

Couple's Brain Dominance: Contributor to Marital Quality

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ABSTRACT

The present study examines the impact of brain dominance on marital quality amongst couples. The left brain (LB), right brain (RB) dominance and its impact on marital quality of couples (N=90) was studied. Two scales were administered; data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, and t-test/ As hypothesized, a significant impact of brain dominance exist marital quality of couples. The marital quality of opposite brain dominance couples was found to be poor. The 't' test results were statistically significant. The result may serve as basis for family therapy, intervention and pre-marital counseling.

Keywords: Marriage, Brain dominance, Marital Quality

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I. INTRODUCTION

Marriage is a socially sanctioned event in the Indian Culture. One of the most important relationships between a man and women is marriage. It involves emotional and legal commitment that is quite important in any adult life. A happy marriage therefore is characterized by learning the art of living together to share, to compromise, to accommodate and to plan together in pursuit of effective performance of marriage.

Moreover, selecting a partner and entering into a marital contract is considered both maturational milestone and personal achievement. During lifetime the most important decisions taken by an individual during life time is to select an appropriate life partner. People marry for many reasons, like; love, happiness, companionship, and the desire to have children, physical attraction, or desire to escape from an unhappy situation Marriage is a commitment with love and responsibility for peace, happiness and development of strong family relationships. Marriage as "socially legitimate sexual union, begun with a public announcement and undertaken with some ideas of permanence; it is assumed with more a less explicit marriage contract, which spells out the reciprocal rights and obligations between the spouses and future children."

In Indian tradition the appropriate partner selection is carried out by the parents. The marriage is considered as a tie between two families and not between two individuals. Horoscope matching is a traditional way of matching two individuals regarding some common traits. The process of match making moved from relatives to print media and now towards online matrimonial sites.

Landis (1954) said that marriage provides a person opportunity for a secure and protected satisfaction of his needs for companionships, affection and sexual expression and it is the most intimate type of emotional relationship between two people. For successful marriage, two people must learn to live together, accommodate, compromise, adjust and plan together, develop proper attitude, skill and temperament to be a successful marriage.

Couples come together, separate, and come together again for a variety of reasons. They identify numerous factors that both attract them as well as contribute to their misunderstanding. They search for a reason for their difficulties. The powerful impact of traditional socialization can easily lead partners to conclude that 'That's the way women/men are' and begin to think of the opposite sex as different.

Roger Sperry, a Nobel Prize winner, initiated the study of the relationship between the brain's right and left hemispheres. Sperry found that the left half of the brain tends to function by processing information in an analytical, rational, logical, sequential way. The right half of the brain tends to function by recognizing relationships, integrating and synthesizing information, and arriving at intuitive insights. This can be explained in other way that the left side of brain deals with a problem or situation by collecting facts, making analyses, and using a rational thinking process to reach a rational conclusion. The right side of your brain approaches the same problem or situation by making intuitive leaps to answers based on insights and perceptions. The left brain

tends to break information apart for analysis, while the right brain tends to put information together to synthesize a whole picture.

There is an entirely different perspective to understand relationship between the spouses. This perspective is based on the observation that people possess, to varying degrees, dominant characteristics associated with either right (RB) or left (LB) brain activity, these form certain patterns in their way of relating to self and others, communicating, problem solving and even making love.

When an RB-dominant and an LB dominant person form a couple, it is joining of opposites, and they make poor couple. These opposites can be male/female, male/male, female/female. These couple often report high levels of frustration and low levels of satisfaction as they struggle to become compatible.

Spanier, G. B., & Lewis, R. A. (1980) defined marital quality as "the subjective evaluation of a married couple's relationship on a number of dimensions and evaluations".

Relationship satisfaction, also called relationship quality, is the ability of two partners to accommodate to each other at any given time (Harper et al, 2000). People need to love and to be loved (Fletcher, 2002). Relationship satisfaction includes interpersonal attraction such as love, commitment and sexual satisfaction; interpersonal interaction such as communication, gender roles, couple sharing, equity, environmental factors such as illness, couple support network etc. (Sokolski, 1999). Relationship satisfaction/ quality (Amato et al., 2003) has 3 dimensions: partners report of happiness, frequency of shared time together and thoughts or actions which may lead to break up.

II. METHODOLOGY

OBJECTIVES:

1. To study the brain dominance amongst married couples.
2. To study the marital quality of married couples.
3. To study the difference between marital quality of similar brain dominance and opposite brain dominance couples.

HYPOTHESES

1. The couples with similar brain dominance will have higher marital quality. (Low score on Marital Quality Scale).
2. The couples with opposite brain dominance will have poor marital quality. (High score on Marital Quality Scale)
3. There will be significant difference between marital quality of similar and opposite brain dominant couples.

SAMPLE

A sample of 90 adults (45 couples- age group 35-50 yrs) was taken. Convenient sampling was used. The sample was belonging to upper middle class families as well as education level was graduation.

MEASURES AND TOOLS

- Personal data sheet,
- Right Brain/ Left Brain Preference Scale by Rebecca Cutter (1994),
- Marital Quality Scale ((MQS) by Anisha Shah (1995)

PROCEDURE:

The investigator administered RB/LB Scale and Marital Quality Scale to the respondents who agreed to participate in the research. The questionnaires were administered with the help of few students of Psychology and the participants were requested to answer the statements truthfully and complete the tests. They were informed that their responses would remain confidential and would be used only for research purposes.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, and t test

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In order to determine brain dominance and marital quality relationship, the obtained data were to the statistical technique mean, standard deviation and 't' test for the independent samples. The findings of the study are presented below.

Table 1: Showing the Scores on Marital Quality for Similar brain dominance couples.

Gender	Number	Mean	SD
Male	22	80.6818	8.49306
Female	22	77.8636	9.57325

Males and females from similar brain dominance couples were compared on the score of marital quality. The findings have shown that male scored more than that of females on marital quality scale. When the scores are compared with the standard scores of the MQS, it was found that the scores are more or less the same to the normal scores of MQS. That is mean for 79.27 for males and 78.33 for females on Marital Quality Scale. (shah,1995) The low scores of females and males in the current study also indicate high marital quality. Males and females from opposite brain dominance couples were compared on the score of marital quality. The findings have shown that male scored more than that of females on marital quality scale.

Table 2: Showing the Scores on Marital Quality for opposite brain dominance couples.

Gender	Number	Mean	SD
Male	23	95.4348	9.08958
Female	23	93.6087	9.55243

When the scores are compared with the standard scores of the MQS, it was found that the scores are more than the normal scores of MQS. That is mean for 79.27 for males and 78.33 for females on Marital Quality Scale. (Shah,1995) The high scores of females and males in the current study also indicate poor marital quality.

Table 3: Showing the Mean, SD and 't' for Marital Quality of similar and opposite brain dominance couples.

Scale	Similar Brain Dominance Couples (N=44)		Opposite Brain Dominance Couples (N=46)		't' Value
	M	SD	M	SD	
Marital Quality	79.27	9.05	94.52	9.26	7.891***

***P<0.001

The entire sample was compared on the basis of brain dominance (opposite and similar) independent of their gender difference. The results show that the opposite brain dominance couples (males and females) scored significantly higher than similar brain dominance couples on MQS. The higher score is indication of poor marital quality.

As marriage is a bond where people share and experience a lot of feelings together. But as Rebecca Cutter (1994) has stated that the problems that opposites have are usually in two main areas, either the couple is in trouble because of the way each interprets other's behavior, or the partners are expending too much energy trying to change each other so that they will be more similar.

The marital disharmony, in the form of lack of understanding in marital unit, feeling of greater rejection from spouse, lower degree of satisfaction in sexual and security needs, unfulfilled affectional needs contributing to lack of concern and unhappiness and regret about the relationship exclusion of spouse from decision-making process etc. . In healthy marriages, supportive conciliatory and trusting behavior helps settle conflicts (Barry, 1970).

The partners who seem most satisfied with their relationship are not "opposites" but rather people who are "wired" the same way. Unless opposites reach an understanding of how their differing styles contribute to their issues and learn specific skills for managing their polarized ways of being, they will enter a crisis state. In Indian culture, matching horoscope before marriage is a common practice. The brain dominance matching can enhance the marital quality.

IV. CONCLUSION

The present study reveals that brain dominance is significant predictor of Marital Quality. This study can be used in pre-marital and marital counselling as well as in family therapy.

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