



## Study of Emotional Intelligence and Marital Satisfaction in Academic Members of Rafsanjan University of Medical Sciences

Agha Mohammad Hasani P<sup>1</sup>, Mokhtaree MR<sup>2\*</sup>, Sayadi AR<sup>3</sup>, Nazer M<sup>4</sup> and Mosavi SA<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Assistant Prof, Psychiatry Dept, Rafsanjan University of Medical Sciences, Rafsanjan, Iran

<sup>2</sup>MSc of Educational Psychology, Rafsanjan University of Medical Sciences, Rafsanjan, Iran

<sup>3</sup>Immunology of Infectious Diseases Research Center, Rafsanjan University of Medical Sciences, Rafsanjan, Iran

<sup>4</sup>Assistant Prof, Psychiatry Dept, Rafsanjan University of Medical Sciences, Rafsanjan, Iran

<sup>5</sup>Medical Student, Rafsanjan University of Medical Sciences, Rafsanjan, Iran

### Abstract

In today's highly stressful world the satisfaction of the married life has been decreasing. On the other hand, the people's communications and viewpoints can have the main role to increase the satisfaction. This study is conducted for evaluation of the relationships and links between the factors of emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction in Academic members of Rafsanjan University of Medical Sciences. 122 people of our statistical universe have answered to the social emotional intelligence of Bar-on and Enrich marital satisfaction questionnaire. Regarding the type of the research, which was descriptive, Pearson and Spearman correlation co-efficiency and also the T test have been used. The moderately satisfied rate in this study was 68% and the emotional intelligence score was 337. Overall, emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction were not linked to the variables of gender and age. Of many aspects of marital satisfaction, interpersonal and empathy aspects were meaningfully related to the variable of gender, regarding the statistics. Also, of many aspects of emotional intelligence, the one for responsibility between men and women was only meaningfully different, regarding the statistics. Total score of emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction were not meaningfully linked to gender. Generally, all the variables of emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction had a statistical meaningful relationship. 37% of marital satisfaction is predictable by emotional intelligence. Regarding the high relationship between emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction, it is greatly recommended that the related educational organizations of the country pay more attention to teach necessary skills to increase emotional intelligence so that matrimony is improved and family foundation is stronger.

**Keywords:** Emotional intelligence; Marital satisfaction; Academic member

### Introduction

The family has always been one of the most important parts of each society in the history of mankind and in all countries. Consequently, this very important factor plays a very important role in the progress and stability of the society. Anyway, the formation of family is based on marriage [1]. Marriage is a mutual, delicate, and complicated relationship between two humans which has a basic role in meeting man and woman's emotional-psychological and physical demands [2]. Marriage is a symbiosis of a man and a woman, who has made a commitment and takes an oath, and accordingly has changed themselves. With the evolution of cultures, marriage has become a religious and sacred rite and tradition. However, any failure in marriage, as a commitment and oath, will socially label the sides. Not all marriages, necessarily, are successful and prosperous and some of them result in a separation. Some of the couples solve their sense of dissatisfaction and grievance through separation and divorce. All in all, from the second half of the 1970s, satisfaction has been declining; but many couples also prefer to stay in a state of conflict or mere indifference. In spite all these discouraging information about marriage, many people opt to marry. John Gottman's states that when there is no problem to make a crisis in a married life couples urge to report a high level of satisfaction. Consequently, many researchers have revealed that a perfect marriage will cause people to have a healthier and happier life [3]. Marriage is a pleasing bond but findings of researches show that more than half of the marriages in the United States lead to disappointment and separation. Therefore, a majority of researchers try to figure out the elements which affect the level of satisfaction and persistency in interpersonal relationships including marriage. According to the researches done about the spouses'

relationships it seems that components of emotional intelligence can be influential on marital satisfaction. Couples' intimate relationship needs communication skills such as: paying attention to other person's viewpoint, being able to empathize perception with what their partner has experienced, and also being sensitive and aware of his / her needs [4]. Marital satisfaction means adaption of person's expectation from matrimony and what he himself experience in life, which is also important [5]. Winch believes marital satisfaction is adjustment between the current condition and the expected or ideal condition [6]. Some of the authorities define marital satisfaction as a subject to the natural cycle of life. In particular, for example, Alice believes that there are different ways to define and describe marital satisfaction and the best definition is provided by Hagins. He defines marital satisfaction as: feeling happiness, pleasure and satisfaction by the wife or the husband, when considering all the aspects of conjugal life. Satisfaction is an attitudinal variable so it is highly considered as an individual feature. With the reference to what was stated, marital satisfaction is in fact a positive and pleasing attitude which is possessed by the couple from the parts of a conjugal life. Lastly, it is essential to be stated that different

\*Corresponding author: Mokhtaree MR, Educational Psychology, Rafsanjan University of Medical Sciences, Iran, E-Mail: [mrmokhtaree@yahoo.com](mailto:mrmokhtaree@yahoo.com)

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factors have been identified to be effective on marital satisfaction including: marriage age, marriage duration, children, educational suitability, financial issues, sexual issues, relatives and acquaintances, religious beliefs, personality traits, the ability to understand the partner, communication skills, spare time, and commitment [6]. Marriage and family researchers have always been looking for factors of satisfaction and dissatisfaction of marriage. It has been years that researchers have been trying to figure out the maladaptation elements in conflicting families. But recently, researchers - instead of insisting on variables which depend on maladaptation - have focused on obvious inter and intrapersonal factors in everyday communication of happy and pleased couples. The researchers state that factors like emotional awareness, emotional expression, emotional regulation, and sympathy affect the marriage communication and quality [7,8].

Salovey and Mayer's theoretical structure of emotional intelligence includes many positive experimental characteristics that researchers relate them to the quality of marriage. Emotional intelligence is the recognition capacity, application, understanding, and management of the emotions. Even more in particular, Salovey and Assistants state that, by thinking into his own and others' emotions, people can share the emotions and understand and manage the emotional information. Furthermore, Salovey and Assistants state that, in marriage therapy, emotional intelligence can be taught, consequently, the more skills couples learn, the more they improve their communications and insight [9,10]. Grieco has also studied the links between the factors of emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction and figured out that in the first marriage there is a dependency and a correlation between the dimensions of emotional intelligence and satisfaction. Inter and intrapersonal communications, adaptation, stress management, and the general temper are meaningfully predictors of marital satisfactions especially in the components of emotional intelligence. But among the many different components of emotional intelligence, only about the general temper, sub-scales of happiness, optimism, general feeling of satisfaction and life perspectives is predictors of meaningful quantity of variance in marital satisfaction. Grieco even adds that the link between emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction may be of a reciprocal nature, and marital satisfaction may inculcate a sense of happiness and optimism in an individual. Furthermore, happiness and satisfaction may be conditions to increase the sense of satisfaction [11]. In today's society, couples are coping with a large number comprehensive and innumerable problems to get their spouse to make a relationship, preserve intimate relationships, and understand the emotions.

Existing deficiencies in emotional and affectional competence of couples, in addition to other factors, will have unpleasant effects on their matrimony life. Some of these deficiencies can be listed as: inability in self consciousness, lack of self-control, lack of sympathy and the inability to sympathize with each other, and in general, deficiency in establishing a fruitful relationship [12]. The current study aims to study the correlation of different elements of emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction among the members of Rafsanjan Medical University faculty.

## Materials and Methods

The current research is of correlation type. The target population in this research was the Academic members of Rafsanjan University of Medical Sciences. The probed sample in this research has been a total of 124 people of the statistical universe. Method of Sampling was Census. The questionnaires, along with a note asking the subjects to return the questionnaires via specified boxes, were put inside envelopes and

given to the subjects and they were also instructed on how to complete the questionnaires. After a one-week-respite the questionnaires were collected. The number of the primary sample was 146 people of which 26 samples were eliminated due to the lack of cooperation or carelessness in filling the forms. In addition, the privacy policy was highly respected and individuals willingly participated in the research. Data analyzed with Pearson and Spearman's correlation statistics and independent T-test. All the stages of analysis were done using the spss15 software.

## Research tools

In this research Bar-on scale was used to measure the level of emotional intelligence. This questionnaire, including 90 questions, is translated to Spanish, French, German, Swedish, and Swahili and was used in The US, Canada, South Africa, Argentina, Germany, Nigeria, Holland, Mexico, chili, Philippine, Sweden, and South Korea [13]. The results of the questionnaire show same results in different cultures.

Internal reliability of the test in nine different studies revealed Cronbach's alpha from 79% to 86%. In reliability testing by using test-retest, one year and four month later, for one month later the values were from 78% to 92% and for months later they were between 55% to 82%. There was correlation to assess validity between the Bar-on emotional intelligence test MMPI, Eysenck personality inventory, Beck's depression questionnaire, personal orientation inventory, and personality testing inventory. Predictive validity shows that there is a relationship between the Bar-on emotional intelligence test and job fulfillment, job satisfaction, success in military university, and success in air force. Dawda and Hart in order determine the validity narrative test of the Bar-on test in university students, Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-I) with The five factors of personality assessed by (or closely resem- bling) Costa and McCrae's and Beck's depression questionnaire and emotional disability assessment test have correlation. Interpersonal scale had less correlation with sub-scales of emotional intelligence. Overall, emotional intelligence scales had similar validity for men and women [14].

## Enrich marital satisfaction questionnaire

Enrich marital satisfaction questionnaire has been chosen in order to survey marital satisfaction. This questionnaire has been used as a valid tool in countless researches to test marital satisfaction. Olson has used the questionnaire to probe marital satisfaction and believes that this scale is related to changes which take place in the duration of human's life and also is sensitive to the changes that happen in the family. This questionnaire can be used as a diagnostic tool for couples who seek for marriage and matrimony consultation or reinforcement of their marriage strength.

In Enrich marital satisfaction questionnaire, the respond to the questions has been based on five-level Likert item ranging from extremely dissatisfied to extremely satisfied and Olson and assistants have reported the validity of this questionnaire as 92% with Cronbach's alpha coefficient [15,16]. This questionnaire's validity and reliability has been estimated in a test by Soleimanian. Its validity has been calculated through alpha coefficient as 93% [17].

## Results

65.9% of all the subjects were men and 34.1% were women. The youngest and the oldest were 32 and 62 years old, respectively; and the age average was 43.84 years old. 5.6% of all the subjects not at all satisfied, 20.6% somewhat satisfied, 68.3% moderately satisfied, and 5.5% very much satisfied (Figure 1). Of all different aspects of marital

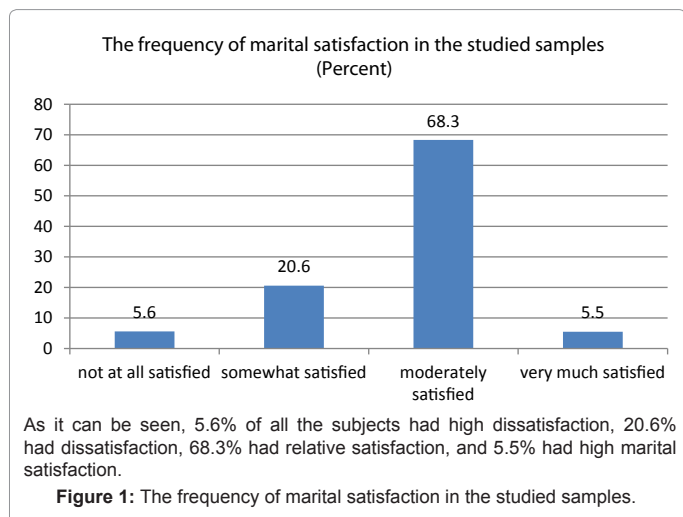
satisfaction, interpersonal and empathy, aspects had a significant relationship with the gender variable (Table 1). Of all different aspects of marital satisfaction, only the one related to friends and relatives has a significant relationship with gender. None of the marital relationships, financial issues, sexual issues, child breeding and problem solving does not have a statistically significant relationship with gender.

Among all the aspects of emotional intelligence, only responsibility, between men and women, differ significantly (Table 2). None of the mentioned aspects of emotional intelligence does not have a statistically significant relationship with age. Regardless responsibility, none of the mentioned aspects of emotional intelligence does not have a statistically significant relationship with age. The difference between emotional intelligence in men and women is not statistically significant. The difference in emotional intelligence's score among the youth and the middle-aged groups is not statistically significant.

Findings of this study show that there is a significant link between the average scores of emotional intelligence's components and the average scores of marital satisfaction (Table 3); and the same thing is true about the link between total score of emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction (Table 4) (P=0/0001).

## Discussion and Conclusion

The rate for relative marital satisfaction in the recent study was 68%. Warde has studied the level of marital satisfaction in physician with children and states that a supportive spouse helps to have a higher level of marital satisfaction. Warde also states that the spouse's having



Marital satisfaction subscales	Female	Male	t	P Value
	mean ± SD	mean ± SD		
Independence	22.88 ± 4.30	23.49 ± 3.70	0.83	0.0408
Stress Tolerance	20.70 ± 4.95	10.92 ± 5.01	0.232	0.817
Reality testing	22.12 ± 4.78	21.08 ± 4.20	-1.236	0.215
Interpersonal Relationship	24.70 ± 3.11	22.28 ± .70	-3.665	<0.0001
Impulse Control	19.84 ± 5.26	19.89 ± 5.77	0.052	0.959
Empathy	21.79 ± 2.65	19.33 ± 3.35	-4.191	<0.0001
assertiveness	21.47 ± 4.39	21.35 ± 4.62	-0.579	0.303
Flexibility	21.07 ± 4.46	20.11 ± 4.86	-2.089	0.282

Note: Significant at P<0.01

**Table 1:** The comparison of average score of marital satisfaction subscales in the subjects of the study according to the gender.

Marital satisfaction subscales	mann-whitney		Mean Rank	
	P value	Z	Female	Male
Problem solving	P=0.998	-0.003	63.51	63.49
Happiness	P=0.131	-1.511	70.29	59.98
Self-Actualization	P=0.054	-1.929	72.17	59.01
Self-Awareness	P=0.174	-1.365	69.64	60.32
Optimism	P=0.790	-0.266	64.70	62.88
Self-Reliance	P=0.487	-1.313	66.63	61.88
Responsibility	P=0.022*	-2.283	73.73	58.20

Note: Significant at P<0.05

**Table 2:** The comparison of the average rate of emotional intelligence's subscale score in the subjects of the study according to the gender.

Marital satisfaction components	P value
Personality issues	0.0001
Marital communication	0.0001
Conflict resolution	0.0001
Finance management	0.0001
Pleasure activities	0.0001
Sexual relation	0.0001
Marriage and children	0.0001
Family and friends	0.0001
Religious orientation	0.0001
Marital satisfaction	0.0001

Note: Significant at P<0.01

**Table 3:** The relationship between emotional intelligence's score and components of marital satisfaction.

	Marital satisfaction
Pearson correlation Emotional intelligence	0.615 P<0.0001

Note: Significant at P<0.01

Based on the information of the table, there is a statistically meaningful relationship between emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction.

**Table 4:** The relationship of emotional intelligence's and the marital satisfaction.

a job or being a housewife is effective on the level of satisfaction [18]. Lewis also quotes the level of marital satisfaction between physicians and dentists as 85%, which is a higher rate in comparison with this study's rate [19]. Wagheyi, in his study, also has estimated a moderately satisfied of 65% in the staff of two universities with a variety of education from lower than high school diploma to those with education more than a bachelor's degree [20]. Similarly, Haghghi obtained a level of 61% and also Shahi obtained 77% in a group of mothers and in couples of Gorgan's injury-bearing areas [21,22]. Warde and assistants who had been searching the doctors' marital satisfaction obtained an approximate high and very high level of marital satisfaction of 38% and 24% respectively.

The average score of emotional intelligence in this study was 337, whereas this score in Haghani's study was calculated as 340.6 [23], whose samples were from the Academic members of a medical university. Also Haghani's scores are congruent with the current study. The scores were reported as 328 in Samouei's [24] study on medical students, 333.13 in Motalebi's [25] study on school principals, 328.9 in Kajaf's [26] study on athletes, 394.45 in Haji pour's [27] study on a group of 51 university principals, and 329 in Salahian's [28] study on samples of ordinary citizens. One probable reason for the differences in these scores can be the differences in the statistical universes. It

seems that university lecturers, regarding their higher education and social situation, have obtained higher score in emotional intelligence. Regarding this statistical universe's education, which varies from master's degrees to specialty degrees, they surely had a higher social position based on their careers. It, therefore, can justify the link between cognitive and social intelligence. Golestan Jahromy, also, studied the relationship between emotional and cognitive intelligence and concluded that these two areas are meaningfully linked [29]. Additionally, Aremu [30] and Petridesa [31] recognize emotional intelligence as an effective factor in students' successful education, which leads to higher levels of education.

It seems that marriage is an effective tool in self-fulfillment process [32]. Here emotional intelligence plays a very important role. The satisfaction level a person feels from his/her marriage may have an impact on his / her verdict of communication types. Most of gloomy and unhappy couples experience a higher level of stress and therefore are exposed to more physical injuries [33]. In the current study, all the components of emotional-social intelligence showed a statistically meaningful relationship with components of marital satisfaction. Lavalekar obtained a similar result in his study too [34]. It seems that the existence of such a link in the current study is related to the aimed statistical universe. Regarding the relationship between emotional intelligence and interpersonal communications, it is perceived that emotional intelligence has an important relationship with people's level of stress and also their psychological health. In the same way, Whisman states that anxiety and stress level of people is the predictor of the marital satisfaction level, and meanwhile, depression plays a far more important level. Therefore, regarding the more complicated mechanism of anxiety, it has a more effective impact on different aspects of life and inter and intrapersonal communications of an individual [35]. Also, in the current study, impulsion control, stress tolerance and happiness, which are components of emotional intelligence, have direct and meaningful relationship with either total score of marital satisfaction or marital satisfaction subscales. Hafner recognizes personality factors, including assertiveness, as one of the most important factors, which affects the level of marital satisfaction [36]. Regarding the meaning fullness of this component - along with the total score of marital satisfaction and its components- this seems to be a true fact.

The results of this current study depict a meaningful difference between emotional intelligence and its components with marital satisfaction. These results are in harmony with Foroughi's results which concluded there is a positive and meaningful relationship between emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction [37]. Likewise, their study showed that there is a positive and meaningful relationship between the components marital satisfaction and emotional intelligence including self awareness, sympathy, self-control, and social skills. It is observed that teaching skills to increase the emotional intelligence has a positive effect on marriage adjustment; and also some researchers, including Fitness and Salovey emphasize on the possible relationship between different aspects of emotional intelligence and the quality of communication between couples [38,39]. Furthermore, Noller and assistants have reviewed some of the studies and state that true expression, recognition, and evaluation of emotions have meaningful relationship with couples' reports on marriage contentment and satisfaction [40]. Carton and assistants show that sensitivity and carefulness in non-verbal communications will predict happiness in communications [41]. One of the components of emotional intelligence is emotional perception which has high relationship with satisfaction

or lack of contentment in marital relationships. Even Fitness suggests another theory and states it as: "a higher emotional intelligence can effectively enable people in better relationship management and mutual forgiveness". Fizer, in his study, understood that those groups, belonging to the satisfied and very satisfied, 14 components out of the total 15 components of social emotional intelligence of Bar-on obtained higher scores as compared to the dissatisfied group [42]. Happiness and satisfaction of life and the self, along with self-sentiment, good interpersonal skills, realistic expectations social responsibility and optimism in hardships have very influential impacts on marital satisfaction. Rauer states that positive emotional expression has limited effect on marriage function, but negative expression has a powerful influence on love, conflict, and marriage ambivalence [43]. Koren believes that job coordination and harmony has a strong impact on marital satisfaction. In addition, due to the unusual working hours and job tension, a physician's marriage with a non- physician person will be stressful [44].

While in the current study there was no obvious and meaningful difference between men's and women's emotional intelligence, in Brackett's study women's scores in emotional intelligence scales had more meaningful relationship with the quality of communication, as compared to those of men's [45]. Day and assistants, also, showed that men obtain higher scores in emotional intelligence test [46]. Kent, however, understood that girls obtain higher scores in emotional perception and descriptive fields [47]. Furthermore, Crick, via the research on social qualification and career success, understood that girl students had higher emotional intelligence scores than boy students [48]. Dehshiri [49] in evaluation of Bar-on scale understood, girls score higher results in emotional intelligence test and this difference was also meaningful in Solyemanin's study. However, Ahmad, states that men's emotional intelligence is higher than women, and the point is that why in this current study the difference was not meaningful [50]. Can high education level, social position, job stability, or decent income change the gender's function in components of emotional intelligence?

Although gender's function, in marital satisfaction level, used to be neglected in former studies, gender currently has been taken into consideration [51]. Moreover, Faulker states that that gender and gender roles have important roles in marital satisfaction [52]. Regarding the findings of this study and the stated topics in former studies, this is to be emphasized that emotional intelligence and its components have a meaningful relationship with the level of marital satisfaction. Regarding the obtained correlation coefficient, 37% of marital satisfaction is predictable by emotional intelligence; and because emotional intelligence is an acquired issue that can be learned, more attention and focus should be concentrated on emotional intelligence by country's cultural and educational authorities.

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