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Emotional Regulation and Marital Satisfaction Among Married Males

**EMOTIONAL REGULATION AND MARITAL SATISFACTION
AMONG MARRIED MALES**

ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationship between emotional regulation and marital satisfaction among married males in south Kerala. Using a quantitative research design, descriptive correlational research design is used to select 100 participants. The Convenience Sampling technique is used for this study. It's a non-probability sampling technique in which the sample is composed of the units that are most conveniently available in the area. The sample participants were categorized on the basis of their age between 40-50 and who is married more than five years. The Revised Marital Satisfaction Scale (MSS) created by Roach, Frazier, and Bowden (198) (1.000) and the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ) created by Gross and John (2003) (.142), which measures cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression, were used to gather data. For better understanding, the questionnaires were given out in Malayalam. Findings of the study revealed that there is no significant difference between emotional regulation and marital satisfaction among married males but there is a relationship between cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression among married

22 males. These findings show that there are other factors that affect married men's emotional
23 regulation and marital satisfaction.

24 **Keywords:** *Age Emotional Regulation, Married Males, Marital Satisfaction, Married More*
25 *Than Five Years.*

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29 **1. INTRODUCTION**

30 **1.1. Introduction to Marital Context**

31 Marriage is one of the most important social institutions that provides companionship,
32 support, and stability in an individual's life. The quality of this relationship is often reflected
33 through the level of marital satisfaction experienced by partners. Marital satisfaction refers to
34 the extent to which individuals feel content, fulfilled, and positive about their relationship
35 with their spouse. High marital satisfaction is associated with better emotional well-being,
36 effective communication, and relational stability, whereas low marital satisfaction may result
37 in frequent conflicts, emotional detachment, or separation (Fowers & Owenz, 2010). Several
38 factors contribute to this satisfaction, including communication, trust, intimacy, and the
39 ability to manage challenges together. Among these factors, emotional regulation plays a
40 central role, as it determines how partners handle both positive and negative emotions within
41 the marriage.

42 **1.2. Men in Marriage**

43 Men play a vital role in shaping marital dynamics through their communication patterns,
44 emotional responses, and coping strategies. In marriage, men are often expected to fulfill

45 multiple roles such as provider, partner, and parent, which can influence their emotional
46 experiences and relationship behaviors. The way men perceive and manage their emotions
47 directly affects how they engage with their spouses, resolve conflicts, and contribute to
48 relationship satisfaction.

49 **1.3. Cultural and Contextual Influence**

50 Cultural and contextual factors substantially shape emotional expression and regulation in
51 marital relationships. In collectivist societies, men may be expected to maintain emotional
52 composure to ensure family harmony, whereas in individualistic cultures, expressing
53 emotions may be valued as a form of authenticity and relational engagement (Butler et al.,
54 2007). Factors such as socioeconomic status, educational background, and duration of
55 marriage can also influence men's emotional experiences and perceptions of regulation.
56 Examining these dynamics within specific cultural contexts allows for a more nuanced
57 understanding of how emotional regulation interacts with marital satisfaction.

58 **1.4. Challenges Faced by Men in Marriage**

59 This study seeks to fill this research gap by exploring married men's perceptions of their
60 emotional regulation and examining its relationship with marital satisfaction. Focusing on
61 men allows for the identification of specific emotional strategies, levels of confidence in
62 emotion management, and their effect on relationship quality. The insights gained can inform
63 marital counseling, interventions, and educational programs aimed at improving emotional
64 regulation skills and relationship satisfaction. Additionally, understanding men's perceptions
65 can help identify gender-specific challenges in marital dynamics and promote healthier
66 communication and emotional intimacy.

67 Men experience particular difficulties in marriage, despite playing a significant role in
68 marital partnerships. Men are frequently encouraged to appear powerful, emotionally

69 controlled, and less expressive by social standards and traditional gender roles. Relational
70 expectations for emotional openness and sharing may clash with the discouragement of
71 vulnerability, grief, or fear (Levant, 2020). Men's emotional functioning inside marriage is
72 further complicated by additional constraints relating to work commitments, financial
73 obligations, parenting roles, and societal expectations. These issues could lead to
74 miscommunication, emotional distance, and misunderstandings, which would ultimately
75 lower marital happiness.

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78 **1.5. Marital Satisfaction of Men in Marriage**

79 Marital satisfaction refers to an individual's subjective evaluation of contentment,
80 fulfilment, and overall relationship quality. High marital satisfaction is associated with
81 greater emotional well-being, improved communication, and stronger relational stability,
82 whereas low satisfaction may contribute to frequent conflicts, emotional detachment, or even
83 separation (Fowers & Owenz, 2010). Emotional regulation plays a pivotal role in determining
84 marital satisfaction, as it shapes conflict resolution, empathy, and mutual understanding
85 between partners. Married men who regulate their emotions effectively are more likely to
86 engage in constructive communication, manage disagreements calmly, and respond
87 sensitively to their spouse's needs, thereby enhancing overall relationship satisfaction (Bloch
88 et al., 2014).

89 **1.6. Emotional Regulation as a Challenge faced by Men in Marriage**

90 Emotional regulation involves the processes through which individuals influence the type,
91 intensity, duration, and expression of their emotions in response to internal experiences and
92 external circumstances. It is a key component of emotional intelligence, affecting how people

93 manage stress, navigate conflicts, and maintain healthy interpersonal interactions. Within
94 marital relationships, emotional regulation is particularly critical, as marriages often require
95 negotiation, compromise, and frequent emotional exchanges that can either strengthen or
96 undermine the bond between partners. By effectively regulating emotions, spouses can
97 manage negative feelings such as anger, frustration, or jealousy, while enhancing the
98 expression of positive emotions like love, empathy, and affection. (Yildirim & Demir,
99 2020). Within marriage, emotional regulation is particularly critical, as spouses must manage
100 both positive and negative emotions during frequent interactions. Married men who regulate
101 their emotions effectively are more likely to engage in constructive communication, manage
102 disagreements calmly, and respond sensitively to their spouse's needs, thereby enhancing
103 marital satisfaction (Bloch et al., 2014). However, Men commonly employ techniques such as
104 suppression, cognitive reappraisal, or avoidance, which influence how emotions are
105 communicated within marriage (Gross & John, 2003). Suppression, or withholding emotional
106 expression, may reduce short-term conflict but can negatively affect intimacy and emotional
107 connection over time. Cognitive reappraisal reframing a situation to change its emotional
108 impact is typically linked to better relational outcomes (McRae & Gross, 2020).
109 Understanding married men's perceptions of their emotional regulation strategies is critical
110 because these perceptions influence how they approach marital challenges and interpret
111 satisfaction within their relationships.

112 The perception of emotional regulation among married males is also influenced by
113 cultural, social, and personal factors. Men from families or communities that encourage
114 emotional openness may find it easier to express themselves, while others raised in stricter
115 environments may rely on suppression or avoidance. Work pressures, financial
116 responsibilities, and family roles also affect how men experience and regulate emotions
117 within marriage. These differences highlight the importance of understanding emotional

118 regulation not just as a general skill, but as one shaped by lived experiences and personal
119 perceptions.

120 **1.7.Theoretical Framework**

121 Emotional regulation theory and frameworks for marital satisfaction, which highlight the
122 influence of emotional processes on relationship quality, serve as the foundation for this
123 study. According to the theory of emotional regulation, people's capacity to control their
124 emotions affects their capacity to interact with others, resolve conflicts, and maintain healthy
125 relationships. Men's emotional regulation abilities have an impact on communication styles,
126 emotional reactivity, and conflict resolution in marriage, all of which have an impact on
127 marital pleasure. According to the study's theoretical framework, married men's experiences
128 and levels of marital happiness are greatly influenced by their assessments of their capacity
129 for emotional regulation. Emotional control techniques and marriage outcomes are influenced
130 by moderating cultural, social, and personal factors. This study intends to fill a significant gap
131 in the literature and aid in the creation of gender-sensitive marital counseling and intervention
132 programs by investigating married men's opinions of emotional control and its connection to
133 marital satisfaction.

134 **1.8.Review of Literature**

135 Bloch, L., et al. (2014) conducted a longitudinal study to investigate the relationship between
136 middle-aged and older couples' marital happiness and the downregulation of negative
137 emotions during marital conflict. The Actor-Partner Interdependence Model (APIM) and a
138 13-year, three-wave design were used in the study, which discovered that both spouses'
139 marital happiness increased when negative emotional experiences and behaviors during
140 conflict were effectively reduced. These effects were found to be mediated by constructive
141 communication, underlining the importance of emotion regulation for promoting long-term
142 marital satisfaction.

143 In research of 200 married couples, Shahid, H., and Kazmi, S. F. (2016) examined the
144 connection between emotional control and marital satisfaction. Regression analysis
145 confirmed that emotional regulation is a major predictor of marital satisfaction, and the
146 results showed an important beneficial relationship between emotional regulation and marital
147 satisfaction. Gender differences were also noted, showing that male spouses exhibited better
148 emotional control in their marriages than female spouses.

149 In an exploratory study of 304 married people, Roslan, S. B., et al (2023) investigated the
150 connection between marital satisfaction and emotional control. The results showed that
151 emotional regulation—especially emotional awareness—and marital satisfaction were
152 positively and significantly correlated, highlighting the essential function that emotional
153 regulation plays in improving marital well-being and overall relationship satisfaction.

154 Scott, R. M. (2009) investigated the connection between 112 married couples' marital
155 satisfaction and reducing emotionality. The results showed an important connection between
156 men's-controlled emotionality and their wives' and their own marital satisfaction. In addition,
157 marital satisfaction was positively correlated with spouses perceived emotional similarity,
158 highlighting the critical role that shared emotional understanding and emotional expression
159 play in maintaining successful marriages.

160 **1.9. Need and Significance of the Study**

161 Examining married males' perceptions of emotional regulation and its influence on marital
162 satisfaction is crucial, as the ability to manage emotions significantly affects conflict
163 resolution, communication, and overall relationship quality. Although previous research
164 emphasizes the role of emotional intelligence and regulation in marital functioning, there is a
165 lack of focus on how men perceive and implement these skills in their own marriages.
166 Investigating these perceptions can reveal key factors that enhance marital satisfaction,
167 highlight potential emotional challenges, and guide interventions aimed at improving

168 relationship quality. This study is therefore important to fill the gap in understanding men's
169 perspectives on emotional regulation and its contribution to marital well-being, offering
170 valuable insights for couples, therapists, and family counselors. Although the link between
171 emotional regulation and marital satisfaction is well recognized, most research focuses either
172 on women or on couples collectively, leaving the male perspective underexplored.
173 Furthermore, studies often rely on objective measures of emotional regulation without
174 considering men's subjective perceptions of their skills and their effects on marital
175 satisfaction. Understanding men's viewpoints is vital, as perception influences behavior,
176 coping strategies, and relational interactions. There is a pressing need for research that
177 examines married men's experiences of emotional regulation and its contribution to marital
178 satisfaction.

179 Studying the connection between men's perceptions of emotional regulation and their
180 marital satisfaction is important for both research and practice. It can provide insights into the
181 strengths and difficulties men face in managing emotions within marriage, offering guidance
182 for relationship counseling and support programs. By highlighting the role of emotional
183 regulation, such studies can also encourage men to develop healthier coping strategies and
184 communication patterns. Ultimately, a deeper understanding of this topic can help promote
185 stronger marriages, healthier emotional well-being, and more balanced family relationships.

186 **2. METHOD**

187 The methodical and theoretical examination of the approaches used in a field of study is
188 referred to as methodology. It is the overarching strategy and justification for the research's
189 methodology. It includes the philosophical presuppositions that guide the study, the choice of
190 suitable methodologies, and the rationale for their application.

191 Research methodology is essential for carrying out studies in a systematic manner. The
192 information concerning the tools and techniques utilized for the systematic gathering of data
193 will be provided by methodology. This section describes the steps that must be taken in order
194 to carry out the study, including the objectives of the study, the methods and techniques that
195 must be employed for data collecting, processing, analysis, and research design.

196 **2.1. AIM OF THE STUDY**

197 To study the emotional regulation and marital satisfaction among married males.

198 **2.2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

- 199 • To assess the level of emotional regulation among married male men
- 200 • Examine the relationship between emotional regulation and marital satisfaction
- 201 • Assess the level of Marital Satisfaction among Married male

202 **2.3. HYPOTHESES**

203 **H₀:** There is no significant relationship between emotional regulation and marital satisfaction
204 among married males.

205 **H₁:** There is a significant relationship between emotional regulation and marital satisfaction
206 among married males.

207 **2.4. RESEARCH DESIGN:**

208 Descriptive correlational research design was used for the study.

209 **POPULATION AND SAMPLE**

210 In India, an estimated 45% of the male population is currently married as of 2025. Based on
211 available statistics, Kerala has approximately 8–9 million married men. In South Kerala
212 (including districts such as Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, and Pathanamthitta), a significant
213 proportion of the male population is married, forming the target population for this study.

214 Using a convenience sampling method, 100 married working men aged 40–50 years who had
215 been married for more than five years were selected for the study. Likert-scale questionnaires

216 were used to assess their perceptions of emotional regulation and marital satisfaction.
217 Participants below 40 or above 50 years, those divorced or separated, and individuals from
218 outside Kerala were excluded.

219 **2.5. TOOLS**

220 **Emotional Regulation and Marital Satisfaction:**

221 The Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ), developed by James J. Gross and Oliver P.
222 John (2003), measures individual differences in the use of two primary emotion regulation
223 strategies—cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression—with a later cultural adaptation
224 by Stefania Balzarotti et al. (2010). Marital satisfaction, on the other hand, is assessed using
225 the Revised Marital Satisfaction Scale (MSS), developed by Roach, Frazier, and Bowden
226 (1981), which evaluates overall satisfaction and adjustment in marital relationships across
227 domains such as emotional understanding, communication, conflict resolution, financial
228 management, sexual relationship, role responsibilities, and family interactions.

229 **2.6. PROCEDURE**

230 The study was conducted in three phases. In Phase I, participants were selected based on
231 predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria using screening questions to determine eligibility;
232 those who did not meet the criteria were excluded, and eligible participants were informed
233 about the study's purpose, procedures, and ethical considerations before providing consent.
234 The questionnaire was translated into Malayalam for better comprehension. In Phase II, data
235 were collected through physical administration of the Emotional Regulation Questionnaire
236 and Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire, with clear instructions provided to ensure accurate
237 completion of all items. In Phase III, the collected responses were systematically organized
238 and subjected to statistical analysis to examine the relationship between emotional regulation
239 and marital satisfaction among married males, and the findings were interpreted and
240 compiled into a comprehensive research report.

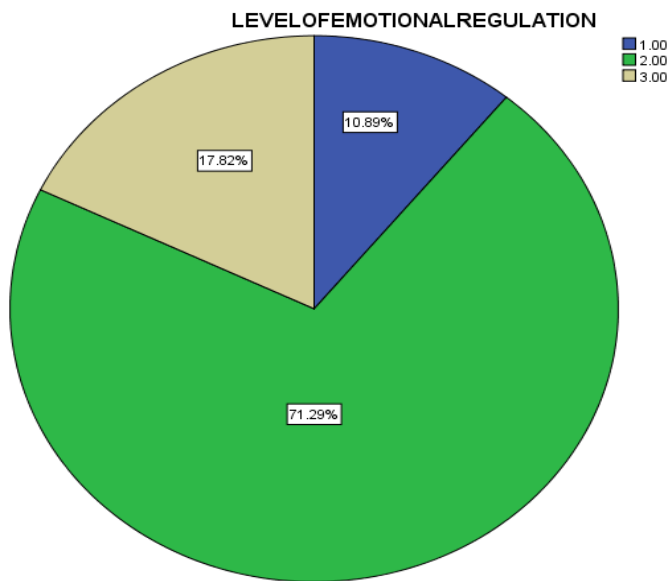
241 **ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

242 Participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and participants have the right to withdraw at
243 any time without any penalty. All participants were provided with a clear explanation of the
244 study's purpose, procedures, and potential benefits before providing informed consent. The
245 questionnaires were designed to avoid inappropriate or offensive language, and all responses
246 was remained anonymous and confidential, accessible only to the research team. The research
247 was conducted with objectivity and integrity to ensure reliable results, and all sources used
248 was properly cited in APA format. Participants' autonomy, privacy, and comfort will be
249 respected throughout the study.

250 **3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

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252 **3.1. RESULTS**

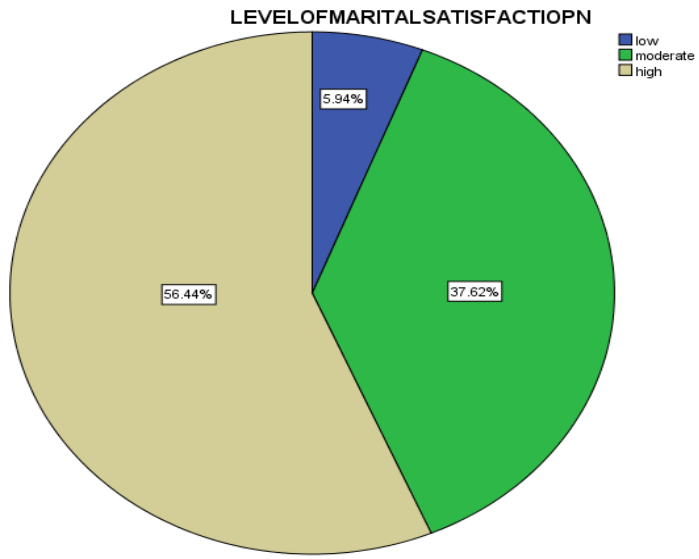


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255 **FIGURE 1.** Level of Emotional Regulation Among Participants

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259 **FIGURE2.** Level of Marital Satisfaction Among Participants

274 **Table 1.** Shapiro- Wilk test of Normality

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276 **Shapiro – Wilk Test**

277 **Statistic df Sig.**

278 **Emotional Regulation** .974 101 .047

279 **Marital Satisfaction** .970 101 .022

280 *. This is a lower bound of the true sig

281 *. Lilliefors Significance Correction

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299 **Table 2**

300 **Correlational Table**

301				
302	Marital	Emotional		
303	Satisfaction	Regulation		
304	Spearman's rho Marital satisfaction	Correlation coefficient	1.000	.142
305	Sig. (2-tailed)	.156		
306		N	101	101
307				
308	Emotional Regulation	Correlation Coefficient	.142	1.000
309	Sig. (2-tailed)	.156		
310	N	101	101	

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312 **Table 3**

313 **Correlational Table**

314 **Marital Expressive**

315 **Satisfaction Suppression**

316 Spearman's rho Marital satisfaction **Correlation Coefficient 1.000 -.214**

317 **Sig. (2- tailed) . .031**

318 **N 101 101**

319 Cognitive reappraisal **Correlation Coefficient -.101 .615****

320 **Sig. (2-tailed) .315 .000**

321 **N 101 101**

322

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

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

325

326 3.2. Discussion

327 According to the study's overall results, most married men (71.29%) exhibited a moderate
328 degree of emotional regulation, indicating that they had an average capacity to control their
329 emotions in marriage. While this degree of control might be sufficient in everyday situations,
330 problems could occur at times of serious disagreement or stress, which could have an impact
331 on partners' ability to communicate, empathize, and understand one another. However, just
332 5.94% of participants reported low marital happiness, whereas 37.62% expressed moderate
333 marital satisfaction and the majority (56.44%) stated excellent marital satisfaction. This trend
334 indicates that many participants have formed good communication patterns, adaptive coping
335 mechanisms, and emotional adjustment within marriage despite having moderate emotional
336 regulation abilities. The results highlight the significance of developing emotional and social
337 abilities through training, counseling, and supportive interventions because improving
338 emotional regulation abilities may further enhance conflict resolution, strengthen emotional
339 intimacy, and foster long-term marital stability and satisfaction. (Figure 1&2)

340 Non-parametric tests have been used for analysis since the results indicated that marital
341 satisfaction and emotional control were not frequently distributed. The results showed that
342 marriage satisfaction and overall emotional regulation had a weak and non-significant
343 connection, indicating that marital satisfaction is not significantly influenced by emotion
344 management alone. This suggests that other aspects of marital pleasure, such as
345 communication, mutual understanding, and coping mechanisms, might be more crucial.

346 However, there was a negative correlation found between expressive suppression and marital
347 satisfaction ($r = -.214, p < 0.05$), suggesting that males who hide or suppress their emotions
348 typically have lower levels of marital pleasure. Despite having an important correlation with
349 expressive suppression, cognitive reappraisal did not significantly correlate with satisfaction
350 ($r = -0.101, p > 0.05$).

351 In order to improve communication, offer emotional support, and successfully handle
352 problems, marital counseling programs can concentrate on helping married men develop their
353 emotional regulation abilities. This will increase marital satisfaction. To assist males in
354 maintaining stable and healthy relationships, family welfare policies can also include marital
355 counseling services and emotional intelligence training. In order to improve coping
356 mechanisms, strengthen relationships with relatives, and boost emotional support between
357 spouses, community awareness programs and seminars can also encourage married men to
358 express their emotions in a healthy way.

359 **CONCLUSION**

360 The study examined the relationship between marital satisfaction and emotional control in
361 married men in South Kerala between the ages of 40 and 50. The results indicated that there
362 was no significant correlation between the two variables and that the majority of participants
363 had good marital satisfaction and a moderate level of emotional regulation, but there is a
364 significant relationship with the emotional regulation subscales which is cognitive reappraisal
365 and emotional suppression. Only married women and couples were the subject of early
366 research projects. This study was the first to be done on married men. Additionally, the
367 research can take into consideration various additional subjects.

368 This suggests that other interpersonal and sociocultural factors might also have an impact on
369 marital satisfaction, highlighting the necessity of counselling interventions that support
370 married men's relationship adjustment and healthy emotional expression.

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