

Original Article

Marital satisfaction predictors: The case of Kermanshah and Hamadan cities, west of Iran

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Abstract

Introduction: This study aimed to assess the predictive factors of marital satisfaction among married people in Kermanshah and Hamadan cities, Iran.

Materials and Methods: The present mixed study (sequential exploratory plan) was carried out in two stages. In the first stage (qualitative), using purposive sampling method, 67 married men and women who had successful marriage interviewed. The content analysis method was used to analyze the interview data, and 20 factors were identified. Then, in the second stage (quantitative), a 116-items researcher-made questionnaire prepared to measure the possible effect of these 20 factors. Then, 372 married people were selected using multi-stage sampling method from Hamadan (200 case) and Kermanshah (172 case). The participants fulfilled the Enrich's Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire and Researcher-Made Questionnaire of Marital Satisfaction Factors. Data were analyzed by using analysis of variance and step-wise regression.

Results: The variables of expressing of feelings, trust, realism/acceptance, and respect were the most important predictors of marital satisfaction among married people of Hamadan city these variables explained 60% of the variance of marital satisfaction. While, the most important predictors in couples of Kermanshah were expressing of feelings, trust, and respect. They explained 31% of variance. Moreover, expressing of feelings, trust, respect, consultation, appreciation and expressing satisfaction with life respectively were the most important predictors of marital satisfaction among all couples and explained 51% of the variance of marital satisfaction.

Conclusion: Based on the findings, expressing of feelings, trust, respect, consultation, appreciation and expressing satisfaction with life can predict marital satisfaction.

Keywords: Couples, Marital satisfaction, Predictor

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Introduction

Family is an essential part of our lives, and the personality of each of us is mainly affected by what happens within the family (1). Accordingly,

with the proper function of the family, all family members will also enjoy good health and well-being (2). One of the factors that affect couples' lives and family functioning, in general, is marital

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satisfaction, which is considered as one of the important aspects of a person's overall life satisfaction (3), and as a factor of growth and purpose, it makes life meaningful (4). Marital satisfaction is a variable that refers to the amount of comfort, pleasure, and acceptance that couples feel in their marriage (5). Marital satisfaction is also a personal experience in a marriage that can only be evaluated by the individual himself in response to the extent of the marital relationship pleasure (6). In addition, according to Hakins, marital satisfaction is related to the satisfaction that couples feel when evaluating aspects of their marriage (7).

The importance of marital satisfaction has led to various studies in recent decades to identify and comprehend the factors that affect marital relationships (8). Because marital satisfaction affects couples' quality of life (9), mental and physical health (10), the level of life satisfaction, and even income, academic success, and job satisfaction (11). Studies conducted in the field of marital satisfaction are as follows: Benin, Afolabi, Oladotun, Chinedu, and Tolulope (12) demonstrated an application for couple therapy and found a significant relationship between gender and communication patterns with marital satisfaction. However, no significant relationship was found between age and marital satisfaction. Eftekhari et al. (13) showed a negative and significant correlation between subjugation schema, failure schema, and the total score of early maladaptive schema. Moreover, there is a significant positive correlation between the mutual constructive pattern and a negative and significant correlation between the avoidance pattern, the demand/ withdrawal pattern, and marital satisfaction. Their research showed that marital satisfaction could be predicted through early maladaptive schemas and constructive communication patterns. The results also indicated no significant difference between couples' communication styles and marital satisfaction in men and women.

In another study entitled "Personality traits as a predictor of marital satisfaction in older couples", Brudek and Steuden (14) showed that personality has a statistically significant relationship with marital satisfaction. Among personality traits, agreeableness was the only predictor of marital satisfaction. Vinayak et al. (15), in their work on

sexual desire and materialism as predictors of marital satisfaction among men, revealed a significant positive correlation between sexual desire and marital satisfaction.

In contrast, materialism has a significant negative correlation, so materialism and sexual desire are predictors of marital satisfaction among men. Sina, Najarpoorian, and Samavi (16) conducted a study entitled "Predicting marital satisfaction through attachment styles and love story". The results demonstrated that the story of men's superior love, social acceptance of men and women, and entertainment positively and significantly predicts marital satisfaction. Haji Hassani and Sim's (17) research on "Marital satisfaction among Iranian girls: emotional intelligence and religious orientation" showed a relationship between emotional intelligence and age of marriage with marital satisfaction. The results also showed that emotional intelligence and age of marriage were predictors of marital satisfaction among Iranian girls with early marriage. Sadeghi et al. (18) showed that couples' similarity in being extroverted predicted an increase in women's marital satisfaction. Couples whom both scored high on the neuroticism trait reported significantly lower marital satisfaction than couples who both scored low on the trait. Couples who scored higher in agreeableness and conscientiousness reported significantly higher marital satisfaction. The study by Arefi and Mohsenzadeh (19) indicated that the two factors of sexual communication and intimacy have a direct and significant effect on marital satisfaction. Moreover, the relationship with sexual intimacy mediation significantly correlated with marital satisfaction. Movahedi, Movahedi, and Kariminejad (20) showed that marital satisfaction, intimacy, and quality of marital relationships have a significant relationship with forgiveness.

People who are more forgiving than their spouses have more marital satisfaction, and the level of intimacy and quality of marital relations between them is higher. Abbasi and Montazer (21) concluded a significant positive relationship between appreciation, humor, and social support with nurses' marital satisfaction. The results also revealed that appreciation, social support, and humor could predict marital satisfaction. Villa and Del Prette's (22) showed that mutual

relationships between three marital, social skills (active self-control, reactive self-control, assertiveness/empathy) with the husband's marital satisfaction and husband's three social skills (assertive conversation, self-expression, and assertiveness/empathy) has more to do with the marital satisfaction of the spouse.

Tavakoli et al. (23) identified the factors that have a significant effect on marital satisfaction as follows: demographic specifications, personality attributes, attachment style, relationship, communication and intimacy, couples' families, forgiveness and sacrifice, religion, emotional intelligence, personal health, and sexual relations (sex). Samdaii, Galeh Kolaei et al. (24) showed six factors related to marital satisfaction: demographic factors, fertility assisting methods, psychological health, life quality, economic, social, and family support, and sexual function.

Sorokowski et al. (25) conducted a study collecting data from 33 countries. The results revealed that factors such as gender, age, duration of the marriage, religion, number of children, economic status, education, and collectivistic values have a relationship with marital satisfaction. In a study about global perspective on marital satisfaction", Dobrowolska et al. (26) reported that gender, age, religiosity, economic status, education, and cultural values were correlated with marital satisfaction among cultures.

Cheragh Ali Gol, Rostami, and Goodarzi (27), in a study on predicting marital satisfaction based on perfectionism, reported a positive and significant correlation between positive perfectionism and marital satisfaction and a negative and significant correlation between negative perfectionism and marital satisfaction. Talaizadeh and Bakhtiarpour (28) showed that marital satisfaction and sexual satisfaction have a positive and significant relationship with the mental health of couples in the age ranges between 20 to 30 years, 31 to 40 years, 41 to 50 years. Also, marital and sexual satisfaction can predict 57% of the variance in mental health in the age range of 20 to 30 years.

Because all couples start their marital relationship expecting a bright future and life satisfaction (29), and also hoping for this relationship to be permanent (30), it seems necessary to identify factors that play an essential

role in predicting the level of marital satisfaction of men and women in their marital life in different cultures and subcultures. So, since knowing those principles can help reduce future challenges within the family and create a conducive environment for raising and nurturing children, this study seeks to answer the following questions: From the perspective of successful couples, what significant factors have they achieved during their marital life which can affect marital satisfaction? Which factors play a decisive role in predicting marital satisfaction? What are the predictors of marital satisfaction in the culture of people in Kermanshah and Hamadan?

Materials and Methods

The present study used a mixed-method, i.e., qualitative/quantitative method, type Sequential Exploratory Plan. The research was conducted in two stages. In the first stage (qualitative part), the phenomenological research method (the science of studying live experiences in individuals) was used - in phenomenological research, people's experiences, perceptions, and feelings are examined. At this stage, sampling was purposeful.

Therefore, 67 successful married couples were interviewed for one month in September 2018 in Hamadan. In order to take part in the research, individuals were supposed to be married, and at least three years have passed since their marriage. The only condition for leaving the research was to have a history of divorce or to have a divorce case.

The research method was descriptive-correlational in the second stage (quantitative part). The statistical population included all married people in Kermanshah and Hamadan in 2018-2019. According to Morgan and Krejcie table, which presents 384 people as the highest sample size, 372 individuals (172 married couples living in Kermanshah and 200 couples living in Hamadan) were selected by sampling method available in November 2018, and completed 116 questions of the researcher-made questionnaire on "Marital Satisfaction Factors" and Enrich 10-item "Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire".In this study, the Enrich 10-item "Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire" was used to measure the criterion variable (marital

satisfaction), and the researcher-made questionnaire on "Marital Satisfaction Factors" was used to identify the predictors of marital satisfaction i.e., predictor variables.

Research instruments

A) Researcher-made questionnaire on "Marital Satisfaction Factors": This questionnaire was developed in two stages. To this end, 67 successful married people were interviewed. The interview was semi-structured. Some of the interview questions include: 1- In your opinion, what factors play a constructive role in marital relations? 2-What is the reason for your success in marital life? 3. What factors in your marital life have had the most significant impact on your life satisfaction?

The interview was conducted in participants' free time. The duration of the interview ranged from 20 to 40 minutes. The interviews were recorded, and at the end of each interview, the content of the interviews was transcribed on paper. Then, the content analysis method was used to extract the components to analyze the interview data. For analyzing data, the transcripts

of the interviews were recorded in written form and coded in three steps. 1- Open coding (including the line-by-line reading of data, extraction of main concepts and sentences, formation of sections and primary categories), 2-Axial coding (including data classification, subclass specification, final class formation), 3-Selective coding (integrating categories for theoretical construction). For example, combining the codes "Spending time with your spouse, talking about problems with your spouse, not prolonging anger and resentment with your spouse, talking to your spouse instead of being silent, sharing your needs and wants with your spouse, talking on how to raise children, being a good listener formed the "general component" of the "friendly/companion relationship" (Table 1). Finally, the kappa coefficient was estimated to determine the degree of agreement between the coders (7 professors and 3 Ph.D. students at Bu-Ali Sina University). The size of the Kappa agreement was 78%, with a significance level of $P < 0.001$, which is considered a good agreement (31).

Table 1. Extracted components of marital satisfaction based on successful married couples' opinion

Components	Sub-components
Friendly/companion relationship	Spending time with your spouse, talking about problems with your spouse, not prolonging anger and resentment with your spouse, talking to your spouse instead of being violent and silent, sharing your needs and wants with your spouse, talking about how to raise children, Being a good listener for your spouse
Respect	Not speaking loudly to your spouse, respect your spouse's family, respect your spouse's opinion
Expression of feelings	Expressing happiness to your spouse, expressing love and affection to each other, expressing happiness in choosing he/she as your spouse, expressing satisfaction in being close to your spouse, expressing love to your spouse, expressing the feeling that my spouse is the best thing in life, expressing feelings to your spouse
Protection and support	Being with the spouse in difficult situations, motivating the spouse in difficult situations, helping the spouse in work-related matters, helping the spouse to his/her personal success, encouraging the spouse when he/she is tired due to work pressure, accompanying the spouse in any problem
Forgiveness/patience	Being forgiving and patient, ignoring some interests and desires for the sake of the spouse and children, overlooking the minor mistakes of the spouse, not blaming him/her for the mistakes
Honesty/Truthfulness	Observing the principle of honesty in married life, telling the truth even if the spouse gets upset, not lying, in order to achieve the goals and desires, being honest with the spouse
Mutual experiences	Doing tasks with your spouse, going to different places with your spouse, pursuing common interests with your spouse, seizing every opportunity to be with your spouse, getting your spouse involved in common tasks
Contentment	Paying attention to reducing the costs of living, being contented, lowering expectations in critical situations, coping with financial living conditions
Trust	Trusting the spouse and his/her words, not mistrusting the spouse, trust in the spouse's abilities
Expressing satisfaction with life	Expressing interest in living with your spouse, expressing satisfaction with your marital life, expressing your happiness with your married life, saying that life without your spouse is worthless
Not letting others interfere	Not allowing others to interfere in your marital life, not allowing parents to interfere during conflicts with your spouse
Variety	Calling your spouse with different titles, changing the atmosphere inside the house, changing the appearance such as hairstyles and clothes, wearing various clothes at home

Understanding/ acceptance	Understanding your spouse's career status, accepting the beliefs and convictions of the spouse, accepting the differences between oneself and the spouse, understanding the spouse's problems, accepting each other's different demands
Commitment	Not having an emotional relationship with other men and women, not cheating on your spouse via text message, emotionally and sexually, not having a relationship with a person of opposite gender in cyberspace, not thinking about an emotional relationship before marriage with a person of opposite gender, not comparing your spouse with your ex-boyfriend or ex-girlfriend
Sexual relations	Sharing sexual desires and needs with the spouse, satisfying sexual needs, diversity in sexual intercourse, having attractive sexual intercourse, having satisfying sexual intercourse with the spouse
Problem solving	Trying to solve your spouse's problems, referring to a counselor to solve the problem if needed, the ability to solve marital problems
Personal privacy	Paying attention to personal affairs as well as married life, giving the spouse the right to be alone if needed, protecting the spouse's privacy, respecting the spouse's privacy, giving the spouse the right to privacy, not being curious about the spouse's actions and behavior, giving the spouse the right to have some secrets with his/her family
Realism / Acceptance	Facing the realities of life, accepting life as it really is, not seeking to change one's spouse, not comparing one's spouse's behavior and actions with others, measuring one's spouse's actions and behavior according to his/her gender criteria
Appreciation	Appreciating your spouse for providing peace in life, thanking your spouse for positive actions, appreciating your spouse for his/her forgiveness and sacrifices, thanking your spouse for helping with your personal matters
Consultation	Consulting your spouse about solving problems, asking your spouse's opinion on life affairs, asking each other for their opinion

In the second stage, after identifying the components (20 factors) by content analysis method, a 116-item questionnaire was developed (researcher-made questionnaire), which consisted of 20 components, namely: Expressing feelings, expressing satisfaction with life, trust, friendly/companion relationship, respect, protection/ support, truth, forgiveness, mutual experiences, contentment, not letting others interfere, variety, understanding/acceptance, sexual relations, commitment, problem-solving, personal privacy, realism/ acceptance, appreciation, and consultation. This scale was developed based on a 6-point Likert scale (strongly agree, somewhat agree, slightly agree, slightly disagree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree). In order to check the face validity and content validity, the questions that were designed based on 20 factors obtained from the analysis of interviews were reviewed by three people from Bu-Ali Sina University, and faulty items were corrected. For a preliminary review, a questionnaire was administered to 50 people, and they were asked to specify and state the parts that needed to be corrected on the questionnaire. According to Lawrence and Meyers, translated by Hassanabadi et al. (32), for a preliminary

review of a researcher-made questionnaire in forecasting research, a sample of 50 or 60 people can be used. Bartlett and KMO tests were used to investigate the possibility of questions being factorized.

The results of factor analysis also confirmed the 20 mentioned components. Then, to evaluate the reliability of this test (116 questions), Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used. Reliability of subscales of this test for Hamadan sample, using Cronbach's alpha, was obtained as follows: for Expressing of feelings (0.929), Expressing satisfaction with life (0.90), Trust (0.941), Respect (0.881), Protection/ support (0.927), Truth (0.940), Forgiveness (0.870), Variety (0.690), Understanding/ acceptance (0.912), Commitment (0.950), Realism/acceptance (0.825) Appreciation (0.955), Sexual relations, mutual experiences (0.880), (0.944), Not letting others interfere (0.545), Problem solving (0.851), Personal privacy (0.872), Friendly/ companion relationship (.896) and consultation (.925). Also, for Kermanshah sample, the reliability of subscales of this test using Cronbach's alpha was obtained as follows: Expressing of feelings (0.923), Expressing satisfaction with life (.535), Trust (.886), Respect

(0.818), Protection/ support (0.885), Truth (0.881), Friendly/ companion relationship (0.669), Forgiveness (0.831), mutual experiences (0.882), contentment (0.809), Not letting others interfere (0.617), Variety (0.696), Understanding/ acceptance (0.841), Sexual relations (0.887), Commitment (0.862), Problem solving (0.790), Personal privacy (0.845), Realism/acceptance (0.768), Appreciation (0.902) and Consultation (0.887).

B) Enrich Standard Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire: The Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire (33) was designed and developed by Enrich based on a five-point Likert scale (strongly disagree = 1, disagree = 2, neither agree nor disagree = 3, agree = 4, strongly agree = 5). This questionnaire has ten questions and measures marital satisfaction with questions such as (I am very happy with the way I plan for leisure and spending time with my spouse). Also, this questionnaire has been validated in Iran by Arab Doosti, Nakhaei, and Khanjani (34), and the Cronbach-alpha equivalence coefficient has been obtained above 0.70. Also, the content, face, and criterion validity of this questionnaire have been evaluated as acceptable. In the present study, the Cronbach's alpha homogeneity coefficient for the Enrich marital satisfaction questionnaire was 0.744 for Kermanshah and 0.865 for Hamadan samples. In order to measure the degree of marital life satisfaction in couples, the following Likert scale was used. Strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (10).

Results

Descriptive statistics and stepwise regression were used to analyze data, and the hypothesis of

normal data distribution was tested using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. In addition, error independence (camera/Watson test) and variance inflation factor (VIF), and tolerance (Tolerance) were checked and confirmed by the linear test. Due to the insignificance of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test results, the data have a normal distribution. The results showed that among 372 participants in the study, 172 were married residents of Kermanshah, and 200 were from Hamadan. In Kermanshah group, people were in the age range of 23 to 63 years and the average age of married people (40/63) years with a standard deviation of 8/38 and their average marriage period was 48.28 with a standard deviation of 8.39 (Duration of marriage 1 to 40 years). In terms of the number of children, 82 participants (47.7%) had two children, 38 participants (22.1%) had one child, 26 participants (15.1%) had three children, 5 participants had four children, one individual had six children, and 20 participants (11.6%) were childless.

In Hamadan group, individuals were in the age range of 19 to 63 years, and their average age was 38.345 with a standard deviation of 8.51, and the average duration of marriage was 14.065 with a standard deviation of 9.52. Also, the average satisfaction with marital life was 7.58, with a standard deviation of 2.25.

In terms of the number of children, 42 participants (21%) had no children, 65 participants (32.5) had one child, 69 participants (34.5) had two children, 18 participants (9%) had three children, 5 participants (2.5%) had four children, and one person (0.5) had six children (Tables 2 and 3).

Table 2. Descriptive indicators of the sample group based on age, duration of the marriage, and marital satisfaction

Groups	Variables	N	Mean	Standard deviation
Kermanshah	Satisfaction with marital life	172	8.5	1.69
	Duration of marriage	172	15.28	8.39
	Age	172	40.63	8.38
Hamadan	Satisfaction with marital life	200	7.58	2.25
	Duration of marriage	200	14.065	9.25
	Age	200	38.345	8.51

Table 3. The Frequency distribution of gender, level of education, and occupation

Groups	Variables	Frequency	Percent
Kermanshah	Female	88	51.2
	Male	84	48.8
	Employee	102	59.3
	Self-employed	26	15.1
	Housewife	42	24.4
	Unemployed	2	1.2
Hamadan	High school	22	12.8
	Diploma	22	12.8
	Bachelor's degree	99	57.6
	Master's degree	29	16.8
	Female	100	50
	Male	100	50
	Employee	91	45.5
	Self-employed	34	17
	Housewife	72	36
	Unemployed	2	1.2
	High school	11	5.5
	Diploma	53	26.5
Education	Bachelor's degree	112	56
	Master's degree	24	12

Based on the correlation matrix between the variables (Table 4), all the correlation coefficients obtained between the research variables are significant (expressing feelings, expressing satisfaction with life, trust, friendly/companion relationship, respect, protection and support, truth, forgiveness, mutual experiences, contentment, understanding/acceptance, sexual relations, commitment, problem-solving, personal privacy, realism/ acceptance, appreciation, consultation, and marital satisfaction). Based on the correlation matrix between the variables (Table 5), all the

correlation coefficients obtained between the research variables were significant (expressing feelings, expressing satisfaction with life, trust, friendly/ companion relationship, respect, protection and support, truth, forgiveness, mutual experiences, contentment, understanding/ acceptance, sexual relations, commitment, problem-solving, realism/acceptance, appreciation, and consultation) except for not letting others interfere, variety, expressing satisfaction with life, and personal privacy which were found to be insignificant.

Table 4. Mean and standard deviation of predictors of marital satisfaction with their correlation coefficients (Hamadan)

Variables	Mean	Standard deviation	Correlation coefficient with marital life satisfaction	P
Expression of feelings	31.42	8.30	0.71	0.001
Expressing satisfaction with life	22.88	6.23	0.68	0.001
Trust	24.43	6.09	0.66	0.001
Friendly/companion relationship	31.63	7.26	0.65	0.001
Respect	27.63	5.81	0.60	0.001
Protection and support	29.49	5.88	0.53	0.001
Honesty/truthfulness	29.38	6.39	0.55	0.001
Forgiveness/patience	28.77	5.55	0.45	0.001
Mutual experiences	22.67	6.02	0.58	0.001
Contentment	19.71	3.58	0.41	0.001
Not letting others interfere	29.47	6.58	0.39	0.001
Variety	26.25	5.21	0.45	0.001
Understanding/acceptance	24.46	5.02	0.50	0.001
Sexual relations	33.77	8.40	0.60	0.001
Commitment	25.72	6.24	0.42	0.001
Problem solving	27.25	6.27	0.65	0.001
Personal privacy	31.88	6.76	0.42	0.001
Realism /acceptance	27.12	5.87	0.60	0.001
Appreciation	25.07	5.26	0.50	0.001
Consultation	29.80	6.02	0.59	0.001
Marital satisfaction	36.65	7.52	1	

Table 5. Mean and standard deviation of factors predicting marital satisfaction with their correlation coefficients (Kermanshah)

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	Correlation coefficient with marital life satisfaction	P
Expression of feelings	35.57	6.22	0.48	0.001
Expressing satisfaction with life	23.38	4.02	0.08	0.281
Trust	27.65	3.59	0.46	0.001
Friendly/companion relationship	35.72	4.81	0.43	0.001
Respect	31.13	4.17	0.48	0.001
Protection and support	23.40	3.85	0.43	0.001
Honesty/truthfulness	33.16	3.6	0.33	0.001
Forgiveness/patience	30.97	4.16	0.34	0.001
Mutual experiences	25.45	4.64	0.42	0.001
Contentment	21.53	2.96	0.18	0.017
Not letting others interfere	28.79	5.14	0.05	0.479
Variety	28.04	5.17	0.01	0.880
Understanding/acceptance	26.84	3.65	0.40	0.001
Sexual relations	36.44	5.85	0.33	0.001
Commitment	28.35	3.74	0.20	0.007
Problem Solving	31.11	4.91	0.32	0.001
Personal privacy	35.95	5.87	0.06	0.412
Realism /acceptance	30.69	5.49	0.26	0.001
Appreciation	32.69	4.27	0.34	0.001
Consultation	27.32	3.66	0.39	0.001
Marital Satisfaction	38.31	4.17	1	

In Table 6, in the first step, the "Expressing of Feelings" variable entered the regression equation and explained 51% of the variance of marital satisfaction. Also, the value of F for model 1 is 62.206, with a significance level of 0.001. Therefore, the model is significant, and the independent variable explains the changes of the dependent variable well. In the second step, the "Expressing of Feelings" and "Trust" variables entered the regression equation and explained a total of 57% of the variance for marital satisfaction. The value of F for model 2 is 27.81, with a significance level of 0.001. Therefore, the model is meaningful, and the independent variables explain the changes of the dependent variable well. In the third step, the variables of "Expressing of Feelings", "Trust", and "Realism/Acceptance" entered the regression equation and explained a total of 61% of the variance for marital satisfaction. The value of F for model 3 is 14.51, with a significance level of 0.001. Therefore, the model is meaningful, and the independent variables explain the changes of the dependent variable well. In the fourth step, the variables of "Expressing of Feelings", "Trust", "Realism/Acceptance", and "Respect" were entered into the model and explained a total of 61% of the variance for marital satisfaction. The value of F for model 4 is 5.79, with a significance level of 0.017.

"Acceptance" entered the regression equation and explained a total of 60% of the variance for marital satisfaction.

Also, the value of F for model 3 is 14.51, with a significance level of 0.001. Therefore, the model is meaningful, and the independent variables explain the changes of the dependent variable well. In the fourth step, the variables of "Expressing of Feelings", "Trust", "Realism/Acceptance", and "Respect" were entered into the model and explained a total of 61% of the variance for marital satisfaction. The value of F for model 4 is 5.79, with a significance level of 0.017.

Therefore, the model is meaningful, and the independent variables explain the changes in the dependent variable well.

Table 6. Stepwise regression of factors affecting marital satisfaction of couples in Hamadan (n= 200)

Group	Step	Predictive variable	R	R squared	df	F	B	B Standard error	Beta	T	P
	1	Expression of feelings	0.71	0.51	(1,197)	62.206	0.64	0.045	0.71	14.37	0.001
	2	Expression of feelings					0.44	0.057	0.49	7.8	
Hamadan		Trust	0.75	0.57	(2,196)	27.81		0.40	0.078	0.33	5.2
		Expression of feelings					0.34	0.061	0.38	5.6	
	3	Trust	0.77	0.60	(3,195)		0.36	0.076	0.29	4.8	
		Realism/acceptance				14.51	0.28	0.074	0.22	3.8	0.001
		Expression of feelings					0.27	0.067	0.30	4.09	
		Trust					0.37	0.075	0.30	4.9	
	4	Realism/acceptance	0.78	0.61	(4,194)	5.79	0.22	0.077	0.17	2.9	0.001
		Respect					0.19	0.082	0.15	2.4	

In Table 7, in the first step, the "Expressing of Feelings" variable entered the regression

equation and explained 23% of the variance of marital satisfaction.

Also, the value of F for model 1 is 51.78, with a significance level of 0.001. Therefore, the model is significant, and the independent variable explains the changes of the dependent variable well. In the second step, the variables of "Expressing of Feelings" and "Trust" entered the regression equation and explained a total of 28% of the variance for marital satisfaction. The value of F for model 2 is 11.76, with a significance level of 0.002. Therefore, the model is significant and

independent variables explain the changes of the dependent variable well. In the third step, the variables of "Expressing of Feelings", "Trust", and "Respect" entered the regression equation and explained a total of 31% of the variance for marital satisfaction. Also, the value of F for model 3 is 8.35, with a significance level of 0.004. Therefore, the model is meaningful, and the independent variables explain the changes of the dependent variable well.

Table 7. Stepwise regression of factors affecting marital satisfaction of couples in Kermanshah (n= 172)

Group	Step	Predictive variable	R	R squared	df	F	B	B Standard error	Beta	T	P
Kermanshah	1	Expressing of feelings	0.48	0.23	(1,170)	51.78	0.48	0.071	0.51	17.19	0.001
	2	Expressing of feelings					0.32	0.086	0.34	3.98	
		Trust	0.53	0.28	(2,169)	11.76	0.27	0.14	0.50	3.43	0.002
		Expressing of feelings					0.16	0.102	0.17	1.67	
	3	Trust					.25	0.146	0.46	3.15	
		Respect	0.56	0.31	(3,168)	8.35	0.255	0.140	0.40	2.89	0.004

In Table 8, in the first step, the "Expressing of Feelings" variable entered the regression equation and explained 63% of the variance of marital satisfaction. Also, the value of F for model 1 is equal to 246.98 with a significance level of 0.001. Therefore, the model is meaningful, and the independent variable explains the changes of the dependent variable well. In the second step, the variables of "Expressing of Feelings" and "Trust" entered the regression equation and explained a total of 45% of the variance for marital satisfaction. The value of F for model 2 is 35.03, with a significance level of 0.001. Therefore, the model is significant and independent variables explain the changes of the dependent variable well. In the third step, the variables of "Expressing of Feelings", "Trust", and "Respect" entered the regression equation and explained a total of 47% of the variance for marital satisfaction. Also, the value of F for model 3 is 14.33, with a significance level of 0.001. Therefore, the model is meaningful, and the independent variables explain the changes of the dependent variable well.

In the fourth step, the variables of "Expressing of Feelings", "Trust", and "Respect", and "Consultation" entered the regression equation and explained a total of 48% of the variance for marital satisfaction. The value of F for model 4 is 10.19, with a significance level of 0.002. The model is meaningful, and the independent variables explain the changes of the dependent variable well. In the fifth step, the variables of "Expressing of Feelings", "Trust", and "Respect", "Consultation", and "Appreciation" entered the regression equation and explained a total of 50% of the variance for marital satisfaction. The value of F for model 5 is 9.34, with a significance level of 0.002. The model is meaningful, and the independent variables explain the changes of the dependent variable well. In the sixth step, the variables of "Expressing of Feelings", "Trust", and "Respect", "Consultation", "Appreciation", and "Expressing Satisfaction with Life" entered the regression equation and explained a total of 51% of the variance for marital satisfaction.

The value of F for model 6 is 10.39, with a significance level of 0.001. The model is meaningful, and the independent variables

explain the changes of the dependent variable well.

Table 8. Stepwise regression of factors affecting marital satisfaction of couples

Group	Step	Predictive variable	R	R squared	df	F	B	B Standard error	Beta	T	P
Hamadan and Kermanshah	1	Expressing of Feelings	0.63	0.40	(1,369)	246.98	0.58	0.038	0.63	15.71	0.001
	2	Expressing of feelings					0.39	0.048	0.42	8.18	
		Trust	0.67	0.45	(2,368)	35.05	0.41	0.07	0.308	5.92	0.001
		Expressing of Feelings					0.27	0.05	0.29	4.78	
	3	Trust					0.39	0.06	0.29	5.68	
		Respect	0.68	0.47	(3,367)	14.33	0.26	0.07	0.202	3.78	0.001
		Expressing of feelings					0.23	0.05	0.25	4.01	
	4	Trust					0.35	0.06	0.26	5.21	
		Respect					0.24	0.07	0.18	3.41	
		Consultation	0.69	0.48	(4,366)	10.19	0.19	0.06	0.14	3.19	0.002
		Expressing of feelings					0.27	0.05	0.29	4.68	
		Trust					0.39	0.06	0.29	5.66	
	5	Respect					0.32	0.07	0.24	4.32	
		Consultation					0.20	0.06	0.14	3.31	
		Appreciation	0.70	0.50	(5,365)	9.34	-0.19	0.06	-0.16	-3.05	0.002
		Expressing of feelings					0.38	0.06	0.41	5.72	
		Trust					0.44	0.07	0.33	6.33	
		Respect					0.34	0.07	0.25	4.63	
	6	Consultation					0.35	0.06	0.18	4.05	
		Appreciation					-0.22	0.06	-0.19	-3.59	
		Expressing satisfaction with life	0.71	0.51	(6,364)	10.39	-0.26	0.08	-0.19	-3.22	0.001

The present study was conducted to determine the predictors of marital satisfaction in Kermanshah and Hamadan. To answer this research question, "From the perspective of successful couples, what significant factors they have achieved during their marital life which can affect marital satisfaction?", the following result was obtained: The results of the content analysis showed that expressing feelings, expressing satisfaction with life, trust, friendly/companion relationship, respect, protection/ support, truth, forgiveness, mutual experiences, contentment, not letting others interfere, variety, understanding/acceptance, sexual relations,

commitment, problem-solving, personal privacy, realism/ acceptance, appreciation, and consultation are some of the determinant factors in marital satisfaction.

Discussion

The following result was obtained to answer the second research question, i.e., "Which factors play a decisive role in predicting marital satisfaction?"

The results of Pearson correlation coefficients depicted a significant positive correlation between factors of expressing feelings, expressing satisfaction with life, trust,

friendly/companion relationship, respect, protection/ support, truth, forgiveness, mutual experiences, contentment, not letting others interfere, variety, understanding/acceptance, Sexual relations, commitment, problem-solving, personal privacy, realism/ acceptance, appreciation, and consultation, with marital satisfaction among couples in Hamadan and also between expressing of feelings, trust, friendly/ companion relationship, respect, protection/ support, truth, forgiveness, mutual experiences, contentment, understanding/acceptance, sexual relations, commitment, problem-solving, realism/ acceptance, appreciation, and consultation with marital satisfaction among couples in Kermanshah.

The results of stepwise regression coefficients showed that the most important predictors of marital satisfaction among couples (Kermanshah and Hamadan together) are the variables of expressing of feelings ($F= 246.98$ and $P< 0.001$), trust ($F= 35.03$ and $P< 0.001$), respect ($F= 14.33$ and $P< 0.017$), consultation ($F= 10.19$ and $P< 0.001$), appreciation ($F= 9.34$ and $P< 0.001$) and expressing satisfaction with life ($F= 10.39$ and $P< 0.001$), which together explain 51% of the variance of marital satisfaction.

Expressing of feelings ($F= 62.206$ and $P< 0.001$), trust ($F= 27.81$ and $P< 0.001$), realism/ acceptance ($F = 14.51$ and $P< 0.001$) and respect ($F= 5.79$ and $P< 0.017$) were the most important predictors of marital satisfaction among couples in Hamadan, respectively, which together explain 0.61 of variance of marital satisfaction. While the most important predictors of marital satisfaction among couples in Kermanshah were expressing of feelings ($F = 51.78$ and $P< 0.001$), trust ($F= 11.76$ and $P< 0.002$) and respect ($F= 8.35$ and $P< 0.004$), which explain 0.31 of variance of marital satisfaction altogether.

In line with the present study, we can refer to some previous studies: Afolabi, Oladotun, Chinado, Tolulope (12) conducted a study in which 200 couples were interviewed, and through interviews, their communication patterns were identified. The relationship between couples' communication patterns and marital satisfaction was analyzed through the Chi-square test. The results indicated a significant relationship between gender and communication patterns with marital satisfaction. Brudak and Staudan's (14)

study on 120 (60 couples) 60 to 75 years old showed that personality is significantly related to marital satisfaction, and among the personality traits, only agreeableness was predictive in marital satisfaction. Their research used the Personality Traits Questionnaire (NEO PI-R) and the Pelopa Good Marriage Questionnaire. Finally, in a study by Vinayak et al. (15), 240 married men between the ages of 25 and 46 were randomly selected from public sector employees in Tehran-Iran. The instruments used included standard questionnaires of Hurlburt Index of Sexual Desire, Material Values Scale, and Enrich marital satisfaction. Data were analyzed by correlation and regression methods. The results showed a positive and significant correlation between sexual desire and a negative and significant correlation between materialism and marital satisfaction, and materialism and sexual desire are predictors of marital satisfaction among men.

The study carried out by Arefi and Mohsenzadeh (19) showed that the two factors of relationship and sexual intimacy have a direct and significant effect on marital satisfaction. Also, the relationship with sexual intimacy mediation was indirectly significantly related to marital satisfaction. In their study, 266 parents (125 males, 141 females) of primary and secondary school students in Kermanshah were selected by cluster sampling. The Marital Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976) and the Enrich Questionnaire (Olsen et al., 1987) were used in this study. Data were analyzed by structural equation modeling. The study of Movahedi, Movahedi, and Kariminejad (20) showed that marital satisfaction, intimacy, and quality of marital relationships have a significant relationship with forgiveness. People who are more forgiving than their spouses show more marital satisfaction, and the degree of intimacy and quality of marital relationships between them is higher. Their research was descriptive and correlational. In this study, 220 people were selected as the research sample and the marital satisfaction questionnaire, family forgiveness scale, marital relationship quality questionnaire, and intimacy questionnaire were used, and the data were analyzed by correlation method.

In a study, Abbasi and Montazer (21) reported a positive and significant relationship between

appreciation, humor, and social support with nurses' marital satisfaction. The results also showed that appreciation, social support, and humor could predict marital satisfaction. Their research was descriptive-correlation, and 263 nurses were selected as a sample. Data were collected using appreciation scale in the relationship, humor scale, perceived social support scale, and marital satisfaction questionnaire and the data were analyzed by Pearson correlation and multiple regression methods. Villa and Del Prette's (22) research showed a relationship between marital, social skills (active self-control, reactive self-control, and assertiveness/empathy) and marital satisfaction. In this study, 406 married couples, 188 men and 218 women, completed the Marital Satisfaction Scale, the Social Skills Inventory, and the Marital Social Skills Inventory. The method used in this research was correlational. By reviewing 250 scientific articles, Tavakoli et al. (23) identified the factors that have a significant effect on marital satisfaction, such as demographic specifications, personality attributes, attachment style, relationship, communication and intimacy, couples' families, forgiveness and sacrifice, religion, emotional intelligence, personal health, and sexual relations (sex). In order to explain the results of the present study, it can be said that with higher levels of factors such as expressing feelings, expressing satisfaction with life, trust, friendly/companion relationship, respect, protection/ support, truth, forgiveness, mutual experiences, contentment, not letting others interfere, variety, understanding/acceptance, sexual relations, commitment, problem-solving, personal privacy, realism/ acceptance, appreciation, and consultation in marital living environment, marital satisfaction increases accordingly. Therefore, by applying these factors in life, it is possible to predict the duration of a couple's marital life based on marital satisfaction (35). Because high levels of marital satisfaction play an important role in the proper functioning of the family. In addition, based on the results, it can be

said that paying attention to the cultural context in the field of predictors of marital satisfaction is important because people in different cultural contexts have different priorities, needs, and expectations regarding marriage, and the way these needs and expectations are realized can affect the quality of their marital relationship (36). As the results revealed, there are significant differences between couples in Kermanshah and Hamadan in terms of predictors of marital satisfaction, which indicates that predictors of marital satisfaction can be different in different cultures (37). In other words, certain behaviors may be related to the inefficiency of the couple's performance in one culture, while in another culture, the same behaviors might not cause a problem in the couple's performance.

Moreover, this research has dealt with the factors of marital satisfaction with a mixed-method from different perspectives. To put it another way, marital satisfaction factors from the perspective of successfully married couples both highlight the role of cultural differences and show influential factors in growing marital satisfaction that have been less studied previously. However, previous studies have examined the relationship and prediction of factors related to marital satisfaction using correlation and regression methods. The research sample of this study was limited to married couples in Hamadan and Kermanshah cities. Designing and constructing a treatment protocol based on 20 factors of marital satisfaction obtained from the findings of the present study is recommended in the future studies.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, expressing of feelings, trust, respect, consultation, appreciation and expressing satisfaction with life can predict marital satisfaction.

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