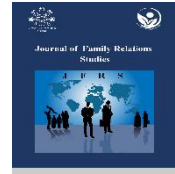




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### Research Paper

## Structural Equation Modeling of Marital Adjustment Based on Spiritual Well-Being: The Mediating Role of Psychological Hardiness



Mohammadreza Tamannaefar<sup>1\*</sup> , Fatemeh Hadizadeh<sup>2</sup> & Ahmad Mazhabdar<sup>3</sup>

1. Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, Faculty of Humanities Sciences, University of Kashan, Kashan, Iran.

2. Master Student of General Psychology, Department of Psychology, Faculty of Humanities Sciences, University of Kashan, Kashan, Iran.

3. Master Student of General Psychology, Department of Psychology, Faculty of Humanities Sciences, University of Kashan, Kashan, Iran.

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### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** The strength of the family institution heavily depends on the quality of couples' relationships, with marital adjustment being a key component. This study aimed to examine the mediating role of psychological hardiness in the relationship between spiritual well-being and marital adjustment.

**Methods:** This applied and correlational research was conducted using structural equation modeling. The participants included 303 married employees from knowledge-based companies in Isfahan Science-Research Town, selected through convenience sampling in 2024. Data were collected using Paloutzian and Ellison's Spiritual well-being Scale (SWBS), Spinner's Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (RDAS), and Kobasa's Psychological Hardiness Questionnaire. Analyses were performed using SPSS and AMOS software version 24.

**Results:** Spiritual well-being had a significant direct effect on marital adjustment ( $\beta = 0.357$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and psychological hardiness ( $\beta = 0.606$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Psychological hardiness also showed a direct effect on marital adjustment ( $\beta = 0.239$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Furthermore, spiritual well-being indirectly influenced marital adjustment through psychological hardiness ( $\beta = 0.145$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).

**Conclusion:** Spiritual Well-being can promote compatibility between couples directly and also through psychological hardiness. This finding can be utilized in psychological interventions by counselors and family therapists.

### 1. Introduction

The family is one of the most influential societal institutions, playing a crucial role in individual and social development. It is a central element for the growth and flourishing of both individuals and society (Ahmadi et al., 2020). Actually, the family is a one-of-a-kind entity that can satisfy the needs of both individuals and the community (Goyal & Narayan, 2024), and it can serve as the foundation for human

well-being and success (Ma et al, 2023). In a healthy family, the different needs of its members are met within the context of an emotional and intimate relationship, with collaboration and mutual support (Mikaeili et al., 2023). Family members help each other, enjoy being together, and promote well-being and happiness (Lampropoulou, 2018; Yang & Wang, 2023). It is clear that the core of this institution is composed

### \*Corresponding Author:

Mohammadreza Tamannaefar

Address: Department of Psychology, Faculty of Humanities Sciences, University of Kashan, Kashan, Iran.

E-mail: [tamannai@kashanu.ac.ir](mailto:tamannai@kashanu.ac.ir)



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of the man and woman who, through the bond of marriage, form the heart of the family. Marriage is notably advantageous for society because it serves as the fundamental base of the family and the cornerstone of society itself. It establishes stability and meaningful relationships in human connections, provides a suitable environment for the nurturing and development of children, and plays a significant role in conveying cultural values and civilization to future generations. Marriage is not only a personal interaction but also a valuable social institution that bolsters the national economy (Harshini & Gopalan, 2020). Marriage is considered a key institution in every society, and having a successful marital life is nearly a principal and ideal goal for most individuals (Myers et al., 2005). For that reason, the quality of the relationship between spouses can play a key role in the robustness and efficiency of the family structure. However, it appears that in the era of modernity, and specifically in recent years, the bond of marriage has encountered the threat of instability (Wondimu & Andualem, 2024), with divorce rates showing a considerable increase (Afonso et al., 2022). In addition, many marriages and spousal relationships are unsuccessful, with spouses not divorcing for a variety of reasons (Rashidi et al., 2023). Nonetheless, one could claim that the harms of such relationships are no less than the consequences of formal marital dissolution. Therefore, a thorough and exact evaluation of the factors influencing marital relationship quality and the stability of the family foundation seems imperative.

Marital adjustment is one of the core aspects related to the relationship between spouses, holding a leading position in family and marital studies (Spanier, 1976). It is one of the most crucial factors influencing spousal stability and strengthening the family. Marital adjustment refers to the quality of communication between spouses, including cohesion, supportiveness, mutual sharing of emotions and thoughts, the degree of interaction and the amount of time spent together. Agreement on fundamental aspects of life, such as financial matters or the division of domestic duties, plays an essential role in achieving optimal adjustment (Mikaeili and Salmani, 2021). Furthermore, compatible couples typically share similar interests and values and are consistent in expressing affection towards each other (Ünal & Akgün, 2020).

In fact, marital adjustment is a continuous process in the relationship between spouses, which is related to reaching harmony in various areas where conflicts may occur between them (Ahmadi et al., 2020). A man and woman who marry, require the capacity to adapt themselves to half a century of societal changes, as well as to the growth and mutual changes in each other; if not, their marital relationship is likely to face difficulties (Mahdipour &

Sadaqatifard, 2015). According to Gottman (1999), couples must learn how to create a calm environment, regain their composure, and refocus their attention. They need to learn how to regulate and manage intense and differing emotions.

Couples with strong compatibility strive to manage their psychological impulses and adapt to life's pressures so that they can find suitable solutions to complex and extensive issues (Alidousti et al., 2021) and manage the latent challenges of life by enhancing their level of adjustment. A strong and positive spousal relationship is the key to life satisfaction and psychological wellness (Çelik et al., 2022). Research has revealed that marital adjustment positively influences marital satisfaction (Chiş et al., 2022; Özgüç & Tanrıverdi, 2018; Shahriar et al., 2023), well-being (Ma et al., 2023), life satisfaction (Işık et al., 2020), and happiness (Kermani et al., 2021; Yang & Wang, 2023). Various studies indicate that numerous aspects are related to marital adjustment, including conflict resolution strategies (Wagner et al., 2019), problem-solving and emotion management skills (Rezazadeh et al., 2024), the use of media and social networks (Dew & Tulane, 2015), environmental elements and gender differences (Beam & et al., 2018), personality traits (Boiman & Littman, 2022 & haji abbasi & taheer, 2022), marital intimacy (Habibi et al., 2024), anxiety (Postler et al., 2022), allocation of childcare tasks (Carlson et al., 2016) and sexual issues (Blumenstock & Papp, 2017; Farajnia et al., 2023).

A contributing factor related to marital adjustment is "spiritual well-being". Spirituality is a dynamic and inner dimension of humanity through which individuals seek ultimate purpose, meaning and transcendence, and experience relationships with themselves, their family, others, nature, society and things that are vital or holy (Celano et al., 2022). In fact, spirituality is one of the intrinsic needs of humans and is essential for personal growth in cognitive, emotional, and ethical domains, accompanied by the ongoing effort of individuals to respond to the existential questions of life. Based on Moberg (1978), Spiritual well-being has two principal aspects: the vertical aspect, which concerns the relationship with God, and the horizontal aspect, which points to a sense of purpose in life and satisfaction with life, regardless of any specific religion. Ellison (1983) also proposes that spiritual well-being contains both a psychological-social dimension and a religious dimension; the religious aspect depicts the connection with a higher power, i.e, God, whereas the existential aspect reflects an individual's sense of who they are, what they do, why they do it, and where they belong. Both the religious and existential aspects encompass transcendence and flow beyond oneself. Spiritual beliefs

may enhance well-being and, in particular, spiritual well-being, by cultivating inner peace, faith, optimism, self-confidence, and greater effort (Saify & Taghavi, 2019). Interpersonal relationships, notably marital relationships, may be an area influenced by spirituality. Religious teachings also provide direction for life and provide a system of beliefs and values affecting the quality of marital relationships (Hünler & Gençöz, 2005). Thanaghee et al., (2011) revealed in their research that religious commitment is a predictor of marital satisfaction, and individuals with religious adherence have a tendency to use lower levels of dysfunctional and incompatible patterns in their relationships with their spouses. Many studies have indicated that spiritual health is associated with well-being and the quality of marital relationships, and it impacts marital adjustment (Besarat et al., 2021; Eidi & Alivandi Vafa, 2021; Farajnia et al., 2024; Karimi et al, 2019; Li et al., 2018; Simonič & Klobučar, 2017; Tuttle & Davis, 2015; Valentina & Nurcahyo, 2023).

Another factor related to marital adjustment is psychological hardiness. Hardiness includes three vital personality traits: commitment, control, and challenge, which facilitate a specific kind of perception, evaluation, and coping that leads to effective management of stressful events and creates the foundation for human adaptation to different life situations (Kobasa & Puccetti, 1983). Indeed, hardiness is considered a worldview and attitude that develops over time and commonly remains as a stable personality trait. tough individuals feel empowered in life, are committed to their tasks, welcome life's challenges, and changes and experience a stronger sense of control. They have a tendency to interpret stressful and painful experiences as a normal part of life—an aspect of life that is, in general, interesting and valuable (Bartone et al., 2022). Hardiness can improve psychological resilience, protect individuals from the negative impacts of anxiety, and enhance human health and performance (Gravand et al, 2022; Predko et al., 2023). An important aspect of the hardiness mechanism comprises the meaning or interpretation that individuals attribute to events around them and their place within this universe of experiences. hardy individuals commonly view life experiences and events as interesting, valuable, and challenging, seeing them as opportunities for personal growth and success, and believe they can keep control over them (Bartone, 2006). Research demonstrates that hardiness has a negative relationship with anxiety, worry, and neuroticism (Kowalski & Schermer, 2019; Lassen et al., 2022) and with avoidance coping strategies (Thomassen et al., 2018), while it has a positive relationship with mindfulness (Baradaran et al, 2023; Kowalski &

Schermer, 2019), self efficacy (Cheng et al, 2019; Gil et al., 2024), resilience (Buheji, 2023; Maddi, 2016), physical health (Hosseini et al., 2022), and mental health (Rashid et al., 2023).

Moreover, numerous studies indicate a positive and meaningful relationship between hardiness and marital adjustment (Beheshteh et al., 2021; Mahdikhani & Izadi, 2021; Roshan-Nejad et al., 2019; Zarei, 2019). On the other hand, the findings of some studies show that spiritual well-being has a positive and significant relationship with psychological hardiness and can predict it. (Bakhshi et al., 2023; Damirchi et al., 2017; Safara et al., 2023; Saify & Taghavi, 2019)

Despite evidence suggesting the role of spiritual well-being in improving marital adjustment, a more precise understanding of how spiritual well-being fosters components of adjustment within couples' relationships could significantly enhance the quality of counseling provided by couple therapists and the efficiency of couple relationship training programs. Based on the existing literature, it seems that spiritual well-being may promote marital adjustment by fostering psychological hardiness in each couples. However, the mediating role of psychological hardiness in the relationship between spiritual well-being and marital adjustment has not been investigated yet. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the mediating role of psychological hardiness in the relationship between spiritual well-being and marital adjustment.

## 2. Materials and Methods

This study is an applied, correlational research, employing structural equation modeling. The statistical population consisted of all married employees of knowledge-based companies in the Scientific and Research Town of Isfahan in 2023. To determine the sample size, the Daniel Soper model (2021) was applied, following the works of Cohen (1988) and Westland (2010). The estimated effect size was set at 0.3, the expected statistical power at 0.9, and the significance level at 0.05. Consequently, the minimum sample size was determined to be 288 participants. Considering the possibility of data attrition, 309 individuals were selected through convenience sampling and completed the questionnaires online. The inclusion criterion for this study was a minimum of one year since the beginning of the marital relationship and the exclusion criterion was incomplete or outlier data. After an initial review of the collected data, 6 questionnaires with invalid responses were excluded from the analysis, leaving 303 questionnaires for statistical analysis. The data were analyzed using SPSS and AMOS version 24 statistical software.

### Instruments

**Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (RDAS):** This 14-item questionnaire was designed by Busby, Crane, Larson and Christensen in 1995. The original version, consisting of 32 items, was created by Spanier in 1976 to assess the quality of marital adjustment. The revised version includes three subscales: consensus (items 1 to 6), satisfaction (items 7 to 10) and cohesion (items 11 to 14). Responses are scored based on a Likert scale, where a score of 5 represents "strongly agree," and a score of 0 indicates "strongly disagree". The score range was between 0 and 70, with a cutoff point of 48. Higher scores indicate better marital adjustment. Hollist and Miller (2005) stated the reliability of the RDAS using Cronbach's alpha, ranging from 0.80 to 0.90. In Iran, the validity and reliability of the questionnaire have also been verified. Isanejad (2008) calculated Cronbach's alpha for the total scale as 0.91 and for the subscales of consensus, satisfaction, and cohesion as 0.81, 0.86 and 0.92 respectively. In this study, Cronbach's alpha was found to be 0.90.

**Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWBS):** This scale was created by Paloutzian and Ellison in 1982 and consists of 20 items with two subscales: religious well-being (RWB), which Assesses the individual's satisfying relationship with God (odd-numbered items), and existential well-being (EWB), Measuring the sense of purpose and life satisfaction (even-numbered items). Responses are rated on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". The score range is between 20 and 120, with scores below 40 reflecting low spiritual well-being and scores above 100 reflecting a high level of spiritual well-being. Paloutzian and Ellison reported Cronbach's alpha for the overall scale as 0.93, with 0.91 for both RWB and EWB subscales (Paloutzian & Ellison, 1982). The reliability of this scale has also been examined in Iran. Dehshiri et al., (2008) reported a Cronbach's alpha of 0.90 for the overall

scale and 0.82 and 0.87 for the RWB and EWB subscales, respectively. In addition, test-retest reliability coefficients were reported as 0.85, 0.78, and 0.81 for the overall scale, RWB, and EWB, respectively. In the present study, Cronbach's alpha was calculated as 0.87 for the overall scale, with 0.85 for the religious well-being subscale and 0.77 for the existential well-being subscale.

**Psychological Hardiness Questionnaire:** In 1982, Kobasa and Maddi designed the short form of the Psychological Hardiness Questionnaire, consisting of 20 items. This questionnaire assesses three subscales: commitment (Items 1–9), Control (Items 10–16), and Challenge (Items 17–20). Each item is scored on a 4-point scale ranging from 0 to 3, where 3 shows "Never," 2 "Rarely," 1 "Sometimes," and 0 "Often". The scores on this scale range from 0 to 60, with higher scores revealing a higher level of hardiness. Kobasa and colleagues reported the reliability of the questionnaire using Cronbach's alpha, with values of 0.95 for the commitment subscale, 0.94 for control and 0.91 for challenge (Kobasa et al., 1982). In Iran, Zareh and Aminpour (2011) assessed the validity and reliability of this questionnaire, reporting an overall Cronbach's alpha of 0.91 and subscale reliabilities of 0.84, 0.82, and 0.75 for commitment, control, and challenge, respectively. In the current study, the reliability of the questionnaire was also examined. The Cronbach's alpha for the overall questionnaire was calculated as 0.91, and for the subscales of commitment, control, and challenge, the values were 0.82, 0.84, and 0.85, respectively.

### 3. Results

Within the participants, 215 were women (71%), and 88 were men (29%). The mean age of the participants was 36.72 years with a standard deviation of 10.71. Table 1 indicates the descriptive statistics, including mean, standard deviation, and normality indices for the variables under study.

**Table 1. Mean, Standard Deviation, and Normality Indices of the Research Variables**

| Variable                | Mean  | Standard Deviation | Skewness | Kurtosis |
|-------------------------|-------|--------------------|----------|----------|
| Spiritual Well-Being    | 89/64 | 114                | -0/268   | 0/553    |
| Religious Well-Being    | 47/27 | 8/32               | -1/033   | 1/073    |
| Existential Well-Being  | 42/36 | 7/78               | -0/183   | 0/602    |
| Psychological Hardiness | 51/89 | 11/55              | -0/181   | -0/336   |
| Commitment              | 24/13 | 5/46               | -0/067   | -0/381   |
| Control                 | 17/79 | 4/55               | -0/319   | -0/492   |
| Challenge               | 9/96  | 3/37               | -0/037   | -0/769   |
| Marital Adjustment      | 53/25 | 9/19               | -0/85    | 0/968    |
| Consensus               | 26/31 | 4/47               | -1/382   | 1/855    |
| Satisfaction            | 12/27 | 3/15               | 0/035    | -0/292   |
| Cohesion                | 14/67 | 3/08               | -0/816   | -0/292   |

The correlation between the study variables is presented in Table 2.

As revealed in Table 2, marital adjustment is significantly

positively correlated with spiritual well-being and psychological hardiness ( $p < 0.01$ ). To evaluate the goodness of fit for the research model, structural equation



modeling (SEM) using the maximum likelihood estimation method was applied. This method needs various fundamental assumptions, which were examined before to the analysis. In this study, more than ten

participants were considered for each parameter as part of the sample size. All variables were measured on an interval scale.

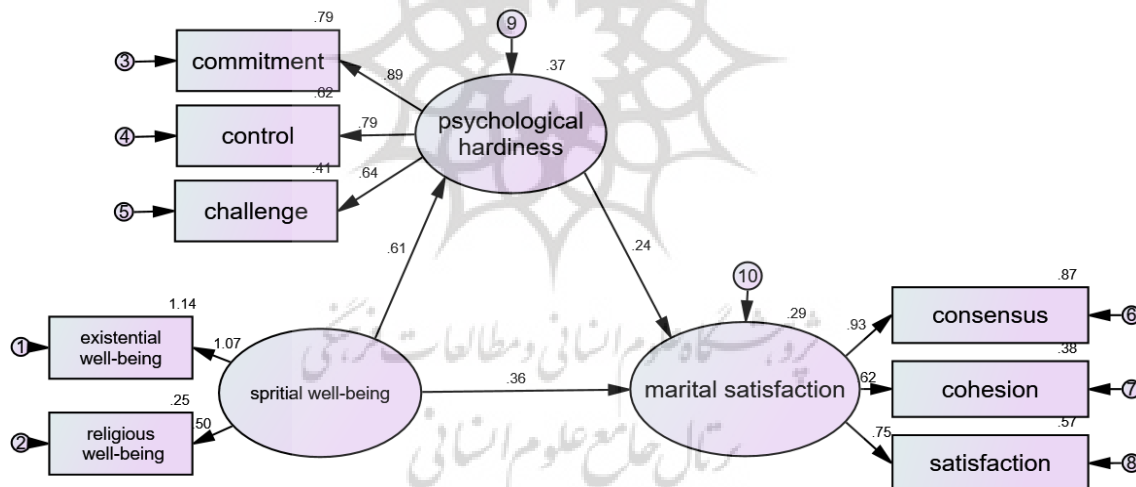
**Table 2. Correlation Matrix of Research Variables**

| Variable                | 1      | 2      | 3      | 4      | 5      | 6      | 7      | 8      | 9      | 10     | 11 |
|-------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|----|
| Spiritual Well-Being    | 1      |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |    |
| Religious Well-Being    | 0/89** | 1      |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |    |
| Existential Well-Being  | 0/86** | 0/53** | 1      |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |    |
| Psychological Hardiness | 0/53** | 0/33** | 0/61** | 1      |        |        |        |        |        |        |    |
| Commitment              | 0/48** | 0/29** | 0/57** | 0/91** | 1      |        |        |        |        |        |    |
| Control                 | 0/43** | 0/26** | 0/49** | 0/87** | 0/71** | 1      |        |        |        |        |    |
| Challenge               | 0/44** | 0/30** | 0/48** | 0/75** | 0/55** | 0/51** | 1      |        |        |        |    |
| Marital Adjustment      | 0/36** | 0/17** | 0/47** | 0/36** | 0/40** | 0/26** | 0/26** | 1      |        |        |    |
| Consensus               | 0/38** | 0/18** | 0/51** | 0/38** | 0/41** | 0/27** | 0/29** | 0/91** | 1      |        |    |
| Satisfaction            | 0/21** | 0/07   | 0/30** | 0/25** | 0/28** | 0/16** | 0/19** | 0/78** | 0/56** | 1      |    |
| Cohesion                | 0/31** | 0/17** | 0/37** | 0/28** | 0/32** | 0/21** | 0/16** | 0/84** | 0/70** | 0/49** | 1  |

\*\*p<0/01, \*p<0/05

To evaluate the normality of the research variables, skewness and kurtosis were calculated (Table 1). The scatter plot analysis showed a linear relationship between the predictor and criterion variables. The tolerance index for each predictor variable was greater

than 0.10, and the variance inflation factor (VIF) for each predictor was lower than 5, confirming that multicollinearity was not an issue (Meyers et al., 2016). Consequently, the assumption of no multicollinearity was met.



**Figure 1. Structural Model of the Study**

To evaluate the model fit (psychological hardiness as a mediator in the relationship between spiritual well-

being and marital adjustment), several metrics were utilized, which are reported in Table 3:

**Table 3. Model Fit Indices**

|                     | $\chi^2$ | df | $\chi^2/df$ | GFI  | AGFI | IFI  | NFI  | CFI  | RMSEA |
|---------------------|----------|----|-------------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Proposed Model      | 28/154   | 17 | 1/656       | 0/98 | 0/95 | 0/98 | 0/97 | 0/99 | 0/04  |
| Acceptable criteria | -        | -  | <3          | 0/9< | 0/8< | 0/9< | 0/9< | 0/9< | 0/08> |

According to the results in Table 3, the values of the model fit indices encompass the chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio ( $\chi^2/df$ ) at 1.65, the Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) at 0.98, the Normed Fit Index (NFI) at 0.97, the Incremental Fit Index (IFI) at 0.98, the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) at 0.99, and the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) at 0.04. Based on Kline (2023), a model is recognized as having a good fit if at

least three indices meet the required thresholds. Within this study, GFI, NFI, CFI, and IFI values exceed 0.90, and the RMSEA value is below 0.08. Additionally,  $p<0.05$  and  $\chi^2/df<3$ , demonstrating that the model meets the acceptable criteria for a good fit.

As shown in the model, marital adjustment is predictable based on spiritual well-being with the mediating role of psychological hardiness, explaining 29% of the variance

in marital adjustment.

Moreover, the conceptual model of this study reveals the presence of both direct and indirect pathways. Table 4

**Table 4. Results of Direct and Indirect Effects Evaluation**

|          | Path                                                                                        | $\beta$ | Standard Error (SE) | p-value | Confidence Interval (CI) |
|----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|---------------------|---------|--------------------------|
| total    | Marital Adjustment $\rightarrow$ Spiritual Well-being                                       | 0/502   | 0/506               | 0/001   | (0/393)(0/619)           |
|          | Marital Adjustment $\rightarrow$ Spiritual Well-being                                       | 0/357   | 0/086               | 0/001   | (0/221)(0/566)           |
| direct   | Spiritual Well-being $\rightarrow$ Psychological Hardiness                                  | 0/606   | 0/068               | 0/002   | (0/463)(0/726)           |
|          | Psychological Hardiness $\rightarrow$ Marital Adjustment                                    | 0/239   | 0/092               | 0/014   | (0/048)(0/398)           |
| indirect | Spiritual Well-being $\rightarrow$ Psychological Hardiness $\rightarrow$ Marital Adjustment | 0/145   | 0/053               | 0/011   | (0/038)(0/246)           |

As shown in Table 4, the total effect of spiritual well-being on marital adjustment ( $\beta = 0.502$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) is significant. In addition, the direct effect of spiritual well-being on marital adjustment ( $\beta = 0.357$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), the direct effect of spiritual well-being on psychological hardiness ( $\beta = 0.606$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), and the direct effect of psychological hardiness on marital adjustment ( $\beta = 0.239$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) were also significant.

In the study model, the indirect effect of spiritual well-being on marital adjustment through psychological hardiness is 0.145, which is significant. This coefficient shows that psychological hardiness, as a mediating variable, enhances the relationship between spiritual well-being and marital adjustment. As the direct effect of spiritual well-being on marital adjustment is also significant, psychological hardiness plays a partial mediating role in the relationship between spiritual well-being and marital adjustment.

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

The aim of the current study was to investigate the structural equation model of marital adjustment based on spiritual well-being with the mediating role of psychological hardiness.

The results of the research showed that spiritual well-being directly predicts marital adjustment, which is consistent with the findings of Besharat et al., (2019), Farajnia et al., (2023), and Valentina & Nurcahyo (2023). This finding can be explained by stating that individuals who understand the meaning and purpose of life and believe in the existence of a kind, knowledgeable, and all-powerful God have higher psychological well-being (Eidi & Alivandi Vafa, 2021). The positive feelings extracted from the meaning of life, ongoing progress towards goals, and communion with God help prevent many negative emotions, such as hopelessness, depression and feelings of emptiness. These factors also enhance life satisfaction and happiness (Damirchi et al., 2017). This psychological well-being and positive outlook on life increase their capacity for constructive interaction with their spouses and the management of marital conflicts. Such

presents the evaluation of these direct and indirect pathways.

individuals possess greater capabilities in forgiveness and self-sacrifice, which are important factors in marital adjustment and reducing the damage caused by marital conflicts (Çelik, 2022).

Spirituality also improves individuals' resilience levels, making them more adaptable and tolerant when facing challenges and difficulties in marital life (Manning et al., 2019). Individuals with spiritual and religious beliefs consider marriage a sacred bond, which promotes greater commitment and loyalty to their spouse and the protection of the marital relationship. This commitment to the shared life is one of the crucial factors influencing marital adjustment (Besharat & Rafiezadeh, 2021; Buyukbayraktar & Kesici, 2020; Simonič & Klobučar, 2017).

Another aspect of spiritual well-being is the refinement of a sense of responsibility toward satisfying both material and emotional needs of the spouse, which plays a key role in marital adjustment and satisfaction (Farajnia et al., 2023; Mahdikhani & Izadi, 2021). On the other hand, the constant sense of God's presence in one's life plays an important role in raising an individual's self-regulation abilities, empowering them to control their anger during marital conflicts and avoid psychological and physical harm (Kalsoom & Kamal, 2018).

God-centeredness decreases selfishness and egocentric tendencies in each spouse, expanding empathy, intimacy, and self-sacrifice in the marital relationship (Hajlo et al., 2016). Couples are on a path of flourishing together, supporting one another while managing the challenges of their shared life through collaboration and synergy. This, in turn, leads to marital satisfaction and adjustment.

The second finding of the study indicated that spiritual well-being predicts psychological hardiness, and psychological hardiness, in turn, predicts marital adjustment. This is consistent with the findings of (Bakhshi et al., 2023; Beheshteh et al., 2022; Mahdikhani & Izadi 2021; Roshan Nejad et al., 2019; Damirchi et al., 2017; Safara et al., 2022; Saify & Taghavi, 2019).

Moreover, the results showed the mediating role of psychological hardiness in the relationship between spiritual well-being and marital adjustment. In explaining this, it can be said that the spiritual connection with God and a purposeful approach to life cultivate enthusiasm in individuals as they move toward their goals, bringing a sense of security, and control over their circumstances (Webb et al., 2010). An individual who experiences higher levels of spirituality in life can cope with challenging situations more easily, as having a meaning in life creates the strength and capacity to manage and endure difficulties (Safara et al., 2022).

In fact, spiritual well-being affects the core components of hardiness, namely commitment, challenge-seeking and control. The power of hardiness and resilience at a societal level empowers people in a community to continue their lives with hope and motivation for the future, even when faced with the harshest life situations, such as sanctions, war, and various psychological and economic pressures. They overcome challenges with success in pursuit of their goals (Buheji, 2023).

In light of this, at the familial and marital level, the meaning system extracted from spiritual well-being allows each spouse to approach life's problems with a resilient mindset. They use more functional coping strategies, view life events as controllable and predictable, and believe that with effort and mutual support, they can impact what happens around them. Accordingly, hardy individuals see the challenges of married life as an opportunity for personal growth and greater self-fulfillment. With a sense of empowerment and hope, they face these conditions and manage them in the way of greater marital adjustment (Saify & Taghavi, 2019). More precisely, hardiness helps individuals manage the challenges of married life more effectively by providing flexibility and greater resilience in difficult situations. This mindset enables spouses to navigate difficulties with minimal damage and maintain the cohesion of their relationship (Golmohammadian & Salimi, 2023). The component of challenge orientation helps individuals accept and manage difficulties as a natural part of life when faced with problems and conflicts. Commitment allows individuals to stay engaged with their surroundings, while control enables them to influence their circumstances to their benefit (Maddi, 2013). Individuals with high levels of hardiness focus on making changes and adapting to circumstances, rather than relying on fixed aspects of life. Such individuals anticipate that changes offer opportunities for personal growth, which allows them to effectively adjust to life (Elahi et al., 2021).

In summary, this research found that spiritual well-being can affect on marital adjustment, and psychological

hardiness, as a positive personality trait, plays a mediating role in the relationship between spiritual well-being and marital adjustment. Nonetheless, this study had some limitations. First, Data collection was conducted through a questionnaire using a self-report method, which is subject to biases and motivations to provide either lower or higher scores, representing limitations of this approach. Second, the study was cross-sectional and based on correlational relationships, meaning that it did not allow for the assessment of causal relationships or observation of longitudinal effects and changes. A third limitation was that only one spouse from each couple participated in the research. Naturally, if data were gathered from both partners in the relationship, it would provide greater in-depth information for evaluating the structural model. Hence, it is recommended that future studies employ other data collection tools and longitudinal experimental methods. The findings of this research suggest that improving spiritual beliefs, deepening the connection with God, and fostering psychological hardiness play an important role in improving marital adjustment and satisfaction. These findings can be helpful for decision-makers and policymakers in the family domain, as well as for family workshop trainers, counselors, and marriage therapists.

## 5. Ethical Considerations

### Compliance with ethical guidelines

This study adhered to all ethical standards. Participants were informed about the research objectives and the various stages of its implementation. They were guaranteed the confidentiality of their information. Furthermore, they were informed that the research findings would be accessible to them upon request.

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### Authors' contributions

All authors were actively involved in the design, conduct, and writing of all parts of this study.

### Conflicts of interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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