

## The Relationship between Religious Orientation and Marital Adjustment among Couples of Qom City

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### ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** marital adjustment is harmony and empathy in achieving common goals of life between husband and wife that leads to satisfaction from living together. Religion is considered as one of the most effective spiritual fulcrums which are able to provide the meaning of life in each moment of lifetime and rescue a person in special condition from suspension and meaninglessness by providing explanatory fulcrum. The main aim of this research is to study the relationship between religious orientation and marital adjustment among couples of Qom City.

**Methods:** this is a correlation descriptive study. The study population included all the couples referred to counseling centers and psychological clinics of Qom City. So 150 people who referred to counseling centers and psychological clinics of Qom City and volunteered to participate, were selected. The required information was collected using Azarbaijani's Religious Orientation Questionnaire (2003) and Espanire Dyadic Adjustment Scale (1976). Data were analyzed using Pearson correlation coefficient and regression.

**Findings:** findings show that there is a positive correlation between religious orientation and marital satisfaction ( $r=0/45$ ,  $p>0/001$ ). This means that religious orientation can predict marital adjustment. Religious orientation also has direct and significant relationship with dimensions of dyadic satisfaction ( $r=0/45$ ,  $p>0/001$ ), dyadic cohesion ( $r=0/41$ ,  $p>0/001$ ), dyadic consensus ( $r=0/40$ ,  $p>0/001$ ), affectional expression ( $r=0/317$ ,  $p>0/001$ ).

**Result:** since religious orientation can be effective in improving relationships and marital adjustment, it is recommended to take advantage of strengthening religious beliefs of couples and cause them to approach each other in counseling.

**KEYWORDS:** Religious orientation; marital adjustment; couples

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### INTRODUCTION

Marriage is considered as a social institution that forms the bases of humane communication and in which man and woman are attracted to each other through a mysterious power due to instincts and rituals and ceremonies and love in order to create a dynamic unity as family (1). Family is a holy and pleasant environment and according to Qur'an's interpretation, is the place of real tranquility and serenity. In surah The Romans, verse 21 it says: And of His signs is this: He created for you helpmeets from yourselves that you might find rest in them, and He ordained between you love and mercy (2).

One of the fields of adjustment in human's life is the subject of marriage so as to successful and satisfactory marriage necessitates a stable level of couples' adjustment (3). Marital adjustment is harmony and empathy in achieving common goals of life between husband and wife that leads to satisfaction from living together. Adjustment between husband and wife allows them to avoid from conflicts or to solve them appropriately, in a way that they both feel satisfied with the marriage and relationship with each other (4). Marital adjustment has also been set forth as one of the most important factors in determining stability and permanence of marital relationship (5).

Marital adjustment can be considered as the system of family or even part of powers to provide living and something that revives family. According to the theory of Luck and Valas, marital adjustment is defined as externalizing each one of couples in a fixed situation (6). Marital adjustment is one of the expressions used extensively in family and marital studies. This expression is related to many other expressions like marital success and happiness and marital satisfaction. Marital adjustment is a multi- dimensional expression that clarifies different levels of marriage and it is a process that is created during the life of couples, because its requisite is conformity of tastes, knowing personality features, establishing behavioral laws and forming relationship patterns. So marital

adjustment is an evolutionary process between husband and wife (7). Adjustment in marital relationship is effective on different aspects of life's quality such as spiritual health of couples, satisfaction from life, satisfaction from job and salary rate, educational success and even the length of lifetime and various studies confirm the importance of marital adjustment (8-11).

On the base of performed research, marital adjustment has 4 main components including dyadic satisfaction, dyadic cohesion, dyadic consensus, affectional expression. Dyadic cohesion is the rate of cohesion couples have over important affairs like managing economical issues of family and making important decisions. Dyadic consensus refers to the fact that how often couples are involved with common activity and affection expression is also related to the fact that how often couples express affection and love to each other and finally dyadic satisfaction consists of the rate of happiness in relationships and also the frequency of experienced conflicts in communication (12).

In general different factors are effective on marital adjustment. Ahmadi in his study expresses the effective factors on marital adjustment as following: 1- background-personal factors such as the original family, social and cultural factors and individual characters. 2- two-side relationship factors such as harmony (in religion, education, general characters and...). Of course of these factors, religious commitment as one of the basic principles of a good life is effective on marital adjustment.

Religion is an organized system of beliefs including ethical values, customs, and participation in religious society to have stronger belief in God or a superior power (13). Religion is considered as one of the most effective spiritual fulcrums which is able to provide the meaning of life in each moment of lifetime and rescue a person in special conditions from suspension and meaninglessness by providing explanatory fulcrum (14). Religious belief is an effective way to confront disasters and painful experience and symptoms of illness. It also influences on the way of humane communication at the time of hardships and difficulties (13).

Azarbaijani defines religious orientation as following: the general approach one adopted from religion. It means a person has a collection of beliefs, deeds and special ceremonies in relationship with an almighty (holy) creature. Religious orientation can be considered as equivalent of the word "religiousness".

Different researches have already confirmed the existence of positive relationship between two institutions of religion and family. Religion can strengthen marital relationships and make it firm (16). In Demaris study, religiousness is reported to be the most important factors in marital adjustment (17). Ahmadi in a study concluded that there is a positive and significant correlation between religious commitments among couples and marital adjustment. It means that the more religious commitment the couples have, the more marital adjustment they experience (17). In Taibe Yeganeh study, the results show that the positive effect of religion in marital adjustment is undeniable (19).

Since religious orientation can be effective in improving relationships and marital adjustment, this research is going to study the relationship between religious orientation and marital adjustment among couples of Qom City.

## MATERIALS AND METHOD

This is a descriptive, cross-sectional and correlation study. The study population included all the couples referred to counseling centers and psychological clinics of Qom City in 1391-92 and sample included 150 people (75 couples) that have been selected among the ones who volunteered to participate in this research. In this research two questionnaires have been used.

### 1- Azarbaijani's Religious Orientation Questionnaire

This scale has been created by Azarbaijani in 2003. This questionnaire is a Likert-type attitude and consists of 70 questions that participant answers to each question on a four-choice scale ranging from "completely agree" to "completely disagree". The reference of this questionnaire's questions is the text of verses and hadiths and expands in areas like human and God, human and hereafter, friends of religion, human and religion, biological model and forces, social relationships, economic affairs, family, human and nature and individual morality.

Numbering the questionnaire is performed on the base of participant's answers to its different items and in four-choice Likert scale. The general score of participant is counted in religious (Islamic) orientation and in two general areas of beliefs and rites-ethics. Higher score shows stronger religious orientation.

The reliability of test was obtained high (%947) by Cronbach's alpha for the scale of beliefs and rites and obtained good (%793) for the scale of ethics. In general it shows religious orientation on the base of Islam with alpha coefficient equivalent of %936 in three areas of beliefs, rites and ethics.

### 2- Spanire Dyadic Adjustment Scale

This scale is a 32-question device to examine the quality of marital relationship from the viewpoint of husband and wife. Factor analysis shows that this scale measures 4 aspects of relationship. These four aspects are as follows: dyadic satisfaction, dyadic cohesion, dyadic consensus, affectional expression.

Spanire (1976) estimated validity of this scale in all scores %96 that shows this scale is of high internal consistency. He also estimated internal consistency of dimensions from good to great: dyadic satisfaction %94, dyadic cohesion %81, dyadic consensus %90, affectional expression %73. This scale was translated, performed and هنجاریابی in Iran in 1995 by Amoozegar and Hosein Nejad (20).

Esmaeeli reported validity coefficient of this questionnaire %92 (21) and Fathi Ashtiyani reported it %94 (22).

Dyadic Adjustment Scale provides three different scales of grading. The total scores of all questions is between 0 to150. Higher scores show better relationship. To enhance the assurance of scale, some questions have been designed positively and some of them negatively. So some questions need to be reversed for numbering. From the viewpoint of Spanire the ones who receive the score of 101 or lower are considered incompatible and the ones who receive the score higher than 101 are considered compatible. Score mean among compatible couples in Spanire study was 114/7 and among incompatible couples was 70/7.

Data were analyzed using Spss, version 17. Statistical method used in this study includes descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and Pearson correlation coefficient and linear regression.

## RESULTS

The mean age of samples is 32/4 with 8/2 standard deviation. The mean age in females is 30/2 and in male 34/7. In the below table educations of samples have been presented according to gender.

**Table 1: Frequency of educations among samples**

Frequency per cent	Total frequency	Female	male	gender Education
3/6	5	2	3	Under Diploma
14/4	20	15	5	Diploma
12/2	17	8	9	Upper Diploma
41	57	30	27	BA
19/4	27	12	15	MA and Ph.D
9/4	13	3	10	Seminary
100	139	70	69	<b>Total</b>

**Table 2: descriptive data of scores related to religious orientation, marital adjustment and its dimensions**

Maximum	minimum	Standard deviation	mean	Scores of study index
337	153	30/07	295/95	Religious orientation
148	22	26/12	111/43	Marital adjustment
53	12	8/48	42/20	Marital satisfaction(adjustment's dimension)
24	4	4/56	16/06	dyadic cohesion( adjustment's dimension)
60	1	12/45	42/44	dyadic consensus( adjustment's dimension)
14	2	2/84	10/65	affectional expression( adjustment's dimension)

**Table 3: correlation of religious orientation and marital adjustment components**

p	Spearman correlation coefficient	Relation between religious orientation and marital adjustment
0/0001	0/732	<b>Male</b>
0/044	0/257	<b>Female</b>
0/0001	0/502	<b>All couples</b>

Paying attention to the above table, relationship between religious orientation and marital adjustment in all couples in the level of 0/05 is significant. According to positive sign of Spearman correlation coefficient in this table (0/502), the result is that this is a direct relationship. It means that the higher religious orientation couples have the more marital adjustment they experience and on the other hand the lower religious orientation couples have, the less marital adjustment they experience. It should be noted that this relationship was significant in both males and females but it was stronger in males than females. (it should be noted that the higher score of marital adjustment scale (DAS) shows more adjustment in marital relationship).

**Table 4: correlation of religious orientation and marital satisfaction (dimension)**

p	Spearman correlation coefficient		Variables
0/0001	0/709	male	Marital satisfaction
0/110	0/205	female	
0/0001	0/459	All couples	
0/0001	0/679	male	dyadic cohesion
0/145	0/181	female	
0/0001	0/412	All couples	
0/0001	0/673	male	dyadic consensus
0/010	0/314	female	
0/0001	0/492	All couples	
0/0001	0/527	Male	affectional expression
0/249	0/143	female	
<0/0001	0/317	All couples	

The below table shows results of multiple regression in studying the relationship between variables of religious orientation, marital adjustment, age, gender and education. In this regression religious orientation is considered to be dependent variable.

**Table 5: results of multiple regression in studying the relationship between variables of religious orientation, marital adjustment, age, gender and education**

p-value	Standard deviation	Regression coefficient	Study variables
0/324	0/288	-0/286	age
0/001	4/533	15/329	gender
0/003	1/766	5/421	education
0/0001	0/206	1/093	Marital adjustment (DAS)

According to the above table, it is observed that the relationship of the study variables (other than age) and religious orientation is significant.  $R=0/688$  and  $R^2 = 0/474$ . Considering regression coefficient, the results show that females in comparison with males on average have higher religious orientation at the rate of 15/329. On average as the level of education enhances for one level, religious orientation increases at the rate of 5/421. On average as the score of marital adjustment scale increases, religious orientation enhances at the rate of 1/093.

In the below table the results of multiple regression in studying the relationship of variables of religious orientation, marital satisfaction, marital adjustment dimensions (marital satisfaction, dyadic cohesion, dyadic consensus, affectional expression) age, gender and education. In this regression religious orientation is considered to be dependent variable.

**Table 6: the results of multiple regressions in studying the relationship of variables of religious orientation, marital adjustment dimensions, age, gender and education**

p-value	Standard deviation	Regression coefficient	Study variables
0/296	0/304	-0/319	Age
0/001	4/574	15/438	gender
0/003	1/806	5/409	education
0/012	0/730	1/865	Marital satisfaction( adjustment's dimension)
0/165	0/857	1/197	dyadic cohesion( adjustment's dimension)
0/051	0/389	0/769	Dyadic consensus( adjustment's dimension)
0/381	1/313	1/155	Affectional expression ( adjustment's dimension)

Considering the above table, it is observed that the relationship between study variables (other than age, dyadic cohesion and affectional expression) and religious orientation is significant.  $R= 0/693$  and  $R^2 = 0/480$ . According to regression coefficients, the result is that on average females in comparison with males have higher religious orientation at the rate of 15/438. On average as the level of education enhances for one level, religious orientation increases at the rate of 5/409. On average as the score of marital satisfaction scale increases for one unit, religious orientation enhances at the rate of 1/865.

On average as the score of dyadic consensus scale increases for one unit, religious orientation enhances at the rate of 0/769. (it should be noted that dyadic consensus variable is significant only at the level of 0/1).

## DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that there is a positive correlation between religious orientation and marital adjustment. It means that religious orientation can predict marital adjustment and findings were confirmed in a significant level ( $p=0/05$ ).

Findings of the present study is consistent with other researches such as the result of Demaris (23), Nathaniel and David (24), Orathinkal and Vansteewegen (25), Hunler and Gencoz (26), Mahoney (27) studies.

Findings of Ahmadi's study expresses that religious beliefs first strengthen and improve couples' relationships. Second it helps people programme appropriately to spend their leisure with family. Third religious beliefs help people accept taste differences of their spouse and adapt with it. In the fourth grade, it helps people solve their conflicts well with their spouse and finally it makes people have reciprocally satisfactory sexual relationship (17).

Most researchers believe that the existence of religious beliefs has significant effect on family strength. Belief in God causes a person to have a purposeful attitude to the whole of existence. Lack of belief in God causes a person not to have cohesion and serenity and this affair makes weakness and is the origin of many family feuds. The performed studies in this field have shown that commitment to religion is an important factor in marriage stability and marital satisfaction. On the other side, the more contradictions couples have in their religious beliefs, the more feud they will have (28).

Ortega weet and Williams (quoted from Call and Heaton) concluded that the more religious differences couples have in beliefs and behaviors, the more dissatisfaction they have from their marriage (16). These results are consistent with findings of Bennet (29), Hunler and Gencoz (30), Orathinkal and Vansteewegen (25), Antonsen (31), and Fiese and Tomcho (32).

Considering the mentioned materials, it is clear that religious orientation of couples can be the cause of their marital adjustment. Also the more religious homogeneity couples have with each other, the more satisfaction and adjustment they enjoy.

Among limitations of this research, we can refer to the small size of sample and also unwillingness of some people to answer due to being personal information. Taking advantage of the results of present study, it is advised to psychologists and therapists in the area of family issues to use strengthening the system of couples' religious beliefs and cause these beliefs to approach to each other among couples in order to improve marital adjustment.

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