

# The Relationship between Religious Attitudes and Marital Satisfaction Among Married Personnel of Departments of Education in Rasht City, Iran

Fatemeh Hosseini Dowlatabadi\*<sup>1</sup>, Sajjad Saadat<sup>2</sup>, Sobhan Jahangiri<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Educational Sciences, University of Guilan, Rasht, Iran

<sup>2</sup>B A. Student of Counseling, University of Guilan, Iran

<sup>3</sup>B A. Student of English Literature, University of Guilan, Iran

\*Corresponding Author E-mail: [fhosseiny@gmail.com](mailto:fhosseiny@gmail.com)

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## ABSTRACT

Marital satisfaction is the objective feeling of satisfaction and pleasure from spouse, considering all aspects of marriage. Religious attitude is known as one of the factors that can be associated with marital satisfaction because the religion is guidelines for life and a system of beliefs and values, which can affect marriage. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between religious attitudes and marital satisfaction. This research is an analytic-descriptive correlation study. The study samples were 150 married personnel of departments of education in 2012 in Rasht city, and in order to investigate the validity of the study, all individuals were tested. Finally, 139 patients (74 female, 64 male) completed their questionnaires thoroughly, which were analyzed. In order to collect data, Religious Attitude Questionnaire with 96 % reliability coefficient and Enrich Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire with 70 % reliability were used. The results showed that there is a significant positive relationship between marital satisfaction and religious attitudes and the results of linear regression analysis, using Enter method, Indicated that religious attitudes explains 10% of the variance in marital satisfaction. Other findings showed that there is not a significant difference between gender and marital satisfaction, and religious attitudes.

**Keywords:** Marital Satisfaction, Religious Attitudes, Family.

## Introduction

Family is the most important educational and cultural institution in a society and the loss of family values culminates in destruction of the foundation of a society. Many sociologists in family field believe that the family is a complete and small community, which in all the other institutions and sociological functions join.

In terms of dating, family can be seen as the oldest institution. In fact, earlier than development of any other institutions such as education, politics, religion, and economy, the reproduction of the family has happened, and in light of this sacred institution (family), other institutions have been emerged. The first buds of the

relationship between humans appear in the privacy of the family, and home is the best source for healthy relationships. Pleasant and peaceful relationships between spouses not only are the best grounds for their personalities' growth and blossoming, but also are necessary for their children and in turn are effective for these children growth and blossoming (Monjezi *et al.*, 2012:30). Family can be defined as a relative group, which takes the responsibility of socializing the children and meets the primary responsibility for some other basic needs of society; family is a group of people, which are related to each other by blood, marriage, and adoption. They live together for an unspecified period of time (Cohen, 1989:137). By transiting from a traditional society to an industrial and modern society, family problems are one of the most important problems in the area of family mental health. Numerous clients of family therapy and crisis intervention centers, and the increasing acts for specialized helps show the existence of a serious problem for family mental health. Divorcing is the most acute and most serious problem of families' relationships. The ratio of divorces to marriages in Iran is seventh among the countries in the world. Studies have shown that the most common problems in families referred to Esfahan Family Therapy Centers include partners' communicative problems (36/4%), psychiatric problems (26/7%), social problems, and delinquency (11/2%) (Ebrahimi *et al.*, 2011:1). The important issue in a marriage is marital satisfaction and compatibility. Ellis believes that the marital adjustment is the actual and concrete feeling of happiness, satisfaction, and pleasure from spouse, taking into account all aspects of marriage life (Kermani Mamazandy *et al.*, 2011:130) (Greef *et al.*, 2001). Marital satisfaction is a

status in which both spouses come to an agreement and are satisfied in the style their relationships, they are content with the quality and type of their leisure times, and well manage their time and economic issues. Marital satisfaction underlie marriage and is the core of life satisfaction, in the other words community and family health can be seen in terms of people's satisfaction with their marriages. By increasing the marital satisfaction, we can expect that people's psychological, social, and academic status becomes improved (Olson, 1986, quoting by Arbabi *et al.*, 2008:82). Several factors can affect marital satisfaction, such as satisfaction with the mood of the spouse (Bloom and Mehrabian, 1999), believing in loyalty and love (Roseblat *et al.*, 1999) and employment and spouse's income (Vibjintimala, Kumari, Pandar, 2004) (quoted by Khodayarifard *et al.*, 2007:612). The couple's marital satisfaction or problem solving advice is one of the goals in counseling program. Allenkar (2000) states that the main cause of many problems of whom refer to counseling centers is marital disorders (quoting by Toghyani *et al.*, 2005:338). Religion is the impact of emotions, effects, and events that belongs to every human in his lonely world and away from all of mundane issues. A man finds out there is a relationship between him and everything that is called the notion of God (James, 1993). Many authors have discussed religion in psychology on the issue of whether religion is beneficial or harmful, and have studied its impacts on adults (Bergin, 1980; Crawford, Handel and Wiener, 1989; Ellis, 1980; Sharkey and Maloney, 1986; quoted by Maltby, 2000:384). One of the factors that can be in relationship with marital satisfaction is religious attitude because religion is a set of advice for life and present a system of

beliefs and values that can affect marital life (HanelroGenchouz, 2005, quoted by Mamazandy et al., 2011:131). Researches by Cranbaugh and Sheffield; Koenig and Kvale and Maton and Paler and Pendleton; Hans Berger (quoted by HosseiniNasab et al., 1388), and Pavot et al. (1998) and McNulty (2004) have shown that religion has a positive relationship with marital satisfaction and adjustment and is effective in psychological adjustment. HosseiniNasab et al. (2009:90) in their study concluded that there is a positive relationship between intrinsic religious attitude and marital adjustment. On the other hand, there are many opposite attitudes about religion's positive role. Ellis (1980) states that religion and irrational thinking, and mental disorders are mixed together. Freud knows different bases for religion (such as collective neurosis, illusion, hallucinations, and universal obsession-neurosis of humanity). He studies the phenomenon of religion in his book *Future of an Illusion* (1928), and along with the differentiating the religion from morality, he argues that we can understand good and evil even if we do not believe in God (Basir, 2011:16). Many researches know these claims as flawed and unscientific and describe religion as a predictor of mental health component. Research findings of Mansouri et al. (2010:113) have shown that there is a significant relationship between gender and religious attitudes, and there is a significant relationship between religious attitudes and death anxiety. Furthermore, there is a significant correlation between intrinsic religious attitudes and stress decrease and there is a significant correlation between extrinsic religious attitudes and stress increase (Mokhtari et al., 2001:56). There is a significant relationship between secure attachment style and intrinsic religious attitude

(KhavaninZadeh, 2005:227). In addition, people's adjustment with internal religious attitudes, and people's health with extrinsic religious attitudes have appropriate status (Khodapanahi, 2005:310). In a research by BahramiEhsan (2004:41), he concludes that there is relationship between religious attitudes and mental health increasing and mental disorders decreasing and positively is able to predict positive religious coping style. Intrinsic religious attitude is a predictor of marital adjustment (HosseiniNasab, 2009:82). People who are intrinsically religious oriented have less anxiety, insomnia, social dysfunction, and depression in comparison with those who are less extrinsically religious oriented (AghayaniChavoshi, 2008:149). In a research by Jafari (2009:91), he concludes that those who have intrinsic religious attitudes use problem-oriented coping style and those who have extrinsic religious attitudes use coping style in encountering stress. Since the religious educational policy is in accordance with educational system, we sought to examine the relationship between religious affiliation and marital satisfaction and the extent of religious life in predicting marital satisfaction.

## Methods

### Population and sampling

This research is an analytic-descriptive correlation study. The study samples were 150 married personnel of departments of education in 2012 in Rasht city, and in order to investigate the validity of the study, all individuals were tested. Finally, 139 patients (74 female, 64 male) completed their questionnaires thoroughly, which were analyzed.

**Research Tools**

The Religious Attitude Questionnaire: the initial Religious Attitude Questionnaire was set up in 1999 by Khodayarifard (2000). This questionnaire has 44 items. Poorshahriyari and Sho'aKazemi (2007), in their study of religious attitudes of female high school students in Tehran, and for assessing the factors that strengthen or weaken the religious attitude added a few questions to the questionnaire and turned it to a multiple-choice questionnaire. In order to check the validity of the questionnaire, content validity was used. Furthermore, the reliability by using Cronbach's alpha was equal to 89%. Shakernya (2010:12), in a study regarding the relationship between religious identity, religious attitude and mental

toughness and mental health of people in *Sister of Imam Reza Mosque* in Rasht city and obtained Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient 96 % which is an excellent percentage. The EnrichMarital Satisfaction Scale: This inventory was first devised by Enrich (1975) and Soleimanian (1994) has translated it into Persian. This instrument contains 47 questions in the 5-degree Likert scale from completely agree to completely disagree and is used for the evaluation of potentially problematic grounds or the identification of appropriate grounds for marital relationship. The validity of this instrument was concluded using the context validity method and its reliability has been calculated using reassessment (82%) (Mardani and Heydari 2010; Sadeghi et al., 2012).

**Findings**

**Table 1.** Comparison between variables for two sexes

Variance	Male			Female			t	P
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD		
Marital Satisfaction	64	146.29	17.15	64	146.33	18.81	-0.012	0.991
Religious Attitudes	75	120.67	13.20	75	120.86	10.71	-0.96	0.924

According to Table 1, there is not a significant difference between the means of men and women groups on marital satisfaction and religious attitudes variables. Accordingly, we can conclude that men and women have reported almost similar levels of marital satisfaction and religious attitudes.

According to results of the correlation coefficient in Table 2, the correlations between marital satisfaction and religious attitudes is  $r=0/317^{**}$  which is significant due to its significance ( $sig=0/000$ ) in  $p<0/01$  level. It confidently can be said that there is a

99% meaningful relationship between religious attitudes and marital satisfaction.

In the present study in order to predict the marital satisfaction based on religious attitudes, Enter linear regression method was used. Regression analysis showed that the religious attitude with  $t=5.319$ , significantly explained 10 percent of variance in marital satisfaction and 90 % of the variance in marital satisfaction stands for the other variables which are not covered in this study.

**Table 2.** Correlation between religious attitudes and marital satisfaction

<b>** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).</b>		<b>Marital Satisfaction</b>	<b>Religious Attitudes</b>
Marital Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1	.317**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	139	139
Religious Attitudes	Pearson Correlation	.317**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	139	139

**Table 3.** Variables in the equation for predicting marital satisfaction and religious attitudes (Enter regression)

<b>independent Variance</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>r<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>F</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>β</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p</b>
Religious Attitudes	0.317**	.101	15.32	.481	.317	5.319	.000

### Discussion and Conclusions

The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between religious attitudes and marital satisfaction among married personnel of departments of education in city of Rasht, Iran. Findings show a significant relationship between religious affiliation, and marital satisfaction explains 10 percent of variance in marital satisfaction. The results of the present investigation are consistent with Sullivan (2001), Dallos (2001), Mcutly (2004), (HanelroGenchouz, 2005) as well as Cranbaugh and Sheffield, Koenig and Kvale and Maton and Paler and Pendleton, Hansberger, HosseiniNasab (2009), which show a relationship between intrinsic religious attitudes and orientation, and marital satisfaction. In addition, the researches of Marsh et al (2000), Cornelius et al (2007) and Demaris et al. (2010) describe the impact of religious education on marital satisfaction and that increasing of religious beliefs is one of the effective ways for life satisfaction and is contrary to the views of Freud and Ellis. Monjezi et al. (2010:35) conducted a research aimed to investigate the effects of Islamic communication and religious attitudes on improving the

marital satisfaction in Isfahan. The results explain the effects of Islamic communication and religious attitudes on improving the marital satisfaction of couples in Isfahan, which are effective. In another study by MamazandiKermani et al. (2010:129), the results showed that the impact of religious attitudes on marital adjustment component is not significant. Among the factors of sensation seeking, only the effect of emotion and adventure factor on the two-person marital relationship was significant. On the other hand, the effect of interactive religious attitude and sensation seeking factor on marital adjustment were significant. There was a significant difference between men and women religious attitudes but no differences were observed in sensation seeking and marital adjustment of both sexes. Abdullahi et al. (2011:279) concluded in their study that marital satisfaction is positively correlated with emotional intelligence and problem-oriented coping style. The findings of a research by Shakeri (2009) showed that there is a significant relationship between suicide committers and individuals of control grouping characteristics, level of

experience, stressful life events, evaluating stress' levels, coping strategies, and religious attitudes. In other words, a suicide committer, in comparison with control group has more personalities such as introversion, neuroticism, psychotics. These people encounter more stressful life events before suicide, face more stress from past events, less exploit problem-oriented coping style, and finally have weaker religious attitudes. In a survey conducted by Shams Esfandabad *et al* (2009:139), findings show that drug addicts, in comparison to non-addicted people have lower religious attitudes and thus their quality of life is lower, too. Hamid (2009) concluded that there is a significant positive relationship between the immune system and religious attitudes. According to research findings of HosseiniNasab *et al.* (2009:82), intrinsic religious orientation, is significant predictor for marital adjustment variable. In another study conducted by Ghafouri *et al* (2009:134), results showed that success and failure of the marital relationship could be predicted by variables of attachment style and religious attitudes. The more the couples have secure attachment style, the less they have avoidant and anxious-ambivalent attachment styles, also if they have attitudes that are more religious, the possibility of their marital success will be more. According to the research findings of Bakhshi Poor (2008:22), in which life satisfaction is a predictor of mental health, a more life satisfaction means a higher mental health. In addition, religious attitude variable, which showed patient students are less religious than healthy students, was only true for female students. In a study by Zargar *et al* (2008:108), the results showed that there is a negative relationship between religious attitude and willingness to

addiction. In other words, those with more religious attitudes, have less tendency toward addiction, and there is a negative relationship between marital satisfaction and tendency toward addiction. Those who are less satisfaction with their spouses, are more exposed to addiction, and also addicted people, in comparison to non-addicted, are less sexually or emotionally satisfaction with their spouses. Causes of dissatisfaction with spouse could be in certain personality traits of each of the spouses, such as spouse excessive employment and too much expectation. Results of a research by Khodayarifard (2001:386) concerning students' social adjustment according to religious attitudes in father-child relationship showed that religious attitudes and father-child relationship are predictors for students' social adjustment. Other results indicated that there is no significant difference between gender and religious orientation. Based on previous researches, women are more religious oriented, and probably this is due to the protective effect of religions for women. Based on research findings of MansouriNejad *et al.* (2011), Koeing (1999), McCullough *et al.* (2005), and Mokhtari and Mohsen Zadeh (2011), women are more inclined to religion and their orientation, according to Allport, is an innate tendency, which is not in accordance with our results. One possible reason could be the lack of research's subjects. The study found no significant difference between men and women in marital satisfaction. In a research by Houston, Kaflyn, Hats, and Smith (2001) no difference was observed in marital satisfaction between men and women, which is consistent with our results. Researches by Berzinak and Wissmann (2004) and Troddle (2002) reported that women have lower marital satisfaction

than men have (quoted by Bakhshayesh and Mortazavi, 2009: 81). The results of the study by Mortazavi and Bakhshayesh (2009) are consistent with our research. In explaining these results, it can be argued that religion is an organized system of beliefs, values, customs, and participating in a religious community for faith in God, or a transcendental power. Religious attitude is an effective way to deal with the catastrophes, painful experiences, and symptoms of disease. In addition, religious attitude of a family can help them in their ways of relationships, maintaining their statuses and boundaries, and guarantee the marital satisfaction between spouses. Another explanation is that faith in God could make the attitudes of the individuals be targeted. Lack of faith in God causes an individual to lose his peace and integrity and this will lead to weakness and is the origin of many controversies in life. The research showed that adherence to religion is an important factor in the stability of marriage and marital satisfaction.

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