



Examining Marital Satisfaction in terms of Interpersonal Mindfulness and Perceived Problem Solving Skills in Marriage*

Research Article

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ABSTRACT

The study aims to determine whether or not interpersonal mindfulness and perceived problem solving skills in marriage predict marital satisfaction. The participants consist of married individuals who live in Istanbul, Turkey, are graduates of at least secondary school and have been married for at least one year. A total of 302 married individuals, 174 (57.6%) females and 128 (42.4%) males, participated in the study. "Personal Information Form", "Marital Life Scale", "Mindfulness in Marriage Scale" and "Marital Problem Solving Scale" were used as data collection tools. Data were analyzed by multiple regression analysis. As a result of multiple regression analysis, it was found that interpersonal mindfulness and perceived problem solving skills in marriage predicted marital satisfaction. Interpersonal mindfulness and perceived problem solving skills in marriage explained 61% of total variance. According to the standardized regression coefficient (β), the relative order of importance of independent variables on marital satisfaction is as follows: interpersonal mindfulness in marriage and perceived problem solving skill but both independent variables can be said to have similar levels of effect on marital satisfaction. As a result of this research, it was found that interpersonal mindfulness and perceived problem solving skills in marriage significantly predicted marital satisfaction.

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Keywords:

Marital Satisfaction, Mindfulness, Interpersonal Mindfulness in Marriage, Marital Problem Solving Skills

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Introduction

Examining marital processes provides invaluable data in evaluating the true nature of healthy and quality marriages. There are many studies investigating various potential factors that might give a clear account of quality and stable marriages (Woszidlo & Segrin 2013). The nature of relationships in quality marriages is examined in terms of certain factors such as happiness, satisfaction, and adjustment (Glenn, 1990; James, 2012; Knapp & Lott, 2010; Kurt, 2018; Spainer, 1979; Spainer & Lewis, 1980). In this context quality marriages means that individuals are happy and satisfied with their marriage.

Marital satisfaction is defined as the perceptions of individuals regarding to what extent their needs are met in a marriage context (Tezer, 1996). This concept is also explained with references to psychological satisfaction related to certain dimensions such as couples' means of interaction, their equality in terms of love, sexual satisfaction and sharing happiness as well as problems (Çağ, 2011; Sokolski & Hendrick, 1999). One of the factors affecting marital satisfaction is mindfulness (Burpee & Langer, 2005; Lenger, Gordon, & Nguyen, 2017). This term is defined as a way to focus one's attention on certain issues as well as the awareness raised as a result of such focusing (Baer, 2003; Brown & Ryan, 2003; Kabat-Zinn, 2003). A high level of mindfulness is associated with high levels of relationship satisfaction (Barnes, Brown, Krusemark, Campbell, & Rogge, 2007; Carson, Carson, Gill, & Baucom, 2004; Gambrel & Keeling, 2010; Gambrel & Piercy, 2015a, 2015b; Lenger et al., 2017; Satıcı, 2018), marital satisfaction (Carson et al., 2004; Deniz, 2017; Jones, Welton, Oliver, & Thoburn, 2011; Parlar & Akgün, 2018; Wachs & Cordova, 2007); marriage and relationship quality (Gambrel & Piercy, 2015a, 2015b; Lenger et al., 2017; Wachs & Cordova, 2007; Williams & Cano, 2014). Although some studies focus on the relationship between relationship satisfaction and mindfulness, this relationship often seems to be vague (Kozlowski, 2013; Lenger et al., 2017). Therefore; the link between relationship satisfaction in marriage and mindfulness is worth examining in detail (Barnes et al., 2007; Karremans, Schellekens, & Kappen, 2017).

The recent literature on mindfulness reveals that this term is examined under two different categories; interpersonal and intrapersonal mindfulness. Here, the traditional account of mindfulness refer to intrapersonal mindfulness (Duncan, Coatsworth, & Greenberg, 2009; Kohlenberg et al., 2015). This term involves individual's accepting without questioning his attention to inner life and awareness about the present time and not acting in a reactive way in case of conflicts and problems (Kohlenberg et al., 2015). Interpersonal mindfulness, on the other hand, is about an individual's ability to maintain his awareness about his thoughts, bodily reactions and inner experiences while interacting with others and keeping his attention, to what others say, to their behaviors, moods, tone of voice, and body language (Pratscher, Wood, King, & Bettencourt, 2019). How interpersonal mindfulness affects relationships has been a topic of interest in the recent literature (Duncan et al., 2009; Erus, 2019; Frank, Jennings, & Greenberg, 2016; McCaffrey, 2015; Pratscher, Rose, Markovitz, & Bettencourt, 2018; Pratscher et al., 2019). In this respect, it is useful to examine the effects of interpersonal mindfulness on marital satisfaction.

Interpersonal mindfulness increases relationship quality. Romantic relationship improves individuals' other relationships in certain areas such as working life (Stahl & Goldstein, 2010). The research also found that interpersonal mindfulness increases relationship quality in bilateral relationships (Bögels, Lehtonen, & Restifo, 2010; Coatsworth, Duncan, Greenberg, & Nix, 2010; Duncan, 2007; Pratscher et al., 2018). Erus (2019) explained interpersonal mindfulness in marriage, with references to interpersonal mindfulness in parenting (Duncan, 2007; Duncan et al., 2009) and interpersonal mindfulness (Pratscher et al., 2019), as the following behaviors of an individual: listening to the spouse carefully during interaction and communication, awareness about his/her and spouse's feelings; accepting the feelings, and thoughts without judgement, and reacting spouse's behaviors without being intuitive through self-regulation. The study concluded that interpersonal mindfulness in marriage increases marriage adjustment. Due to the availability of only one study in the

literature dealing with interpersonal mindfulness in marriage and marriage adjustment, the current study also aims to examine the effect of interpersonal mindfulness in marriage on marriage satisfaction so that it might provide valuable contributions to the related literature.

One of the variables affecting marital satisfaction is problem solving skills. Harmony with spouse, effective communication and getting on well are important in a healthy marriage relationship (Lauer, Lauer, & Kerr, 1990; Lewis & Spanier 1979; Özgüven, 1997; Robinson & Blanton 1993; Spainer & Lewis, 1980). Solving problems faced in marriage effectively leads to healthy marriage and promotes marital satisfaction.

If problems experienced by married couples are not solved effectively, marital relationship and marital adjustment might be affected negatively. The main issues discussed in relation to such conflicts are the nature of their relationships and communication, how this problem is reflected in relationships, the nature of conflicts, and how they are perceived, reacted and solved (Segrin & Flora, 2011; Williamson, Hanna, Lavner, Bradbury, & Karney, 2013). Finding a constructive and effective solution to problems leads to a functional and satisfied family life (Sullivan, 2008). Solving problems collaboratively and in a reconciled way increases marital satisfaction while destructive and negative behaviors affect marital satisfaction negatively (Greef & De Bruyne, 2000). An effective solution to problems brings high levels of marital satisfaction.

Marriage is one of the most important relationships in individuals' lives. Research found that there is relationship between interpersonal mindfulness and relationship satisfaction (Erus, 2019; Pratscher et al., 2019) and problem solving skills and marital satisfaction (Akça-Koca, 2013; Aydemir-Sevim, 2016; Canel, 2012; Demir & Durmuş; 2015; Erbek, Beştepe, Akar, Eradamlar, & Alpkan, 2005; Greef & De Bruyne, 2000; Taşköprü, 2013). Therefore it might be said that a mindful interaction between spouses and effective solutions to their problems are effective in building up marriages with high levels of satisfaction. Therefore, this study aims to investigate to what extent interpersonal mindfulness in marriage and marital problem solving skills increase marital satisfaction.

Method

Research Model

The study conducted with relational design, which aims to determine the presence and/or the nature of a variation among two or more variables. The study examines to what extent interpersonal mindfulness and perceived problem solving skills predict marital satisfaction.

Participants

The sample of the study was determined by convenience sampling. Convenience sampling method was preferred since researchers reach married individuals easily and practically. The participants of the study are 302 married individuals who lived in Istanbul, Turkey. The demographic data obtained from the participants are displayed in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Frequency and Percentage Values of Demographic Information about the Participants

Variable	f	%
Gender		
Female	174	57.6
Male	128	42.4
Age		
20-30	106	35.1
31-40	130	43
41 or above	66	21.9
Duration of marriage		
1-4 year	114	37.7
5-9 year	74	24.6
10-14 year	48	15.8
15 or above	66	21.9
Educational Background		
Secondary School	66	21.9
Undergraduate Degree	190	62.9
Master's Degree	46	15.2
Spouse's Educational Background		
Secondary School	79	26.2
Undergraduate Degree	184	60.9
Master's Degree	39	12.9
Number of children		
No child	108	35.8
1 child	98	32.4
2 or more children	96	31.8
Total	302	100

According to Table 1, a total of 302 individuals participated in the study: 174 (57.6%) female and 128 (42.4%) male. 106 (35.1%) of these married individuals are in 20-30 age group, 130 (43%) in 31-40 and 66 (21.9%) 41 or above. As for the duration of marriage, 114 (37.7%) individuals have been married for 1-4 years, 74 (24.6%) for 5-9 years, 48 (15.8%) for 10-14 years, and 66 (21.9%) for 15 or more years. The data regarding their educational background show that 66 (21.9%) of the participants are graduates of secondary schools, 190 (62.9%) of an undergraduate program and 46 (15.2%) of a master's degree program. As for the educational background of spouses, the table shows that that 79 (26.2%) of the participants are graduates of secondary schools, 184 (60.9%) of an undergraduate program and 39 (12.9%) of a master's degree program. Finally, 108 (35.8%) participants have no child, 98 (32.4%) only 1 child and 96 (31.8%) 2 or more children.

Data Collection Tools

The data collection tools used in this study are Personal Information Form, Marital Life Scale, Mindfulness in Marriage Scale and Marital Problem Solving Scale.

Personal Information Form. Personal Information Form was developed by the researchers to obtain information regarding certain demographic variables about participants' gender, age, educational background, duration of marriage, number of children.

Marital Life Scale. Marital Life Scale was developed by Tezer (1996) to measure married couples' overall satisfaction about marriage. This 5 point Likert scale consists of 10 items, and the lowest possible score to be obtained is 10, and the highest is 50. A low score implies low level of marital satisfaction and a high score high level of marital satisfaction. The validity and reliability studies of the scale were conducted with two

groups of participants; the first group consisting of 25 couples and the second one 104 couples. The scores obtained from the scale by 10 divorced couples and 50 individuals in the first group were compared for construct validity purposes. A significant difference was found between the groups. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated as .91 for the first group and .89 for the second group. Similarly, test-retest reliability coefficient was found to be .85 (Tezer, 1996). In this study, the Cronbach's alpha internal reliability coefficient for the overall score obtained from the scale was calculated as .90.

Mindfulness in Marriage Scale. Developed by Erus and Deniz (2018), Mindfulness in Marriage Scale determines levels of interpersonal mindfulness in marriage. This 12-item scale has 5 point Likert scale. The lowest score to be obtained from the scale is 12, and the highest score is 60. A high score implies a high level of interpersonal mindfulness in an individual's relationship with his/her spouse. A two-phase data collection procedure was applied for reliability and validity studies of the scale. The data were collected from 384 married individuals in the first phase and from 162 married individuals in the second one. The exploratory factor analysis in the first phase revealed a single-factor structure for the scale. In the second phase, the confirmatory analysis showed that this single-factor structure has a good-fit. As for the reliability analyses of the scale, the Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated as .87 and .85 for the groups respectively (Erus & Deniz, 2018). In this study, the Cronbach's alpha internal reliability coefficient for the scores obtained from the scale was calculated as .81.

Marital Problem Solving Scale: Marital Problem Solving Scale was developed by Baugh, Avery, and Sheets-Hawoth (1982) in order to determine couples' perceptions regarding their marital problem solving skills. This 9-item scale has a 7-point Likert scale format. The study for the adaptation of the scale into Turkish was carried out by Hünler and Gençöz (2002), and 7 point Likert scale format was reduced to 5 point one. The lowest score to be obtained from the scale is 9 and the highest is 45. A high score implies that individuals perceive that they are successful in solving problems in their marriages. The factor analysis revealed a single-factor structure for the scale. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the scale was calculated as .88 (Hünler & Gençöz, 2002). In this study, the Cronbach's alpha internal reliability coefficient was found to be .88.

Data Collection

Required permissions were granted for the data collection instruments used in the study, and data collection set was prepared accordingly. As part of this data set, the participants were informed about the aim of the study and how to fill out data collection instrument. They were also informed that the data will not be shared with third parties and will be used only for the purposes of this study. These instruments were administered to married individuals who participated in the study on a voluntary basis. In addition to printed versions of these instruments, their online versions were prepared via Google Form as a link. Out of 302 total data set, 207 were collected online and 95 from the printed versions. The data was collected between March 2019 and May 2019. It took approximately 15 minutes to fill out data collection instruments.

Data Analysis

SPSS 22 Software Package was used for the analyses of the data. Margin of error was taken as .05. Multiple regression analysis was carried out to determine to what extent interpersonal mindfulness and perceived problem solving skill in marriage predict marital satisfaction.

The data were prepared for multiple regression analysis firstly by examining extreme values and checking kurtosis and skewness values. These two values must range between +1 and -1 for a normal distribution (Çokluk, Şekercioğlu, & Büyüköztürk, 2016). Box graphics for each total scale score were examined, and 4 pieces of data were excluded from the analysis. By doing so, kurtosis and skewness values ranged between +1 and -1. The results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, which examines single variable normality, showed that the data did not display a normal distribution. Çokluk et al. (2016) emphasized that as the

sampling size increases, small differences tend to be meaningful and the kurtosis and skewness values between +1 and -1 prove that distribution does not considerably deviate from normality. In addition, Q-Q graphics was examined, and it was determined that the data fit the single-variable normal distribution because the points in the graphics were on a 45 degree line and close to each other (Büyüköztürk, 2011; Can 2017).

Multi-directional extreme values were examined by using Mahalanobis distance test to prepare the data for regression analysis, in which marital satisfaction was dependent variable and interpersonal mindfulness in marriage and perceived problem solving skill were independent variables. According to chi square distribution table (Büyüköztürk, 2011, p. 196), critical value is 5.99, margin of error is .05. 14 pieces of data higher than 5.99 were excluded from data set in order to meet multi-variable normality assumption (Çokluk et al., 2016).

The presence of multiple correlation problems among independent variables is examined through variance inflation factor (VIF), and tolerance values. There is not a multiple correlation problem if tolerance values are higher than .10 and VIF values are lower than 10 (Palant, 2011). The results of the analysis show that VIF and tolerance values of the variables met the required conditions. In addition, correlation coefficient among variables range between .62 and .70 ($p < .01$). Since these values are lower than .90, multi collinearity problem does not exist (Palant, 2011). Under the light of these conclusions, necessary assumptions were considered to be fulfilled and multiple regression analysis was done with 284 pieces of data accordingly.

Findings

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient analysis was done to determine the correlation between interpersonal mindfulness in marriage, perceived problem solving skills and marital satisfaction. The results of the analysis and descriptive statistics were displayed in Table 2.

Table 2. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient Analysis Results

Variables	1	2	3
1. Marital satisfaction	1.00		
2. Interpersonal mindfulness in marriage	.71*	1.00	
3. Perceived problem solving skills	.70*	.63*	1.00
\bar{X}	40.10	50.81	35.71
SD	7.38	5.77	5.67

* $p < .01$

Table 2 shows that there is a statistically positive significant relationship between interpersonal mindfulness in marriage and marital satisfaction ($r = .71$; $p < .01$); between marital satisfaction and perceived problem solving skills ($r = .70$; $p < .01$); between perceived problem solving skills and interpersonal mindfulness in marriage ($r = .63$; $p < .01$).

In order to determine to what extent interpersonal mindfulness in marriage and perceived problem solving skills predict marital satisfaction, multiple linear regression analysis was applied, and the results were presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Results Regarding the Prediction of Marital Satisfaction

	B	SE	β	t	p	Zero-order r	Partial r
Constant	-8.36	2.39		-3.50	.000		
Mindfulness in marriage	.57	.06	.44	9.49	.000	.71	.48
Marital problem solving skills	.55	.06	.42	9.03	.000	.70	.46

R=.78; R²=.61; F=231.16; $p < .001$

As seen in Table 3, multiple regression analysis results showed that interpersonal mindfulness in marriage and perceived problem solving skills predicted marital satisfaction. Interpersonal mindfulness in marriage and perceived problem solving skills explain 61% of total variance for marital satisfaction. When t-test result regarding the significance of regression coefficient is examined, we can see that interpersonal mindfulness in marriage and perceived problem solving skills significantly predict marital satisfaction ($p < .001$). According to the standardized regression coefficient (β), the relative order of importance of independent variables on marital satisfaction is as follows: interpersonal mindfulness in marriage (.44) and perceived problem solving skill (.42). Both independent variables can be said to have similar levels of effect on marital satisfaction.

Discussion and Conclusion

The results of this study showed that interpersonal mindfulness in marriage and marital problem solving skills significantly predict marital satisfaction. It was found that the scores for interpersonal mindfulness in marriage and marital problem solving skills accounted 61% of the total variance and both variables have almost the same levels of effect on marital satisfaction. This 61% account of marital satisfaction showed that interpersonal mindfulness in marriage and perceived marital problem solving skills are two significant variables leading to high levels of marital satisfaction.

One of the conclusions of this study is that interpersonal mindfulness in marriage predicts marital satisfaction. Mindfulness enables individuals to accept others' lives and empathies (Kozlowski, 2013). Mindfulness improves empathy skills (Gambrel & Piercy, 2015b; Kozlowski, 2013). Empathizing and being in the moment improves effective communication with the spouse (Gambrel & Piercy, 2015b) and relationship satisfaction (Gambrel & Piercy, 2015b; Kozlowski, 2013). It might be said that interpersonal mindfulness effect interaction positively. In addition, marital satisfaction includes effective communication (Canel, 2007; Lewis & Spanier, 1979; Özgüven, 2014; Şafak-Öztürk, 2014). In this context, interpersonal mindfulness improves marital satisfaction. There is only one study in the literature which suggests a parallel research result. Erus (2019) found that interpersonal mindfulness in marriage predicts marital adjustment. In addition, Pratscher et al. (2019), in their study conducted with university students who continued a romantic relationship for at least 3 months, found a low level positive relationship between overall interpersonal mindfulness level and relationship satisfaction. The reason for this low level satisfaction might be that only overall interpersonal mindfulness was measured and the study was conducted with a group that did not experience an extensive relationship as in a marriage. In addition, no relationship was found between intrapersonal mindfulness and relationship satisfaction. Similarly, Erus (2019) found that intrapersonal mindfulness did not predict marital satisfaction. It can be said that interpersonal mindfulness contributes to marital satisfaction rather than intrapersonal mindfulness.

There are studies reporting that interpersonal mindfulness increases the quality of relationships between two people (Bögels et al., 2010; Coatsworth et al., 2010; Duncan, 2007; Pratscher et al., 2018). Interpersonal mindfulness was found to increase the quality of parent-children relationships (Coatsworth et al., 2010; Corthorn and Milicic, 2016; Duncan, 2007; Han et al., 2019) and friendship relationships (Pratscher et al., 2018) and contribute to teacher-student relationship (Elreda, Jennings, DeMauro, Mischenko, & Brown, 2019; Frank et al., 2016). In addition, the researchers concluded that interpersonal mindfulness increased communication and interaction (Bögels et al., 2010; Lippold, Duncan, Coatsworth, Nix, & Greenberg, 2015; Schuh, Zheng, Xin, & Fernandez, 2019), and improved functional behaviors in relationships (Bögels et al., 2010; Duncan, 2007; Karremans, Schellekens, & Kappen, 2019; Lippold et al., 2015; Parent, McKee, Rough, & Forehand, 2016; Pratscher et al., 2018; Pratscher et al., 2019). These conclusions might imply that interpersonal mindfulness in marriage might contribute to marital satisfaction by improving relationships.

Another result of the research suggests that problem solving skills in marriage predict marital satisfaction. In other words, as perceived problem solving skills increase, marital satisfaction also increases. The studies reporting similar results found that communication and problem solution in marital problems predict marital satisfaction and adjustment (Ahmadi, Ashrafi, Kimiaee, & Afzali, 2010; Arvas-Balçı & Hökelekli, 2017; Batık-Vural, 2019; Boylu-Akgün, 2018; Chiu, 1998; Ebeñuwa-Okoh, 2008; Greef & De Bruyne, 2000; Güven, 2005; Hünler & Gençöz, 2003; Kodan-Çetinkaya, 2018; Malkoç, 2001; Özen, 2006; Sardoğan & Karahan, 2005; Soylu & Kağnıcı, 2015; Uçar, 2018; Wozidlo & Segrin, 2013). Effective communication is important in marital relationship (Canel, 2007; Soylu & Kağnıcı, 2015). Communication skills of couples significantly predict marital satisfaction (Lavner, Karney, & Bradbury, 2016). According to problem solving model, marital satisfaction has been shown to be positively related to the use of constructive problem solving strategies (negotiation and compromise) and negatively related to the use of negative problem solving strategies (coercion, withdrawal, and avoidance) (Kurdek, 1991). Solving the existing problems constructively and effectively result in a functional and satisfied family (Sullivan, 2008). Solving problems effectively increases marital satisfaction (Akça-Koca, 2013; Aydemir-Sevim, 2016; Canel, 2012; Demir & Durmuş; 2015; Erbek et al., 2005; Greef & De Bruyne, 2000; Taşköprü, 2013). Collaboration and agreement among spouses improve marital relationship and contribute to healthy marital relationships (Canel, 2007, 2012; Özen, 2006; Segrin & Flora, 2011). In this respect, problem solving skills can be considered an important variable that increases marital satisfaction. Although marital satisfaction and conflicts are interrelated, conflicts do not always cause unhappy marriages (Grych & Fincham, 1990). Problems may arise between spouses for certain reasons (sharing responsibilities, bringing up children, etc.) (Canel, 2007). Conflicts may occur in spouses' interaction which is natural in marriage. Spouses may not agree on all issues. However, it is important to solve problems in an effective way and reconcile in case of conflicts. Such reconciliation helps spouses perceive that they possess marital problem solving skills, which in turn increases perceived marital satisfaction.

This study concludes that interpersonal mindfulness in marriage and perceived problem solving skills increase marital satisfaction. The findings of the study suggest that psychological counsellors, psychologists and therapists who are experts in the field of marriage and family counselling might be recommended to implement interpersonal mindfulness interventions (mindful listening, mindful communication, loving-kindness meditation, etc.) during therapy sessions and improve couples' problem solving skills, which is likely to increase their marital satisfaction. Limitation of this study can be sampling method. These studies was determined by convenience sampling and conducted with individuals who are graduates of at least secondary school, married for at least one year and live in Istanbul. Majority of married couples are graduates of an undergraduate program. The relationship of the variables focused on in this study might be examined in another study with couples or with individuals with different educational background (illiterate, graduates of primary school, etc.).

Longitudinal studies might be designed to examine the changes in married couples' levels of interpersonal mindfulness, problem solving and marital satisfaction. The results of this study are based on the replies of married individuals to data collection instruments within the framework of a quantitative study. How interpersonal mindfulness in marriage affect marital satisfaction and how perceived problem solving skills contribute to marital satisfaction might be examined more thoroughly by using qualitative research methods in a qualitative study. More in-depth data might be obtained through various data collection techniques such as interview, observation, etc. Programs that implement interpersonal mindfulness interventions for married individuals might be developed and the effects of such programs on marital satisfaction might be examined empirically.

GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

Evlilik Doyumunun Evlilikte Bilinçli Farkındalık ve Algılanan Sorun Çözme Becerileri Açısından İncelenmesi

Giriş

Bireyin evlilik ilişkisindeki ihtiyaçları karşılama derecesindeki algısı, evlilik doyumudur (Tezer, 1996). Evlilik doyumunu etkileyen değişkenlerden biri bilinçli farkındalıktır (Burpee & Langer, 2005; Lenger vd., 2017). Son yıllarda bilinçli farkındalığın alanyazında içsel ve kişilerarası bilinçli farkındalık olarak ayrıldığı görülmektedir. İçsel bilinçli farkındalık, bireyin içsel yaşantılarına, şimdiki ana yönelik dikkatini, farkındalığını, yargılamadan kabul etmesini ve tepkisel davranmamasını içermektedir (Kohlenberg vd., 2015). Kişilerarası bilinçli farkındalık ise bireyin etkileşim halindeyken anbean farkındalığını sürdürülebilmesi, etkileşim sürecinde kendi düşüncelerinin, duygularının, vücut duyularının ve içsel deneyimlerinin farkında olması aynı zamanda dışsal yaşantılara, iletişimi sürdürdüğü kişinin söylediklerine, davranışlarına, ruh haline, ses tonuna ve beden diline de dikkat edebilmesidir (Pratscher vd., 2019). Güncel alanyazında kişilerarası bilinçli farkındalığın ilişkileri nasıl etkilediği önemli bir konu haline gelmiştir (Duncan vd., 2009; Frank vd., 2016; McCaffrey, 2015; Pratscher vd., 2018; Pratscher vd., 2019). Bu bağlamda evlilik doyumunu üzerinde kişilerarası bilinçli farkındalığın etkisinin incelenmesi önemli görülmüştür.

Evlilik doyumunu etkileyen en önemli değişkenlerden birinin de sorun çözme becerileri olduğu söylenebilir. Yaşanılan sorunların etkili bir şekilde çözülmesi sağlıklı evliliği ve evlilik doyumunu arttırmaktadır. Evli çiftlerin yaşadığı sorunlar, iletişim yoluyla etkili bir şekilde çözülmezse evlilik ilişkisine ve uyumuna zarar verebilir, eşler arasında çatışmalar artabilir. Evlilik, bireyin hayatındaki en önemli ilişki alanlarından biridir. Eşlerin birbirleriyle farkındalıkla etkileşimde bulunmasının ve sorunlarını etkili bir şekilde çözebilmelerinin doyumlu evliliklerin oluşmasında etkili olduğu söylenebilir. Bu bağlamda araştırmada evli bireylerin evlilikte kişilerarası bilinçli farkındalıklarının ve algılanan sorun çözme becerilerinin evlilik doyumunu ne derece artırdığının belirlenmesi amaçlanmıştır.

Yöntem

Bu araştırmada ilişkisel model kullanılmıştır. Bu araştırma kapsamında evlilikte kişilerarası bilinçli farkındalık ve algılanan sorun çözme becerisinin evlilik doyumunu ne derece yordadığı incelenmiştir.

Araştırmaya, 174'ü (%57,6) kadın ve 128'i (%42,4) erkek olmak üzere toplam 302 evli birey katılmıştır. Veri toplama aracı olarak araştırmacılar tarafından geliştirilen Kişisel Bilgi Formu, Tezer (1996) tarafından geliştirilen Evlilik Yaşamı Ölçeği, Erus ve Deniz (2018) tarafından geliştirilen Evlilikte Bilinçli Farkındalık Ölçeği ve Baugh vd. (1982) tarafından geliştirilen Hünler ve Gençöz (2002) tarafından Türkçe'ye uyarlanan Evlilikte Sorun Çözme Ölçeği kullanılmıştır. Veri toplama araçları, araştırmaya katılmaya gönüllü olan evli bireylere uygulanmıştır. Bireylerin veri toplama araçlarını doldurmaları yaklaşık 15 dakika sürmüştür.

Verilerin analizinde, SPSS 22 paket programı kullanılmış, hata payı .05 alınmıştır. Evlilikte kişilerarası bilinçli farkındalık ve algılanan sorun çözme becerisinin evlilik doyumunu ne derece yordadığını belirlemek için çoklu regresyon analizi yapılmıştır.

Bulgular

Evlilikte kişilerarası bilinçli farkındalık, algılanan sorun çözme becerisi ile evlilik doyumunu arasındaki ilişkiyi belirlemek için Pearson çarpım momentler korelasyon analizi yapılmıştır. Analiz sonucunda evlilikte kişilerarası bilinçli farkındalık ile evlilik doyumunu arasında ($r=.71$; $p<.01$); evlilik doyumunu ile algılanan sorun çözme becerisi arasında ($r=.70$; $p<.01$); algılanan sorun çözme becerisi ile evlilikte bilinçli farkındalık arasında ($r=.63$; $p<.01$) istatistiksel olarak pozitif yönde anlamlı ilişki bulunmuştur.

Evlilikte kişilerarası bilinçli farkındalık ve algılanan sorun çözme becerisinin evlilik doyumunu ne derece yordadığını belirlemek amacıyla çoklu doğrusal regresyon analizi yapılmış, analiz sonucunda evlilikte kişilerarası bilinçli farkındalık ve algılanan sorun çözme becerisinin evlilik doyumunu yordadığı bulunmuştur ($R=.78$; $R^2=.61$; $F=231.16$; $p<.001$). Evlilikte kişilerarası bilinçli farkındalık ve algılanan sorun çözme becerisi, evlilik doyumu toplam varyansının %61'ini açıklamaktadır. Regresyon katsayısının anlamlılığına ilişkin t testi sonucu incelendiğinde evlilikte kişilerarası bilinçli farkındalık ve algılanan sorun çözme becerisinin, evlilik doyumu üzerinde anlamlı bir yordayıcı olduğu görülmektedir ($p<.001$). Standardize edilmiş regresyon katsayısına (β) göre bağımsız değişkenlerin evlilik doyumu üzerindeki göreceli önem sırası; evlilikte kişilerarası bilinçli farkındalık (.44) ve algılanan sorun çözme becerisidir (.42). Her iki bağımsız değişkenin de evlilik doyumu üzerindeki etkilerinin birbirine yakın olduğunu söylemek mümkündür.

Tartışma ve Sonuç

Bu araştırmanın bulgusunda evlilikte kişilerarası bilinçli farkındalığın evlilik doyumunu yordadığı sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Alanyazında bu sonuçla paralel sadece bir araştırma sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Erus (2019) evlilikte kişilerarası bilinçli farkındalığın evlilik uyumunu yordadığını bulmuştur. Alanyazında evlilikte kişilerarası bilinçli farkındalık ile evlilik uyumu arasındaki ilişkiyi inceleyen başka bir araştırmaya ulaşılmaya da kişilerarası bilinçli farkındalığın ikili ilişkilerde ilişki kalitesini arttırdığı yapılan çalışmalarla kanıtlanmıştır (Bögels vd., 2010; Coatsworth vd., 2010; Duncan, 2007; Pratscher vd., 2018). Ayrıca yapılan araştırmalarda kişilerarası bilinçli farkındalığın iletişimi ve etkileşimi arttırdığı (Bögels vd., 2010; Lippold vd., 2015; Schuh vd., 2019) ve ilişkilerdeki işlevsel davranışları geliştirdiğini bulunmuştur (Bögels vd., 2010; Duncan, 2007; Karremans vd., 2019; Lippold vd., 2015; Parent vd., 2016; Pratscher vd., 2018; Pratscher vd., 2019). Bu sonuçlara paralel olarak evlilik ilişkisindeki kişilerarası bilinçli farkındalığın ilişkiyi geliştirilmesiyle evlilik doyumuna katkı sağladığı düşünülebilir.

Araştırmanın bir diğer sonucunda evlilikte sorun çözme becerilerinin evlilik doyumunu yordadığı bulunmuştur. Bu araştırmanın sonucuna benzer olarak çalışmalar, evlilik içi sorunlarda iletişim, sorun ve çatışma çözümlerinin evlilik doyumunun veya uyumunun yordayıcısı olduğunu bulmuştur (Ahmadi vd.,2010; Arvas-Balcı & Hökelekli; 2017; Batk-Vural, 2019; Boylu-Akgün, 2018; Chiu, 1998; Ebeuwa-Okoh, 2008; Greef & De Bruyne, 2000; Güven, 2005; Hünler & Gençöz, 2003; Kodan-Çetinkaya, 2018; Malkoç, 2001; Özen, 2006; Sardoğan & Karahan, 2005; Soylu & Kağnıcı, 2015; Uçar, 2018; Woszidlo & Segrin, 2013). Etkili iletişim, evlilik ilişkisinde oldukça önemlidir (Canel, 2007; Soylu & Kağnıcı, 2015). Yaşanılan sorunların yapıcı ve etkili iletişimle çözülmesi, ailenin işlevsel ve doyumlu olmasını sağlar (Sullivan, 2008). Bu bağlamda sorun çözme becerilerinin evlilik doyumunu arttıran önemli bir değişken olduğu söylenebilir.

Araştırmanın bulgularına göre evlilik ve aile danışmanlığı alanında uzman psikolojik danışman, psikolog ve terapistlere, terapi süreçlerinde kişilerarası bilinçli farkındalık müdahalelerini kullanmaları ve çiftlerin sorun çözme becerilerini arttırmaları önerilebilir. Böylece çiftlerin evlilik doyumları artırılabilir. Bu araştırmada en az ortaöğretim mezunu ve en az bir yıl evli olan bireylerle çalışılmıştır. Evli bireylerin çoğu lisans eğitim düzeyine sahiptir. Bu araştırma kapsamına dâhil edilen değişkenlerin ilişkisi başka bir betimsel araştırmada çiftlerde veya eğitim düzeyi farklı olan (okuma yazma bilmeyen, ilkokul mezunu) evli bireylerde incelenebilir. Evli bireylerin evlilikte kişilerarası bilinçli farkındalık, sorun çözme ve evlilik doyum düzeylerindeki değişimlerin incelendiği boylamsal araştırmalar planlanabilir. Bu araştırmanın sonuçları, nicel araştırma kapsamında evli bireylerin ölçme araçlarına verdikleri yanıtlar doğrultusunda oluşturulmuştur. Evlilikte kişilerarası bilinçli farkındalığın evlilik doyumunu nasıl etkilediği, algılanan sorun çözme becerilerinin evlilik doyumuna nasıl katkı sağladığı gibi sorular nitel araştırma yöntemleri ile derinlemesine incelenebilir. Nitel araştırmalar kapsamında görüşme, gözlem gibi farklı tekniklerden yararlanılarak ayrıntılı bilgilere ulaşılabilir. Evli bireylere yönelik kişilerarası bilinçli farkındalık müdahalelerinin uygulandığı programlar geliştirilebilir ve programların evlilik doyumuna etkisi deneysel araştırmalarla incelenebilir.

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