



Research Paper: Predicting Marital Satisfaction based on Forgiveness and Tolerance in Spouses' Relationships



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Abstract

Objective: Forgiveness and tolerance in relationships between spouses can be effective in increasing their marital satisfaction. This research was conducted with the aim of predicting marital satisfaction based on forgiveness and tolerance in spouses' relationships.

Methods: This research is descriptive and correlational. The research population was the married students of Qazvin Islamic Azad University in the academic year of 2021-2022. 185 married students were selected using convenience sampling method. Research tools included ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale (EMS), Marital Offense-Specific Forgiveness Scale (MOFS) and Tolerance in Spouses' Relations Scale (TSRS). Data were analyzed based on Pearson's correlation coefficient and standard regression with SPSS-20 software.

Results: The results showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between marital satisfaction and forgiveness and tolerance in spouses' relationships ($P < 0.01$). Also, forgiveness and tolerance in spouses' relationships could significantly predict marital satisfaction ($P < 0.001$).

Conclusion: According to these results, it can be concluded that the existence of forgiveness and tolerance in the relationship of spouses can strengthen their marital satisfaction, and therefore, they are important topics for teaching couples.

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1. Introduction

Marriage is one of the old traditions in human societies, which affects the mental health of people and social health (Kravdal et al., 2023). As the years of marriage pass, the couple's relationship moves away from its original and romantic state and moves more towards intimacy (Wallerstein, 2019). After these early years of marriage, the issue of marital satisfaction will play an important role in the quality of marriage and the quality of people's lives. If couples are satisfied with their married life, they will experience more mental health and will perform better in different areas of life such as occupational areas (Morteza et al., 2018).

Marital satisfaction is the objective feelings of contentment and enjoyment experienced by a husband or wife when considering all aspects of their marriage (Joiner et al., 2023). Marital satisfaction depends on various factors. Researches have shown that factors such as marital commitment (Givertz et al., 2009), problem solving methods of couples (Deniz et al., 2020), ways of expressing anger (Parandin et al., 2022) and emotional support of couples to each other (Yedirir & Hamarta, 2015) are effective on their marital satisfaction. But one of the areas that is often emphasized in the matter of marriage is the couple's tolerance in life and forgiveness of each other. That couples can get over each other's mistakes and forgive the resentments that have arisen between them can help them live together more intimately. Researches have also shown that forgiveness in marital relationships is associated with more marital satisfaction (Kaleta & Jaśkiewicz 2023; Mirzadeh & Fallahchai, 2012; Orathinkal & Vansteenwegen, 2006; Rose et al., 2018). On the other hand, the couple's tolerance of each other and their lack of strictness towards each other can also affect their level of

marital satisfaction. When couples do not criticize each other, do not constantly blame each other and do not seek to blame their mistakes on the other, then they can live together with more intimacy and satisfaction (Özdemir, 2023; Shahid & Shahid, 2016). Nowadays, considering that divorce is spreading more and more in Iran (Bastani et al., 2022), it is important to identify the factors that can affect marital satisfaction. Therefore, this research was conducted with the aim of predicting marital satisfaction based on forgiveness and tolerance in spouses' relationships.

2. Methods

2.1. Statistical Population, Sample, and Sampling Method

This research is descriptive and correlational. The research population was the married students of Qazvin Islamic Azad University in the academic year of 2021-2022. 185 married students were selected using convenience sampling method. The study questionnaires were completed with the consent of the participants and completed in person by them. Questionnaires that were incompletely filled were also excluded from the analysis process. Data were analyzed based on Pearson's correlation coefficient and standard regression with SPSS-20 software.

2.2. Instrument

ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale (EMS): This scale has 47 items and was developed by Olson et al. (1983). It has 12 subscales, which are: contractual response, marital satisfaction, personality issues, marital

relationship, conflict resolution, financial supervision, leisure activities, sexual relations, marriage and children, relatives, friends, egalitarian roles, ideological orientation. It is scored on a 5-point Likert scale from completely agree (1) to completely disagree (5). In the research of [Olson et al. \(1983\)](#), the construct validity of this scale has been confirmed and the Cronbach's alpha of the subscales was reported between 0.48 and 0.90. In Iran, [Ahadi et al. \(2011\)](#) investigated the psychometric properties of this scale and showed that the method of factor analysis in the method of inclined rotation of the direct oblimin type of five factors (conflict resolution, sexual relations, equality of rights, family and friends and financial management) which explains a total of 48.16% of the total variance. Cronbach's alpha of the whole questionnaire was also 0.92.

Marital Offence-Specific Forgiveness Scale (MOFS): This scale was created by [Paleari et al. \(2009\)](#), which has 10 items and two subscales, benevolence and resentment-avoidance. This scale is scored on a 6-point Likert scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (6), and a higher score indicates more forgiveness in the marital relationship. In [Paleari et al.'s \(2009\)](#) study,

its construct validity, convergent and divergent validity was confirmed in three studies, and its internal consistency was reported as 0.83 for the benevolence subscale and 0.80 for the resentment-avoidance subscale. In the research of [Azarkish et al. \(2016\)](#), the validity of this scale was confirmed and its Cronbach's alpha was reported as 0.74.

Tolerance in Spouses' Relations Scale (TSRS): The scale was developed by [Khojasteh Mehr et al. \(2020\)](#). This scale has 20 items and 4 factors (acceptance and empathy towards spouse, emotional control and patience, facilitating the process of spouse's growth and actuation towards spouse, and beneficence and forgiveness towards spouse). It is scored on a 5-point Likert scale from completely agree (1) to completely disagree (5). Its construct validity and convergent validity were renewed in the study of [Khojasteh Mehr et al. \(2020\)](#) and its Cronbach's alpha was 0.93.

3. Results

The mean and standard deviation of the students' ages were 24.81 and 6.47. 156 students were female and 29 were male. The mean and standard deviation of the research variables are presented in [Table 1](#).

Table 1

The mean and standard deviation of research variables

Variables	Mean	Standard deviation
Marital satisfaction	160.77	11.95
Tolerance in spouses' relations	84.13	6.24
Marital forgiveness	42.53	5.90

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was not significant to check the data distribution (marital satisfaction: $F = 0.84$, $P = 0.19$; tolerance in spouses' relations: $F = 0.42$, $P = 0.34$; marital

forgiveness: $F = 0.37$, $P = 0.39$), which indicates that the data have a normal distribution. The correlation matrix of research variables is presented in [Table 2](#).

Table 2
The correlation matrix of research variables

Variables	1	2	3
Marital satisfaction	1		
Tolerance in spouses' relations	0.46**	1	
Marital forgiveness	0.51**	0.62**	1

As can be seen in [Table 2](#), there is a positive and significant relationship between marital satisfaction with tolerance in spouses'

relations and marital forgiveness ($P < 0.01$). The results of the regression are presented in [Table 3](#).

Table 3
Summary of the regression model for predicting marital satisfaction based on forgiveness and tolerance in spouses' relationships

Predictive variables	Sum of square	Mean of square	R	R2	F	P
Tolerance in spouses' relations	1673.42	1673.42	0.71	0.50	4.09	0.001
Marital forgiveness	846.11	846.11	0.62	0.38	3.67	0.001

As can be seen in [Table 3](#), forgiveness and tolerance in spouses' relationships have been able to positively and significantly predict marital satisfaction.

2023; Mirzadeh & Fallahchai, 2012; Orathinkal & Vansteenwegen, 2006; Özdemir, 2023; Rose et al., 2018; Shahid & Shahid, 2016).

4. Discussion

This research was conducted with the aim of predicting marital satisfaction based on forgiveness and tolerance in spouses' relationships. The findings showed that forgiveness and tolerance in spouses' relationships are positively and significantly related to marital satisfaction and predict it.

In explaining these findings, it can be said that when couples go over each other's mistakes and forgive each other for them, a basis is provided to reduce the amount of blame among them. Also, the feeling of humiliation that happens to each of the parties can be accompanied by expressing anger in unhealthy ways. Studies have also shown that the unhealthy expression of anger will lead to a decrease in marital satisfaction (MuniRajamma, 2012). A scorned couple will misdirect their anger elsewhere.

This finding is consistent with the studies conducted in this field (Kaleta & Jaśkiewicz

Therefore, when couples forgive each other, they avoid this anger and resentment.

Couples should accept each other's capacities and not constantly have high expectations from each other. This tolerance in relationships can help increase marital intimacy and commitment. Marital intimacy and commitment are important factors in marital satisfaction (Givertz et al., 2009). In contrast, insulting each other and blaming each other greatly reduces marital satisfaction (Jory et al., 2018).

Although the students in this research were selected as convenience and self-report tools were used to measure the variables of the research, but the findings clearly show that forgiveness and tolerance in spouses' relationships are tied to increasing their marital satisfaction. Therefore, it is suggested that couples should be taught these points in pre-marriage training sessions, so that the ever-increasing rate of divorce in society can be predicted.

5. Conclusion

The findings showed that forgiveness and tolerance in spouses' relationships are positively and significantly related to marital satisfaction and predict it. Therefore, training couples in the field of tolerance and tolerance can strengthen their marital satisfaction.

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Conflicts of Interest

No conflict of interest has been reported.

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