



Research Paper

doi: [10.22034/IJFP.2023.1989983.1205](https://doi.org/10.22034/IJFP.2023.1989983.1205)

Investigating the Factors Related to Marital Satisfaction in Iran: A Meta-analysis

S. M. Ebadirad¹, K. Zahraei², F. Mohsenzadeh³

1. Ph.D. candidate in Counseling, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Kharazmi University, Tehran, Iran
2. Professor, Department of Counseling, Faculty of Educational and Psychology, Kharazmi University, Tehran, Iran
3. Associate Professor, Department of Counseling, Faculty of Educational and Psychology, Kharazmi University, Tehran, Iran

Article Info.	Abstract
<p>Received: 19.02.2023</p> <p>Accepted: 11.05.2023</p> <hr/> <p>Keywords:</p> <p><i>qualitative research,</i></p> <p><i>meta-synthesis,</i></p> <p><i>marital satisfaction</i></p>	<p>Abstract</p> <p>The crucial role of marital satisfaction in the health of the individual, family, and society has attracted many researchers in the last few decades. Thus, multiple studies have been done on this issue. The current study investigated the factors related to marital satisfaction in Iran. This research was developmental in terms of its purpose. In terms of the nature of the data, it was a meta-analysis. Moreover, to analyze the data, we applied Sandelowski and Barroso's models to combine the qualitative data. In this regard, according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria, a sample group consisting of twenty-one articles was selected for analysis. The results of this study led to the identification of four categories, including individual, marital, family, and environmental factors which affected the couples' marital satisfaction. In addition, the category of marital factors which referred to the concepts related to marital relationship was named as the main category affecting marital satisfaction. The results of this meta-analysis showed that to achieve optimal marital satisfaction, one should pay attention to the individual, family, and environmental factors along with strengthening the marital relationships between a couple. Nevertheless, the factors related to marital relationships had the most influential role in marital satisfaction.</p>
<p>*Corresponding author Email: mebadirad@gmail.com</p>	

Introduction

The quality of the couple's relationship forms the foundation of future functioning of the family and the physical and mental health of the members. Therefore, the most important criterion for determining a healthy family can be the couple's satisfaction with marriage (i.e., marital satisfaction) (Heidarnejad et al., 2018). Marital satisfaction is known as the most important sign of successful functioning in marriage. The alarming statistics of divorce have caused many concerns in the field of marital satisfaction (Fahimdanesh et al., 2020). This issue has made the examination of marital satisfaction of particular importance. On the other hand, the high cost of therapeutic research studies has caused the identification of factors related to marital satisfaction the focus of many research studies (Heidarnejad et al., 2018). However, each of these studies focused on certain aspects of marital satisfaction. This issue has prevented the presentation of a comprehensive view on the factors related to marital satisfaction. In fact, when a precise and clear understanding of marital satisfaction and its predictors is not achieved, it is not possible to formulate effective plans for the mental health of couples. Therefore, since no research study has systematically examined the concept of marital satisfaction among Iranian couples, the researchers in the present research tried to identify and to categorize the factors which predicted marital satisfaction.

Methodology

The current research study is developmental in terms of objective, qualitative in terms of nature of data, and meta-analysis in terms of data collection method. To conduct a meta-analysis, there are different methods and models; in this study, Sandelowski et al.'s (2007) model, which includes the following seven stages, was used.

1. Setting the research question: The current research asked about the most important factors related to marital satisfaction.
2. Reviewing the literature systematically: This review was based on sources such as Scientific Information Database, Humanities Comprehensive Portal, Web of Science and Scopus based on the keyword of "Marital Satisfaction" in the period of 2010- 2022.
3. Searching, reviewing and selecting appropriate texts: This process was done through investigating the title, abstract and keywords, and then reviewing the main text of the article using the Critical Appraisal Skills Program (CASP), which led to the extraction of 21 final articles.
4. Extracting data: This process was done through data coding based on semantic units and thematic analysis, which led to the identification of 175 codes, 33 subcategories, 15 categories and finally 4 indicators.
5. Analyzing and synthesizing qualitative findings: This step included identification of codes, subcategories, categories and indicators.
6. Checking the quality of process implementation and results: This process was carried out with the help of the focus group and repeated corrections in the analysis process as well as the techniques of triangulation and cross comparison of the findings with reliable scientific sources.
7. Presenting the findings

Results

Using a meta-analysis method, this research study identified the components, factors, and concepts related to marital satisfaction in the form of initial codes. Then, these codes were categorized in the form of categories, subcategories, and indicators. All the codes, subcategories, categories and indicators were presented in table 1. Then, a detailed explanation of the table is presented in the body of the study.

Table 1. The categorization of the findings of the present study

Table 1: The categorization of the findings of the present study			
Indicators	Categories	Subcategories	
Marital factors	Conflict resolution strategies	Tolerating Resolving conflicts boldly Quitting aggression Creating and maintaining a marital relationship	
	Attention to the emotional dimension in marital relationships	Having marital intimacy Having romantic relationship Having deep emotional relationships Trying to improve sexual relations Managing marital relationship	
	Life management	Maintaining marital integrity Having marital harmony Knowing how to deal with marital issues Having equal relationship	
	Previous acquaintance	Dating before marriage	
	Personal privacy	Preserving borders and individual independence Maintaining boundaries and marital independence	
	Similarity of couples	Having marital similarities Individual characteristics	
	Beliefs and unique characteristics	Religious attitude	
	Individual factors		Spouse characteristics An individual's perception of his spouse, others and the situation Goals and demands from the spouse and life having skill Family involvement in marital issues
		Individual perspective	
		Knowledge and skill	
		The involvement of families	
	Family-related factors		Family of origin Similarities of the family of origin Interaction between the couple's families
		Family interactions	Interaction of families with couples
Environmental factors	Background factors	Financial issues Marriage conditions	
	Cultural background	Cultural influences	

The final model of the factors related to marital satisfaction were summarized in four indicators (i.e., marital factors, individual factors, family-related factors and environmental factors), 14 categories (i.e., conflict resolution strategies, attention to the emotional dimension in marital relationships, life management, previous acquaintance, personal privacy, couple similarity, beliefs and unique characteristics, individual perspective, knowledge and skills, family involvement, characteristics of the family of origin, family interactions, background factors and cultural background) and 31 subcategories. However, each of the four indicators of marital satisfaction played a different role in strengthening marital satisfaction.

Figure 1 refers to the role of each of the four identified indicators in marital satisfaction. As it is evident in this figure, the index of marital factors occupied 17 subcategories out of 31 identified subcategories. As a result, it can be stated that this index had the most important role in creating marital satisfaction. Moreover, the index of individual factors included six subcategories; the index of family factors included five subcategories. Finally, the

index of environmental factors included only three categories out of 31 categories. In other words, this index had the least important role in creating marital satisfaction.



Figure 1. Factors associated with marital satisfaction identified in past qualitative studies

Conclusion

The findings of the current research study indicated that each of the identified categories and subcategories could affect the marital satisfaction of couples in certain ways. Conflict resolution strategies are necessary to help avoid inevitable conflicts (Sheikhi et al., 2023); attention to the emotional dimension in marital relationships improves the quality of emotional relationships (Konrath et al., 2018); simultaneous attention to sexual factors, marital cohesion and marital harmony lead to better management of marital relations (Körük & Kurt, 2019). Maintaining marital privacy ensures the independence of couples (Pirsaghi et al., 2017). The similarity of couples in basic aspects facilitates understanding of each other's behaviors and thoughts (Dyrenforth et al., 2010); couples' personality traits determine their individual functioning (Kaufman, 2011); family interactions and support create a favorable social support network for couples (Berry et al., 2010). Furthermore, environmental factors provide the basis for satisfaction.

In general, it can be stated that the findings of the current research study show that marital satisfaction is a multidimensional concept which is rooted not only in the way couples' function, but also in the families of origin and even environmental factors. However, to experience marital satisfaction, it does not seem necessary to have all the conditions. From among the identified factors, the most important role is related to marital factors; other characteristics also bring changes in couples' marital satisfaction mainly through the way they affect this index.

Conflict of interest

This article is taken from a dissertation on Counseling in Tehran's Kharazmi University, and there is no conflict of interest.

Acknowledgment

The researchers consider it necessary to appreciate all the researchers who facilitated the researchers' access to the resources needed for the meta-analysis.

References

- Heidarnejad, K., Iranpour, R., & Hakim, M. (2018). Feasibility study of the relationship between marital satisfaction with five major personality traits. *Women and Family Studies*, 11(42), 55-69. [In Persian]
- Fahimdanesh, F., Noferesti, A., & Tavakol, K. (2020). Self-compassion and forgiveness: Major predictors of marital satisfaction in young couples. *The American Journal of Family Therapy*, 48(3), 221-234.
- Sandelowski, M., Barroso, J., & Voils, C. I. (2007). Using qualitative meta-summary to synthesize qualitative and quantitative descriptive findings. *Research in Nursing and Health*, 30(1), 99-111.
- Sheikhi, M., Abooei, A., & Azizi, M. (2023). The effectiveness of Jung's self-knowledge on the adaptability and marital satisfaction of mothers with hearing-impaired children. *Auditory and Vestibular Research*. 32(3), 233-239.
- Konrath, S., Meier, B. P., & Bushman, B. J. (2018). Development and validation of the single item trait empathy scale (SITES). *Journal of Research in Personality*, 73, 111-122.
- Körük, S., & Kurt, A. A. (2019). The predictive role of early maladaptive schemas in the evaluation of pre-marital romantic relationships among university students. *Yaşam Becerileri Psikoloji Dergisi*, 3(5), 73-83.
- Pirsaghi, F., Zaharakar, K., Kiamanesh, A., Mohsenzadeh, F., & Hasani, J. (2017). The Indices of effective marital relationship: A qualitative study. *J Appl Couns*, 7(1), 1-26.
- Dyrenforth, P. S., Kashy, D. A., Donnellan, M. B., & Lucas, R. E. (2010). Predicting relationship and life satisfaction from personality in nationally representative samples from three countries: The relative importance of actor, partner, and similarity effects. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 99(4), 690-699.
- Kaufman, A. (2011). Personality, partner similarity and couple satisfaction. *Do opposites attract or birds of a feather flock together*.
- Berry, K., Roberts, N., Danquah, A., & Davies, L. (2014). An exploratory study of associations between adult attachment, health service utilisation and health service costs. *Psychosis*, 6(4), 355-358.

COPYRIGHTS

©2023 by the authors. Licensee Family Psychology Association of Iran. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>)

