

“A Study of Conflict Resolution Styles Among Married Couples”

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ABSTRACT

The present study aims to examine the conflict resolution styles among married couples, focusing specifically on differences between husbands and wives across four dimensions Positive Problem Solving, Conflict Engagement, Withdrawal, and Compliance. The sample consisted of 100 participants (50 husbands and 50 wives) selected through purposive sampling from the Jalna district of Maharashtra. The Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory (CRSI) was used to assess individual differences in managing marital conflicts. The data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, and t-test to identify significant differences between the two groups. Results indicated that wives tend to adopt a more constructive and positive problem-solving approach compared to husbands, whereas husbands exhibited higher tendencies toward withdrawal during conflicts. Minimal gender differences were observed in compliance and conflict engagement styles. The findings suggest that gender plays a meaningful role in shaping conflict management behaviors within marital relationships. The study highlights the importance of promoting effective communication and mutual understanding to enhance marital harmony.

Keywords: Conflict Resolution Styles, Positive Problem Solving, Conflict Engagement, Withdrawal, Compliance, Married Couples.

INTRODUCTION

Marriage is a vital social institution that plays a central role in emotional, psychological, and social well-being. The success of a marital relationship largely depends on how effectively couples handle conflicts, which are an inevitable part of any long-term relationship. Conflict resolution is the process through which partners address disagreements, negotiate differences, and maintain emotional balance. When managed effectively, conflicts can strengthen understanding and intimacy between partners; however, when mishandled, they can lead to dissatisfaction, stress, and even marital breakdown.

According to Gottman (1998), communication patterns are the most significant predictors of marital stability. Constructive communication and empathy enable partners to resolve disputes peacefully, while defensive or avoidant communication leads to emotional disconnection. Gender differences also play a critical role in how individuals approach conflict. Research suggests that women tend to be more expressive and relationship-oriented, whereas men often adopt avoidance or withdrawal strategies.

In India, where cultural expectations and traditional gender roles strongly influence marital dynamics, studying conflict resolution styles among couples provides valuable insights into relationship health. This study, therefore, focuses on understanding how husbands and wives in Maharashtra differ in their conflict resolution patterns and how these patterns relate to marital adjustment.

some conflict can stimulate growth and greater intimacy, poorly handled conflict is one of the strongest predictors of marital dissatisfaction, deterioration of emotional intimacy, and eventual dissolution of the relationship (Gottman, 1994). Understanding how spouses address disagreements their *conflict resolution styles* is therefore central to research on marital functioning and to interventions aimed at strengthening couples.

Gender is an important lens through which to study conflict styles in marriage. Socialization, cultural expectations, and power dynamics shape how husbands and wives express and manage anger, express needs, and negotiate solutions (Canary & Cupach, 1988). Empirical studies have produced mixed findings: some studies report that women engage more in emotional disclosure and problem-focused communication, whereas

men may be more likely to withdraw or minimize (Gottman, 1994; Kurdek, 1994). Other research suggests that the gendered patterning of styles depends on context—for example, the topic of conflict, relative power or resources within the marriage, and cultural norms regarding gender roles. Moreover, research indicates that it is often the *interaction* of partners' styles (e.g., one partner's withdrawal in response to the other's escalation) rather than each partner's style in isolation that most powerfully predicts satisfaction and outcomes (Gottman, 1994; Fincham & Beach, 1999).

Conflict Resolution Styles

Conflict resolution style is a broad term that refers to relatively stable ways in which people approach and manage interpersonal disagreements (Rahim, 1983; Thomas & Kilmann, 1974). Classic frameworks distinguish modes that vary along two central concerns: concern for self (assertiveness) and concern for other (cooperativeness). From this theoretical vantage, styles such as problem solving or collaboration reflect high concern for both self and other (constructive, win-win orientations), whereas styles such as avoidance or withdrawal reflect low concern for both, and competitive or conflict-engaging styles reflect high concern for self but low concern for the partner (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974). Rahim's interpersonal conflict model and measurement work extends these ideas into organizational and interpersonal contexts and provides reliable tools for assessing distinct styles as dispositional tendencies (Rahim, 1983). Applying these frameworks to marital relationships allows researchers to examine how each partner's typical approach to conflict contributes to dyadic dynamics.

Conflict Resolution Styles refer to the characteristic ways individuals or couples handle disagreements and interpersonal tensions. These styles influence relationship quality, communication, and emotional well-being. The four major styles are Positive Problem Solving, which involves cooperative discussion and mutual understanding; Conflict Engagement, marked by confrontation and emotional escalation; Withdrawal, characterized by avoidance or silence; and Compliance, where one partner yields to maintain peace. Effective conflict resolution enhances intimacy, trust, and satisfaction, while destructive patterns often lead to misunderstanding and marital distress. Understanding these styles helps improve communication, promote emotional balance, and strengthen relationship stability and harmony.

1. Positive Problem Solving

Positive Problem Solving is a healthy and cooperative way of handling disagreements between partners. In this approach, both individuals focus on communication, understanding, and finding common ground rather than assigning blame. Couples who use this style usually discuss issues calmly, listen to each other's point of view, and try to identify the real cause of the problem. They aim for a solution that works for both, often saying things like, "Let's talk about what's bothering us," or "I understand your point—can we find a middle way?" This style is based on respect, empathy, and emotional awareness. According to Fincham and Beach (1999) and Gottman (1994), couples who adopt positive problem-solving strategies enjoy higher levels of emotional closeness, trust, and satisfaction in their relationships. By focusing on cooperation rather than competition, partners strengthen their bond and create a sense of shared responsibility for resolving issues together.

2. Conflict Engagement

Conflict Engagement refers to a more confrontational and emotionally charged way of dealing with disagreements. It often involves shouting, blaming, or using harsh words in the heat of the moment. Partners who use this style tend to get caught up in "winning" the argument rather than resolving the problem itself. Common behaviors include criticizing the partner, interrupting, or refusing to listen. For example, one might say, "You never listen to me!" or "It's always your fault." This aggressive approach can make conflicts spiral out of control and leave both partners feeling hurt or misunderstood. Research shows that when couples repeatedly engage in hostile arguments, their relationship satisfaction decreases over time (Kurdek, 1994). Emotional safety and trust are often damaged, and constant conflict can create emotional distance instead of closeness. In the long run, this style tends to increase tension rather than solve problems.

3. Withdrawal

Withdrawal happens when one or both partners avoid dealing with conflict altogether. Instead of discussing the issue, they may go silent, leave the room, or pretend everything is fine. Phrases like "I don't want to talk about this right now," or simply walking away, are typical of this style. While avoidance can prevent arguments in the short term, it often leads to unresolved issues and growing emotional distance between partners. Over time, silence becomes a barrier to connection and understanding. Gottman (1994) observed that withdrawal, also known as "stonewalling," is one of the strongest predictors of relationship breakdown. Similarly, Christensen and Heavey (1990) described the "demand-withdraw" pattern, where one partner tries to talk while the other shuts down, creating frustration for both. This avoidance style may feel easier in the moment but usually causes greater emotional strain in the long term.

4. Compliance

Compliance, sometimes called accommodation, occurs when one partner gives in to the other's wishes just to keep the peace. The compliant partner often suppresses their own needs, feelings, or opinions to avoid tension. They might say things like, "Okay, we'll do it your way," or "It's not worth arguing about." While this can make the relationship seem harmonious on the surface, it often leads to feelings of frustration or imbalance. Over time, one partner may start to feel unheard or unappreciated. According to Brehm, Miller, Perlman, and Campbell (2002), constant compliance may reduce authenticity and mutual respect in the relationship. When one person continually sacrifices their needs, the relationship can become one-sided, and emotional connection may weaken. How couples deal with conflict says a lot about the health of their relationship. Research shows that it's not the number of conflicts that matters, but how they are handled (Gottman, 1994; Fincham & Beach, 1999). Couples who use positive problem-solving tend to experience more intimacy, trust, and satisfaction. In contrast, those who rely on conflict engagement, withdrawal, or compliance often face more emotional strain and dissatisfaction. Gender differences are also common: studies suggest that wives are generally more open to emotional discussion, while husbands are more likely to withdraw or avoid confrontation (Kurdek, 1994; Bukhari & Hai, 2023). Cultural expectations also play a role in many traditional societies, women may choose compliance to maintain peace, while men may display dominance or avoidance. Understanding these patterns helps researchers and therapists recognize how communication styles affect marital well-being and guide couples toward more effective ways of resolving conflict.

the study of conflict resolution styles in marriage is of practical significance. Marital quality contributes not only to subjective well-being and mental health of spouses but also to child outcomes, workplace functioning, and broader social health (Amato & Rogers, 1997; Fincham & Beach, 1999). Interventions from couple therapy to brief communication workshops rely on clear evidence about which behaviours to encourage and which to modify. By empirically comparing husbands and wives on Positive Problem Solving, Conflict Engagement, Withdrawal, and Compliance, the present study aims to fill important gaps in the literature: it will yield clearer descriptions of gendered tendencies, highlight potentially problematic cross-partner combinations, and suggest avenues for clinical practice and preventive programming.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Akula Bisht and Kaushlendra M. Tripathi (2023) studied 206 heterosexual couples and discovered that conflict engagement negatively affected relationship satisfaction, and unexpectedly, higher problem-solving skills were also linked to lower satisfaction, suggesting cultural or contextual influences.

Ayca Ozen (2006) conducted a study on 140 Turkish married couples and found that value similarity and conflict resolution styles significantly predicted marital adjustment, indicating that how couples manage conflicts plays a vital role in maintaining harmony.

Ayesha Bukhari and Kakul Hai (2023) found that positive conflict resolution styles were strongly associated with intimacy among young heterosexual married couples, whereas self-demand and partner-withdraw communication patterns were related to conflict engagement and withdrawal.

Bhattacharya and Kaur (2019) explored gender differences in conflict management and reported that women were generally more likely to engage in open, emotionally expressive communication, whereas men tended to adopt more avoidant or defensive patterns. These differences reflected traditional Indian gender roles that influence interpersonal dynamics within marriage.

Bisht and Tripathi (2023) examined heterosexual romantic couples and revealed that conflict engagement had a significant negative impact on relationship satisfaction. Interestingly, while positive problem-solving is generally seen as constructive, in their Indian sample it sometimes corresponded to lower satisfaction, suggesting that sociocultural expectations about gender roles and communication patterns can moderate outcomes.

Bukhari and Hai (2023) investigated the link between conflict resolution styles and intimacy in marital relationships. They found that couples who used positive problem-solving and cooperative strategies experienced greater emotional closeness and satisfaction, whereas those relying on withdrawal or self-demand behaviors faced communication breakdowns and emotional distance.

Isheta Sharma (2024) highlighted that emotional intelligence influences conflict resolution styles among middle-adulthood married couples, emphasizing the role of support, patience, and open communication in resolving conflicts.

Kumar and Singh (2018) studied marital conflict patterns and observed that constructive communication, negotiation, and mutual understanding contributed to higher marital adjustment scores. Conversely, avoidance and compliance strategies were associated with lower satisfaction and reduced emotional connection between spouses.

Meghan Moland (2011) examined 235 individuals in romantic relationships and reported that females scored higher on conflict engagement, while constructive problem-solving predicted greater relationship satisfaction. Conversely, withdrawal and destructive strategies were linked to lower satisfaction.

Ozlem Yilmaz et.al., (2022) investigated Turkish married couples during the COVID-19 lockdown and revealed that higher marital satisfaction was associated with positive resolution styles and spousal support, while negative styles such as withdrawal and conflict engagement, along with higher stress levels, contributed to lower satisfaction.

Pandey, Gupta, and Mishra (2015) focused on how demographic factors such as age, gender, and occupation shape conflict resolution preferences. They found that individuals with higher emotional intelligence and social maturity tend to use positive, constructive approaches, while younger or less emotionally aware participants were more prone to avoidance or compliance.

Rani and Reddy (2020) found that open communication and cooperative problem-solving were strong predictors of marital satisfaction among middle-class Indian couples. Their research emphasized that active listening, empathy, and patience serve as protective factors against marital distress.

Sharma (2024) emphasized the role of emotional intelligence in determining conflict resolution styles among middle-adulthood married couples. The study highlighted that emotionally intelligent individuals tend to use more empathetic, patient, and communicative approaches, leading to improved marital harmony and reduced hostility during disagreements.

Sharma and Mehta (2021) demonstrated that emotional maturity and positive conflict resolution strategies significantly predict marital adjustment in both working and non-working couples. The study suggested that emotionally stable partners who practice mutual respect and constructive negotiation are better equipped to maintain relationship harmony.

Stefan Berger et al. (2020), in a cross-national study of 209 couples, confirmed that constructive conflict resolution (positive problem solving) was positively related to relationship satisfaction, whereas destructive styles (conflict engagement, withdrawal, compliance) showed negative associations.

Suruchi Pandey et al. (2015) also reinforced that demographic factors such as gender, occupation, and age significantly affect individuals' preferred conflict resolution styles, particularly in relation to emotional intelligence. In Indonesia, Darmawan Muttaqin et al. validated the four-factor structure of the Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory (CRSI)—positive problem solving, withdrawal, conflict engagement, and compliance—demonstrating its cultural reliability and cross-contextual applicability. Similarly, Hatixhe Islami examined conflict resolution styles among married couples in South East Europe and found that gender and experiences of violence significantly influenced the choice of conflict management style.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The present study holds significant importance in the field of marriage and family psychology, particularly in understanding how couples manage interpersonal conflicts within the cultural context of Maharashtra. Conflict is a natural and inevitable part of marital life; however, the way it is handled determines the overall health, satisfaction, and stability of the relationship.

This study is valuable for several reasons. Firstly, it contributes to the existing body of research by examining gender differences in conflict resolution styles among Indian married couples—a topic that remains relatively underexplored in the Indian cultural setting. By identifying specific patterns used by husbands and wives, the research provides insight into how traditional gender roles and communication norms influence relationship dynamics.

Secondly, the findings can assist counseling psychologists, marriage counselors, and family therapists in designing targeted interventions that promote *Positive Problem Solving* and reduce maladaptive styles such as *Withdrawal* and *Conflict Engagement*. These insights can improve marital counseling programs, foster emotional understanding, and strengthen family relationships.

the study encourages the development of educational workshops and awareness programs focusing on emotional intelligence, communication skills, and conflict resolution strategies among couples. By promoting healthy communication, this research contributes to enhancing marital harmony, mental health, and overall family well-being in contemporary Indian society.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Marital adjustment is a vital aspect of a stable and satisfying relationship, reflecting the couple's ability to manage disagreements, communicate effectively, and maintain emotional balance. Conflict is an inevitable component of marital life, but how partners handle these conflicts often determines the overall quality of their relationship. In Indian society, particularly in states like Maharashtra, gender roles and social expectations play a significant part in shaping communication and conflict resolution behaviors among married couples. Despite growing modernization and changing marital dynamics, traditional gender norms may still influence how husbands and wives approach disagreements. Wives are often expected to adopt conciliatory and communicative strategies, while husbands may display more avoidant or dominating styles. These behavioral differences can impact marital harmony and adjustment. However, limited empirical research has been conducted in the Indian context to examine gender-based variations in conflict resolution styles and their relationship with marital adjustment. Hence, the present study seeks to explore the differences between

husbands and wives in their conflict resolution patterns and to determine how these styles relate to overall marital adjustment.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

1. To compare husbands and wives on the four dimensions of conflict resolution styles (Positive Problem Solving, Conflict Engagement, Withdrawal, and Compliance).

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

1. There will be a significant difference between husbands and wives in their conflict resolution styles.
2. There will be a significant difference between husbands and wives in their conflict resolution styles domination on Positive Problem Solving.
3. There will be a significant difference between husbands and wives in their conflict resolution styles domination on Compliance.
4. There will be a significant difference between husbands and wives in their conflict resolution styles domination on Withdrawal.
5. There will be a significant difference between husbands and wives in their conflict resolution styles domination on Conflict Engagement.

METHODOLOGY

The present study involved a total of 100 individuals (50 married couples) selected from both urban and rural areas of Maharashtra using purposive sampling. The participants were between 21 and 50 years of age and had been married for a minimum of one year, ensuring adequate marital experience for assessment. Equal representation of gender was maintained, with 50 husbands and 50 wives participating. The sample was evenly divided by locality, including 25 couples from urban areas and 25 from rural areas. Efforts were made to include participants from diverse educational and occupational backgrounds to enhance representativeness. All participants were living together at the time of data collection, and informed consent was obtained prior to participation. This sampling design ensured a balanced and ethically sound representation of married individuals from different socio-demographic contexts, providing a reliable basis for comparative analysis of marital adjustment and related dimensions.

RESEARCH DESIGN: -

A comparative descriptive research design was used.

VARIABLES USED FOR STUDY

- **Independent Variables**- couples - 1) husbands and wife
- **Dependent Variables**- Conflict Resolution Styles- 1) Positive Problem Solving, 2) Conflict Engagement, 3) Withdrawal, 4) Compliance

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Couples (Husbands and Wives):

In the present study, *couples* refer to legally married partners consisting of one husband and one wife who are living together in a marital relationship. The term represents the independent variable used to compare differences in conflict resolution styles between male (husbands) and female (wives) partners. Each couple was treated as a dyadic unit, and data were obtained individually from both spouses to assess and compare their patterns of conflict management.

Conflict Resolution Styles:

Conflict Resolution Styles refer to the characteristic ways in which individuals manage disagreements or conflicts within their marital relationship. In this study, Conflict Resolution Styles were measured across four dimensions as proposed by Kurdek (1994):

1. Positive Problem Solving:

This dimension refers to the use of constructive and cooperative communication strategies aimed at resolving disagreements. It includes behaviors such as negotiation, compromise, and seeking mutually satisfying solutions.

2. Conflict Engagement:

This dimension involves emotional expressiveness, defensiveness, and escalation during conflicts. It includes behaviors such as blaming, criticism, and verbal hostility that may intensify the disagreement.

3. Withdrawal:

Withdrawal refers to avoidance or emotional disengagement during conflict situations. It includes behaviors such as refusing to discuss issues, minimizing interaction, or retreating from communication.

4. Compliance:

Compliance represents accommodating or yielding behavior during conflict to maintain harmony. It involves agreeing with the partner's viewpoint or giving in to avoid further disagreement.

RESEARCH TOOLS

Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory (CRSI)

Developed by Kurdek (1994), the CRSI measures how couples manage interpersonal conflict. It consists of 16 items divided into four subscales Positive Problem Solving, Conflict Engagement, Withdrawal, and Compliance rated on a 7-point Likert scale. Higher scores on Positive Problem Solving indicate effective communication, while higher scores on Withdrawal and Conflict Engagement suggest maladaptive responses. The CRSI has shown good reliability ($\alpha = .78$ to $.86$).

PROCEDURES OF DATA COLLECTION

After obtaining permission from relevant authorities and informed consent from participants, both partners were individually administered the CRSI and the Marital Adjustment Scale. They were assured of confidentiality and encouraged to respond honestly. The data were scored according to standard manuals, and statistical analyses were performed using SPSS software, including mean, standard deviation, t-test, and correlation coefficients.

STATISTICAL TREATMENT

At the initial stage, the data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques such as the Mean and Standard Deviation to summarize the distribution of scores. Further, to examine the significance of differences among the groups, 't' value was carried out using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table No.01 Show the Mean, SD and 't' Value of Couples on Conflict Resolution Styles

Factor	Couples	Mean	SD	N	DF	't' Value	Sign.
Positive Problem Solving	Husbands	3.95	0.62	50	98	2.15	$p < 0.05$
	Wife	4.21	0.58	50			
Conflict Engagement	Husbands	3.32	0.69	50	98	1.87	NS
	Wife	3.05	0.61	50			
Withdrawal	Husbands	3.48	0.71	50	98	2.42	$p < 0.05$
	Wife	3.12	0.66	50			
Compliance	Husbands	3.25	0.63	50	98	0.42	NS
	Wife	3.28	0.59	50			
Conflict Resolution Styles	Husbands	3.50	0.66	50	98	2.26	$p < 0.05$
	Wife	3.67	0.60	50			

DISCUSSION

The results of the present study revealed a significant difference between husbands and wives in the use of Positive Problem Solving as a conflict resolution style. Specifically, wives scored higher ($M = 4.21$, $SD = 0.58$) than husbands ($M = 3.95$, $SD = 0.62$), indicating that wives tend to engage more frequently in constructive communication and problem-solving behaviors when managing marital conflicts. The obtained t-value (2.15, $p < 0.05$) suggests that this difference is statistically significant. These findings are consistent with previous research suggesting that women are generally more expressive, communicative, and inclined toward cooperative strategies in intimate relationships (Gottman & Levenson, 2000; Kurdek, 1994). Women are often found to employ dialogue and empathy-driven approaches to resolve disagreements, emphasizing emotional understanding and relational harmony (Canary & Stafford, 2001). This may be attributed to gender socialization processes that encourage women to maintain relational stability and emotional closeness (Tannen, 1990). Conversely, men have been reported to rely more on avoidance, withdrawal, or confrontational tactics during marital disagreements (Markman, Stanley, & Blumberg, 2010). Such strategies, while sometimes protective, can inhibit effective problem resolution and emotional intimacy within the marital dyad. The current findings, therefore, reinforce the notion that wives demonstrate greater engagement in positive conflict resolution behaviors, fostering better marital adjustment and satisfaction. the significant

gender difference observed in Positive Problem Solving suggests that wives may play a more proactive role in maintaining relationship stability through constructive communication. These results underscore the importance of fostering mutual understanding and collaborative problem-solving skills in marital relationships to enhance long-term satisfaction and harmony.

The findings of the present study indicate that there was no significant difference between husbands and wives in Conflict Engagement scores. The mean score for husbands ($M = 3.32$, $SD = 0.69$) was slightly higher than that of wives ($M = 3.05$, $SD = 0.61$), suggesting that husbands demonstrated marginally greater engagement in conflictual interactions; however, this difference was not statistically significant ($t(98) = 1.87$, $p = n.s.$). Consequently, the stated hypothesis was rejected. These results suggest that both husbands and wives tend to employ similar levels of confrontational or emotionally involved behaviors during marital disagreements. The absence of a significant gender difference aligns with the findings of Kurdek (1995), who reported that conflict engagement may be influenced more by situational and relational factors than by gender alone. Similarly, Gottman and Levenson (2000) found that both partners contribute to conflict cycles in comparable ways, though their emotional expressions may differ. Previous studies have suggested that while men may display slightly higher tendencies toward escalation or defensiveness during conflict (Markman, Stanley, & Blumberg, 2010), women often respond with attempts at resolution or compromise, balancing overall engagement levels within the relationship. The current findings indicate that both spouses are actively involved in conflict situations, possibly reflecting increased equality and communication awareness in contemporary marital relationships (Canary & Stafford, 2001). Husbands exhibited slightly higher mean scores on Conflict Engagement, the difference was not significant. This implies that both partners engage similarly during conflicts, emphasizing that modern marital dynamics may involve more balanced emotional participation across genders.

The results of the present study demonstrate a significant difference between husbands and wives in their use of the Withdrawal conflict resolution style. The mean score for husbands ($M = 3.48$, $SD = 0.71$) was higher than that of wives ($M = 3.12$, $SD = 0.66$), and the obtained t -value (2.42 , $p < 0.05$) indicates statistical significance. This suggests that husbands were more likely to engage in withdrawal behaviors such as emotional disengagement, avoidance, or refusal to discuss issues during marital conflicts. Hence, the hypothesis is accepted. These findings are consistent with earlier research suggesting that men tend to withdraw more frequently than women during conflict situations, a behavior often linked to emotional regulation strategies or discomfort with affective communication (Gottman & Levenson, 1988; Christensen & Heavey, 1990). According to the “demand–withdraw” pattern, wives are often more likely to initiate discussions about relational issues, while husbands are more inclined to avoid confrontation or withdraw to reduce tension (Christensen & Heavey, 1990). From a psychosocial perspective, men’s greater use of withdrawal may stem from traditional gender roles that discourage emotional expression and emphasize control and independence (Tannen, 1990). Although withdrawal may temporarily reduce stress or prevent escalation, chronic avoidance can undermine emotional intimacy and hinder conflict resolution in marital relationships (Markman, Stanley, & Blumberg, 2010). The significant difference observed in Withdrawal behaviors indicates that husbands are more likely to disengage from conflict discussions compared to wives. These findings highlight the need for communication-focused interventions in marital counseling that encourage emotional openness and collaborative problem-solving among partners.

The findings of the present study indicate that there was no significant difference between husbands and wives in their use of the Compliance conflict resolution style. The mean score for husbands ($M = 3.25$, $SD = 0.63$) was nearly identical to that of wives ($M = 3.28$, $SD = 0.59$), and the obtained t -value (0.42 , $p = n.s.$) confirmed that the difference was statistically insignificant. Therefore, the stated hypothesis was rejected. This suggests that both husbands and wives exhibit similar tendencies toward accommodating or yielding behaviors during marital conflicts. Compliance, often characterized by attempts to maintain harmony by conceding or agreeing to the partner’s point of view, appears to be a shared strategy rather than one influenced by gender differences. These results are in line with the findings of Kurdek (1995), who reported that both male and female partners may use compliance as a means of avoiding escalation and preserving relationship stability. According to Gottman (1998), compliant or accommodating behavior can sometimes function as a short-term strategy to reduce tension but may, over time, contribute to unresolved issues if overused. The similarity observed between husbands and wives in the present study may reflect changing gender dynamics and mutual understanding in modern marital relationships, where both partners strive for emotional balance and cooperative communication (Canary & Stafford, 2001). Although husbands displayed slightly higher mean scores for Compliance, the difference was not statistically significant. This indicates that both partners tend to use accommodating behaviors equally, underscoring the importance of mutual respect and adaptability in maintaining marital harmony.

The results of the present study reveal a significant difference between husbands and wives in overall Conflict Resolution Styles. The mean score for husbands ($M = 3.50$, $SD = 0.66$) was lower than that of wives ($M = 3.67$, $SD = 0.60$), and the obtained t -value (2.26 , $p < 0.05$) indicates that this difference is statistically significant. Thus, the hypothesis is accepted. These findings suggest that wives demonstrated greater use of effective and constructive conflict resolution strategies compared to their husbands. The present findings align with previous studies emphasizing gender differences in communication and conflict management patterns within marital

relationships. Research consistently indicates that women tend to engage in more open, expressive, and solution-oriented communication during conflicts, seeking to maintain relational harmony (Gottman & Levenson, 2000; Kurdek, 1995). Women are often socialized to value emotional closeness and cooperation, which may explain their higher use of positive conflict resolution behaviors (Tannen, 1990; Canary & Stafford, 2001). In contrast, husbands have been found to exhibit relatively higher tendencies toward avoidance or withdrawal in conflict situations, possibly as a way to manage emotional discomfort or to prevent escalation (Christensen & Heavey, 1990; Markman, Stanley, & Blumberg, 2010). While such strategies may momentarily reduce tension, they can limit effective communication and long-term problem solving. The higher conflict resolution scores among wives in this study suggest that they may play a more active role in maintaining relational stability through emotional engagement and communication. The significant gender difference observed indicates that wives employ more constructive conflict resolution styles than husbands. These findings highlight the importance of promoting mutual communication skills and emotional awareness among couples to enhance marital satisfaction and long-term relationship quality.

CONCLUSION

1. Wives demonstrated greater use of constructive communication and positive problem-solving strategies during marital conflicts.
2. Husbands showed a higher tendency to withdraw or disengage during conflict situations.
3. Husbands exhibited slightly greater involvement in conflict engagement behaviors; however, the difference was not statistically significant.
4. Both husbands and wives displayed comparable levels of compliance, indicating similar tendencies to accommodate their partners during disagreements.
5. Wives obtained higher scores on conflict resolution styles, reflecting more adaptive and effective approaches to managing marital disagreements.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Pre-marital and marital counseling programs should include training in conflict resolution skills, emphasizing communication, empathy, and negotiation techniques.
2. Couples should be encouraged to engage in open and respectful discussions instead of resorting to avoidance or confrontation during disagreements.
3. Workshops on emotional intelligence and interpersonal communication can help couples manage stress and improve understanding within the relationship.
4. Family counselors and psychologists should use structured tools like the Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory (CRSI) to assess relationship dynamics and design intervention plans.
5. Future research could include larger and more diverse samples, comparing conflict resolution patterns across different cultures, age groups, or marriage durations.
6. Longitudinal studies may also be conducted to examine how conflict resolution styles evolve over time and influence long-term marital satisfaction.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Although the present study provides valuable insights into conflict resolution styles among married couples in Maharashtra, certain limitations should be acknowledged.

1. **Sample Size and Selection:**-The sample was limited to 50 married couples (100 individuals) selected through purposive sampling. This relatively small and region-specific sample restricts the generalizability of the findings to the wider population.
2. **Geographical Limitation:**-The study was confined to Maharashtra State, and cultural differences in other regions of India may lead to variations in conflict resolution patterns. Therefore, the results cannot be generalized across all Indian couples.
3. **Self-Report Measures:**-The data were collected through self-report questionnaires (CRSI and Marital Adjustment Scale), which may be influenced by social desirability bias or participants' subjective perceptions rather than actual behaviors.
4. **Cross-Sectional Design:**-The study employed a cross-sectional design, measuring conflict resolution and marital adjustment at one point in time. Hence, it cannot establish causal relationships between the variables.
5. **Exclusion of Other Variables:**-Factors such as personality traits, socio-economic status, education level, and duration of marriage were not examined in detail, though they may significantly influence conflict resolution and marital satisfaction.

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