

## The relationship between religious orientation, and marital satisfaction among couples of Qom City

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### Abstract

**Introduction:** Marital satisfaction is a positive relationship with spouse's family, positive dynamism in the original family, self-esteem and religious homogeneity of couples. Religion is one of the most effective spiritual fulcrums that are able to provide the meaning of life in every moment of life. Religious beliefs and credence are important factors in marital satisfaction. The main purpose of this study was the survey of the relationship between religious orientation, and marital satisfaction among couples of Qom City.

**Methods:** This study was performed by the descriptive correlation method. The study population included all the couples referred to counselling centers and psychological clinics of Qom City. Therefore, 150 couples have been selected who were volunteer for cooperation in this study. Required information was collected by the Azarbajehani religious orientation (2003) and Walter marital satisfaction (1992) questionnaires. The data were analyzed by SPSS Version-17 statistical software and using Pearson correlation coefficients and regression and descriptive statistics.

**Findings:** The results showed that there was a positive significant relationship between religious orientation and marital satisfaction. ( $P=0/001$  &  $r=-0/511$ ) The results of regression analyses indicated that religious orientation is as a predictor of sex ( $p=0/001$ ,  $r^2=15/438$ ), educational degree ( $p=0/003$ ,  $r^2=5/409$ ) and marital satisfaction ( $p=0/004$ ,  $r^2=0/927$ ).

**Conclusion:** According to the importance of religious orientation and credence of family and especially in couples that increases the commitment and marital satisfaction, it has been recommended to strengthen the couple's religious beliefs in preventive and treatment programs.

**Key words:** Religious Orientation; Marital Satisfaction; Couples.

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### Introduction

Marriage is the most important and the most excellent social plot for obtaining the emotional and security needs that always been greatly accepted. Marriage is a human, complex, elegant and dynamic relationship which has its special features. In contemporary society, human life has dramatic and rapid

changes in all of the aspects. Marriage and marital life are no exception to this rule. Although, marriages remain as a global foundation. Butgoals and expectations and the formation of this foundation have been changed under the various social, cultural and economic changes (1).

In the past, wives were chosen by the parents and the marriage was an agreement between

families. Also, the marriage was an instrument for the regulation of sexual behavior, reproduction, maintaining social and economic status of the family and it was a need to stabilize the family. By social and economic changes, the base of marriage has changed from an agreement between the families to freedom of choice and spouse choice. And in addition to social and economic issues, romantic attraction and individual needs was based for mate selection. The purpose of marriage changed from family and social relationships to personal, emotional-psychological needs satisfaction. In today's society, the main reasons for marriage are love and kindness, having a partner and compeer in life, fulfilling emotional-psychological expectations and increasing happiness and contentment. Nowadays, many factors affect the satisfaction of a marriage (2).

Marital satisfaction is an individual's consent from them family; the consent from family is the concept of life satisfaction. Thus, this issue will facilitate the growth and excellence of material and spiritual progress of society (3). The concept of marital satisfaction is the practical implication for illustration of the amount of happiness and stability. Marital satisfaction is the most important and most fundamental factor for stability of marriage. Marital adjustment is the status that in this regard, the couples often have feelings of happiness and satisfaction with each other (4). They agreed with each other and they are satisfied with the type and level of relationship and also from the type and quality of leisure time. They have managed well the time and finance issues (5). Brad boron, Fyncham and Beach (2000) defined marital satisfaction as an overall attitude or feelings towards his/her spouse and his/her relationship. Such a definition of marital satisfaction suggests that satisfaction is a one-dimensional concept represented an overall assessment of the individual and his/her relationship to his/her spouse. The presence of marital satisfaction is inevitable for marital life permanency and how they enjoy being together. But, having marital satisfaction does not mean the absence of any conflict in a marital relationship; and the

notion that there must be no conflict in the joyful and happy life is completely wrong because conflict is inevitable in human relationships (6).

In studies related to the factors affected the satisfaction of marital life, several factors have been mentioned in various sources. Since divorce is increasing in the world and this increase has led some countries facing a crisis. So in the last decade, many researchers have investigated the factors affecting the stability of marriage and marital satisfaction. Among these factors, some factors should be mentioned, such as psychological factors, demographic factors, parental characteristic, mental and physical health of couples, personality characteristic, the amount of dependence on marriage, physical attraction and premarital factors or a combination of these factors. From a new point of view (Brad boron, FynchamVbych, 2000), the factors affected the marital satisfaction can be divided into two categories:

- 1- Interpersonal processes which occur between couples including cognition, emotion, physiology, behavioral patterns, social support, and violence, the environment that couples are living in, includes a retail environment (for example presence of children, life stresses, transport and macro-environment like economic factors and...)
- 2- The environment that couples lived in (6).

There are lots of social, economic, personal, cognitive, religious factors that affect marital satisfaction and adjustment and they may threat marital life. Among these factors, faith and religious adherence are the pillars of a happy life and can increase marital satisfaction and adjustment. Researchers suggested that religion can adjust severe crisis in life and spiritual beliefs are interesting topics to fight for problems (7).

Religious beliefs are important factors in marital satisfaction. Religion is an organized system of beliefs, including moral values, customs and participation in a religious community for a stronger belief in God or a higher power (8). Religious beliefs are an effective way to deal with suffering and painful

experiences and disease symptoms. Also, it has effect on the kind of human relationship in the times of problems and discomfort (9).

Azerbaijani defines religious orientation as: The things that the person has taken from religion; it means that there are a set of beliefs, practices and ritual communications with the transcendent (divine). Religious orientation roughly is equal to religion-making or religiosity (10).

Khodayari fard in his study proved the existence of a significant positive relationship between the couples' religious attitude and their marital satisfaction. The more the religious adherence is, the more the marital satisfaction would be (11).

In their comparison between the persons who have been married only once with the persons who have married for several times, Orathinkal & Vansteewegen found that religiosity is positively correlated with marital satisfaction (12). Several studies have confirmed the positive relationship between the two factors of religion and family. Religion can reinforce and strengthen marital relationships (13).

Non-adherence to religious matters can be a cause that the couples been non-alignment to religious issues and thereby reduce the marital satisfaction (14). In another aspect, when people interpret marriage as responsibility for all of life, love one another, providing comfort for each other, loyalty and commitment to his/her spouse, it shows the influence of marital relationship from religion (15). According to the religious issues that are one of the important foundations in all of the life issues like family, law, politics, economics, etc. It can be said that within counselling sessions, couples therapy can be more effective in Iran with regard to Islamic religious beliefs and behaviors. The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between religious orientation, and marital satisfaction among couples in Qom.

### **Method**

This study is descriptive - cross sectional correlation study. The study population consists of all couples who referred to the counselling and clinical psychology centers in

Qom in 2012-2013. The sample included 150 persons (75 couple) that were taken voluntarily from the available peoples. The inclusion criteria were being married, have at least one child, no history of infertility, menopause, pregnancy, known physical illness (diabetes, cardiovascular, respiratory, cancer, etc.) and psychological disorder (for example diagnosis of depression and other mental disorders under treatment with antidepressants and other drugs that affect psyche), non-violent conflict with his wife and desire to participate in the study. Single women, divorcees and widows, history of infertility, pregnancy, menopause and who suffering from mental and physical illness were excluded. At the first step, all samples completed the forms for ethical issues with informed consent. Information contained in the questionnaires was confidential and data collection performed without personal characteristics. In this study, two questionnaires were used.

### **1- Azerbaijani religious orientation questionnaire:**

This scale was created in 2003 by M. Azerbaijani. The questionnaire consists of 70 questions in a Likert-type attitude that respondents have choices to each question on a scale of strongly agree for a positive answer and the scale of disagree for a negative answer. The questions are taken from the treasury of verses and hadith texts and are in the categories of man and God, man and the hereafter, religion parents, human and religion, and models and biological power, social relationship, economy, family, human and nature and personal ethics.

Questionnaire scoring is based on triable responses to various materials and done in quaternary Liker scale. By summing the scores, the total triable score of Islamic religious orientation in two categories of beliefs and rituals-morality were obtained. High scores indicate strong religious affiliations. The reliability of this test was obtained high for the scale of beliefs and rituals with Cronbach's alpha (alpha coefficient was

equal to 0.947) and good for the scale of morality (alpha coefficient was equal to 0.793). In general, the religious orientation based on Islam showed an alpha coefficient equal to 0.936 in three domains of beliefs, rituals and morality.

**2- Index of Marital Satisfaction(IMS):**

The Marital Satisfaction Index is a 25 item instrument that developed for measuring the amount, intensity and amplitude of marital problems. This index does not recognize the relationship characteristics as a whole, but is measuring the relationship problems in the aspect of man or woman. (The 1<sup>st</sup> spectrum means that never to 7<sup>th</sup> spectrum means that always) This index contains of two deviation score. One is the score of 30(±5) that lower scores are indicative of the lack of important clinical problems in the relationship. Scores above 30 indicated the presence of a significant clinical problem. The second deviation score is 70. The scores over than 70 always indicated that the referred person suffering from severe stress and there is the possibility of using violence for solving the problems. The range of

Achieved number is from 0 to 100 that the higher score is an indicator of the extent and severity of problems. Marital satisfaction index is one of multiple scales of Valmyr 2 scale collection that all of them performed and graded in the same way (16). The average alpha index of marital satisfaction is 96%, which indicates excellent internal consistency and low standard error. For the present study, alpha Cronbach's coefficient for this scale was obtained %94.

For data analysis processes, SPSS software Version-17 was used. Statistical methods used in this study included descriptive statistics (mean and SD) and Pearson's correlation coefficient and linear regression.

**Findings**

The mean age of participants was 32.4 with standard deviation of 8.2 year. The mean age of females and males are equal to 30.2 and 34.7, respectively. Table 2 presents the studied participants according to the sex. According to the table 1, it is seen mean and standard deviation in religious orientation and marital satisfaction.

**Table 1: (The comparison of scores related to religious orientation, and marital satisfaction)**

The studied index score	Mean	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Religious orientation	295.95	30.07	153	337
Marital satisfaction index	35.54	19.21	14.29	92

**Table 2: (The correlation between the elements of religious orientation, and marital satisfaction)**

The relationship between religious orientation and marital satisfaction index	Spearman correlation coefficients	P-value
Male	-0.750	0.001
Female	-0.296	0.017
In all of couples	-0.511	0.001

According to the above-mentioned table, it is seen that the relationship between religious orientation, and marital satisfaction in all the couples is significant at the level of 0.05. According to the negative Spearman correlation coefficient in above table (-0.511), it is concluded that this relationship is

reversed. It should be noted that this relationship is significant both in males and females at the level of 0/05; but this relationship is stronger in males than females. Note that the higher marital satisfaction index indicates that there are more problems in the marital relationship.

**Table 3: (The results of multiple regressions in the survey of relationship between religious orientation and marital satisfaction)**

Under-studied variables	Regression coefficient	Standard deviation	P-value
Age	-0.319	0.304	0.296
Sex	15.438	4.574	0.001
Education	5.409	1.806	0.003
Marital satisfaction	0.927	0.313	0.004

According to the regression coefficients, it is concluded that females have higher religious orientation in comparison with males in the amount of 15.438. Averagely, religious orientation increased in the amount of 5.409 by an increase in the level of education. Averagely, religious orientation increased in the amount of 0.927 by increasing one unit in marital satisfaction index score.

#### **Discussion:**

The results showed that there are a positive significant relationship between religious orientation and marital satisfaction. ( $r=0.511$ ,  $p=0.001$ )

The results of regression analysis showed that religious orientation is a predictor of sex ( $p=0.001$ ,  $r^2=15.438$ ), education level ( $p=0.003$ ,  $r^2=5.409$ ) and marital satisfaction ( $p=0.004$ ,  $r^2=0.927$ ).

The finding of this study is parallel to other researches. As can be noted, Khodayarifard in his study found that there was a positive significant relationship between religious attitude and marital satisfaction. This study was conducted among married students of Tehran University (12). Nelson in his research which was conducted among the students of Vanderbilt University, concluded that the couples have apparent religious differences have lower marital satisfaction and more inconsistencies (17).

The findings of Ahmadi's study indicated that religious adherences primarily led to the strength and improvement of couples' relationships which improves parental duties. Secondly, it helps people to spend their leisure time with family and do proper planning. Secondly, religious adherence can help people to accept mate style differences and be consistent with it.

In fourth grade, it helps people to resolve conflicts between self and spouse (18). Most researchers believe that religious beliefs have a significant impact on family stability. Faith in God leads the person's attitude towards this fact that the whole universe is purposeful. Lack of faith in God leads to the condition that persons haven't any integrity and peace and this issue will lead to the weakness and differences in family life. An accomplished study in this field showed that adherence to religion is an important factor in the stability of marriage and marital satisfaction. In contrast, whatever the amount of contrast in couples' religion beliefs is, the degree of differences between them will be more (19).

Ortega Witt and Williams concluded that more religious differences in beliefs and behavior leads to more marital satisfaction. (14) These results are parallel to the findings of Hanler & Ganchooz (20), Ortingal & Venstigen (13) and Face & Tamco.

According to the above-mentioned issues, it was found that the couple's religious orientation can lead to an increase in marital satisfaction. Also, the more religious heterogeneity may lead to greater satisfaction and adjustment.

Among the limitation of this study can cite to the availability and the reluctance of some individuals to respond (because the information was personal).

#### **Conclusion**

By use of the results of this study can advise the psychologists and psychotherapists in the field of family issues to streng then the system of religious beliefs and align them between couples to improve the marital satisfaction.

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