




Development of a Native Educational Package for Marital Life Enrichment Based on the Lived Experiences of Successful Couples

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ABSTRACT

The present study aimed to develop a culturally grounded educational package for marital life enrichment based on the lived experiences of successful couples. This study was conducted using a qualitative research design grounded in a phenomenological approach integrated with constructivist grounded theory. The research population included successful couples residing in Shahrekord in 2023, from whom 15 couples were selected through purposive sampling based on theoretical saturation. Data were collected using semi-structured, in-depth interviews, each lasting between 40 and 120 minutes, and transcribed verbatim for analysis. The analytical process followed Charmaz's grounded theory approach, including open, axial, and selective coding, with constant comparative analysis guiding the development of categories and themes. To ensure rigor and trustworthiness, strategies such as member checking, peer debriefing, and external auditing by six experts were employed. Inter-coder reliability was also assessed using independent coders. Following the qualitative phase, the extracted categories were used to design an educational package, which was subsequently evaluated by 13 experts in family counseling using the Content Validity Index (CVI), with a minimum agreement threshold of 0.80 considered acceptable. The findings resulted in the identification of nine core domains of marital life enrichment, including ethical orientation, emotional security, communication and conflict management, intimacy and affection, individual and relational growth, family role functioning, shared identity, spiritual transcendence, and resilience. These domains were systematically organized into a structured nine-session educational protocol. The expert evaluation demonstrated high content validity across all components, with CVI values ranging from 0.83 to 0.91 and an overall CVI of 0.87, indicating strong agreement regarding the relevance, structure, and adequacy of the developed package. The study provides a comprehensive and culturally grounded framework for marital life enrichment, demonstrating that successful marital relationships are shaped by a dynamic integration of ethical, emotional, communicative, structural, and spiritual factors, and suggesting that the developed educational package is a valid and applicable tool for enhancing marital quality.

Keywords: Marital life enrichment, grounded theory, lived experience, successful couples, educational package, marital satisfaction, relationship quality

1. Introduction

Marital relationships constitute one of the most fundamental social institutions, playing a central role in individual well-being, family stability, and broader societal cohesion. In contemporary societies characterized by rapid socio-cultural transformations, increasing individualism, and shifting expectations from intimate relationships, the quality and sustainability of marital life have become critical concerns in psychological and social research. Studies have consistently shown that marital satisfaction and stability are not merely outcomes of initial compatibility but are dynamic constructs shaped by ongoing interpersonal processes, emotional exchanges, and contextual influences (Nguyen et al., 2025; Zia & Safarzadeh, 2023). In this regard, marital life enrichment has emerged as a key preventive and developmental approach aimed at strengthening relational functioning, enhancing emotional bonds, and equipping couples with the necessary skills to navigate challenges effectively (Radpour et al., 2023; Tavaloli et al., 2022).

The concept of marital enrichment refers to structured interventions designed to improve the quality of couple relationships by fostering communication skills, emotional intimacy, problem-solving abilities, and mutual understanding. A growing body of empirical evidence supports the effectiveness of such programs in improving marital satisfaction, reducing conflict, and enhancing psychological well-being among couples (Gholipour et al., 2022; Khojastehmehr et al., 2021). For instance, relationship enrichment programs grounded in cognitive-behavioral and emotion-focused approaches have been shown to significantly increase marital intimacy and adjustment, particularly among couples experiencing relational distress (Mohammadi et al., 2023; Shapourifar, 2020). Similarly, enrichment interventions based on structured models such as PREP and TIME have demonstrated effectiveness in reducing marital conflicts and improving emotional security (Radpour et al., 2023; Tavaloli et al., 2022). These findings highlight the importance of proactive, skill-based interventions in promoting healthy and resilient marital relationships.

Despite the demonstrated effectiveness of existing marital enrichment programs, a critical limitation in the literature is the lack of culturally sensitive and contextually grounded interventions. Many established models have been developed within Western cultural frameworks and may not fully capture the socio-cultural, religious, and value-based

dimensions of marital life in non-Western societies. Cultural factors, including shared beliefs, religious orientations, and social norms, play a significant role in shaping marital expectations, interaction patterns, and conflict resolution strategies (Heydarnia et al., 2021; Sanagooi Zadeh, 2021). Therefore, the development of indigenous, culturally tailored enrichment programs is essential to ensure ecological validity and practical applicability. Research has emphasized that culturally adapted interventions are more effective in addressing the specific needs, values, and lived experiences of couples within a given context (Khalatbari & Mohammad, 2021; Lotfi, 2025).

In recent years, qualitative studies have increasingly focused on exploring the lived experiences of successful couples as a valuable source of knowledge for designing effective marital interventions. Such approaches move beyond deficit-oriented models that primarily address dysfunction and instead emphasize strengths, adaptive strategies, and positive relational dynamics. Grounded theory studies have identified key components of successful marriages, including effective communication, mutual respect, emotional support, shared values, and resilience in the face of challenges (Hormozi et al., 2024; Nikooy et al., 2024). These findings suggest that successful couples actively construct their relationships through intentional behaviors, shared meanings, and adaptive coping mechanisms, which can serve as a foundation for developing evidence-based enrichment programs.

Moreover, the importance of communication patterns, emotional regulation, and conflict management has been consistently highlighted as core determinants of marital success. Effective communication not only facilitates mutual understanding but also enhances emotional intimacy and reduces the likelihood of destructive conflicts (Asefi, 2023; Kazemnezhad & Mohammadi, 2021). Similarly, emotional literacy and the ability to regulate negative emotions play a crucial role in maintaining relational harmony and preventing escalation of conflicts (Gholipour et al., 2022; Shapourifar, 2020). Interventions that focus on these domains have demonstrated significant improvements in relational outcomes, including reduced marital burnout, increased optimism, and improved attitudes toward commitment (Armin et al., 2021; Barzegar et al., 2023).

Another important dimension in marital life enrichment is the role of support systems and relational security. Research indicates that emotional and instrumental support between spouses is a key predictor of marital satisfaction and stability. Couples who perceive their partners as reliable and

supportive are more likely to experience higher levels of trust, intimacy, and resilience (Derakhshan et al., 2023; Samari Safa et al., 2023). In addition, the ability to maintain healthy boundaries with extended family and external influences has been identified as a critical factor in preserving relational cohesion and autonomy (Shirdel et al., 2022). These findings underscore the importance of addressing both internal relational dynamics and external contextual factors in enrichment programs.

Spirituality and shared value systems also constitute a significant aspect of marital relationships, particularly in cultures where religious beliefs play a central role in daily life. Studies have shown that couples who share common spiritual beliefs and engage in religious practices together report higher levels of marital satisfaction, intimacy, and commitment (Khalatbari & Mohammad, 2021; Sanagooi Zadeh, 2021). Spirituality not only provides a framework for meaning-making but also serves as a resource for coping with stress and adversity. Integrating spiritual dimensions into marital enrichment programs can therefore enhance their effectiveness and relevance in culturally grounded contexts.

Furthermore, contemporary research has highlighted the importance of adaptability and resilience in sustaining long-term marital relationships. Couples inevitably face various stressors, including financial challenges, parenting demands, health issues, and life transitions. The ability to adapt to changing circumstances and maintain relational stability in the face of adversity is a hallmark of successful marriages (Bakkan & Safarzadeh, 2023; Nguyen et al., 2025). Enrichment programs that incorporate resilience-building strategies, stress management skills, and adaptive coping mechanisms can significantly enhance couples' capacity to navigate these challenges effectively.

In addition to these relational and individual factors, the structure and delivery of enrichment programs themselves play a crucial role in their effectiveness. Research suggests that comprehensive, multi-component interventions that integrate cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and spiritual elements are more effective than single-focus approaches (Abolhasani et al., 2023; Lotfi, 2025). Moreover, the use of participatory and experiential learning methods, such as role-playing, reflective exercises, and guided discussions, can facilitate deeper engagement and behavioral change among participants. These insights highlight the need for designing holistic and integrative educational packages that address the multifaceted nature of marital relationships.

Despite the growing body of research on marital enrichment, there remains a significant gap in the development of indigenous educational packages that are explicitly grounded in the lived experiences of successful couples within specific cultural contexts. Most existing programs are either adapted from Western models or focus primarily on problem-oriented interventions, with limited attention to culturally embedded strengths and resources. This gap underscores the necessity of adopting a bottom-up approach that draws directly from the narratives and experiences of couples who have successfully maintained satisfying and stable relationships over time. Such an approach not only enhances cultural relevance but also ensures that the resulting interventions are rooted in real-life practices and context-specific dynamics.

Accordingly, the aim of the present study is to develop a culturally grounded educational package for marital life enrichment based on the lived experiences of successful couples.

2. Methods and Materials

2.1. Study Design and Participants

This study was conducted using a qualitative research design grounded in a phenomenological approach integrated with grounded theory methodology. The selection of this methodological framework was based on the study's objective to explore and theorize the lived experiences of successful couples and to generate a contextually grounded educational model for marital enrichment. Grounded theory was employed specifically because of the relative scarcity of comprehensive theoretical frameworks addressing culturally tailored marital enrichment programs, as well as the need to develop a novel, data-driven model derived directly from participants' experiences. Within this framework, the constructivist grounded theory approach proposed by Kathy Charmaz (2014) guided the analytical process, emphasizing iterative data collection and constant comparison to refine emerging categories and direct subsequent sampling.

The research population in the qualitative phase consisted of married couples residing in Shahrekord during the year 2023 who were identified as successful based on predefined criteria, including high marital satisfaction scores. A purposive sampling strategy was adopted to ensure the inclusion of participants who could provide rich, relevant, and diverse insights into successful marital relationships. The sample size in this phase included fifteen successful couples, selected based on the principle of theoretical

saturation, whereby data collection continued until no new conceptual insights emerged. In addition, a separate group was included for the expert validation phase, comprising specialists in family counseling and educational psychology from Shahrekord and Sanandaj. Thirteen experts were ultimately selected through purposive sampling, with the criterion for sample adequacy being the attainment of a minimum agreement coefficient of 0.80 among evaluators. This dual-sample structure enabled both the generation and validation of the educational package.

2.2. Measures

Data were collected primarily through researcher-developed semi-structured interviews designed to capture in-depth accounts of participants' lived experiences of successful marital relationships. The interview protocol included both open-ended and closed-ended questions, allowing flexibility for participants to elaborate on their experiences while ensuring coverage of key thematic areas. To establish content validity, the interview guide was reviewed by four academic experts in counseling and family studies, who evaluated the clarity, relevance, and comprehensiveness of the questions. Their feedback was incorporated into the final version of the instrument prior to data collection.

The interview process began with a broad, exploratory question such as "Please describe the factors and criteria that contribute to a successful marriage," followed by probing questions to elicit deeper insights and clarify emerging concepts. Each interview lasted between 40 and 120 minutes, depending on participant availability and engagement. All interviews were digitally recorded with participants' informed consent and transcribed verbatim immediately after completion to preserve data accuracy. To enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, prolonged engagement with participants and maximum variation sampling were employed. Member checking was conducted by sharing portions of the transcripts and preliminary codes with participants to verify interpretive accuracy and resolve ambiguities.

Ethical considerations were rigorously observed throughout the research process. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants, confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage. Additionally, data credibility was strengthened through peer debriefing and external auditing, whereby

multiple academic reviewers examined the coding process and thematic development.

2.3. Data analysis

Data analysis was conducted concurrently with data collection, following the systematic procedures of grounded theory within a constructivist paradigm. The analytical process involved three interrelated stages: open coding, axial coding, and theoretical (selective) coding, as originally conceptualized by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss and further developed in constructivist form by Charmaz. During open coding, interview transcripts were examined line-by-line to identify discrete concepts, which were labeled with codes representing the underlying meaning of the data. This process allowed for unrestricted generation of codes, ensuring that all relevant aspects of participants' experiences were captured. Similar codes were then grouped into preliminary categories based on conceptual similarities.

In the axial coding phase, relationships between categories and subcategories were systematically explored and refined. Analytical memos were used to document emerging connections and to organize categories into a coherent structure that explained the phenomenon under investigation. This stage enhanced the explanatory power of the analysis by linking conditions, interactions, and consequences associated with successful marital experiences. Subsequently, in the theoretical coding phase, a central category was identified, and all other categories were integrated around it to form a unified theoretical model. This process involved validating relationships, refining categories, and ensuring theoretical saturation.

To ensure the reliability and rigor of the coding process, multiple strategies were employed. Inter-coder reliability was assessed by involving at least two independent, anonymous coders, and the agreement coefficient was calculated to confirm consistency in coding. Additionally, three established qualitative validation techniques were applied: member validation, analytical comparison with raw data, and audit by six experts in grounded theory methodology. Following the completion of coding and model development, the content and structure of the educational package were derived from the identified themes and categories.

Subsequently, educational techniques corresponding to each extracted thematic category were identified through a systematic keyword-based review of relevant scientific literature. An initial version of the educational package was

then designed and subjected to expert evaluation. A panel of at least six specialists assessed the package in terms of structure, content adequacy, and instructional timing. Their feedback was incorporated to refine the package, and inter-rater agreement was calculated to ensure consistency in evaluation. Finally, the validated educational package was prepared for implementation in the quantitative phase of the research.

3. Findings and Results

The demographic profile of the participants indicated that the study included 15 couples (30 individuals) with a broad range of socio-demographic characteristics. The age of female participants ranged from 25 to 67 years, while male participants ranged from 29 to 70 years, reflecting both younger and older marital cohorts. Educational attainment varied from primary education to postgraduate degrees, with

many participants holding diplomas, bachelor's, or master's degrees, indicating a heterogeneous educational background. In terms of occupation, women were predominantly homemakers, teachers, nurses, and employees, whereas men were employed in diverse roles such as engineers, freelancers, programmers, shopkeepers, greenhouse supervisors, and public-sector employees, suggesting variability in socioeconomic status. The number of children per couple ranged from one to five, with most couples having one or two children. The duration of marriage showed substantial variation, spanning from 6 to 46 years, thereby capturing both early-stage and long-term marital experiences. Regarding the style of acquaintance prior to marriage, the majority of couples reported traditional forms of introduction, while a smaller number indicated modern or semi-traditional/modern pathways, including university-based acquaintance, highlighting diversity in relational formation patterns.

Table 1

Integration of Open Codes into Axial Categories Based on the Charmaz Approach

Code No.	Axial Categories	Open Codes
1	Preservation of relational dignity and respect	Non-judgment, avoiding humiliation, honesty, loyalty, preserving dignity, maintaining reputation, confidentiality
2	Shared spirituality and religious values	Respect, honesty, trustworthiness, fundamental ethical principles, faith, reliance on God, religious similarity, belief in lawful income, divine perspective on marriage, spiritualized life
3	Regulation of expectations and acceptance of reality	Acceptance of differences, avoiding comparison, moderating expectations, realism
4	Healthy interpersonal ethics	Avoiding humiliation, judgment, reproach; respectful and noble interaction
5	Spousal support and reliability	Financial support, emotional support, being supportive, not abandoning each other, being a reliable partner, caregiving during illness, consistent presence
6	Emotional and psychological security	Creating security, active listening, empathy, mutual understanding, emotional presence, soothing, compassion, companionship
7	Practical and economic security	Financial support, cooperation, standing by each other
8	Mature problem-solving and conflict management	Conflict management, discussion after calming down, self-restraint, resolving conflict without winners, assertiveness with kindness, silence during anger, calm negotiation, disengaging from futile arguments
9	Effective and intimate communication	Active listening, empathetic hearing, direct expression, transparency, avoiding shouting, non-aggressive dialogue, expression without fear
10	Participatory interaction and negotiation	Calm negotiation, consultation, friendly interaction
11	Emotional regulation	Self-regulation, self-soothing, managing anger
12	Shared activities and everyday intimacy	Shared activities, joint recreation, travel, memory-making, walking, shopping, humor
13	Expression of love (verbal and behavioral)	Verbal affection, behavioral expressions of love, gift-giving, farewell kisses, small acts of kindness
14	Positive emotional reinforcement	Encouragement, appreciation, highlighting strengths, motivation enhancement, gratitude
15	Deep friendship	Friendship, intellectual companionship
17	Individual growth and self-improvement	Personal growth, self-improvement, continuous learning, overcoming selfishness, attitude change
18	Relationship maturity and gradual development	Relationship growth, increasing intimacy, overcoming hardships, couple resilience
19	Family role functioning	Gender role performance (security, financial management; emotional atmosphere), fair division of labor
20	Cooperation in family and parenting	Agreement in parenting, parental responsibility
21	Family structure	Childbirth, impact of children on the relationship

22	Healthy family boundaries	Protecting family boundaries, limiting external interference, confidentiality
23	Couple identity and shared orientation	Shared orientation, common life perspective, building shared identity
24	Spiritual orientation and divine focus	Religious completion, sacred marriage, divine intention, purity, piety, faith-centered life
25	Practical spirituality in marital life	Religious practices, prayer, gratitude, spiritual mindfulness
26	Ideological alignment	Religious similarity, shared beliefs
27	Shared resilience	Overcoming crises, togetherness in hardship
28	Adaptive compatibility	Contentment, reduced expectations, flexibility
29	Relationship stability	Durability, stability, perseverance

The results presented in Table 1 demonstrate the systematic integration of open codes into higher-order axial categories through the constructivist grounded theory approach. A wide range of behavioral, emotional, cognitive, and spiritual indicators extracted from participants' narratives were conceptually clustered into coherent categories that collectively explain the dynamics of successful marital relationships. The findings indicate that relational success is multidimensional, encompassing ethical interaction patterns, emotional and psychological security, effective communication, and mutual support as core interpersonal processes. Additionally, deeper structural and value-based dimensions such as shared spirituality, religious

alignment, and a common life orientation emerged as central organizing themes. The analysis further highlights the importance of individual and relational growth, adaptive coping mechanisms, and resilience in sustaining long-term marital stability. Notably, practical dimensions such as economic security, role functioning, and parenting cooperation were also identified as essential components, reflecting the interplay between emotional intimacy and functional partnership. Overall, the integration of these categories suggests that successful marital life is shaped by a dynamic synthesis of moral foundations, emotional competencies, shared values, and adaptive relational strategies.

Table 2

Components of Marital Relationship Enrichment Based on Axial and Core Categories Derived from Interviews with Successful Couples

Axial Categories	Core Categories	Enrichment Components
Preservation of relational dignity and respect Shared spirituality and religious values Regulation of expectations and acceptance of reality Healthy interpersonal ethics Spousal support and reliability	Ethical orientation and foundational values Supportive bonding and relational security	Constructive actions that build the ethical foundations of the relationship Constructive actions that create a secure emotional support system
Emotional and psychological security Practical and economic security Mature problem-solving and conflict management Effective and intimate communication Participatory interaction and negotiation Emotional regulation	Communication skills and conflict management Intimacy, friendship, and enduring love	Constructive actions for effective conflict management Constructive actions that enrich love and intimacy
Shared activities and everyday intimacy Expression of love (verbal and behavioral) Positive emotional reinforcement Deep friendship	Shared growth and relational maturity	Constructive actions that build a balanced and evolving relational identity
Individual growth and self-improvement Relationship maturity and gradual development Family role functioning Cooperation in family and parenting Family structure	Structural functions and shared roles	Constructive actions for complementary role performance

Healthy family boundaries	Couple cohesion and shared identity	Creating a shared “we” without dominance or overshadowing
Couple identity and shared orientation		
Spiritual orientation and divine focus	Spiritual transcendence and sacredness of the relationship	Reframing marital life within a higher, transcendent meaning
Practical spirituality in marital life		
Ideological alignment		
Shared resilience	Resilience and adaptability	Constructive actions fostering resilience and adaptability in times of adversity
Adaptive compatibility		
Relationship stability		

The results presented in Table 2 illustrate the higher-level abstraction of axial categories into core categories and their corresponding enrichment components, forming a coherent conceptual framework for marital life enrichment. The findings indicate that the lived experiences of successful couples can be systematically organized into nine overarching domains that integrate ethical, emotional, communicative, structural, and spiritual dimensions of marital functioning. At the foundational level, ethical orientation and shared values serve as the bedrock of relational integrity, while supportive bonding and emotional security sustain stability and trust within the relationship. Communication competencies and conflict management skills emerge as essential mechanisms for navigating interpersonal challenges, complemented by intimacy,

affection, and deep friendship that maintain relational vitality. Furthermore, the model emphasizes the importance of continuous individual and relational growth, alongside clearly defined and complementary family roles that support functional harmony. At a more integrative level, the development of a shared identity and cohesive relational boundaries reflects the emergence of a collective “we,” which is further enriched by spiritual transcendence and alignment in beliefs. Finally, resilience and adaptability are identified as critical capacities enabling couples to withstand and grow through life’s adversities. Overall, this framework demonstrates that marital enrichment is a dynamic, multi-layered process shaped by the interaction of moral foundations, emotional bonds, communication patterns, shared meanings, and adaptive capacities.

Table 3

Educational Protocol for the Native Marital Life Enrichment Package

Session	Session Title	Objectives	Content
Session 1	Ethical Orientation and Foundational Values in the Couple Relationship	Identifying individual and shared values; translating values into observable behaviors; strengthening honesty, respect, justice, and commitment; fostering emotional security through ethical adherence	Exploration of core relational values; recognition of honesty, respect, justice, and trustworthiness; translating values into daily behaviors; concept of human dignity in relationships; practical exercise on ethical behaviors; summary linking ethics to trust and stability
Session 2	Supportiveness, Reliability, and Emotional Security	Enhancing empathy skills; fostering a sense of support; teaching supportive feedback; distinguishing support from interference	Concept of emotional backing; active listening skills; supportive and encouraging feedback; helping without control; couple exercise on active listening; summary linking security to intimacy and stability
Session 3	Mature Conflict Management and Communication Skills	Understanding and regulating anger; learning a structured conflict management model; strengthening listening skills; expressing emotions without blame	Nature of anger as temporary emotion; calming techniques; seven-step conflict management model (awareness, calming, distancing, emotional expression, active listening, problem-solving, agreement); practical application exercise
Session 4	Practical Love, Everyday Intimacy, and Love Languages	Identifying individual love languages; increasing expressions of affection; strengthening daily intimacy; designing personalized expressions of love	Explanation of five love languages; identifying primary love language; exercises for expressing love aligned with partner’s preferences; shared intimacy-building activities
Session 5	Individual-Relational Growth and Couple Identity	Promoting self-acceptance and mutual acceptance; focusing on personal growth for relational benefit; understanding the concept of “couple self”; introducing relationship development models	Concept of balanced relational identity; acceptance of strengths and weaknesses; stages of relationship development; identifying personal growth areas; conceptualizing shared relational identity
Session 6	Functional Roles, Family Cooperation, and Healthy Boundaries	Clarifying family roles; negotiating fair division of responsibilities; understanding family as a system; strengthening healthy boundaries	Transition from traditional to complementary roles; structured dialogue on roles; negotiation strategies; establishing family routines; boundary-setting with extended family; designing a shared role map

Session 7	Creating a Shared “We” Without Dominance	Building shared couple identity; strengthening shared narrative; preventing dominance; designing a shared future vision	Concept of shared identity; writing the couple’s relational narrative; identifying shared values and symbols; visualizing future goals; reinforcing sense of “we-ness”
Session 8	Spiritual Meaning-Making and Transcendence in Marital Life	Understanding shared spirituality; enhancing meaning-making; practicing shared spiritual rituals; applying spirituality in challenges	Marriage as a meaningful and transcendent journey; role of faith, gratitude, and forgiveness; simple spiritual practices; designing shared rituals; reframing challenges as growth opportunities
Session 9	Shared Resilience, Adaptability, and Relationship Stability	Developing adaptive coping; strengthening joint resilience; reducing dyadic stress; repairing relationships after crises	Concept of couple resilience; identifying internal and shared resources; flexibility in roles; stress management skills; rebuilding trust; designing a preventive crisis plan

The results presented in Table 3 outline the structured educational protocol derived from the qualitative findings, consisting of nine sequential sessions designed to operationalize the identified enrichment components into actionable interventions. Each session targets a distinct yet interconnected domain of marital functioning, beginning with foundational ethical values and progressively advancing toward complex relational capacities such as shared identity, spiritual transcendence, and resilience. The protocol reflects a developmental trajectory in which couples first establish moral and emotional stability, then acquire communication and conflict management competencies, and subsequently deepen intimacy, relational

identity, and collaborative functioning. Notably, the integration of practical exercises in each session facilitates the translation of abstract concepts into behavioral change, thereby enhancing the ecological validity of the intervention. Furthermore, the inclusion of spiritual meaning-making and resilience-building components demonstrates a holistic approach that addresses both internal psychological processes and broader existential dimensions of marital life. Overall, the protocol represents a comprehensive, culturally grounded framework aimed at fostering sustainable marital enrichment through the systematic cultivation of ethical, emotional, communicative, structural, and adaptive competencies.

Table 4

Content Validity Index (CVI) Results of the Native Marital Life Enrichment Educational Package Based on the Lived Experiences of Successful Couples

Item	CVI	Result
Content alignment of the designed sessions with the process of the native marital life enrichment package	0.91	Acceptable
Appropriateness of sessions with the required structure and steps of the educational package	0.83	Acceptable
Adequacy of time allocated to each step and skill in the educational package	0.88	Acceptable
Overall adequacy of the educational package	0.88	Acceptable
Overall evaluation of the educational package	0.86	Acceptable
Total CVI	0.87	Acceptable

The results presented in Table 4 indicate that the content validity of the developed educational package is at a high and acceptable level across all evaluated dimensions. The highest CVI score (0.91) was observed for the alignment of session content with the overall process of the educational package, suggesting strong coherence between the designed sessions and the conceptual framework derived from participants’ lived experiences. Other dimensions, including the appropriateness of session structure (0.83), adequacy of time allocation (0.88), and overall sufficiency of the package (0.88), also demonstrated satisfactory validity levels, all exceeding commonly accepted thresholds for content validity. The overall evaluation score of 0.86 further confirms the consistency and relevance of the package from the perspective of expert reviewers. Importantly, the total

CVI value of 0.87 indicates a robust level of agreement among experts regarding the quality, structure, and applicability of the educational program. These findings collectively support the conclusion that the developed native marital life enrichment package possesses strong content validity and is suitable for implementation in subsequent phases of research and practical application.

4. Discussion

The findings of the present study led to the development of a culturally grounded educational package for marital life enrichment based on the lived experiences of successful couples, organized into nine core domains and operationalized through a structured intervention protocol. The qualitative results revealed that successful marital

relationships are shaped by an integrated system of ethical foundations, emotional security, communication competencies, shared identity, spiritual orientation, and adaptive resilience. In particular, the extraction of axial and core categories demonstrated that marital success is not reducible to a single dimension such as communication or satisfaction, but rather emerges from the dynamic interaction of multiple relational processes. This multidimensional conceptualization aligns with contemporary perspectives that view marital functioning as a complex, systemic phenomenon influenced by both internal relational dynamics and broader socio-cultural contexts (Nguyen et al., 2025; Zia & Safarzadeh, 2023).

One of the central findings of the study was the importance of ethical orientation and foundational values as the underlying basis of marital stability. Participants emphasized elements such as honesty, respect, dignity, and commitment as essential components of a successful relationship. These findings are consistent with research highlighting the role of moral and value-based frameworks in shaping relational quality and long-term commitment. For example, studies have shown that adherence to shared ethical principles enhances trust and reduces relational conflict, thereby contributing to marital satisfaction and stability (Heydarnia et al., 2021; Sanagooi Zadeh, 2021). Moreover, the integration of ethical values into daily behaviors, as reflected in the developed intervention, is supported by evidence suggesting that observable relational behaviors mediate the relationship between values and marital outcomes (Asefi, 2023).

Another key dimension identified in the findings was the role of supportive bonding and emotional security. The results indicated that successful couples consistently engage in behaviors that foster a sense of emotional safety, mutual support, and reliability. This includes both emotional support, such as empathy and understanding, and practical support, such as financial cooperation and caregiving during times of need. These findings are in line with prior research demonstrating that perceived partner support is a strong predictor of marital satisfaction and psychological well-being (Derakhshan et al., 2023; Samari Safa et al., 2023). Furthermore, the emphasis on distinguishing support from control reflects advanced relational functioning and aligns with theoretical models that highlight autonomy-supportive interactions as a key factor in relationship quality (Barzegar et al., 2023).

The findings also underscored the critical role of communication skills and conflict management in

maintaining relational harmony. The identification of structured strategies for managing conflict, including emotional regulation, active listening, and collaborative problem-solving, reflects a mature and adaptive approach to relational challenges. These results are consistent with a substantial body of research indicating that effective communication and conflict resolution skills are among the strongest predictors of marital satisfaction and stability (Kazemnezhad & Mohammadi, 2021; Radpour et al., 2023). In addition, the incorporation of emotion regulation techniques, such as self-soothing and delayed response, aligns with findings suggesting that emotional dysregulation is a major contributor to relational distress, and that interventions targeting these processes can significantly improve relationship outcomes (Gholipour et al., 2022; Shapourifar, 2020).

The domain of intimacy, affection, and deep friendship emerged as another fundamental component of marital enrichment. Participants highlighted the importance of expressing love through both verbal and behavioral means, engaging in shared activities, and maintaining a sense of companionship. These findings are supported by studies indicating that positive emotional exchanges, such as affection and appreciation, play a crucial role in sustaining relational satisfaction and preventing emotional disengagement (Armin et al., 2021; Bakkan & Safarzadeh, 2023). The identification of “love languages” and individualized expressions of affection in the intervention protocol further reflects contemporary approaches to enhancing intimacy through personalized and context-sensitive strategies (Lotfi, 2025).

In addition to interpersonal processes, the findings emphasized the importance of individual and relational growth, as well as the development of a shared identity. The concept of a “couple self” or shared identity highlights the transition from individual-centered to relationship-centered functioning, in which partners co-construct a مشترک sense of meaning and purpose. This aligns with qualitative research demonstrating that successful couples actively engage in processes of mutual growth, adaptation, and identity formation over time (Hormozi et al., 2024; Nikooy et al., 2024). Moreover, the emphasis on continuous learning and self-improvement reflects the dynamic nature of marital relationships and the need for ongoing development to sustain relational quality.

The findings also highlighted the role of structural and functional aspects of family life, including role distribution, parenting cooperation, and boundary management.

Successful couples were found to engage in flexible and complementary role performance, negotiate responsibilities effectively, and maintain healthy boundaries with extended family members. These results are consistent with research indicating that role clarity, fairness in task distribution, and effective boundary-setting are critical for reducing conflict and enhancing relational satisfaction (Barzegar et al., 2023; Shirdeh et al., 2022). Additionally, the integration of family system perspectives in the intervention protocol reflects the interconnected nature of marital and family functioning.

Spirituality and shared belief systems emerged as a distinctive and culturally significant dimension of marital enrichment in this study. Participants emphasized the role of faith, shared religious practices, and a transcendent perspective on marriage as sources of meaning, resilience, and cohesion. These findings are consistent with studies demonstrating that shared spirituality enhances marital satisfaction, promotes forgiveness, and provides a framework for coping with stress and adversity (Khalatbari & Mohammad, 2021; Sanagooi Zadeh, 2021). The integration of spiritual practices into the educational package therefore represents an important contribution to the development of culturally grounded interventions.

Finally, the findings highlighted the importance of resilience and adaptability in sustaining long-term marital relationships. Successful couples were characterized by their ability to navigate challenges, adapt to changing circumstances, and maintain relational stability in the face of adversity. This aligns with research indicating that resilience is a key determinant of marital longevity and quality, particularly in the context of external stressors such as work-family conflict and life transitions (Bakkan & Safarzadeh, 2023; Nguyen et al., 2025). The inclusion of resilience-building strategies in the intervention protocol therefore enhances its relevance and applicability in real-world contexts.

5. Conclusion

Overall, the results of this study contribute to the existing literature by providing a comprehensive, culturally grounded framework for marital life enrichment that integrates ethical, emotional, communicative, structural, and spiritual dimensions. The use of a grounded theory approach based on lived experiences allowed for the identification of context-specific factors that may not be fully captured in existing models. Furthermore, the validation of the educational package through expert evaluation, as indicated

by acceptable CVI values, supports its content validity and potential effectiveness. These findings are consistent with previous research demonstrating the effectiveness of multi-component, culturally adapted enrichment programs in improving marital outcomes (Abolhasani et al., 2023; Armanpanah et al., 2021).

The present study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the qualitative phase of the study was conducted with a relatively small sample of successful couples from a specific geographical and cultural context, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other populations. Second, the reliance on self-reported data may introduce bias, as participants may present their relationships in a socially desirable manner. Third, although the educational package was validated by experts, its effectiveness was not empirically tested in a controlled experimental design within the present study. Finally, the cross-sectional nature of the qualitative data limits the ability to capture changes in relational dynamics over time.

Future research is recommended to evaluate the effectiveness of the developed educational package using quantitative and experimental designs, such as randomized controlled trials, in order to establish its causal impact on marital outcomes. Additionally, studies could explore the applicability of the package in diverse cultural and socio-economic contexts to assess its generalizability and adaptability. Longitudinal research is also needed to examine the long-term effects of the intervention on marital stability and satisfaction. Furthermore, future studies may investigate the role of moderating variables, such as personality traits, attachment styles, and life stressors, in influencing the effectiveness of marital enrichment interventions.

From a practical perspective, the findings of this study provide valuable insights for counselors, therapists, and family educators involved in marital and family interventions. The developed educational package can be utilized as a structured and culturally sensitive tool for enhancing marital relationships in both clinical and community settings. Practitioners are encouraged to incorporate the identified components, including ethical orientation, emotional support, communication skills, and resilience-building strategies, into their intervention programs. In addition, policymakers and educational institutions can benefit from integrating such enrichment programs into premarital and postmarital education

initiatives to promote family stability and well-being at a broader societal level.

Authors' Contributions

Authors equally contributed to this article.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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Ethical Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants.

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