

# Predicting Marital Conflict Based on Mindfulness, Communication Patterns, and Emotional Intelligence in Married Students


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## 1. Round 1

### 1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

In the Introduction section, the sentence “married university students constitute a particularly vulnerable group because they are simultaneously confronted with academic responsibilities, financial pressures, role ambiguity, and marital expectations” would benefit from stronger theoretical grounding. The manuscript currently presents this claim descriptively without integrating a relevant framework such as role strain theory, family stress theory, or ecological systems theory. Adding a theoretical lens would strengthen the conceptual coherence of the study.

The paragraph beginning with “One of the variables that has recently attracted considerable attention in psychological and marital research is mindfulness” adequately defines mindfulness but does not sufficiently explain why mindfulness should specifically predict marital conflict among married students rather than general adults. The authors should elaborate on how mindfulness may buffer student-specific stressors such as academic workload, financial uncertainty, and developmental transition pressures.

The manuscript repeatedly cites “Ryan & Brown (2003)” as the source defining mindfulness ; however, the correct authorship for the seminal mindfulness-related work is typically “Brown & Ryan (2003).” The authors should carefully verify all citation formats and bibliographic accuracy throughout the manuscript to ensure scholarly precision.

The psychometric discussion of the Marital Conflicts Questionnaire raises concerns because the reported reliability coefficients ranging from 0.52 to 0.69 are relatively low for research purposes. The authors should justify the continued use of this instrument despite modest reliability indices or provide updated psychometric evidence from more recent Iranian validation studies.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

### 1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The paragraph discussing communication patterns states that “communication theories emphasize that marital stability depends not only on the presence of disagreements but also on the manner in which couples manage and communicate during conflicts”. This section would be significantly strengthened by explicitly identifying the communication theory or relational framework being referenced. At present, the statement is overly general and lacks sufficient theoretical attribution.

The description of the demand/withdraw communication pattern should include discussion of reciprocal partner dynamics. The current wording implies a one-directional interaction, whereas demand/withdraw cycles are typically understood as reciprocal relational processes influenced by both partners’ emotional regulation and attachment behaviors. Including this nuance would improve conceptual accuracy.

The literature review synthesizes prior findings effectively but lacks a clearly articulated research gap. In the paragraph beginning “Although previous studies have separately examined mindfulness, communication patterns, and emotional intelligence”, the authors should more explicitly identify what is genuinely novel about the present study. For example, is the novelty the simultaneous examination of all predictors, the focus on married students, or the cultural context? This should be stated more directly.

The rationale for sample size determination in the “Study Design and Participants” section is insufficiently rigorous for publication in a high-quality empirical journal. Reliance solely on Stevens’ heuristic rule is limited. The manuscript would be strengthened by including an a priori statistical power analysis (e.g., using G\*Power) indicating the anticipated effect size, statistical power, and minimum required sample size.

The manuscript states that convenience sampling was used, but the recruitment procedure is not adequately described. The authors should specify how participants were approached, whether recruitment occurred online or in person, which faculties or campuses were included, and whether any incentives were provided. Without these details, the reproducibility and representativeness of the study remain unclear.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

## 2. Revised

Editor’s decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.