

Developing a model of marital adjustment based on self-compassion, marital intimacy and job satisfaction in married female teachers

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The present study aimed to evaluate the marital adjustment model based on the factors of marital intimacy, self-compassion and job satisfaction. The research design was a correlation of component-based structural equation modeling.

Method: The statistical population was all married female teachers of high schools in Khorramabad city in 2021 -2022. The sampling method was a multi-stage cluster sampling in which 100 married female teachers responded to the scales of Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS), Marital Intimacy Scale (MIS), Self-Compassion Scale (SCS), and Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ). In order to analyze the data, SPSS 23 software was used for descriptive statistics, and PLS software was used to evaluate the model's fit.

Results: The research findings showed that the model has a high fit and that the predictive power of the model is appropriate. Among the variables, marital intimacy, with a factor loading of 0.68, has the greatest impact on marital adjustment, and the variables of self-compassion and job satisfaction, with factor loadings of 0.165 and 0.160, are in the second and third positions, respectively.

Conclusion: The results showed that self-learning variables marital intimacy and job satisfaction positively and significantly affect marital adjustment.

Keywords: marital adjustment, marital intimacy, self-compassion, job satisfaction

1 Introduction

Marriage and family formation as an essential stage of adulthood can affect different dimensions of people's lives. The quality of married life depends on several factors, one of which is *marital adjustment* (MA). MA is the process of adopting and revising the pattern of behavior and interaction between the individual and the couple to achieve

maximum satisfaction in relationships (Bali, Dhingra, & Baru, 2010). This evolutionary process refers to a state of adaptation in different domains of couples in which there may be conflict (Mondol, 2014). MA is a multidimensional concept with more objective characteristics than marital satisfaction (Broman, 2005). MA is a process whose consequences are determined by the of couples' problematic

differences, interpersonal tensions, individual anxiety, satisfaction with each other, cohesion and interconnectedness, and consensus on important marital issues (Gong, 2007). Compatible couples are husbands and wives who agree with each other and manage their time and finances well (Greeff & De Bruyne, 2000). The adaptive processes of couples are: Active expression of affection and other positive emotions, communication to resolve conflict and aggression, playing a role or performing main tasks, mutual support, sexual satisfaction, shared beliefs and expectations, strong communication skills in response to life events and family background and experiential and adaptive. Identifying effective factors in compatibility and solving conflicts and problems between couples to enrich married life and try to reduce divorce with any ideology and any school is of primary importance (Tehrani, Headari, & Jafari, 2013). MA is a process that occurs during the life of a couple, because it requires the adaptation of tastes, the recognition of personality traits, the creation of behavioral rules, and the formation of communication patterns (Bagarozzi, 2014). Many factors are effective on MA. One of the factors affecting MA and creating a stable marriage is *marital intimacy* (MI) (Crawford & Unger, 2004). Intimacy is feelings based on love and affection, having a partner and companion in life, satisfying emotional-psychological needs and increasing happiness and pleasure in married life. Intimacy can predict MA (Besharat & Rafiezadeh, 2021). Intimacy in marriage is often described as a dynamic process positively associated with adjustment and satisfaction in married life (Bagarozzi, 2014). Intimacy is usually the basic criterion and key feature of marital relations with a significant effect on MA and mental health of young couples, which leads to a decrease in depression and an increase in happiness, well-being and life satisfaction (Boden, Fischer, & Niehuis, 2010). Marital satisfaction and adjustment can be higher in couples with a higher degree of intimacy, or in other words, couples with a higher degree of intimacy are more capable of facing problems and changes related to their relationship, and as a result, experience higher satisfaction and MA. (Patrick et al., 2007). *Self-compassion* (SC) is another positive psychological characteristic that has a direct relationship with MA (Bibi et al., 2017). SC as a basic construct focuses on emotional regulation and is a form of mindfulness (Samaie & Farahani, 2011). According to the researches of Neff and Dahm (2015), it is important to be kind to oneself in the face of failures, arguments and conflicts every day (Neff & Dahm, 2015). In addition, SC positively correlates with empathy,

forgiveness, marital satisfaction, affectionate communication and self-determination, and a negative and significant relationship with depression, anxiety, stress, and intellectual inhibitions (Hooman, 2002; Neff, 2011; Rajabi, Hayatbakhsh, & Taghipour, 2015).

In addition, SC is positively correlated with adaptive functions such as optimism, positive emotions of self-acceptance, social connection, and psychological flexibility. SC is related to self-love and concern and care for others, but it does not mean self-centeredness or prioritizing one's own needs over others (Neff, 2011; Yang, 2016). SC plays an essential role in maintaining and maintaining relationships. Based on Baker and McNulty's (2011) research findings, SC, especially in women, has a positive relationship with the motivation to correct interpersonal mistakes (Baker & McNulty, 2011). Through SC, one creates an emotional security that allows him to see himself clearly without fear of self-blame and has the opportunity to more carefully understand and correct inconsistent patterns of thought, emotion, and behavior (Neff, 2011). This feature is a supportive process that leads to adaptation (Pinto-Gouveia et al., 2012). This attitude makes a person not to blame himself for failures, losses. Considering that SC is a relatively emerging construct in psychological research, one of the goals of this research is to investigate the effect of SC on MA. *Job satisfaction* (JS) is another factor affecting MA (Batool, Hussain, & Bajwa, 2017). JS is a person's attitude toward his job (Ma, Samuels, & Alexander, 2003). According to Cranny et al. (1992), JS is a person's emotional response to his job. Today, there is an opinion that family issues have a strong impact on work life, and on the other hand, work environment factors also affect family life (Cranny, Smith, & Stone, 1992). Satisfaction with job, salary and wages, boss and coworkers, and satisfaction with mutual trust between people in the organization and other matters related to JS can directly relate to life satisfaction and, ultimately, peace and mental health of family members. Research shows a significant relationship between JS, quality of life, and adaptability (Samaie & Farahani, 2011). The conflict between work and family has burdened the role of people in the family and the work environment, and this issue, especially for women, brings physical and psychological harm, affecting people's quality of life and mental health (Bethge & Borngräber, 2015). The research conducted by Lopez et al. (2014) showed that increasing work pressure is related to decreasing JS and decreasing adaptability (Lopes, Lagoa, & Calapez, 2014). On the other hand, there is a significant positive relationship between

orientation and JS with satisfaction and MA (Batool, Hussain, & Bajwa, 2017; Dehghanmehr et al., 2016; Sadeghi, Khedmati, & Yousefi, 2018). Reviewing and reviewing the research literature shows a positive relationship between MI, SC, and JS with MA. Despite the theoretical relationships between these variables, the importance of their interaction in the form of a model is necessary for explaining the stability and durability of married life and maintaining family cohesion, especially in the community of female teachers, considering their position and role in raising teenagers. Therefore, this research investigates the effect of MI, SC, and JS on MA using a structural equation model. The research hypotheses are presented as follows:

The assumed model of MA fits the research data.

SC has a direct and meaningful causal relationship with MA.

MI has a direct and meaningful causal relationship with MA.

JS has a direct and meaningful causal relationship with MA.

2 Methods

2.1 Study design and Participant

The design of the current research was the correlation of structural equation modeling type based on the component. The statistical population included all married female teachers working at the secondary level of Khorram Abad city. Sampling was done by multi-stage cluster method and the sample size was equal to 100 people. Although there is no general agreement on the sample size required for structural equation models for each variable, some researchers such as James Stevens have suggested 15 for each variable (Helter, 1983; quoted by Ghasemi 2012). After sampling, the research questionnaires were given to the participants by providing the necessary guidance and explanation about how to answer, inviting the audience to volunteer cooperation and obtaining their permission.

2.2 Measurements

The data were collected using *Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS)*, *Marital Intimacy Scale (MIS)*, *Self-Compassion Scale (SCS)*, and *Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire*.

2.2.1 Marital Adjustment

DAST was created by Spanier in 1976 in order to measure the quality of marital relationship between husband and wife

(Spanier, 1976). This scale is a 32-question instrument that measures four dimensions: couple satisfaction (10 items), couple solidarity (5 items), couple agreement (13 items) and affection expression (4 items). The scores of this questionnaire range from 0 to 151, and scores equal to or greater than 100 mean compatibility of individuals, and scores less than 100 mean problems in marital relations and lack of compatibility and family understanding. People whose score is 101 or less are considered to have marital problems and incompatibility. The internal consistency between the subscales is good to excellent. Spanier reported an internal consistency coefficient of 96% and a high reliability criterion for this scale. The total score of this scale has significant internal consistency with Cronbach's alpha of 96% (Spanier, 1976). The validity of this scale in Iran has been checked with the logical methods of content validity. The compatibility scale of husband and wife with the power to distinguish married and divorced couples in each question has shown its validity for known groups. This scale also has its concurrent validity confirmed (Yarmohammadian, Bonakdar Hashemi, & Asgari, 2011).

2.2.2 Self-Compassion

SCS has 26 items, the answers of which are in the 5-point Likert scale range from almost never (1) to almost always (5). This scale measures three components in the form of 6 subscales: Self-compassion (5 items) versus self-judgment (5 items, reversed), human commonality (4 items) versus isolation (4 items, reversed), and mindfulness (4 items) versus overidentification (4 items, reversed). Negative dimensions are scored in reverse (quoted by Momeni et al., 2013). The subscales have high two-way correlations with each other. The self-compassion scale shows strong evidence of reliability and internal consistency (above 0.90). The scale's internal consistency was obtained through Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.92 for the whole scale and 0.78, 0.77, 0.80, 0.79, 0.75 and 0.81 for each of the subscales, respectively. In addition, test-retest reliability (after three weeks) was reported to be 0.93 (Neff, 2011). Akin (2012) reported the reliability coefficients of six subscales from 0.66 to 0.87, which indicates the instrument's internal consistency (Akin, 2012). Research conducted in the field of validating this scale in Iran indicates high internal consistency and reliability (Azizi et al., 2013). In the Iranian version, Cronbach's alpha is reported as follows: Self-kindness is 0.81, self-judgment is 0.79, human commonality is 0.84, isolation is 0.85, mindfulness is 0.80, extreme

assimilation is 0.83, and whole scale is 0.76 (Azizi et al., 2013).

2.2.3 Marital Intimacy

The intimacy scale of Walker and Thompson (1983) is a 17-item instrument that is used to measure love and intimacy between couples. The subject's score in the intimacy scale is obtained by adding the scores of the expressions and dividing it by the number 17. The range of scores is between 1 and 17. The higher a person's score on this scale, the more intimacy he experiences. Walker and Thompson (1983) have reported the reliability coefficient of this test using Cronbach's alpha method of 0.91 to 0.97. Also, to check the validity of the test, the content and face validity methods were used. In this way, several professors in the field of counseling and psychology examined the above questionnaire and stated that it correctly measures couples' intimacy (Walker & Thompson, 1983). In Iran researchers calculated the reliability of the intimacy questionnaire using Cronbach's alpha and split-half method, which were obtained as 0.90 and 0.83, respectively, and indicate the excellent reliability coefficients of the intimacy questionnaire (Nasr Isfshni, Etemadi, & Shafie Abadi, 2013).

2.2.4 Job Satisfaction

The valid and standardized Minnesota Questionnaire was developed in 1967 at Minnesota State University by Weiss, Dawis, England & Lofquist. This questionnaire has 19 items and its purpose is to examine job satisfaction in six dimensions: Payment system (3 questions), job type (4 questions), advancement opportunities (3 questions), organizational climate (2 questions), leadership style (4 questions) and physical conditions (3 questions). This questionnaire was a five-point Likert scale (completely disagree = 1, disagree = 2, not sure = 3, agree = 4, and completely agree = 5). The validity of the mentioned questionnaire was confirmed based on the opinion of experts, and Cronbach's alpha coefficient was estimated to be 78% to confirm its reliability (Weiss, Dawis, & England, 1967). In Iran, this questionnaire was validated by Homan (2002) (Hooman, 2002).

2.3 Data Analysis

The collected data were extracted and suitable statistical tests, including partial least squares method, were used in

accordance with the goals and hypotheses of the research. In this structural equation modeling method based on partial least squares approach, Smart-PLS software was used. Unlike the first generation approach, the second generation approach based on variance, instead of reproducing the empirical covariance matrix, focuses on backgrounding the variance of the dependent variables that are predicted by the independent variables.

3 Findings and Results

Regarding demographic characteristics, most participants were 30 to 40 years (38%). Moreover, 41% had a bachelor's degree, 55% had a master's degree, and 4% had a doctoral degree. In order to check the assumption of normality of data distribution, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used. The results of the data normality test are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Descriptive findings and normality test (N=100)

Var.	Obs. Var.	Mean	SD	K-S
SC	Mindfulness	13.85	2.25	0.167**
	Self-kindness	17.07	3.20	0.100*
	Common humanity	14.61	2.26	0.174**
	Self-judgment	13.06	2.72	0.102*
	Over-identification	10.76	2.86	0.137**
	Isolation	11.89	2.66	0.114**
MI	—	5.80	0.98	0.131**
JS	Pay	2.11	0.86	0.140**
	Job type	3.79	0.75	0.162**
	Promotion	2.53	1.05	0.087
	Climate	3.41	0.93	0.138**
	Leadership style	3.10	0.59	0.203**
MA	Environment	3.58	1.05	0.196**
	Affective expression	9.32	2.02	0.155**
	Satisfaction	40.13	3.73	0.092*
	Cohesion	16.41	3.27	0.122**
Consensus	52.21	7.89	0.108**	

*p < 0.05; **p<0.01

According to Table 1, Pearson's correlation coefficients show a significant relationship between the variables. The factor loadings (path coefficients) related to the variables of the measurement models are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Factor loadings and t-values of measurement model

Latent Variable	Observed Variable	Factor Loading	t
SC	Mindfulness	0.424	2.269*
	Self-kindness	0.686	4.776**
	Common humanity	0.708	5.865**
	Self-judgment	0.680	4.666**

MI	Over-identification	0.670	4.134**
	Isolation	0.650	3.944**
	—	0.681	12.010**
JS	Pay	0.699	4.526**
	Job type	0.761	8.386**
	Promotion	0.695	4.833**
MA	Climate	0.777	9.170**
	Leadership style	0.585	2.536*
	Environment	0.508	2.800**
	Affective expression	0.789	21.859**
	Satisfaction	0.844	27.578**
	Cohesion	0.820	21.158**
	Consensus	0.816	21.315**

*p < 0.05; **p < 0.01

According to Table 2, the factor loadings (path coefficients) of the measurement models are significant with t values above 1.96 at the error level of $\alpha=0.05$ and with t values above 2.57 at the error level of $\alpha=0.01$. Among the variables, MI with a factor load of 0.68 has the greatest impact on MA. Among the obvious variables, common human sense for SC, organizational climate for JS and couple satisfaction for MA show the highest factor load.

Figure 1

Factor loadings (path coefficients)

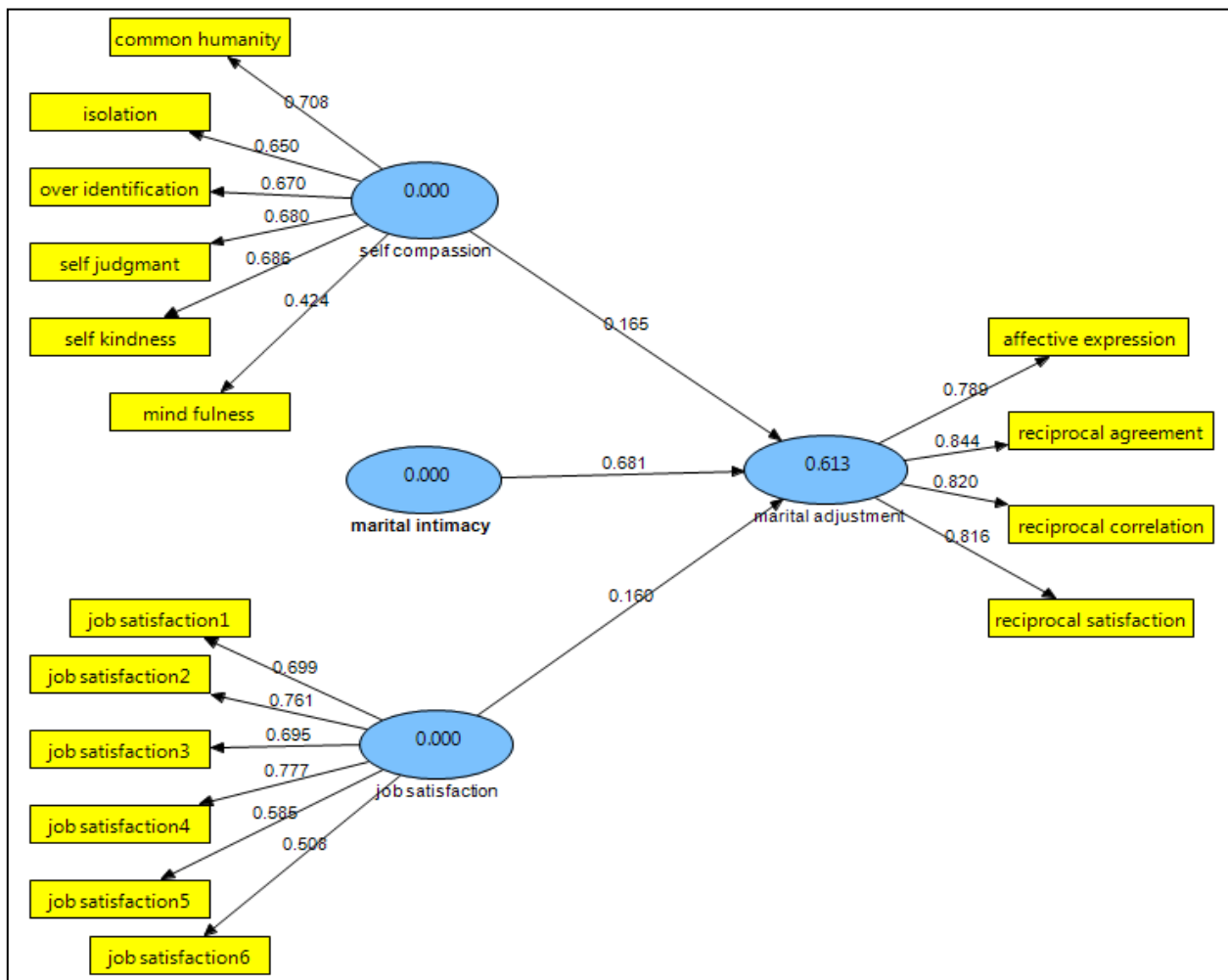


Figure 2

t-values

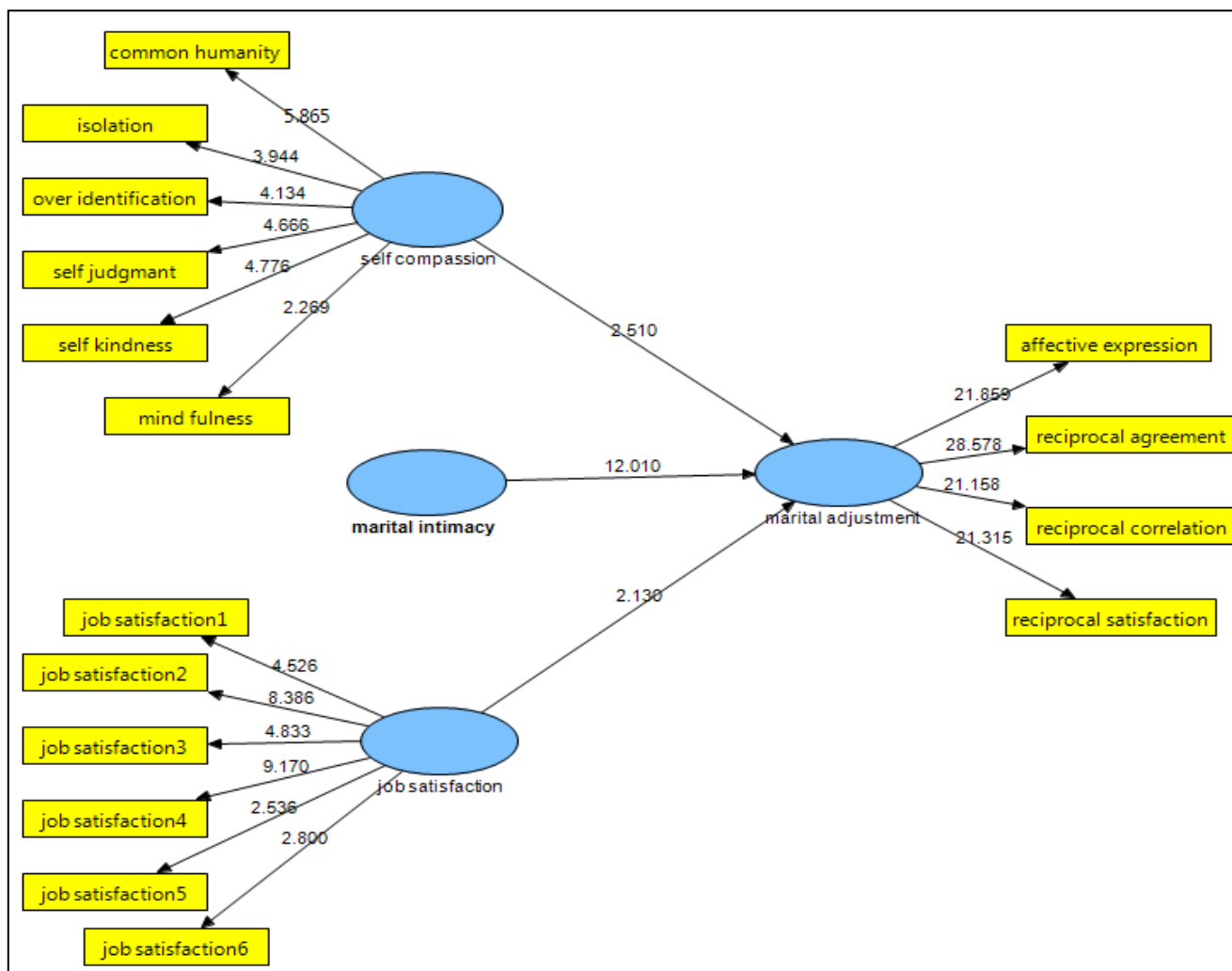


Table 3

Factor loadings and t-values of structural model

Path	Factor Loading	t
SC to MA	0.165	2.14*
MI to MA	0.681	12.01**
JS to MA	0.160	2.51*

*p < 0.05; **p < 0.01

According to

Table 3, the factor loadings (path coefficients) of structural model variables are significant with t values above 1.96 at the error level of $\alpha=0.05$ and with t values above 2.57 at the error level of $\alpha=0.01$. As can be seen, MI with a factor load of 0.681 has the greatest effect on MA, and SC and JS variables with factor loads of 0.165 and 0.160 are in the second and third positions, respectively.

Table 4

Results of Cronbach's Alpha, fit model indexes and coefficient of determinations

Var.	AVE	Q ²	C R	Communality	Cronbachs Alpha	R ²	GFI
SC	0.41	0.41	0.81	0.41	0.72	0.61	0.63
MI	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00		
JS	0.46	0.46	0.83	0.46	0.78		
MA	0.67	0.62	0.89	0.67	0.84		
Standard Mean	0.64	0.62	0.88	0.64	0.83		

*p < 0.05; **p < 0.01

The fit of the model was evaluated at three levels (See [Table 2](#), [Table 3](#) and [Table 4](#)):

1) Assessing the fit of measurement models. The average composite reliability index (CR=0.88) and the average Cronbach's alpha coefficients (0.83) are more than 0.70; According to the average amount of extracted variance (AVE=0.64) which is greater than 0.5, the model has convergent reliability and considering that (AVE < CR), convergent validity is established. Based on this and considering the significant values of t in

[Table 3](#), it can be concluded that the measurement models have a good fit.

2) Evaluating the fit of the structural part of the model. The average determination coefficient index (R²=0.61) is between 0.33 and 0.67; Q² index, whose average value (0.62) is higher than 0.35; In addition, based on the significant values of t in [Table 2](#), it is concluded that the structural model has a good fit and the predictive power of the model is good.

3) Evaluation of the overall fit of the model. The calculated value GFI was equal to 0.63, which is higher than 0.35, so it is concluded that the overall model has a good fit. According to the mentioned results, SC, MI and JS positively and significantly affect MA. Among the mentioned variables, MI with a factor load of 0.68 has the greatest impact on MA, and SC and JS variables with factor loads of 0.165 and 0.160 are in the second and third positions, respectively ([Table 4](#)).

4 Discussion and Conclusion

This research aimed to compile and fit the MA model based on SC, MI and JS. The results showed that the initial hypothetical model was confirmed and had a good fit (GFI = 0.63) and SC, MI and JS significantly affected MA. Based on the research findings, the hypothesis of the significant effect of SC on MA is confirmed, which is consistent with the research results of some previous studies ([Bibi et al., 2017](#); [Pinto-Gouveia et al., 2012](#); [Skoda, 2011](#)). In explaining this research hypothesis, it can be said that the more SC a person has, the more ability he has to adapt in a marital relationship. SC has three basic components: SC against self-judgment, human common sense against isolation, and mindfulness against over-identification, which mutually affect each other. The first component refers to a balanced and kind view of oneself when facing failures and

mistreatment and avoiding self-judgment and blame. In addition, it means being patient and kind towards others and having an unbiased understanding of them ([Neff, 2011](#)). Blaming and focusing on weaknesses causes distance between people and reduces the amount of constructive interaction and sincere conversation, which leads to more conflicts and non-MA. Therefore, SC can predict MA in conflicts between couples by guiding thoughts and behaviors, replacing positive emotions and correcting undesirable behavioral patterns. The second component refers to failure and suffering occurring as a part of common and common human experience in the lives of all human beings ([Neff, 2011](#)). SC through understanding the situation, pain and suffering of the spouse and admitting that he/she is a fallible human being, facilitates, facilitates and strengthens marital forgiveness; Spouses also make their wrong behavior appear unintentional, unselfish, and blameless when harm occurs from their spouse, thus applying a more positive and constructive attitude that promotes forgiveness in marital relationships ([Neff, 2011](#); [Skoda, 2011](#)). The third component of SC means people's awareness of their own feelings and emotions and a proper and balanced attitude to experiences, far from exaggeration ([Neff, 2011](#)). Women who have marital conflicts and are disturbed face problems recognizing, revealing, processing and regulating emotions, and they have problems distinguishing internal emotions from physical ones ([Rajabi, Hayatbakhsh, & Taghipour, 2015](#)). In many ways, compassion can be a kind of emotion-oriented coping strategy. Accordingly, SC is considered an emotion regulation strategy and one of the aspects of emotional intelligence ([Lutz et al., 2008](#)), which can lead to coping and greater adaptation. According to another hypothesis of this research, that there is a meaningful and positive relationship between intimacy and MA, the findings are consistent with the results of previous research ([Batool, Hussain, & Bajwa, 2017](#); [Besharat & Rafiezadeh, 2021](#);

Bethge & Borngräber, 2015; Haris & Kumar, 2018; Yalcin & Karahan, 2007). Several individual and two-person processes positively correlate with intimacy, including adjustment, psychological well-being, mental health, relationship quality, trust, and sexual satisfaction (Frost, 2013). Each of these aspects can increase the compatibility of couples with commitment and behavioral confrontation, affecting marital satisfaction and leading to stability and strength in the relationship and marriage. Intimacy has a powerful and effective role in the relationship of couples, which is in the form of openness and non-inhibition in relationships and the closeness of two people in various emotional, logical, and functional dimensions created in the context of relationships (Wanic & Kulik, 2011). More intimate communication lets couples discuss, problem-solve, and practically share important information. As a result, open lines of communication between couples make them use each other as supporters to solve conflicts and problems, which leads to increased compatibility and marital satisfaction (Tolstedt & Stokes, 1983). High levels of intimacy lead to better communication and harmony and reduce marital disputes. On the other hand, any deficiency in these relationships has a significant relationship with women's adaptability. In addition, in parallel with this relationship, the problem of marital dissatisfaction, if it exists in a couple's relationship, can affect a person's adaptive behavior. Adaptability includes controlling impulses and bearing pressures to the extent that by improving it one can find suitable answers for many latent problems in life (Yalcin & Karahan, 2007). Another hypothesis that was confirmed in this research was the direct and meaningful relationship between JS and MA, which is consistent with previous findings (Batool, Hussain, & Bajwa, 2017; Dehghanmehr et al., 2016; Rogers & May, 2003). In explaining this hypothesis, it can be said that the higher the JS of people, the more their compatibility at home should increase. JS increases MA by increasing the quality of life, and the effect on marital satisfaction (Zanjani & Bayat, 2010). Among the factors that cause psychological stress in teachers, we can mention the problems caused by the teacher's role, problems caused by unfavorable working conditions, and students' behavioral problems. Teachers' reactions to these pressures are divided into four categories: behavioral, emotional-emotional, intellectual-psychological, and physical responses. Women's employment has left effects on the family and women's health by creating fundamental changes in the job structure

of society, the traditional value system, and the distribution of roles and bases of men and women (Batool, Hussain, & Bajwa, 2017; Zanjani & Bayat, 2010). The combination of work and family roles requires extraordinary roles from working women to reduce the psychological pressure caused by conflicting roles. Sometimes these roles may conflict, and evidence of psychological pressure and tension can be seen, threatening their health and adaptability. JS from various aspects and dimensions can be effective on MA, including salary, advancement opportunities, service conditions and emotional reaction of a person towards his job. There is a negative correlation between work-family conflict and MA (Batool, Hussain, & Bajwa, 2017; Zanjani & Bayat, 2010); Therefore, stress factors in the work environment and lack of JS hurt the quality of life and marital satisfaction, reducing the amount of compatibility in the home and family. These differences affect the physical health and mental well-being of couples.

5 Limitations

Among the limitations of the research, considering that the research community was the teachers of Khorramabad city, and all the samples were made up of women, the generalization of the results to men and other communities should be made cautiously.

6 Suggestions and Applications

It is suggested that this research be done in other communities and strata with a larger sample size. MI training and cognitive SC are suggested to reduce couple conflicts and increase MA. It is also suggested to adopt measures, management solutions and social support to improve working conditions and increase teachers' JS.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

Ethics principles

In this research, ethical standards including obtaining informed consent, ensuring privacy and confidentiality were observed.

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