Developing the Model of Relationship with God and Marriage Burnout Through the Mediation of Cognitive Verbal Control

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Abstract

Background and Objectives: Spirituality and the quality of communication with God with an emphasis on Islamic teachings can play an essential role in life, including marital relationships. On the other hand, the applicability of relationship with God quality in prohibition, activation, and verbal dialogue is important in this regard. Therefore, this study aimed to evaluate the model of marriage burnout associated with the relationship with God and verbal control.

Methods: A total of 350 married students studying in Azad and Public universities were selected by multiple-stage sampling and modeling among them. Research tools included the questionnaires of marriage burnout, three-dimensional model of relationship with God, and verbal control designed by the researcher reliability and validity of which were assessed using factor analysis, Cronbach's alpha coefficient, and structural equation modeling.

Results: In this study, the dimensional model of God-centered relationship with God predicted the decrease of "marital burnout" only indirectly by increasing verbal control ($\beta=0.72$). The value of God-centered trust and respect for God was obtained at 0.38. In addition, the path of "self-centered faith" triangle can affect the prediction of marital burnout increase directly ($\beta=0.19$) and indirectly ($\beta=0.23$) by a decrease of verbal control.

Conclusion: God-centered relationship resulted in the reduction of marital burnout through the mediation of verbal control. On the other hand, the direct role of the self-centered human relationship with God in the increase of marital burnout was indicative of the importance of injury caused by this type of relationship.

Keywords: Marital Burnout, Cognitive Verbal Control, Dimensions of Relationship with God.

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Introduction

Marriage is a divine institution to begin a life with someone else with love. However, the spark of love might fade away, which is exactly the initiation of marriage burnout (1). This concept is defined as emotional, physical, and mental fatigue and response to existential issues, and accumulation of small annoyances (2). Based on what was mentioned, religious values predict the success of a marriage that gives life meaning and purpose (3).

According to the literature, lack of religious values is associated with marriage burnout (4,5) and decreased marital satisfaction (6,7). On the other hand, previous studies have focused on religious experiences that have become routine and lost their effectiveness. However, in the present study, the structure of the type of relationship with God was a dynamic important spiritual component that covered the performance of a person. In addition, it matched the Islamic culture, principles, and fundamental issues.

The structure of the dimensional pattern of the relationship with God is evaluated and designed based on Quranic interpretations and

religious sciences, encompassing three aspects of "fear of God", "need for God", and "kindness to God". On the other hand, faith is based on kindness, and kindness is the origin of action and mobility. Therefore, this dimension is fundamentally different from the other two types and is the pillar of the relationship with God.

The need for God (i.e. hope) and fear of God (i.e., dread) are each a scale on the horizontal axis reversely extended toward each other from the joint hypothetical zero point. In this regard, the scale of kindness is vertical on the joint hypothetical zero point. Therefore, two right angles are created on the two sides of the Diagram that form the need for God as the left-side angle and the fear of God as the right-side angle (Figure 1) (8).
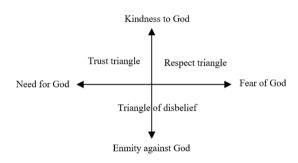

Figure 1. Combination of three dimensions of relationship with God

It is interesting to note that the counterpoint of kindness dimension is unkindness (i.e., enmity) to God. Accordingly, if a segment is drawn vertically on the kindness dimension, enmity against God will be added to the explanation of the relationship between human and God as the fourth dimension, which leads to the formation of disbelief triangle.

In this pattern, a combination of the components of "fear of God" and "kindness to God" (i.e., the upper-right triangle) results in the creation of a complicated component known as "respect for God". On the other hand, the combination of the components of "need for God" and "kindness to God" (i.e., the upper-left triangle) forms a more complicated component known as "trust in God". Finally, the combination of the components of "respect for God" and "trust in God" forms a more complicated component

known as "trust and respect for God". In addition, trust and respect for God are each placed in two God-centered and self-centered domains (related to the present world and afterlife) (8).

However, in designing the model of marriage burnout, it is expected that the dimensions of the relationship with God play a role in the prediction of marriage burnout as one of the important components of spirituality (e.g., religious activities). On the other hand, the relationship with God affects the cognitive processes of the individual, and the most important effect of kindness to God creates positive thinking in a person (9) that results in saying kind words. The attitudes and beliefs of couples play an important role in marriage burnout, and couples' conversations on marital issues provide the grounds for marital conflicts (10).

Therefore, it is expected that verbal control is the mediator between the dimensional model of the relationship with God and marriage burnout. However, it seems that religious experiences, such as verbal control caused by the type of relationship with God, reduce marriage burnout. Therefore, this study aimed to assess marriage burnout model associated with the dimensional model of relationship with God and verbal control.
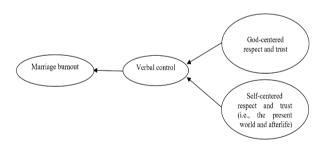

Figure 2. Conceptual model of marriage burnout related to relationship with God and verbal control

Methods

This correlational study was performed on all married students of Public and Azad universities of Birjand, Iran, during 2014-2015 (including about 1,110 and 2,760 students in Public in Azad universities, respectively). According to what was suggested by James

Stevens, considering 15-20 subjects for each marker is appropriate in modeling. Since each latent variable (four main variables of the study in the conceptual model of Figure 2) consists of three to four markers, the sample size was estimated at 350 individuals considering 5% attrition and selected by multistage sampling among the volunteer students in each class.

To determine the sample size of married students in the two universities, the quota sampling method was used, while the multistage sampling technique was exploited to select students in each university. After receiving the approval from the Office of the Supreme Leader and cultural authorities of the universities, a list of the married students was provided from each university based on the level of education. With regard to the number of married students in each university and based on the sample size, the quotas of Public and Azad universities were determined at 100 and 250 cases, respectively. Three schools from each university and four classes from each school were randomly selected, and all married students of the selected classes were evaluated in this study.

Research Tools

Marriage burnout: The scale of marriage burnout was prepared by Paynes in 1996. The questionnaire encompasses 21 phrases and 3 main subscales of physical, emotional, and mental fatigue. The questionnaire is scored based on a seven-point Likert scale from never (score=1) to always (score=7). Some questions are reversely scored. The evaluation of the reliability coefficient of marriage burnout questionnaire demonstrated that the internal consistency between the variables was within the range of 0.84-0.90, and the questionnaire enjoys an acceptable validity (11).

Model of human relationship with God: This questionnaire is prepared based on a three-dimension model of the human relationship with God or faith triangle. The questionnaire contains 67 items and 6 scales. The subscales of the test include fear (i.e., fear of God, 15 items), hope (i.e., need for God, 15 items), kindness to God (16 items), enmity against God (7 items), disappointment (7 items), and courage (7 items) designed in three separate domains of God-centered, world-related, and afterlife-related. The estimation of the domains of kindness, fear, and need of each case leads to the formation of trust and respect to God triangle, while the estimation of domains of enmity, disappointment, and courage leads to the calculation of disbelief triangle.

It should be noted that each of these triangles was obtained in three domains of God-centered, afterlife-related, and world-related (i.e., self-centered). The items are scored based on a five-point Likert scale from "completely disagree" to "completely agree". To evaluate the validity of the questionnaire, it was sent to some experts in the field of Islamic topics (i.e., the professors of Qom Seminary) and psychologists who confirmed the validity of the tool. In addition, the reliability of the questionnaire in total and its scales was estimated at 0.80 by its designers (8). In the present study, the reliability of the tool was obtained rendering a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.75.

In the present study, the validity was estimated using factor analysis. Since Kaiser Meyer Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy was estimated at 0.65, and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant, the (Principal Component Analysis with Oblimin rotation was applied, which led to obtaining a two-factor simple structure in which God-centered respect and trust, as well as self-centered respect and trust in God (i.e., related to the present world and afterlife), explained 50.27% and 23.99% (74.27% in total) of the total variance of human relationship with God, respectively.

Moreover, the components of trust in God and respect for God (God-centered) and self-centered trust to God (related to the afterlife) were uploaded in the factor of God-centered trust and respect. However, each of the components (triangles) of self-centered trust to God and respect for God (related to the present world and afterlife) were uploaded in the factor of self-centered trust and respect.

Cognitive verbal control: This 24-item questionnaire was designed by Shahabizadeh based on the religious text of Nahj Al-

Balaghah, hadiths, and narrations and with the guidance of religion experts and professors. This scale refers to the cognitive aspect of verbal control that is related to thinking before speaking. The other dimension has a behavioral aspect and refers to observing speech in various contexts with regard to

Islamic rules. Overall, the items are in the two dimensions of speech activation for effective and kind speech and speech inhibition for the prevention of frivolous or inappropriate words or sins.

The questionnaire is scored based on a six-point Likert scale from completely agree (score=1) to completely disagree (score=6). The tool was distributed among 20 students in a two-week interval, and the re-test results of the scale were estimated at 0.76. In addition, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated at 0.78 at the second preliminary study conducted on 75 students. Moreover, factor analysis was applied to determine validity. Given that sampling sufficiency index was estimated at 0.82, and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant, the analyzing method of the main components was applied with Oblimin rotation for factor analysis. The results of the two-factor simple structure showed activation control and verbal inhibition that explained 50.07% and 15.74% (65.82% in total) of the overall variance, respectively (12).

In the present study, reliability was confirmed at the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of higher than 0.78 for the scales of verbal control for the inhibition and activation of language. In addition, factor analysis was applied for the estimation of validity. Kaiser Meyer Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy was 0.93, and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant that showed the results of (Principal Component Analysis by Oblimin rotation showed the two-factor simple structure. In this regard, the factors of verbal control for the inhibition and activation explained 55.51% and 6.84% (62.35% in total) of the overall variance of verbal control, respectively.
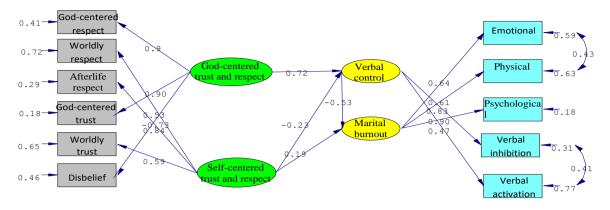
Structural equations modeling (LISREL software) was applied to analyze the data. It should be noted that the information of the subjects was anonymously recorded to ensure the participants of the confidentiality terms. At the end of the study, the individuals were provided with their personal results. Furthermore, informed consent was obtained from the subjects prior to the study.

Result

In order to explain the conceptual model of marriage burnout regarding the role of dimensions of relationship with God and verbal control, structural equations assumptions were evaluated based on the modeling, including A) measuring variables at a distance level, B) equal distribution of endogenous variables: in general, the inequivalent distribution of multivariate regressions does not undermine the LISREL models but weakens them, and C) lack of multiple linearity: the correlations below 0.8 between exogenous variables shows a lack of multiple linearity. The obtained results of the correlation coefficients between the studied variables presented in Table 1 confirmed the mentioned assumption.

Table 1. Correlation between marriage burnout, verbal control, and dimensions of relationship with God

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Emotional burnout	1								
2. Physical burnout	0.82**	1							
3. Emotional burnout	0.57**	0.56**	1						
4. Burnout	0.92**	0.90**	0.80**	1					
5. Verbal control for inhibition	-0.25**	-0.18**	-0.42**	-0.29**	1				
6. Verbal control for activation	-0.15*	-0.09	-0.31**	-0.19**	0.83**	1			
7. God-centered trust and respect for God	-0.07	-0.20**	-0.22**	-0.21**	0.41**	0.46**	1		
8. Self-centered trust and respect for God related to world present	0.19**	0.23**	0.22**	0.24**	-0.26**	-0.19**	0.15*	1	
9. Self-centered trust and respect for God related to afterlife	0.001	-0.06	-0.11	-0.06	0.26**	0.29**	0.58**	0.43**	1
10. Disbelief triangle (i.e., disappointment, courage, and enmity)	0.13*	0.15*	0.40**	0.27**	-0.45**	-0.53**	-0.66**	0.02	-0.45**

Chi-Square=48.98, df=25, P-value=0.00284, RMSEA=0.052

Figure 3. Standardized and significant coefficients of marriage burnout regarding role of dimensional model of relationship with God and verbal control (latent structures in ovals and observed variables in squares; all coefficients at significance level of 0.01)

In this study, structural equations modeling was used in order to evaluate the model of marriage burnout and determine the mediating role of verbal control. It is notable that after the comparison of factorized items based on factor analysis and theoretical foundation, the mean of each factor resulted from factor analysis was considered a marker. The χ² with degrees of freedom, root mean square error of approximation, comparative fit index, and incremental fit index were considered in the guidelines related to the report of proper indices of model fitness. Moreover, this normal fix index (NFI) not affected by sample size was considered in the evaluation of the present model. In addition, the expected cross-validation index was regarded to compare the model with other competing models by creating a relative order for various models.

The fitted conceptual model is shown in the Diagram below, and the parameters of the model were estimated through the maximum likelihood method. In order to estimate the parameters and fitness indices of LISREL more accurately, the paths with insignificant coefficients (i.e., the path of God-centered trust and respect and marriage burnout) were eliminated from the model, and the parameters were re-calculated. The fitness indices demonstrated that the index of χ² was obtained at 48.98 with a freedom degree of 25 lower than 2, and the second root of the

approximation error variance was 0.052 lower than 0.06. Moreover, comparative and incremental fitness indices and NFI were estimated at 0.99 and 0.98, respectively (higher than 0.99). Therefore, it could be concluded that the model had proper fitness of the data. The cross-validity index was 0.47 within the confidence interval range (CI range: 0.41-0.54) indicative of a reasonable approximation in the society (Houman, 2005).

God-centered respect and trust did not play a direct role in the prediction of marriage burnout (the mentioned path was not significant) and was only indirectly associated with decreasing marriage burnout through the increase of verbal control (v=0.73, P<0.01). In other words, the increase of trust and respect for God with a God-centered intention increased verbal control, and verbal control was associated with a reduction of marriage burnout (v=-0.53, P<0.01). In this regard, the value of the indirect effect of God-centered respect and trust was estimated at 0.38.

However, the mentioned model showed that self-centered trust and respect for God (i.e., trust and respect for God due to the issues related to the present world and the afterlife) increased marriage burnout directly (β=0.19, P<0.01). In addition, self-centered respect and trust can indirectly increase marriage burnout through decreasing verbal control (β=-0.23, P<0.01). In this regard, the value of the

indirect effect of trust and respect for God with a self-centered intention (i.e., related to the world and the afterlife) was estimated at 0.12.

Table 2. Estimation of standardized coefficients of direct and indirect effects of dimensions of relationship with God and verbal control

Variable	Direct path on marriage burnout	Indirect path through verbal control
God-centered trust and respect	0	-0.38*
Self-centered trust and respect	0.19*	0.12*
Verbal control	-0.53*	0

*0.01 level of significance

Therefore, with respect to the comparison of indirect coefficients of the dimensions of the relationship with God, it was determined that verbal control increased by the effect of God-centered relationship with God instead of being affected by the self-centered relationship with God. On the other hand, the model showed that the self-centered relationship with God played a direct role in the increase of marriage burnout, which demonstrated the importance of the injury caused by this issue.

To have a better understanding of the mediating role of verbal control, according to Baron and Kenny (1986; quoted by Toukar et al., 2003), the mediating role of a variable (e.g., verbal control) should lose its significance in the main model through the presence of a third variable (as observed in Diagram 2, the direct path of God-centered trust and respect and marriage burnout was not significant; however, the path of self-centered trust and respect was significant). The next assumption is that the same path that has become insignificant (i.e., the path of dimensions of the relationship with God and marriage burnout) became significant with the elimination of verbal control.

In this condition, verbal control plays a mediating role. Therefore, in separate modeling, the role of all dimensions of the relationship with God on marriage burnout was evaluated, and the fit indices are presented in Table 4. In this respect, χ^2 equal to 10.1 was not significant with 5 and 0.05 degree of freedom and level of significance, respectively. Accordingly, the model was completely fitted to the data.

The index of the second root of approximation error variance was equal to 0.05 and the comparative and incremental fitness index was obtained at 0.99. Moreover, the cross-validity index was 0.16 within the CI range (CI range: 0.15 and 0.2). Therefore, it could be concluded that the model was properly fitted to the data, which led to the confirmation of the assumptions. Accordingly, the dimensions of God-centered trust and respect can decrease marriage burnout with the mediating role of verbal control.

In this model, the paths of dimensions of God-centered respect and trust was significant with the markers of God-centered trust (Mazaheri and Pasandideh, 2011) ($\beta=0.25$, P<0.01). Moreover, the path of dimensions and self-centered respect was significant with the markers of worldly trust, worldly respect, afterlife trust, and afterlife respect ($\beta=-0.24$, P<0.01). However, in the illustrated final model, the path of God-centered respect and trust (without self-centered respect and trust) was significant in the presence of verbal control, which demonstrated the mediating role of verbal control and importance of this variable.

While the aforementioned model explained 15% of marriage burnout, the conceptual model presented in this study anticipated 34% of marriage burnout. Sobel test that is a test of determining the relative size of the indirect path was significant against the direct path of the dimensional model of the relationship with God (i.e., God-centered respect and trust) and marriage burnout (z=-5.72, P<0.05). This finding demonstrated the full mediation of verbal control.

Discussion

According to the results of the present study, the path of God-centered faith triangle (i.e., trust and respect for God) played only indirectly a reverse role in the prediction of marriage burnout through verbal control (indirect paths: 0.38). However, the path of self-centered faith triangle (i.e., the afterlife and worldly trust and respect for God) both directly and indirectly had a significant role in the prediction of marriage burnout through

verbal control, which was indicative of the importance of the injury to such relationship with God. The results of various studies have shown the presence of a direct and significant relationship between lack of religious values with marital burnout and marriage dissatisfaction (4,6,10,13,14).

However, the above-mentioned studies have failed to explain the association between the relationship with God and religion with the structures and solutions that lead to marital satisfaction. Believing in God and having religious beliefs in human generate motivation and emotions, such as perceiving divine affection and respect for creation. Therefore, such a person has a purpose in life and has understood the meaning of life (15). Subsequently, understanding the meaning of life leads to inhibition of sins that upset God, such as verbal sins.

Spiritual man tries to show his beliefs in worship, fundamental values, and lifestyle, and God-centeredness in religious culture is a step in the form of worshiping behaviors that directly affect the relationship with God. Saying the name of God and avoiding verbal sins are types of spiritual behaviors that are directly related to this issue. Therefore, trust and respect for God (i.e., God-centered faith triangle) causes a person to avoid verbal sins, which has positive consequences for the individual. In this regard, Imam Ali says: "you have authority over your words as long as you do not say anything; however, you say something you will be caught up". Therefore, as long as a person can control what he/she says and use proper words and phrases in the conversation with the spouse, fewer conflicts will occur in families.

Therefore, trust and respect for God decrease marriage burnout indirectly through verbal control, which is consistent with the results of several studies. The studies demonstrated that the interactions and conversations between the couples, especially when they talk about themselves decrease marital conflicts (10,16-18). However, the point to be considered is that the communication models in the present study were not carried out with an emphasis on verbal control. Another important issue is that

the concept of verbal control was derived from Islamic teachings in the present study.

Nonetheless, the present model results showed that the worldly and afterlife trust and respect predicted marriage burnout directly and indirectly through verbal control. In this regard, it can be stated that a conflict-free life can be obtained while focusing on spiritual issues and strengthening religious beliefs.

The relationship with God gives life meaning and is considered a shelter from life crises, such as sadness, loss, and mourning. In addition, it is a foundation for a religious lifestyle (19). The relationship with God can be out of affection or fear and need. The affectionate relationship is a two-way relationship between human and God. However, there is no such thing in a relationship based on fear or hope. Therefore, the affection-based relationship is more stable, compared to the relationship established on the base of fear or greed (8).

Therefore, the cognitive and behavioral adjustment of fear and hope in the relationship with God without affection and only for the worldly and afterlife beliefs will not be towards spiritual adjustment and language control. Therefore, based on the present model, self-centered faith increased marriage burnout through the reduction of verbal control. Accordingly, it is recommended that verbal control can decrease the effectiveness of the self-centered relationship on marriage burnout. As a result, according to the relationship between the dimensional relationship with God and verbal control and given the effect of religious beliefs on marital relationships, it is suggested to identify the individuals' religious beliefs and design training courses regarding the modification of these beliefs and improvement of cognitive verbal control in order to decrease marriage burnout in training before and after marriage.

Conclusion

According to the results of the present study, the worldly and afterlife self-centered relationship with God played direct and indirect roles in the increase of marriage burnout through decreasing verbal control. In

addition, given the indirect role of God-centered emotional relationship without worldly intentions and only with afterlife intentions highly demonstrated the importance of pathology of extrinsic religious orientation and improvement of the emotional relationship with God, as well as the importance of intrinsic religious orientations. This finding can be a criterion for spiritual psychotherapists and family consultants. On the other hand, with regard to the mediating role of verbal control in decreasing the role of non-God-centered relationship with God in marriage burnout, this issue can be considered a new educational approach.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the present study.

Acknowledgements

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