

Review Paper

Factors Associated With Marital Adjustment in Couples: A Narrative Review



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ABSTRACT

Background and Objective: Marital compatibility is very important in strengthening the relationship between couples and strengthening the foundation of the family. This study was conducted with the aim of investigating the factors related to marital compatibility in couples.

Materials & Methods: This review study was conducted by searching databases such as SID, PubMed, Magiran, IranDoc, ScienceDirect, Scopus and Google Scholar in 2024. The keywords used were “associated factors,” “marital adjustment,” “men,” “women” and “couples.” Subsequently, studies from 2016 to 2024 were selected. After screening titles, abstracts, and full texts of 1124 studies, 18 studies were ultimately included in the review. Studies with undefined sample sizes and methodologies and those lacking full-text availability were initially excluded from the study process. The quality assessment of the studies was conducted using the appraisal tool for cross-sectional studies (AXIS) tool.

Results: The literature review categorized the findings into four groups based on responses to the main research question. These categories include communication factors (interactions, communication style, empathy, and commitment), individual factors (age, age at marriage, marital history, gender and number of children), psychological factors (emotional intelligence, personality traits, attachment style, stress, boredom, domestic violence, self-esteem and marital justice) and economic and social factors (financial status, employment status and education).

Conclusion: Communication, psychological, economic and social factors contribute to the marital adjustment of couples.

Keywords: Associated factors, Marital adjustment, Couples, Narrative review

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Introduction

Marriage is a longstanding divine tradition upheld by laws and regulations [1]. The success of this sacred bond and the well-being of the marriage extend beyond the union itself. In our culture and country, the family unit is established upon the marriage of two individuals [1, 2]. The family stands as the primary and most distinctive social institution; the society's health and prosperity rely on the well-being and contentment of its members. The impact of any individual and relationship, whether positive or negative, is unparalleled in terms of duration, depth, and intensity, with its significance evident across various levels of the individual, the couple (husband and wife) and the family system. Furthermore, the reciprocal influence of this union's quality is profound on other family members in areas such as education, employment, social interactions and related issues [2, 3].

The family is established through the marriage contract between a man and a woman. Marriage represents the initial emotional and legal commitment that an individual undertakes in adulthood and selecting a partner and formalizing a marriage contract marks a pivotal moment in personal maturation and progress [3]. Numerous factors contribute to the longevity of a marriage, with adaptation to stressful circumstances being the most crucial factor [3, 4]. In contemporary times, marital adjustment stands out as a widely utilized concept in studies related to families and marriages [4].

Marital adjustment is a multidimensional concept that illuminates various facets of marriage and represents a process that unfolds throughout a couple's life [5]. It involves adjusting preferences, recognizing each other's traits, establishing behavioral norms, and developing relationship dynamics. Marital adjustment signifies an evolving process between spouses, a concept utilized over the years without a consistent and definitive definition among researchers [5, 6]. It serves as a means through which married individuals, individually or collectively, adapt to sustain their marriage, proving to be one of the pivotal factors influencing the stability and continuity of married life [7-9].

Marital adjustment influences various aspects of individuals' and society's lives, serving as the cornerstone for effective family functioning. It facilitates parental roles, fosters economic development and enhances overall life satisfaction [9, 10]. Conversely, marital adjustment between spouses creates challenges in the aforementioned areas, resulting in difficulties in social interactions, inclinations towards social and moral deviations, and a decline in cultural values within couples [11]. According to the literature, factors

impacting marital adjustment fall into three categories: Personal characteristics, situational factors, and life events [10, 11]. Additionally, variables such as family environment and attachment style exhibit a positive correlation, while factors like irrational thoughts and depression show a negative association with marital adjustment [12, 13].

In the US, approximately 55% of marriages, 42% in England and 37% in Germany ultimately result in divorce [12]. In Iran, as per the latest data from the Civil Registration Organization, the divorce rate surged by 19.1% in 2020 compared to previous years. Concurrently, marriage statistics saw a slight increase of 0.2%, with the divorce-to-marriage ratio reported as 47.5 in 2023 [12, 13]. Over the past two decades in Iran, significant transformations have occurred in the structure of families and the dynamics among their members. Many social science studies investigating the reasons behind the weakening of marital bonds and adjustment have focused on macro variables like social and economic status, income reduction, unemployment and cultural and social challenges. These factors have been identified as influential in the prevalence of marital discord and divorce in Iran [13-15]. Notably, there is a lack of comprehensive studies on the factors associated with marital adjustment in Iran.

Therefore, recognizing the pivotal role of adjustment in couples' relationships and aiming to enhance the quality of married life, fortifying marital bonds and diminishing divorce rates while safeguarding the family unit underscores the comprehensive understanding of the factors linked to couples' adjustment. Consequently, it is crucial to delve into and scrutinize this variable comprehensively, drawing insights from pertinent primary research studies to mitigate conflicts, address issues and elevate satisfaction within marital relationships. Rather than adopting a pathological perspective on factors contributing to marital adjustment and unsuccessful marriages, it is imperative to investigate the impact of social characteristics on marital adjustment [14-17]. Review studies, particularly narrative ones, are structured to address specific research inquiries and meticulously evaluate other original studies within the realm of the research question [18]. Therefore, the present study aims to review the factors associated with marital adjustment among couples.

Materials and Methods

This review study adhered to the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) methodology [18]. It was conducted in five distinct steps: 1) Designing the research question, 2) Searching for and extracting relevant studies, 3) Selecting pertinent observational studies, 4) Tabulating and summarizing the gathered information and data, and 5) Reporting the outcomes [18].

Initially, the research team chose the research subject, leading to the formulation of the research question. Subsequently, keywords were identified using the Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) and relevant studies were retrieved. After eliminating duplicates, articles unrelated to the topic were sifted out based on their titles, abstracts, and full texts. The final article selection process was independently carried out by two researchers (Jila Ganji and Seyedeh Fatemeh Hashemi), with no conflicts or disagreements arising. Various databases, including [Google Scholar](#), [PubMed](#), [Scopus](#), [Library](#), [ScienceDirect](#), [Web of Science](#), [Magiran](#) and [Scientific Information Database \(SID\)](#), were explored to locate all electronically published articles without time constraints. Additionally, a manual search within journals was conducted to extract articles on related subjects from the references of identified articles. The search spanned from 2015 to April 1, 2024, a period chosen due to lifestyle changes observed over the past decade.

Search strategy

The search strategy using the keywords was as follows: ["factors" OR "agents"] AND ["related factors"] AND ["psychological factors" OR "anxiety" OR "stress" OR "depression" OR "bipolar disorder" OR "paranoid" OR "delusional disorder"] AND ["continuity" OR "durability" OR "permanence" OR "persistence" OR "stability"] AND ["physical factors" OR "diseases"] AND ["sexual factors"] AND ["economic factors" OR "social factors" OR "work" OR "job" OR "financial situation" OR "individual factors"].

All relevant studies concerning the factors linked to marital adjustment in couples were extracted during the search. Studies with undefined sample sizes, inconclusive results, and abstracts from conference articles lacking full text were excluded from the study. After eliminating duplicates, articles not aligned with the study's focus were identified by scrutinizing titles, abstracts, and full texts. Two researchers also conducted the final article selection process.

The quality of the articles was assessed using the appraisal tool for cross-sectional studies (AXIS) tool, designed for the critical appraisal of cross-sectional studies. This tool is commonly utilized in systematic reviews by physicians, guideline developers, journal clubs and other review studies within health research groups. The AXIS tool's components were formulated through evidence, epidemiological processes, researchers' experiences, and input from Delphi participants. The tool evaluates five main sections categorized as

introduction, methods, results, discussion and other information, with some sections further divided into subsets, totaling 20 items. Seven items in the final questions (1, 4, 10, 11, 12, 16 and 18) pertain to the quality of reporting, seven items (2, 3, 5, 8, 17, 19 and 20) relate to study design quality, and six items (6, 7, 9, 13, 14 and 15) address potential biases in the study. Response options for the questions include yes, no, don't know, or leave a comment. In this study, 16 items were utilized for critical evaluation and bias assessment (Table 1) [19].

Utilizing the specified keywords, a total of 1124 articles were acquired. To streamline the organization of studies, EndNote software, version 21 was employed. Additionally, three articles were identified through a manual search. Subsequently, utilizing the mentioned software and meticulously evaluating the titles and abstracts of articles meeting the inclusion criteria eliminated a significant portion due to their lack of relevance to the study's objectives. Following this, duplicate and irrelevant studies were excluded, leaving 28 studies. After a review of the abstracts, seven studies were further eliminated and four more were removed upon full-text examination, resulting in a final selection of 18 studies (Figure 1). Upon scrutinizing the abstracts and full texts of these qualified articles, pertinent data were extracted to facilitate the composition of the present study. The essential data extracted from each study encompassed details such as author/year, location, objectives, sample size, research instruments, variables investigated, and outcomes. Subsequently, the extracted data from the articles were categorized and presented as a comprehensive review article (Table 2).

Results

Participants

Participants in the studies were comprised of both men and women, with sampling conducted among married individuals and singles (those without marriage experience, those with unsuccessful marriages and widows). The age range of participants varied from 15 to 50 years. All studies adhered to specific inclusion and exclusion criteria for participant selection. Inclusion criteria typically involved literacy in reading and writing, a willingness to participate in the study, and falling within the specified age group or aligning with the study's objectives. Some studies also recorded the number of previous marriages and mental health records to mitigate the influence of confounding factors [20-36].

Table 1. Quality assessment using axis

Row	Authors (y)	Country	Study Type	Objective	Sample Size	Variables	Tools	Result
1	AbdelJaber Muhammad et al. (2023) [20]	Egypt	Descriptive and analytical	Determining the relationship between psychological stress and marital adjustment	60 couples	Psychological stress and marital adjustment	Psychological stress scale and marital adjustment scale	There is a negative and significant relationship between stress and marital adjustment (P=0.001, r=0.343)
2	Younis Sulaiman et al. (2023) [21]	Iraq	Descriptive and analytical	Obstacles faced by women in balancing work and home and its relationship with marital adjustment	376 married cases aged 23-61	Job and marital adjustment	A researcher-made questionnaire	In this study, it was shown that there was a negative relationship between women's busyness outside the home and marital adjustment.
3	Fahimi et al. (2022) [22]	Iran	Descriptive and analytical	Prediction of marital adjustment based on marital justice and marital dissatisfaction	1100 participants	Marital justice, marital satisfaction, and marital adjustment	Graham Spanier's dyadic adjustment scale (1976), Ghafari's marital justice questionnaire (2012) and Pines' marital discomfort scale (1996)	Marital adjustment can be predicted based on marital justice and marital satisfaction.
4	Ahmadi et al. (2019) [23]	Iran	Descriptive and analytical	The relationship of autonomy and intimacy of the family of origin with marital adjustment: The role of personality factors	150 men and 150 married women	Autonomy, the intimacy of the family of origin, personality factors, and marital adjustment	NEO-five factor inventory (NEO-FFI), marital adjustment scale (DAS) and the family of origin scale (FOS)	Family of origin experiences and individual personality factors may be associated with better or worse levels of marital adjustment.
5	Al Fazari et al. (2017) [24]	Oman	Descriptive and analytical	Factors predicting marital adjustment in Omani society	171 husbands and 83 wives	Socio-demographic characteristics and marital adjustment	A researcher-made questionnaire	Gender, age, number of children and previous divorce history were the main predictors of marital adjustment among the studied sample.
6	Calandre et al. (2021) [25]	Spain	Descriptive and analytical	Marital adjustment in patients with fibromyalgia	257 participants	Physical illness and marital adjustment	Locke-Wallace marital adjustment test (LWMAT)	Patients with fibromyalgia have poor marital adjustment.
7	Onabamiro et al. (2017) [26]	Nigeria	Descriptive and analytical	Three-factor predictors of marital adjustment among couples in Abeokuta Metropolis, Ogun State, Nigeria.	330 couples	Coping style, self-esteem, emotional intelligence, and marital adjustment	coping style questionnaire (CSQ), Self-esteem scale questionnaire (SESQ), emotional intelligence questionnaire (EIQ), and marital adjustment questionnaire (MAQ)	The results show a significant relationship between coping style and marital adjustment but no significant relationship between self-esteem, emotional intelligence and marital adjustment.
8	Derakhshan et al. (2019) [27]	Iran	Descriptive and analytical	Investigating the relationship between work-family conflict and marital adjustment	200 married women	Work-family conflict and marital adjustment	Marital adjustment, work-family conflict, and social support questionnaires	The results showed the importance of social support as a moderator of the relationship between work-family conflict and marital adjustment.

Row	Authors (y)	Country	Study Type	Objective	Sample Size	Variables	Tools	Result
9	Saemi et al. (2019) [28]	Iran	Descriptive and analytical	Predicting marital adjustment based on marital intimacy and emotion regulation difficulty	72 couples	Marital intimacy-difficulty in emotional regulation and marital adjustment	Spanier's marital adjustment questionnaire (1976), marital intimacy questionnaire (2001), and Gertz and Romer's (2004) emotional regulation questionnaire	Couples who have higher marital intimacy and have more ability to control their emotions have more marital adjustment.
10	Nazari et al. (2022) [29]	Iran	Descriptive and analytical	Relationship between identity styles and coping strategies with marital adjustment in nurses	221 participants	Identity styles and coping strategies and marital adjustment	Billings and Moss's coping strategies questionnaire and Locke-Wallace marital adjustment test (LWMAT)	Informational and normative identity styles and the number of shift hours able to explain changes in marital adjustment
11	Ruiz-Marin et al. (2021) [30]	Spain	Descriptive and analytical	Marital adjustment in breast cancer patients	130 female patients	Physical illness and marital adjustment	Locke-Wallace marital adjustment test (LWMAT)	Patients with breast cancer have poor marital adjustment, and this relationship is related to the severity of the disease in them.
12	Durğut et al. (2018) [31]	Turkey	Descriptive and analytical	Predictors of marital adjustment among women	246 women	Socio-demographic characteristics and marital adjustment	Locke-Wallace marital adjustment test (LWMAT)	The incidence of physical violence was inversely correlated with women's marital adjustment scores. In contrast, women's age, education, income level, number of living children, age and education level of their husbands were not correlated.
13	Can and Tufekci (2021) [32]	Turkey	Descriptive and analytical	Factors affecting marital adjustment and life satisfaction of parents with disabled children	286 parents	Socio-demographic characteristics and marital adjustment	Marital adjustment questionnaire (MAQ)	The findings showed that unemployed and illiterate parents with disabled children had higher marital adjustment compared to others.
14	Mohammadi et al. (2016) [33]	Iran	Descriptive and analytical	The relationship between self-worth and communication styles with marital adjustment in women	148 married women	Self-worth and communication styles and marital adjustment	Spanier's marital adjustment questionnaire (1976), self-esteem questionnaire (Krokrolloff, 2003) and communication styles questionnaire (Christensen and Salawi, 1984)	The results of the present study showed that the external dimension of self-worth had a negative effect on marital adjustment. Also, women's communication styles (mutual constructive communication) directly have a positive impact on marital adjustment, and the avoidance style and expectation/withdrawal style have a negative effect on marital adjustment.

Row	Authors (y)	Country	Study Type	Objective	Sample Size	Variables	Tools	Result
15	Andamikhoshk et al. (2013) [15]	Iran	Descriptive and analytical	Prediction of marital adjustment based on marital expectations with the mediating role of marital conflicts	400 married women	Expectations and marital conflict and marital adjustment	Spanier's marital adjustment questionnaire (1976), marital expectations questionnaire (Bahrami et al. 2018) and marital conflict questionnaire (Thanaei, 2018)	Marital expectations had a direct and significant effect on marital conflicts and marital adjustment, and marital conflicts had a direct and significant effect on marital adjustment of married students.
16	Göriş et al. (2016) [35]	Turkey	Descriptive and analytical	Do symptoms related to hemodialysis affect marital adjustment?	282 participants	Physical illness and marital adjustment	Dialysis symptom index (DSI) and revised dyadic adjustment scale (RDAS)	Dialysis symptom index scores in patients had a negative correlation with their marital adjustment score at a significant level. It was also observed that the symptoms experienced by dialysis patients have a negative effect on their marital adjustment.
17	Yılmaz And Avcı, (2021) [36]	Turkey	Descriptive and analytical	The relationship between personality traits, menopausal symptoms, and marital adjustment	559 women	Physical and mental condition and marital adjustment	Marital adjustment scale, Cervantes scale, and menopause grading scale	Education level, economic status, duration of menopause, neurotic and maladjusted personality traits, and physical, mental, and reproductive symptoms were determined as statistically significant predictors of marital adjustment in postmenopausal women.
18	Hoseini Hoseinabad et al. (2018) [34]	Iran	Descriptive and analytical	Prediction of marital adjustment based on attachment styles	220 women	Attachment style and marital adjustment	Marital adjustment questionnaire and adult attachment styles questionnaire	Attachment style was a predictor of marital adjustment. There was a significant negative correlation between marital adjustment and anxious and avoidant attachment style, and the correlation between marital adjustment and secure attachment style was significantly positive.

Current Psychosomatic Research

Data classification

The findings were structured around addressing the primary research question concerning various factors: communication factors (interactions, communication style, empathy, and commitment) [22, 26, 29, 31, 33, 34], individual factors (number of children, age, marital status, history of previous marriages, and gender) [21, 24, 27, 29, 31, 32, 33, 34], psychological factors (emotional intelligence, personality traits, attachment style, stress, boredom, domestic violence, self-esteem, ego, and marital justice) [20, 22, 23, 26, 27, 28, 29, 34, 35], economic

and social factors (financial status, employment status, and education) [21, 27, 28, 31, 32, 36], medical and physical factors (types of physical diseases, including incurable or chronic illnesses) [25, 30, 36, 34].

Description of studies

In the reviewed studies, interactions, communication style, the number of children, empathy, and commitment were identified as communication factors influencing the level of adjustment among couples [22, 26, 29, 31, 33, 34]. Communication factors represent individu-

Table 2. Data extracted from the studies

Authors (y)	Question						
	Were the objectives of the study clear?	Was the study design appropriate for the stated objectives?	Was the sample size justified?	Was the target/reference population clearly defined? Is it clear what the research was about?	Is the sample frame drawn from an appropriate population base to closely represent the target/reference population under study?	Was the selection process random to select individuals/participants representative of the target/reference population under study?	Were measures taken to handle and classify non-respondents?
AbdellJaber Muhammad et al. (2023) [20]	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	I don't know
Younis Sulaiman et al. (2023) [21]	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	I don't know
Fahimi et al. (2022) [22]	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	I don't know
Ahmadi et al. (2019) [23]	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	I don't know
Al Fazari et al. (2017) [24]	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	I don't know
Calandre et al. (2021) [25]	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	I don't know
Onabamiro et al. (2017) [26]	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	I don't know
Derakhshan et al. (2019) [27]	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	I don't know
Saemi et al. (2019) [28]	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	I don't know
Nazari et al. (2022) [29]	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	I don't know
Ruiz-Marin et al. (2021) [30]	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	I don't know
Durğut et al. (2018) [31]	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	I don't know
Can and Tufekci (2021) [32]	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	I don't know
Mohammadi et al. (2016)[33]	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	I don't know
Andamikhoshk et al. (2013) [15]	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	I don't know
Göriş et al. (2016) [35]	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	I don't know
Yılmaz and Avcı (2021) [36]	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	I don't know
Hoseini Hoseinabad et al. (2019) [34]	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	I don't know

Authors (y)	Question								
	Were the risk factors and outcome variables measured according to the study's objectives?	Were the risk factor and outcome variables properly measured using previously piloted or published instrument measures?	Is it clear what was used to determine statistical significance and or precision assessments? (P, CIs)	Are the methods (including statistical methods) sufficiently described to enable their replication?	Is the underlying data adequately described?	Does response rate raise concerns about non-response bias?	If applicable, is information about non-responders explained?	Were the results internally consistent?	Are the results of the analyses explained in the presented work method?
AbdelJaber Muhammad et al. (2023) [20]	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	I don't know	No	Yes	Yes
Younis Sulaiman et al. (2023) [21]	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	I don't know	No	Yes	Yes
Fahimi et al. (2022)[22]	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	I don't know	No	Yes	Yes
Ahmadi et al. (2019) [23]	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	I don't know	No	Yes	Yes
Al Fazari et al. (2017) [24]	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	I don't know	No	Yes	Yes
Calandre et al. (2021) [25]	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	I don't know	No	Yes	Yes
Onabamiro et al. (2017) [26]	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	I don't know	No	Yes	Yes
Derakhshan et al. (2019) [27]	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	I don't know	No	Yes	Yes
Saemi et al. (2019)[28]	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	I don't know	No	Yes	Yes
Nazari et al. (2022) [29]	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	I don't know	No	Yes	Yes
Ruiz-Marin et al. (2021) [30]	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	I don't know	No	Yes	Yes
Durğut et al. (2018) [31]	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	I don't know	No	Yes	Yes
Can and Tufekci (2021) [32]	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	I don't know	No	Yes	Yes
Mohammadi et al. (2016)[33]	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	I don't know	No	Yes	Yes
Andamikhoshk et al. (2013) [15]	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	I don't know	No	Yes	Yes
Göriş et al. (2016) [35]	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	I don't know	No	Yes	Yes
Yılmaz and Avci (2021 [36]	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	I don't know	No	Yes	Yes
Hoseini Hoseinabad et al. (2019) [34]	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	I don't know	No	Yes	Yes

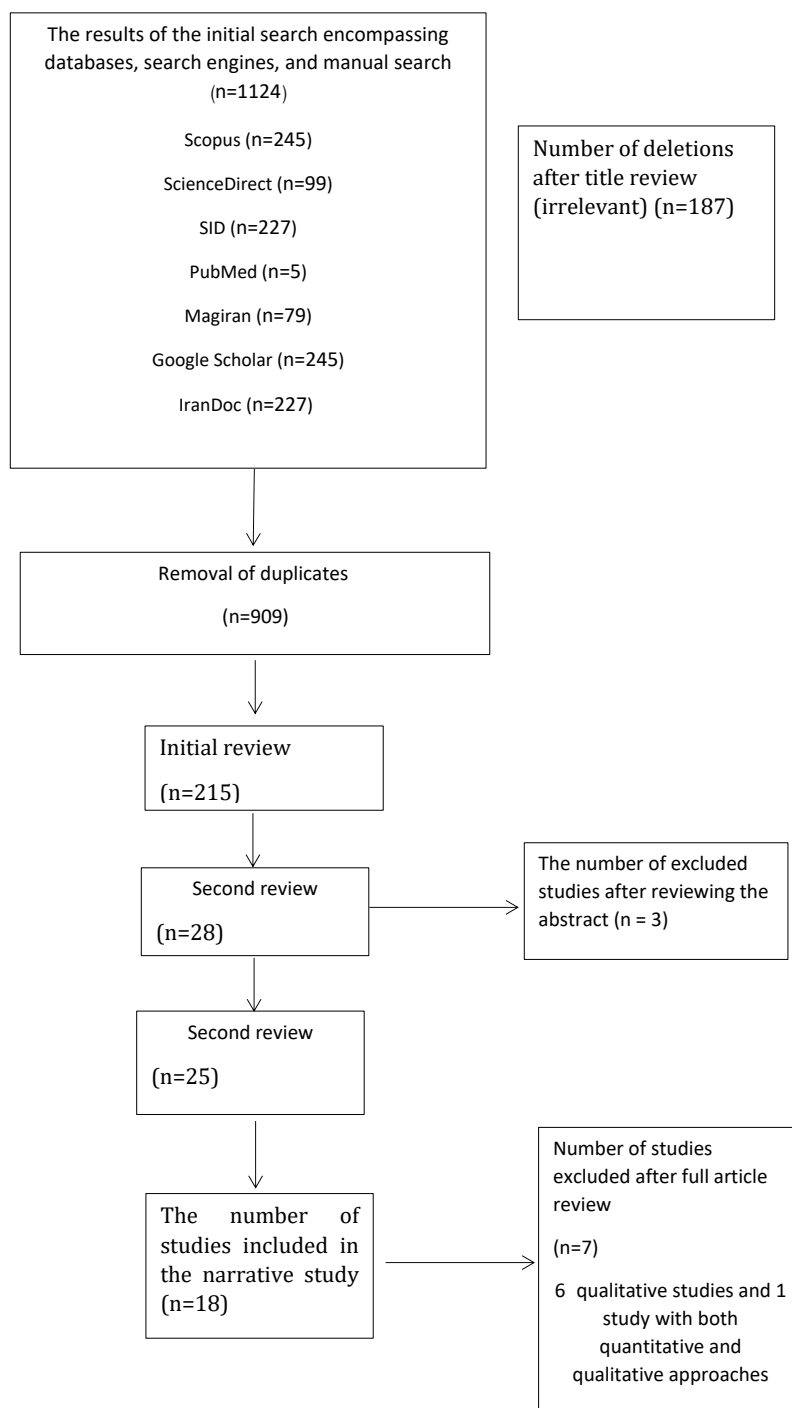


Figure 1. Flowchart of the research stages

als sharing information and emotions using verbal and non-verbal cues. Additionally, certain scenarios, such as the impact of the number of children on communication dynamics within a household, were categorized under communication factors. Enhanced levels of commitment and empathy within couples can foster an environment conducive to improved marital adjustment [22, 29, 33, 34]. Empathy, in this context, pertains to an individual’s cognitive and emotional responses to the experiences

of others, with higher levels of empathy increasing the likelihood of providing assistance and demonstrating compassion.

Eight studies explored the correlation between individual factors and the level of marital adjustment among couples [21, 24, 27, 29, 31, 32, 33, 34]. Within these studies, individuals of older age are found to exhibit higher levels of adjustment compared to their younger

counterparts. The history of an unsuccessful marriage has been identified in some studies as a factor contributing to marital adjustment [29], while in others, it is associated with an increase in adjustment [24, 31]. Furthermore, certain studies indicate that females are more compatible than males [31], with men being perceived as less compatible due to factors such as the presence of testosterone hormones and tendencies toward violence [31]. Conversely, men are deemed more compatible and peace-loving than women in other instances, attributed to factors like fatigue and boredom [24].

Eleven studies delved into the psychological aspects of individuals and their impact on marital adjustment, highlighting various dimensions such as self-esteem, personality traits, emotional intelligence, and attachment style as factors influencing adjustment between couples [20, 22, 23, 26-29, 34, 35]. In these studies, high self-esteem is associated with enhanced adjustment, while certain personality traits like paranoia and narcissism were linked to lower marital adjustment. A secure attachment style also contributed to better adjustment among couples [20, 22, 26-29, 34].

Social status and economic well-being are foundational for fostering positive and harmonious marital relationships [21, 27, 28, 31, 32, 36]. In some studies, employed women are considered a hindrance to favorable marital adjustment. At the same time, in other instances, employment challenges, such as job difficulty, long hours and shifts, and weakened marital adjustment, are mentioned as the culprits [21, 29, 27]. Physical health also plays a significant role in determining the level of adjustment in any relationship. Marriage compatibility between couples often hinges on the physical health of both partners, as an illness, depending on its severity, can impact the marital relationship and its compatibility [25, 30, 36, 34]

Discussion

The present study aimed to explore the factors influencing marital adjustment among couples. This narrative study scrutinized the contents of the selected articles. Marital adjustment fosters optimal conditions for alignment and unity, grounded in heightened intimacy and enhanced moral, physical and psychological resilience. It is widely regarded as a pivotal factor in determining the stability and longevity of married life [6, 7]. Various factors, including women's employment status, influence the adjustment between men and women within a family. Employment and education stand out as crucial contemporary themes aimed at enhancing women's social and economic involvement, leading to significant

transformations in the values, cultural norms and structural dynamics of families and societies [8, 9]. In various studies, women's employment and the resulting fatigue have been identified as impediments to enhanced adjustment, leading to decreased continuity and increased conflict within marriages [21, 29, 27]. A woman's inclination towards employment predominantly impacts the family dynamics, altering the relationships between spouses and children.

Consequently, the educational impact influenced by a later career choice sometimes yields contradictory effects on adjustment. However, it can also enhance women's awareness and knowledge, fostering greater understanding and empathy. The correlation between education and marital adjustment is intertwined with additional factors, including the nature of the job, starting and working hours, the spouse's job satisfaction, the couple's personalities, financial status, and income levels [21, 27]. Interestingly, two studies reported no significant relationship between employment and marital adjustment [20, 21].

Some studies have delved into the psychological dimension of individuals in fostering harmony [20, 34]. The rationale behind the emphasis on this dimension lies in its resemblance to the psychological aspect [20, 22]. Adaptation is cultivated within the psychological realm of individuals and is occasionally influenced, like other psychological factors, by various dimensions of a person's life [28, 29, 34]. Factors such as attachment style, intelligence, life stressors, self-esteem, and personality types play pivotal roles in determining the level of adjustment [34, 35]. In a study by AbdelJaber et al. (2023), the relationship between psychological stress and marital adjustment was explored in 60 couples, revealing that stress diminishes marital adjustment [20]. Onabamiro et al. highlighted a significant correlation between self-esteem, emotional intelligence and marital adjustment [26]. Hosseini noted that individuals with insecure attachment may, at times, exhibit higher marital adjustment, attributing this increase to the fear of losing or being rejected by their partner. Additionally, communication challenges can hinder proper marital adjustment between spouses [34].

Communication styles can stem from psychological issues and serve as the foundation for marital conflicts or the cultivation of intimacy [22, 26, 29, 31, 33, 34]. Each individual employs communication methods to fulfill their desires. The selection of a communication style is influenced by environmental, psychological and, at times, physical and social conditions. A positive coping style can lay the groundwork for enhancing adjustment

between couples, leading to increased marital satisfaction and improved quality of communication within relationships [26, 29].

Certain factors tied to an individual's demographic characteristics, such as age, gender and past marital experiences, can influence the level of adjustment between two individuals [21, 24, 27, 29, 31-34], with studies highlighting both positive and negative associations. Research indicates that older age can contribute to increased adaptability, and instances of past failures may lead to heightened adaptability due to fear of loss or decreased adaptability due to normalization of incompatibility and failure [24, 29, 31]. Al Fazari et al. identified a history of divorce as a key predictor of marital adjustment [24]. Another dimension relevant to marital adjustment is physical health. Individuals with better physical health tend to exhibit higher motivation levels for compromise and coexistence. At the same time, those with chronic or incurable illnesses may demonstrate lower levels of compromise depending on the nature and severity of the disease. Studies by Ruiz-Marin et al. [30] Göriş et al. [35] and Calandre et al. [25] have identified various chronic and incurable diseases as factors contributing to reduced marital adjustment, noting that the average adjustment among individuals with such conditions tends to be lower than that of the general population. Naturally, individuals experiencing physical fatigue may place less value on their marriage, potentially leading to diminished hope for shared longevity in such relationships.

One limitation of this study is that while the articles meeting the inclusion criteria were identified and reviewed, some published studies may have been overlooked due to limited access to languages other than Farsi and English and restricted access to databases like PsycINFO. Another limitation lies in the variation of adjustment assessment tools used across different studies. Additionally, the unavailability of full-text articles and excluding non-English or non-Persian language studies present further constraints. Despite these limitations, the study's results can be valuable for developing intervention programs.

Conclusions

Various factors, including communication styles, individual traits, psychological aspects, economic and social conditions, and medical and physical considerations, are linked to marital adjustment among couples. These factors, as documented in the literature, can be leveraged to enhance adjustment in couples through the development of targeted intervention programs.

Educational application

The study's findings shed light on the factors influencing marital adjustment. Understanding these factors can aid in identifying facilitators and barriers, ultimately fortifying the foundation of families. With proper planning and the assistance of psychological experts, it is hoped that tailored educational programs can be crafted to bolster family structures.

Clinical application

This study delved into the factors associated with marital adjustment, highlighting predictive indicators of incompatibility that could inform the development of clinical trials focused on marital harmony.

Application in policy-making

Given that enhancing marital adjustment and fortifying family structures are key objectives in the country's social development agenda, the study's outcomes are anticipated to be instrumental in refining policies to enhance the quality of family-strengthening programs.

Ethical Considerations

Compliance with ethical guidelines

The authors of this study have meticulously adhered to ethical considerations and general publication standards, ensuring compliance with guidelines to prevent plagiarism, falsification, data manipulation, and the simultaneous submission of articles to multiple journals

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Authors' contributions

Supervision: Jila Ganji and Zeinab Hamzehgardeshi; Research and data collection: Seyedeh Fatemeh Hashemi and Jila Ganji; Data Analysis: Abolfazl Hosseinnataj And Seyedeh Fatemeh Hashemi; Conceptualization, methodology, writing—original draft, review, editing and funding department: All authors.

Conflict of interest

The authors declared no conflict of interest.

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