances relationship quality and psychological well-being among couples. Rusu et al. (2020) found that supportive dyadic coping contributes to long-term relationship stability. Similarly, Wollny et al. (2019) reported that positive dyadic coping is associated with greater relationship satisfaction, while Shujja et al. (2022) found that couples who cope with stress together experience better marital adjustment and satisfaction. Randall and Bodenmann (2009) also emphasised that dyadic coping is an important predictor of relationship quality because it helps couples manage stress together rather than individually. These findings support the results of the present study, which showed that higher levels of dyadic coping were associated with higher marital satisfaction among both working and non-working married women.

The present findings can also be understood through Attachment Theory, which proposes that individuals with secure attachment are more likely to trust their partners, communicate openly, seek support during stressful situations, and respond sensitively to their partner's needs. These behaviours promote both effective dyadic coping and greater marital satisfaction. Likewise, Family Systems Theory explains that the family functions as an interconnected system in which the behaviour of one partner influences the well-being of the other. When couples support each other and cope with stress together, positive changes occur within the relationship, contributing to greater marital satisfaction. Together, these theories explain why women who reported better dyadic coping also experienced greater marital satisfaction in the present study.

The present study further examined marital satisfaction across different durations of marriage. The findings showed that marital satisfaction did not differ significantly among women who had been married for 1–5 years, 6–15 years, and 16 years or more. This finding indicates that the number of years spent in marriage alone does not determine how satisfied individuals feel in their marital relationship. Instead, marital satisfaction appears to depend more on the quality of the relationship than on its duration. Communication, trust, emotional support, commitment, and the ability of couples to adjust to changing life circumstances may be more important in maintaining marital satisfaction than the length of marriage itself.

The present finding is consistent with Williamson and Lavner (2020), who reported that marital satisfaction is influenced mainly by relationship processes and couples' ability to manage different life experiences rather than by the duration of marriage itself. This finding is also supported by the Vulnerability–Stress–Adaptation Model proposed by Karney and Bradbury, which explains that marital quality is influenced by the interaction between partners' personal characteristics, stressful life events, and the ways couples adapt to these challenges. According to this model, couples who successfully adapt to stress and maintain supportive

relationships are more likely to experience stable marital satisfaction regardless of how long they have been married.

In contrast, the present study found a significant difference in dyadic coping across different durations of marriage. The post hoc analysis showed that the significant difference was found only between women who had been married for 1–5 years and those married for 6–15 years, while no significant differences were observed between the other groups. This finding suggests that couples may develop better ways of coping together as they gain experience in married life. During the early years of marriage, partners are often adjusting to new roles, responsibilities, and expectations. As marriage progresses, couples experience different life events, including career development, parenting, financial responsibilities, and family commitments. Managing these experiences together may help them develop more effective ways of communicating and coping with stress.

This finding is supported by Bodenmann's Systemic Transactional Model, which explains that dyadic coping develops through repeated interactions between partners. As couples face stressful situations together over time, they learn to communicate more effectively, understand each other's needs, and provide appropriate support. The absence of significant differences between the middle and longer duration groups in the present study may indicate that once couples develop effective dyadic coping strategies, these patterns remain relatively stable during later stages of marriage.

Overall, the findings of the present study indicate that employment status did not significantly influence marital satisfaction, although working married women demonstrated slightly higher levels of satisfaction than non-working married women. Working married women, however, reported significantly higher dyadic coping than non-working married women, although the difference was small. More importantly, dyadic coping showed a

significant positive relationship with marital satisfaction among both working and non-working married women. These findings highlight the importance of communication, mutual support, shared problem-solving, and collaborative coping in maintaining healthy marital relationships. The findings also suggest that strengthening dyadic coping skills may help improve marital satisfaction among married couples regardless of women's employment status.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This chapter presents a summary of the entire study and highlights the major findings in relation to the research objectives. It provides a brief overview of the research problem, methodology, and key results, followed by the conclusions drawn from the findings. The chapter also discusses the implications of the study, acknowledges its limitations, and offers suggestions for future research based on the findings. The findings are interpreted in light of the existing literature to understand their relevance and contribution to the field of counselling psychology. Particular emphasis is placed on the relationship between marital satisfaction and dyadic coping among working and non-working married women. The chapter also reflects on how the findings address the identified research gap and contribute to a better understanding of marital relationships within the Indian, particularly Kerala, socio-cultural context. The practical significance of the findings for counselling practice, couple interventions, and mental health promotion is also highlighted. Overall, this chapter provides a comprehensive conclusion to the study by integrating the major findings, discussing their implications, and outlining directions for future research.

Summary

The present study was undertaken to examine marital satisfaction and dyadic coping among working and non-working married women. The primary aim of the study was to assess the levels of marital satisfaction and dyadic coping among working and non-working married women, compare these variables between the two groups, and examine the relationship between marital satisfaction and dyadic coping. In addition, the study explored whether marital satisfaction and dyadic coping differed based on selected socio-demographic variables. The study was undertaken with the understanding that marital relationships are influenced by

several interpersonal and contextual factors and that effective dyadic coping plays an important role in maintaining marital satisfaction.

To achieve these objectives, the study adopted a quantitative cross sectional design .The study was conducted among 130 married women, comprising 65 working married women and 65 non-working married women, who met the inclusion criteria. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, and data were collected through Google Forms after obtaining informed consent. Ethical principles such as voluntary participation, confidentiality, anonymity, and the right to withdraw from the study were ensured throughout the research process.

Three instruments were used for data collection. A socio-demographic data sheet was used to collect information regarding the participants' personal and family characteristics. Marital satisfaction was assessed using the ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale, while dyadic coping was measured using the Dyadic Coping Inventory (DCI) developed by Bodenmann. The collected data were coded, entered into Jamovi, and analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Appropriate statistical tests were employed to address the research objectives and test the formulated hypotheses.

The findings of the study indicated that both working and non-working married women generally reported satisfactory levels of marital satisfaction and dyadic coping. The results revealed differences between the two groups on selected variables and demonstrated a positive and significant relationship between marital satisfaction and dyadic coping. The findings suggest that couples who communicate effectively, provide mutual support, and cope with stress collaboratively are more likely to experience greater satisfaction in their marital relationship. These findings are consistent with previous research highlighting the importance of dyadic coping in strengthening marital relationships and promoting relationship quality.

The study also examined the influence of selected socio-demographic variables on marital satisfaction and dyadic coping. The findings indicated that certain demographic characteristics were associated with variations in these variables, suggesting that marital relationships are shaped not only by interpersonal processes but also by individual and contextual factors. These findings contribute to a broader understanding of the experiences of working and non-working married women and emphasize the importance of considering socio-demographic characteristics while studying marital relationships.

As research on dyadic coping in Kerala is limited, the findings help address an important gap in the literature and provide culturally relevant evidence regarding marital relationships among married women. The study also highlights the need for greater attention to positive coping processes within marital relationships rather than focusing only on marital problems and distress.

The findings of the present study have practical implications for counselling psychology, marriage counselling, and family intervention programmes. The results may assist psychologists, counsellors, and family therapists in designing interventions that strengthen communication, mutual support, and collaborative coping between spouses. Promoting effective dyadic coping may enhance marital satisfaction, improve relationship quality, and contribute to the psychological well-being of married women and their families. The findings may also be useful for organisations and policymakers in developing family-friendly initiatives that support married women in balancing their personal and professional responsibilities.

Overall, the present study successfully achieved its objectives and provides meaningful insights into the relationship between marital satisfaction and dyadic coping among working and non-working married women. The findings reinforce the importance of collaborative coping in fostering satisfying marital relationships and provide a valuable foundation for future research exploring additional psychological, relational, and socio-cultural factors influencing

marital life. It is hoped that the study will contribute to the growing body of literature in counselling psychology and encourage further research aimed at promoting healthy marital relationships and family well-being.

Major Findings

The major findings of the present study are as follows:

1. The majority of both working and non-working married women reported a moderate level of marital satisfaction. Among working married women, 60.0% demonstrated moderate marital satisfaction, while 56.2% of non-working married women also reported moderate marital satisfaction.
2. The majority of both working and non-working married women demonstrated below-average dyadic coping. A higher proportion of non-working married women (81.2%) exhibited below-average dyadic coping compared to working married women (57.1%).
3. There was no statistically significant difference in marital satisfaction between working and non-working married women. Although working married women obtained slightly higher marital satisfaction scores, the observed difference was not statistically significant. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 was not supported.
4. A statistically significant difference was observed in dyadic coping between working and non-working married women. Working married women demonstrated significantly higher dyadic coping scores than non-working married women. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 was supported.
5. A strong positive and statistically significant relationship was found between dyadic coping and marital satisfaction among working married women. Higher levels of dyadic coping were associated with higher levels of marital satisfaction. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 was supported.

6. A moderate positive and statistically significant relationship was found between dyadic coping and marital satisfaction among non-working married women. Higher levels of dyadic coping were associated with higher levels of marital satisfaction. Therefore, Hypothesis 4 was supported.
7. There was no statistically significant difference in marital satisfaction across the three duration-of-marriage groups (1–5 years, 6–15 years, and 16 years and above). Therefore, Hypothesis 5 was not supported.
8. A statistically significant difference was observed in dyadic coping across the three duration-of-marriage groups. Post hoc analysis revealed that the significant difference existed only between women married for 1–5 years and those married for 6–15 years, while no significant differences were found between the other groups. Therefore, Hypothesis 6 was supported.
9. The findings indicate that dyadic coping is positively associated with marital satisfaction among both working and non-working married women, highlighting the importance of shared stress management and supportive communication in promoting healthy marital relationships.
10. Overall, the study suggests that employment status alone does not significantly influence marital satisfaction, whereas effective dyadic coping plays an important role in enhancing marital satisfaction among married women.

Conclusion

The present study was undertaken to examine marital satisfaction and dyadic coping among working and non-working married women and to explore the relationship between these variables. The study also investigated whether marital satisfaction and dyadic coping differed across different durations of marriage. The findings contribute to a better understanding of the

factors associated with healthy marital relationships among married women in the Indian context.

The results indicated that employment status alone did not significantly influence marital satisfaction, as both working and non-working married women reported comparable levels of marital satisfaction. However, working married women demonstrated significantly better dyadic coping than non-working married women, suggesting that employment may be associated with more effective collaborative coping strategies within marriage. The study also found a significant positive relationship between dyadic coping and marital satisfaction among both working and non-working married women, indicating that couples who effectively communicate, provide mutual support, and manage stress together are more likely to experience satisfying marital relationships.

Furthermore, while marital satisfaction did not differ significantly across different durations of marriage, dyadic coping showed significant variation between certain duration groups, suggesting that couples' coping behaviours may change as they progress through different stages of married life. Overall, the findings emphasise that marital satisfaction is a complex and multidimensional construct influenced by the quality of interactions between spouses rather than by employment status alone. Effective dyadic coping, characterised by supportive communication, emotional responsiveness, shared problem-solving, and mutual understanding, emerged as an important factor associated with satisfying marital relationships. These findings support the view that healthy marriages are strengthened not only by individual adjustment but also by the ability of partners to cope with life's challenges together.

The study contributes to the existing body of knowledge on marital satisfaction and dyadic coping by providing empirical evidence among working and non-working married women in Kerala. It also highlights the importance of promoting positive communication, collaborative coping, and emotional support through couple counselling, marital enrichment programmes,

and family-based interventions. It is expected that the findings of the present study will be useful for psychologists, family counsellors, mental health professionals, researchers, and policymakers in developing programmes and interventions that strengthen marital relationships and promote the psychological well-being of married couples.

Implications of the Study

Theoretical Implications

The present study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by enhancing the understanding of the relationship between dyadic coping and marital satisfaction among working and non-working married women. The findings provide empirical support for the Systemic Transactional Model of Dyadic Coping proposed by Bodenmann, which emphasizes that couples who cope with stress collaboratively are more likely to experience healthier and more satisfying marital relationships. The study also supports the view that effective communication, mutual support, and shared coping strategies are important components of relationship quality. By examining these variables within the Indian, particularly Kerala, socio-cultural context, the study extends the existing literature, which is predominantly based on Western populations. Furthermore, the findings address the limited empirical evidence on dyadic coping among married women in Kerala and provide a foundation for future research exploring additional psychological, interpersonal, and socio-cultural factors associated with marital relationships.

Practical Implications

The findings of the present study have several practical implications for individuals, families, professionals, organisations, and society. The results highlight the importance of developing healthy communication patterns, mutual understanding, and collaborative coping strategies within marital relationships. Couples may benefit from becoming more aware of the value of supporting one another during stressful situations, as effective dyadic coping can

contribute to greater marital satisfaction and stronger relationship quality. The findings also emphasize that both working and non-working married women may experience unique challenges, making it important to recognise and address their specific needs within the family environment.

The study may be useful for professionals working in the fields of mental health, family welfare, education, and community development by providing insights into the factors associated with healthy marital relationships. The findings can support the development of educational programmes, couple enrichment programmes, workshops, and awareness initiatives that promote positive relationship skills, effective communication, emotional support, and shared problem-solving among married couples. Such programmes may help strengthen family relationships and improve overall family functioning.

The findings may also assist organisations and employers in recognising the importance of maintaining a healthy work–life balance for married employees. Finally, the study provides practical information for future researchers by identifying areas that require further exploration. The findings encourage additional research involving larger and more diverse samples, different regions of India, and various socio-cultural settings. Future studies may also examine other psychological, interpersonal, and contextual variables that influence marital satisfaction and dyadic coping. In this way, the present study not only contributes to the existing literature but also serves as a valuable reference for future research, policy development, and programmes aimed at strengthening marital relationships and promoting family well-being.

Limitations of the Study

The present study has certain limitations that should be considered while interpreting the findings.

1. The study was limited to married women, and the perspectives of husbands were not included. Since marital satisfaction and dyadic coping are relationship-based constructs involving both partners, the findings reflect only the perceptions of married women.
2. The study was conducted among married women from Kerala. Therefore, the findings may not be generalisable to married women from other geographical regions or cultural settings.
3. A purposive sampling technique was employed for selecting the participants. As the sample was not selected using probability sampling methods, the findings cannot be generalised to the entire population of married women.
4. The study adopted a cross-sectional research design, in which data were collected at a single point in time. Consequently, causal relationships between dyadic coping and marital satisfaction could not be established.
5. Data were collected through an online survey using self-report questionnaires. Therefore, the responses may have been influenced by social desirability, response bias, or participants' subjective interpretation of the questionnaire items.
6. The study assessed marital satisfaction and dyadic coping using quantitative measures alone. Qualitative methods such as interviews or focus group discussions were not included, which may have provided a more comprehensive understanding of participants' lived experiences.
7. The study focused only on employment status (working and non-working) as the primary comparison variable. Other factors that may influence marital satisfaction and dyadic coping, such as personality characteristics, socioeconomic status, quality of communication, mental health, family structure, number of children, and spousal characteristics, were not examined.

8. The sample size was limited to 134 participants. Although adequate for the objectives of the study, a larger sample would have enhanced the representativeness of the findings and increased the generalisability of the results.
9. The study did not differentiate participants based on the nature of employment, such as government, private, self-employed, full-time, or part-time occupations. Differences in work conditions and occupational demands may influence dyadic coping and marital satisfaction.
10. As the study was conducted within a specific time period, the findings reflect the participants' perceptions during that period and may not account for changes in marital relationships or coping patterns over time.

Suggestions for Further Research

Based on the findings and limitations of the present study, the following suggestions are proposed for future research:

1. Future studies may include both husbands and wives to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of marital satisfaction and dyadic coping from the perspectives of both partners. Couple-based studies may provide a better understanding of mutual interactions and relationship dynamics.
2. Similar studies may be conducted in different geographical regions of India and among diverse cultural, religious, and socioeconomic groups to examine the generalisability of the present findings.
3. Future researchers may employ probability sampling techniques and larger sample sizes to improve the representativeness of the sample and enhance the generalisability of the findings.

4. Longitudinal studies may be undertaken to examine changes in marital satisfaction and dyadic coping across different stages of marriage and to understand how these variables evolve over time.
5. Future studies may adopt mixed-method or qualitative research designs to gain deeper insights into the lived experiences of married couples and to understand the contextual factors influencing marital satisfaction and dyadic coping.
6. Further research may examine additional psychological and interpersonal variables such as emotional intelligence, attachment style, communication patterns, conflict resolution strategies, resilience, perceived social support, psychological well-being, personality traits, and stress, as these factors may influence both marital satisfaction and dyadic coping.
7. Comparative studies may be conducted among different occupational groups, such as government employees, private-sector employees, self-employed individuals, healthcare professionals, teachers, and shift workers, to explore the influence of occupational characteristics on marital relationships.
8. Future research may compare dyadic coping and marital satisfaction among couples living in nuclear and joint families, as family structure may influence relationship dynamics and coping behaviours.
9. Experimental or intervention-based studies may be conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of couple counselling, dyadic coping training programmes, communication skills training, and stress management interventions in improving marital satisfaction among married couples.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Informed Consent

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About the Study

This study is conducted as part of the academic requirements for the M.Sc. Counselling Psychology programme at Loyola College of Social Sciences. The study aims to examine marital satisfaction and dyadic coping among working and non-working married women. The research focuses on understanding how married women manage stress within their marital relationships and how this relates to their level of marital satisfaction. Your participation will contribute to a better academic understanding of marital relationships among women in the Indian context.

What Will You Be Asked to Do?

This Google Form consists of three sections:

- Section I — Demographic Information Sheet
- Section II — Dyadic Coping Questionnaire
- Section III — Marital Satisfaction Scale

Completion of the form will take approximately 10–15 minutes. Please read each item carefully and respond honestly. There are no right or wrong answers.

Your Rights as a Participant

- Voluntary Participation — Your participation is entirely voluntary. You are under no obligation to take part in this study.
- Right to Withdraw — You may stop participating at any time without any consequences or explanation.
- Confidentiality — All responses will be used only for academic research and will not be shared with any third party.
- Anonymity — You are not required to provide your name. Your identity will remain completely anonymous.
- No Risk — Participation involves no physical, psychological, or social risk. You may skip any question that causes discomfort.

Eligibility Criteria

This study is intended for individuals who are:

- Married couple
- Aged 21 years and above
- Able to read and understand English

Declaration of Consent

I have read and understood the information provided above. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without any consequences. I confirm that I meet the eligibility criteria for this study. By proceeding, I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study. Check all that apply.

☐ Yes, I have read and understood the above information and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study

Appendix B
Socio-Demographic Sheet

Name/Initials(Optional)

Age

Gender

☐ Male

☐ Female

District /Area of Residence

Educational Qualification (Tick highest achieved)

☐ Below 10th Standard

☐ 10th standard

☐ Higher Secondary (12th)

☐ Graduate (Bachelor's Degree)

☐ Post Graduate (Master's Degree)

☐ Professional Degree (e.g., MBBS, LLB)

Occupational Status

☐ Employed (Full time)

☐ Employed (Part time)

☐ Self-Employed

☐ Unemployed

If employed, please specify your type of employment:

- ☐ Government
- ☐ Private
- ☐ Self-employed
- ☐ Other

Marital Status

- ☐ Married
- ☐ Separated
- ☐ Divorced

Type of Family

- ☐ Nuclear Family
- ☐ Joint Family
- ☐ Extended Family

Duration of Marriage

- ☐ 1-5
- ☐ 6-10
- ☐ 11-15
- ☐ 16 Years and above

Age at Marriage

Is this your first marriage

- ☐ Yes -First Marriage

☐ No -SecondMarriage

☐ No -Third

Do you have children?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Appendix C

Dyadic Coping

Coping Inventory. This scale is designed to measure how you and your partner cope with stress. Please indicate the first response that you feel is appropriate. Please be as honest as possible. Please respond to all items by marking the appropriate case, which is fitting to your personal situation. There are no false answers.

1. I let my partner know that I appreciate his/her practical support, advice, or help.

- ☐ Very Rarely
☐ Rarely
☐ Sometimes
☐ Often
☐ Very Often

2. I ask my partner to do things for me when I have too much to do

- ☐ Very rarely
☐ Rarely
☐ Sometimes
☐ Often
☐ Very Often

3. I show my partner through my behavior when I am not doing well or when I have problems.

- ☐ Very rarely
☐ Rarely
☐ Sometimes
☐ Often
☐ Very often

4. I tell my partner openly how I feel and that I would appreciate his/her support

- ☐ Very rarely
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Often
- ☐ Very often

5. My partner shows empathy and understanding to me

- ☐ Very rarely
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Often
- ☐ Very often

6. My partner expresses that he/she is on my side.

- ☐ Very rarely
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Often
- ☐ Very often

7. My partner blames me for not coping well enough with stress.

- ☐ Very rarely
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Often
- ☐ Very often

8. My partner helps me to see stressful situations in a different light.

- ☐ Very rarely
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Often
- ☐ Very often

9. My partner listens to me and gives me the opportunity to communicate what really bothers me.

- ☐ Very rarely
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Often
- ☐ Very often

10. My partner does not take my stress seriously.

- ☐ Very rarely
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Often
- ☐ Very often

11. My partner provides support, but does so unwillingly and unmotivated.

- ☐ Very rarely
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Often
- ☐ Very often

12. My partner takes on things that I normally do in order to help me out.

- ☐ Very rarely
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Often
- ☐ Very often

13. My partner helps me analyze the situation so that I can better face the problem

- ☐ Very rarely
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Often
- ☐ Very often

14. When I am too busy, my partner helps me out.

- ☐ very rarely
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Often
- ☐ Very often

15 When i am stressed, my partner tends to withdraw

- ☐ Very rarely
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Often
- ☐ Very often

- 16 My partner lets me know that he/she appreciates my practical support, advice, or help.

☐ Very rarely
☐ Rarely
☐ Sometimes
☐ Often
☐ Very Often

- 17 My partner asks me to do things for him/her when he has too much to do.

☐ Very rarely
☐ Rarely
☐ Sometimes
☐ Often
☐ Very Often

- 18 My partner shows me through his/her behavior that he/she is not doing well or when he/she has problems.

☐ Very rarely
☐ Rarely
☐ Sometimes
☐ Often
☐ Very often

- 19 My partner tells me openly how he/she feels and that he/she would appreciate My support.

☐ Very rarely
☐ Rarely
☐ Sometimes
☐ Often
☐ Very often

20 I show empathy and understanding to my partner.

- ☐ Very rarely
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Often
- ☐ Very often

21 I express to my partner that I am on his/her side.

- ☐ Very rarely
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Often
- ☐ Very often

22 I blame my partner for not coping well enough with stress.

- ☐ Very rarely
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Often
- ☐ Very often

23 I tell my partner that his/her stress is not that bad and help him/her to see the situation in a different light.

- ☐ Very rarely
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Often
- ☐ Very often

- 24 I listen to my partner and give him/her space and time to communicate what really bothers him/her.

☐ Very rarely
☐ Rarely
☐ Sometimes
☐ Often
☐ Very often

- 25 I do not take my partner's stress seriously

☐ Very rarely
☐ Rarely
☐ Sometimes
☐ Often
☐ Very often

- 26 When my partner is stressed, I tend to withdraw.

☐ Very rarely
☐ Rarely
☐ Sometimes
☐ Often
☐ Very often

- 27 I provide support, but do it so unwillingly and unmotivated because I think that he/she should cope with his/her problems on his/her own.

☐ Very rarely
☐ Rarely
☐ Sometimes
☐ Often
☐ Very often

28 I take on things that my partner would normally do in order to help him/her out.

- ☐ Very rarely
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Often
- ☐ Very often

29 I try to analyse the situation together with my partner in an objective manner and help him/her to understand and change the problem

- ☐ Very rarely
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Often
- ☐ Very often

30 When my partner feels he/she has too much to do, I help him/her out

- ☐ Very rarely
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Often
- ☐ Very often

31 We try to cope with the problem together and search for ascertained solutions

- ☐ Very rarely
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Often
- ☐ Very often

32 We try to cope with the problem together and search for ascertained solutions

☐ Very rarely

☐ Rarely

☐ Sometimes

☐ Often

☐ Very often

33 We engage in a serious discussion about the problem and think through what has to be done

☐ Very rarely

☐ Rarely

☐ Sometimes

☐ Often

☐ Very often

34 We help one another to put the problem in perspective and see it in a new light.

☐ Very rarely

☐ Rarely

☐ Sometimes

☐ Often

☐ Very often

35 We help each other relax with such things like massage, taking a bath together, or listening to music together.

☐ Very rarely

☐ Rarely

☐ Sometimes

☐ Often

☐ Very often

- 36 We help each other relax with such things like massage, taking a bath together, or listening to music together.

☐ Very rarely
☐ Rarely
☐ Sometimes
☐ Often
☐ Very often

- 37 We are affectionate to each other, make love and try that way to cope with stress.

☐ Very rarely
☐ Rarely
☐ Sometimes
☐ Often
☐ Very often

Appendix D

Marital Satisfaction Scale

This scale is designed to measure the level of satisfaction in your marital or partner relationship. It focuses on different areas of your relationship such as communication, decision-making, emotional support, roles and responsibilities, financial management, leisure activities, affection, and overall relationship satisfaction. Please read each statement carefully and indicate the response that best describes your feelings and experiences in your relationship. Mark the option that most accurately reflects your opinion or personal situation. There are no right or wrong answers. Your honest responses will help in understanding your relationship more clearly. Please respond to all items by selecting the appropriate option for each statement. All responses will be kept confidential and will be used only for research or assessment purposes.

My partner and I understand each other perfectly.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Moderately agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Moderately disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

I am not pleased with the personality characteristics and personal habits of my partner

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Moderately agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Moderately disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

I am very happy with how we handle role responsibilities in our marriage.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Moderately agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Moderately disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

My partner completely understands and sympathizes with my every mood.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Moderately agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Moderately disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

I am not happy about our communication and feel my partner does not understand me.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Moderately agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor
- ☐ Moderately disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

Our relationship is a perfect success.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Moderately agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Moderately disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

I am very happy about how we make decisions and resolve conflicts.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Moderately agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Moderately disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

I am unhappy about our financial position and the way we make financial decisions.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Moderately agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Moderately disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

I have some needs that are not being met by our relationship.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Moderately agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Moderately disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

I am very happy with how we manage our leisure activities and the time we spend together.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Moderately agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Moderately disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

I am very pleased about how we express affection and relate sexually.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Moderately agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Moderately disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

I am very pleased about how we express affection and relate sexually.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Moderately agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Moderately disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

I am not satisfied with the way we each handle our responsibilities as parents.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Moderately agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Moderately disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

I have never regretted my relationship with my partner, not even for a moment.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Moderately agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Moderately disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

I am dissatisfied about our relationship with my parents, in-laws, and/or friends.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Moderately agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Moderately disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

I feel very good about how we each practice our religious beliefs and values.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Moderately agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Moderately disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree