

Article

Marital Adjustment, Spiritual Well-Being, and Locus of Control in Married Couples

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Abstract: The aim of this study is to examine the relationship between marital adjustment, spiritual well-being, and locus of control in married couples. A total of 526 married individuals living in İzmir, Turkey, 283 (53.8%) women and 243 (46.2%) men between the ages of 18 and 65, participated in the research. The married individuals were evaluated individually rather than as couples. The of control scale (LCS) developed by Dağ, the marital adjustment test (MAT) developed by Locke and Wallace and adapted into Turkish by Tutarel Kışlak, the spiritual well-being scale (SWBS) developed by Ekşi and Kardaş, and a socio-demographic information form were applied to the participants. SPSS 22.0 was used for statistical analysis of the data obtained in the study. The findings were evaluated at a 5% significance level within a 95% confidence interval ($p < 0.05$). The findings of the study revealed that the marital adjustment of male participants was higher than that of females, and that as spiritual well-being increased, marital adjustment also increased. A positive relationship was found between transcendence, one of the sub-dimensions of spiritual well-being, and marital adjustment and internal locus of control. Similarly, a positive correlation was identified between harmony with nature and marital adjustment and internal locus of control, while a negative relationship was found between anomie and marital adjustment and internal locus of control. Moreover, negative and significant relationships were found between marital adjustment and external locus of control determinants such as belief in luck, meaninglessness of making an effort, belief in an unjust world, and anomie, one of the sub-dimensions of spiritual well-being. Additionally, a positive relationship was found between higher education and internal locus of control, and a positive relationship between marriages conducted between the ages of 17 and 20 and an external locus of control.

Keywords: marital adjustment; spiritual well-being; locus of control; Türkiye



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1. Introduction

1.1. Marital Adjustment

Marital adjustment is defined as “the marriage of couples who communicate with each other, can form a common view and opinion on issues that affect their marriage and family, and positively address their problems” (Tutarel Kışlak and Çabukça 2002). In the literature, for a marriage to be described as happy, it is understood to be linked to factors such as communication in the relationship, perception of the relationship, problem-solving skills, commitment, sociability, sexuality, spirituality and religiosity, and education (Ramadhina et al. 2022; Polat 2014, p. 23). It is observed that it is a recurring finding that marriage not only positively affects the life expectancy and quality of individuals, but also protects their physical and psychological health and increases their happiness.

Many studies on marital adjustment and satisfaction reveal that there is a positive and significant correlation between high spirituality and religion, and marital adjustment and satisfaction (Mahoney and Boyatzis 2019; McGill et al. 2020). Religion/spirituality contributes to both preventing and resolving problems in marriages (Yapıcı 2018; Lucero et al. 2013). In studies investigating the relationship between spirituality and marital

satisfaction, it is put forward that high levels of religiosity/spirituality increase marital satisfaction and that personal religiosity/spirituality and being involved in collective worship for married individuals who go to religious/spiritual places are indicators of satisfaction and happiness in marriage (Mahoney et al. 2008; Robinson et al. 2019). For this reason, the study also includes two factors that are thought to predict marital adjustment: spiritual well-being and locus of control.

1.2. Locus of Control

The locus of control is defined as an individual's thoughts or perceptions of what or who directs their behaviors and experiences (Rotter 1966).

The term locus of control is explained by Rotter in two dimensions: internal and external control. Individuals with an internal locus of control are self-confident, have a sense of independence, are often active and initiative, and have high academic achievements. These individuals are accepted as those who can easily adapt to their environment and have positive coping skills with their environment (Galvin et al. 2018). An external locus of control, on the other hand, can be expressed as the expectation of individuals attributing their successes and failures and rewards and punishments to external forces (such as God, fate, or luck) and as their expectation that personal efforts will not/cannot be effective (Yeşilyaprak 1990).

It is observed that individuals with an internal locus of control tend to have higher levels of marital adjustment/satisfaction, use positive problem-solving skills (Scanzoni and Arnett 1987), and maintain a more positive attitude towards trust in their relationships and exhibit more positive behaviors. On the other hand, individuals with an external locus of control are observed to attempt to control their spouses and influence the events they experience with their spouses in their marriage in their own favor (Çelik 2009, p. 95).

Research shows that an individual's belief system is a significant factor in the formation of their personality, and it is considered one of the main factors in measuring personality. In this regard, Rotter (1966), a prominent researcher on this subject, names the individual's belief system as the "locus of control". The individual's belief system, spiritual well-being, and locus of control are closely related to each other and appear to be influential on many psycho-social variables. However, studies on this subject are relatively limited in the literature. It is considered that this study will contribute to the literature in this regard.

1.3. Spiritual Well-Being

Spiritual well-being examines the person's relationship between spiritual values and self and social environment from a holistic perspective by centering around the individual's spiritual development and transformation, and it shows the relationship between the meaning of life and satisfaction with life (Paloutzian and Park 2021).

Spiritual well-being provides stability, peace, and harmony in an individual's life. It also contributes to harmony in interpersonal relationships. In this way, it facilitates the individual experiencing a sense of closeness with oneself, the creator, and others (Mahdian and Ghaffari 2016). There is a positive relationship between low levels of spiritual well-being and low psychological well-being, hopelessness, and a tendency towards depression. Additionally, a positive relationship is observed between religion/spirituality and psychological well-being. Beyond the psychopathology and suffering that individuals may experience as a result of negative situations and events in their lives, spiritual well-being has a positive relationship with overall happiness, satisfaction with life, creating meaning and purpose, as well as having a positive relationship with factors like longevity, income, and education level (Kusner et al. 2014; McDonald et al. 2018; Chamberlain 1992).

2. Method

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between marital adjustment, spiritual well-being, and locus of control in married individuals. In this sense, the main problem of the study is to determine the factors that may be related to marital adjustment.

Although there are some studies in the literature on the subject, there are very limited studies in Turkey.

Within the scope of the research purpose, answers were sought to the following questions.

- What are the mean scores of marital adjustment, locus of control, and spiritual well-being in married individuals?
- What is the relationship between marital adjustment, locus of control, and spiritual well-being in married individuals?
- Is there a significant difference between marital adjustment, locus of control, and spiritual well-being and the variables of gender, educational status, and age at marriage in married individuals?

2.1. Participants

A total of 526 married adults, 283 female and 243 male, living in Izmir/Turkey participated in the study. The average age of the participants was 36.11.

Research Model: The relational screening model, one of the quantitative research methods, was used in the research. The variables of our research are demographic variables, marital adjustment, spiritual well-being, and locus of control.

Universe and Sample: The research aims to examine the relationship between marital adjustment, spiritual well-being, and locus of control of married individuals. The research universe consists of married individuals in Izmir, which is the third largest city in Turkey and also a city with a high level of education and development in the westernmost part of Turkey. Married individuals were included in the study separately, not as a couple. The sample consists of a total of 526 participants, 283 female and 243 male, who were determined by an easily accessible random method. The research sample was determined according to the research purpose, considering that the researcher could easily reach suitable individuals. In this research, the relationship between marital adjustment, spiritual well-being, and locus of control in married individuals was examined without any intervention.

2.2. Data Collection Tools

Personal Information Form

This section includes questions regarding age, gender, educational level, and age at marriage, which are considered to be related to marital adjustment, locus of control, and spiritual well-being.

Marital Adjustment Test (MAT)

The marital adjustment test (MAT) was developed by [Locke and Wallace \(1959\)](#) to measure the quality of marriage. It was adapted to Turkish by [Tutarel Kışlak \(1999\)](#). The scale consists of 15 items and 2 sub-dimensions. The Cronbach's alpha internal consistency reliability coefficient for the entire scale was found to be 0.90.

Spiritual Well-being Scale (SWBS)

Developed by [Ekşi and Kardaş \(2017\)](#) for adults, the spiritual well-being scale aims to measure individuals' processes of making sense of their lives and values in both social and individual aspects. The scale consists of a total of 29 items, organized into three sub-dimensions: transcendence, harmony with nature, and anomie. When the Cronbach's alpha values of the scale were examined, transcendence was found to be 0.953, harmony with nature to be 0.864, anomie was 0.853, and the total value to be 0.886.

Locus of Control Scale (LCS)

The scale, developed by [Dağ \(2002\)](#), consists of 47 items and aims to determine the status of individuals' attributions to events on the internal control and external control dimensions. This 5-point Likert-type scale has 5 sub-dimensions: personal control (18 items), belief in luck (11 items), meaninglessness of making an effort (10), fatalism (3 items), and belief in an unjust world (5 items). In the reliability study of the LCS, the internal consistency coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) of the sub-dimensions ranged between 0.61 and 0.87, with the internal consistency coefficient of the entire scale calculated as 0.92. 22 items of the

scale (items 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 36, 37, 41, 43, 44, 45 and 47) were arranged as reverse items, where high scores obtained from these items indicate an external locus of control.

2.3. Data Collection Process

The survey forms were prepared by the researcher by transferring them to a virtual environment using the Google Forms program and were distributed to participants online. No personal identification information was requested from the participants during the administration of the forms.

2.4. Data Analysis

The data obtained in the research were analyzed using SPSS 22.0 (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) program. Descriptive statistical methods (number, percentage, mean, standard deviation) were used in the evaluation of the data. *T*-test and ANOVA were employed in the comparison of quantitative data. The relationship between dependent and independent variables was tested using Pearson correlation analysis. The findings were evaluated at a 95% confidence interval with a significance level of 5%.

2.5. Findings

When the demographic information of the participants in the study was examined, in Table 1, it was found that 283 (53.8%) were female and 243 (46.2%) were male. Regarding educational level, 31 (5.9%) were primary school graduates, 32 (6.1%) were secondary school graduates, 147 (27.9%) were high school graduates, 275 (52.3%) were university or college graduates, and 41 (7.8%) were postgraduate graduates. As for the age at marriage, it was found that 74 participants (14.1%) got married between the ages of 17 and 20, 201 participants (38.2%) between the ages of 21 and 24, 179 participants (34%) between the ages of 25 and 28, 49 participants (9.3%) between the ages of 29 and 32, and 23 participants (4.4%) got married at the age of 33 and above.

Table 1. Demographic information about the participants.

Variables	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)	
Gender	Female	283	53.8
	Male	243	46.2
Educational level	Primary school	31	5.9
	Secondary school	32	6.1
	High school	147	27.9
	University or junior college	275	52.3
	Postgraduate	41	7.8
Age at marriage	17–20	74	14.1
	21–24	201	38.2
	25–28	179	34
	29–32	49	9.3
	33+	23	4.4
Age	Mean		36.11
	Standard deviation		9.98
	Minimum		21
	Maximum		71

As shown Table 2, the independent sample *t*-test was employed to examine whether there was a significant difference between the total scores of the scale and sub-dimension scores in terms of the gender variable of the participants. According to the results of the analysis, significant differences were spotted in terms of marital adjustment ($p = 0.001 < 0.05$), fatalism ($p = 0.001 < 0.05$), belief in an unjust world ($p = 0.002 < 0.05$), and transcendence and anomie sub-dimensions among genders ($p = 0.010 < 0.05$). According to this finding, it was found out that men's marital adjustment is higher (mean = 43.93), that women (mean = 12.48) are more fatalistic than men (mean = 11.61), and that men's belief in an unjust world score (mean = 11.37) is higher than that of women (mean = 10.32). Women (mean = 4.59) showed more transcendence (mean = 2.40) and anomie (mean = 2.16) than men (mean = 4.46).

Table 2. Comparison of gender variables, total scores, and sub-dimension scores of the scales.

Scales	Gender	n	Mean	t	p
Marital adjustment test (MAT) total score	Female	283	41.98	−3.222	0.001
	Male	243	43.93		
Locus of control scale (LCS) total score	Female	283	124.34	0.950	0.342
	Male	243	122.87		
Locus of control scale (LCS) personal control sub-dimension	Female	283	47.87	1.725	0.085
	Male	243	46.15		
Locus of control scale (LCS) belief in luck sub-dimension	Female	283	29.15	0.311	0.756
	Male	243	28.98		
Locus of control scale (LCS) meaninglessness of making an effort sub-dimension	Female	283	24.50	−0.355	0.723
	Male	243	24.73		
Locus of control scale (LCS) fatalism sub-dimension	Female	283	12.48	4.184	0.001
	Male	243	11.61		
Locus of control scale (LCS) belief in an unjust world sub-dimension	Female	283	10.32	−3.077	0.002
	Male	243	11.37		
	Male	243	22.81		
Spiritual well-being scale (SWBS) total score	Female	283	4.34	0.603	0.547
	Male	243	4.31		
Transcendence sub-dimension	Female	283	4.59	2.601	0.010
	Male	243	4.46		
Harmony with nature sub-dimension	Female	283	4.55	1.528	0.127
	Male	243	4.48		
Anomie sub-dimension	Female	283	2.40	3.556	0.001
	Male	243	2.16		

As seen in Table 3, one-way ANOVA was conducted to examine whether there was a significant difference between the educational status of the participants of the study in terms of sub-dimension scores of locus of control scale (LCS). In the post-hoc test, which was carried out to examine which groups had differences between themselves, the Scheffe test was applied when the homogeneity of the variances was achieved, while Tamhane's T2 analysis was applied when the homogeneity of the variances was not ensured. According to the results, a significant difference was found in the scores of the sub-dimension of belief in luck in terms of educational level ($p = 0.011 < 0.05$). According to the results of the post-hoc analysis, which was conducted to determine from which groups this difference stemmed, it can be stated that participants with a high school educational level (mean = 29.95) showed

a greater tendency for belief in luck compared to those with a university level of education (mean = 28.15).

Table 3. Comparison of educational level and locus of control scale sub-dimensions.

Scale		Total Sum of Squares	Mean	SD	Mean Sum of Squares	Levene <i>p</i>	F	<i>p</i>
Personal control sub-dimension	Between Groups	927.595	Primary = 42.67 Secondary = 49.90 High school = 47.21	12.41 13.21 11.76	231.899	0.379	1.797	0.128
	Within Group	67,249.052	University = 47.33 Postgraduate = 45.97	10.91 10.40	129.077			
Belief in luck sub-dimension	Between Groups	496.421	Primary = 30.38 Secondary = 30.31 High school = 29.95	5.73 4.31 6.03	124.105	0.111	3.319	0.011
	Within Group	19,479.383	University = 28.15 Postgraduate = 30.14	6.35 6.21	37.388			
Meaninglessness of making an effort sub-dimension	Between Groups	2654.169	Primary = 30.03 Secondary = 27.34 High school = 26.50	7.73 8.32 7.50	663.542	0.043	13.501	0.001
	Within Group	25,606.487	University = 23.12 Postgraduate = 21.60	6.66 5.60	49.149			
Fatalism sub-dimension	Between Groups	191.306	Primary = 14.09 Secondary = 11.62 High school = 12.46	1.32 2.68 2.19	47.826	0.001	9.011	0.001
	Within Group	2765.340	University = 11.77 Postgraduate = 11.58	2.34 2.60	5.380			
Belief in an unjust world sub-dimension	Between Groups	186.646	Primary = 11.25 Secondary = 12.62 High school = 11.19	3.01 4.68 4.19	46.661	0.039	3.113	0.015
	Within Group	7809.721	University = 10.38 Postgraduate = 10.56	3.77 3.09	14.990			

A significant difference was found among educational statuses in terms of LCS sub-dimension of meaninglessness of making an effort score ($p = 0.001 < 0.05$). In this regard, it can be said that individuals with a primary school level of education (mean = 30.03) exhibit a greater attitude of considering making an effort as meaningless compared to those with university or college educational level (mean = 23.12) and postgraduate educational level (mean = 21.60). Additionally, individuals with a secondary school educational level (mean = 27.34) are observed to have a greater tendency of considering making an effort as meaningless compared to those at a university or college educational level (mean = 23.12) and postgraduate educational level (mean = 21.60).

A significant difference was found between educational statuses and LCS fatalism sub-dimension score ($p = 0.001 < 0.05$). According to this finding, it can be said that those whose education level is primary school (mean = 14.09) have a more fatalistic attitude than those whose education level is secondary school (mean = 11.62), high school (mean = 12.46), university or junior college (mean = 11.77), and postgraduate (mean = 11.58).

Similarly, a significant difference was found between educational statuses of the participants and the score of LCS belief in an unjust world sub-dimension ($p = 0.015 < 0.05$). According to this finding, it was concluded that individuals whose education level was secondary school (mean = 12.62) exhibited a greater tendency of belief in an unjust world compared to those with a university or college level of education (mean = 10.38). Additionally, no significant difference was observed among educational statuses in terms of the scores of the LCS sub-dimension of personal control ($p > 0.05$).

As seen in Table 4, one-way ANOVA was conducted to examine whether there was a significant difference among the educational statuses of the participants of the study

in terms of the spiritual well-being scale (SWBS) sub-dimension scores. In the post-hoc test to examine which groups had differences, the Scheffe test was applied when the homogeneity of the variances was ensured, while Tamhane's T2 analysis was applied when the homogeneity of the variances was not achieved. In this respect, a significant difference was found in the scores of the transcendence sub-dimension of the spiritual well-being scale in terms of educational level ($p = 0.001 < 0.05$). It can be said that those whose education is at a university or college level (mean = 4.78) show more transcendence than those with a postgraduate level of education (mean = 4.19). In addition, it can be said that those with a high school level of education (mean = 4.59) have more transcendental attitudes than those with an education level of university or college (mean = 4.54).

Table 4. Comparison of educational level and the sub-dimensions of spiritual well-being scale (SWBS).

Scale		Total Sum of Squares	Mean	SD	Mean Sum of Squares	Levene p	F	p
Transcendence sub-dimension	Between Groups	7.495	Primary = 4.78 Secondary = 4.42	0.21 0.54	1.874	0.001	6.482	0.001
	Within Group	150.616	High school = 4.59 University = 4.54 Postgraduate = 4.19	0.49 0.54 0.76	0.289			
Harmony with nature sub-dimension	Between Groups	0.727	Primary = 4.62 Secondary = 4.42	0.42 0.41	0.182	0.544	0.832	0.505
	Within Group	113.906	High school = 4.52 University = 4.52 Postgraduate = 4.47	0.46 0.46 0.54	0.219			
Anomie sub-dimension	Between Groups	8.192	Primary = 2.54 Secondary = 2.50	0.78 0.98	2.048	0.012	3.593	0.007
	Within Group	296.991	High school = 2.35 University = 2.18	0.77 0.70	0.570			
	Within Group	296.991	Postgraduate = 2.44	0.75	0.570			

A significant difference was found among participants in terms of the scores of the anomie the sub-dimension of the spiritual well-being scale in terms of their educational statuses ($p = 0.007 < 0.05$). In this sense, it was found that individuals with a primary school educational level (mean = 2.54) exhibit a greater anomie compared to those at a university or college educational level (mean = 2.18). However, no significant difference was found in the scores of the harmony with nature sub-dimension of the spiritual well-being scale in terms of educational levels.

As shown in Table 5, one-way Anova (analysis of variance) was applied to determine whether there was a significant difference between the locus of control scale sub-dimension scores of the participants of the study in terms of their age at marriage. To identify which groups had differences between each other, the Scheffe test was applied when the variances were homogeneous, and Tamhane's T2 test post-hoc (multiple comparisons) tests were applied when the variances were not homogeneous.

Table 5. Comparison of sub-dimensions of locus of control scale in terms of participants' ages at marriage.

Scale		Total Sum of Squares	Mean	SD	Mean Sum of Squares	Levene <i>p</i>	F	<i>p</i>
Personal control sub-dimension	Between groups	239.328	17–20 = 45.97 21–24 = 47.33 25–28 = 46.75	12.35 11.94 10.67	59.832	0.313	0.459	0.766
	Within group	67,937.318	29–32 = 48.55 33+ = 47.78	10.21 11.56	130.398			
Belief in luck sub-dimension	Between groups	290.395	17–20 = 30.10 21–24 = 28.46 25–28 = 29.44	5.58 6.37 6.35	72.599	0.528	1.921	0.106
	Within group	19,685.410	29–32 = 29.65 33+ = 27.04	5.36 5.68	37.784			
Meaninglessness of making an effort sub-dimension	Between groups	899.346	17–20 = 26.44 21–24 = 24.07 25–28 = 24.84	8.07 7.09 7.46	224.836	0.007	4.281	0.002
	Within group	27,361.310	29–32 = 25.48 33+ = 19.73	6.82 4.08	52.517			
Fatalism sub-dimension	Between groups	156.977	17–20 = 12.91 21–24 = 12.18 25–28 = 12.08	2.20 2.17 2.40	39.244	0.074	7.303	0.001
	Within group	2799.669	29–32 = 11.04 33+ = 10.60	2.35 3.02	5.374			
Belief in unjust world sub-dimension	Between groups	267.040	17–20 = 11.44 21–24 = 10.19 25–28 = 11.28	3.95 3.71 4.03	66.760	0.146	4.500	0.001
	Within group	7729.327	29–32 = 11.59 33+ = 8.82	4.13 2.22	14.836			

There is a significant difference among the meaninglessness of making an effort sub-dimension scores of the LCS in terms of the age groups at marriage ($p = 0.011 < 0.05$). In this sense, those whose age at marriage is between 17 and 20 (mean = 26.44) were found to have more meaninglessness of making an effort attitude than those between the ages of 21 and 24 (mean = 24.07) and those over the age of 33 (mean = 19.73).

A significant difference was found in the scores of the fatalism sub-dimension of the LCS in terms of the age at marriage ($p = 0.001 < 0.05$). According to this finding, it was concluded that those who got married between the ages of 17 and 20 (mean = 12.91) exhibit a greater tendency towards fatalistic attitudes compared to those who got married between 21 and 24 (mean = 12.18), 25 and 28 (mean = 12.08), 29 and 32 (mean = 11.04), and those aged 33 and above (mean = 10.60).

A significant difference was found between the scores of the LCS sub-dimension of belief in an unjust world and participants' age at marriage ($p = 0.001 < 0.05$). According to this finding, it was obtained that those who got married between the ages of 17 and 20 (mean = 11.44) had a greater belief in an unjust world compared to those aged 21–24 (mean = 10.19). It can also be said that individuals who got married between the ages of 25 and 28 (mean = 11.28) had a greater belief in an unjust world compared to those aged 21–24 (mean = 10.19) and those aged 33 and above (mean = 8.82). Additionally, no significant difference was found among age groups at marriage in terms of the LCS sub-dimension scores of personal control and belief in luck ($p > 0.05$).

Table 6 presents the correlation analysis results examining the relationship between the total scores of the MAT and SWBS and sub-dimensions of LCS. According to the results, a negative relationship was found between the total score of MAT and the LCS sub-dimensions of belief in luck ($p = 0.001 < 0.05$, $r = -0.150$), meaninglessness of making an effort ($p = 0.001 < 0.05$, $r = -0.165$), and belief in an unjust world ($p = 0.001 < 0.05$, $r = -0.141$). This suggests that as marital adjustment increases, belief in luck, the sense of

meaninglessness of making an effort, and the belief in an unjust world decreases. Additionally, no significant relationship was found between MAT and the fatalism sub-dimension of LCS.

Table 6. Examination of the relationship between sub-dimensions of spiritual well-being scale (SWBS), total scores of marital adjustment test (MAT), locus of control scale (LCS), and spiritual well-being scale (SWBS).

		LCS Belief in Luck Sub-Dimension	LCS Meaningless of Making an Effort Sub-Dimension	LCS Fatalism Sub-Dimension	LCS Belief in an Unjust World Sub-Dimension
Total of MAT	Pearson Correlation p	−0.150 * 0.001	−0.165 * 0.001	−0.012 0.776	−0.141 * 0.001
Total of SWBS	Pearson Correlation p	0.074 0.089	0.207 * 0.001	0.577 * 0.001	0.024 0.583

SWBS—spiritual well-being scale; MAT—marital adjustment test; LCS—locus of control scale. * $p > 0.05$.

The correlation analysis results examining the relationship between the sub-dimensions of the spiritual well-being scale (SWBS), the total scores of the MAT, LCS, and SWBS are presented in the Table 7. According to the results, a positive relationship was found between the transcendence sub-dimension of the SWBS and MAT ($p = 0.016 < 0.05$, $r = 0.105$) and a negative relationship with LCS ($p = 0.007 < 0.05$, $r = -0.117$). In other words, it can be said that as transcendence increases, marital adjustment and spiritual well-being also increase, while the locus of control decreases.

Table 7. Examination of the relationship between the sub-dimensions of locus of control scale (LCS), the total scores of the marital adjustment test (MAT), and the spiritual well-being scale (SWBS).

Variables		Total of MAT	Total of LCS	Total of SWBS
SWBS transcendence sub-dimension	Pearson Correlation p	0.105 * 0.016	−0.117 * 0.007	0.863 * 0.001
SWBS harmony with nature sub-dimension	Pearson Correlation p	0.191 * 0.001	−0.244 0.001	0.686 * 0.001
SWBS anomie sub-dimension	Pearson Correlation p	−0.474 0.001	0.431 * 0.001	0.213 * 0.001

SWBS—spiritual well-being scale; MAT—marital adjustment test; LCS—locus of control scale. * $p > 0.05$.

A positive relationship was found between the SWBS sub-dimension of harmony with nature and the total score of the MAT ($p = 0.001 < 0.05$, $r = 0.191$), a negative relationship with the total score of the LCS ($p = 0.001 < 0.05$, $r = -0.244$), and a positive relationship with the total score of the SWBS ($p = 0.001 < 0.05$, $r = 0.686$). In other words, it can be claimed that as harmony with nature increases, marital adjustment and spiritual well-being also increase, while the locus of control decreases.

A negative relationship was found between the sub-dimensions of anomie and MAT ($p = 0.001 < 0.05$, $r = 0.474$). Additionally, positive relationships were identified between the LCS and SWBS, with coefficients of ($p = 0.001 < 0.05$, $r = 0.431$) and ($p = 0.001 < 0.05$, $r = 0.213$), respectively.

A positive relationship was found between the total score of the SWBS and the LCS sub-dimension of meaninglessness of making an effort ($p = 0.001 < 0.05$, $r = 0.207$) and the fatalism sub-dimension of LCS ($p = 0.001 < 0.05$, $r = 0.577$).

3. Discussion

This study investigated the relationship between marital adjustment, spiritual well-being, and locus of control in married individuals. According to the findings of the research, it was found out that men have higher levels of marital adjustment and a belief in an unjust world compared to women. On the other hand, women were found to be more fatalistic, transcendent, and experience a greater sense of meaninglessness. Although there are findings in the literature suggesting that women have higher levels of marital adjustment (Tutarel Kışlak 1999), there are also studies reporting no significant gender differences (Çağ and Yıldırım 2013). However, in this study, it was found that men had higher levels of marital adjustment. It is considered that more experimental findings are needed regarding the reason for the difference.

The findings regarding the relationship between the gender variable and locus of control reveal that women are more fatalistic, while men have a greater belief in an unjust world. Women being more fatalistic can be associated with an early age of marriage. In this study, a relationship was found between an early age of marriage and fatalism. No finding was found in the literature explaining why men have a higher belief in an unjust world. Belief in an unjust world is an indicator of an external locus of control. Individuals with an external locus of control tend to have difficulties in their marital relationships and tend to cope with problems in an emotion-focused manner (Scanzoni and Arnett 1987; Doherty 1981; Lee and McKinnish 2019). Therefore, it is thought that providing locus of control training for both individual and societal development will be beneficial.

According to the scores obtained from the spiritual well-being scale, it was seen that women significantly have both higher levels of transcendence and anomie compared to men. In fact, it is expected that transcendence and anomie are inversely proportional. The contradictory finding may be attributed to the gender discrimination that women often experience and the limitations of spiritual education programs. However, further experimental studies are thought to be necessary to elaborate on this important finding.

No significant difference was observed between marital adjustment and the variable of educational level. Looking at the results of the study, it can be interpreted that regardless of the educational level, married individuals can experience different levels of marital adjustment. This finding is supported by studies such as (Campbell et al. 1976, p. 355), Robbins et al. (2002) and Alder (2010).

When examining the relationship between education and locus of control in the study, it was found that primary school graduates tend to be more fatalistic and believe more in the meaninglessness of making an effort compared to all other educational levels. Secondary school graduates have a higher belief in an unjust world and have a greater sense of meaninglessness of making an effort compared to university graduates. High school graduates, on the other hand, tend to believe more in luck compared to university graduates. In summary, it can be said that university graduates are more internally focused on control. This finding is in line with the literature, as studies indicate that individuals become more internally focused on control after starting higher education (Burger 2006, p. 593).

According to the relationship between education level and spiritual well-being, it was found that primary school graduates experience more anomie than university graduates, while university graduates experience more transcendence than postgraduate graduates, and high school graduates experience more transcendence than university graduates. The fact that higher education reduces meaninglessness can be considered an important finding.

Looking at the relationship between age at marriage and locus of control, it was found that participants who married between the ages of 17 and 20 have more belief in the meaninglessness of making an effort, are more fatalistic, and have a higher belief in an unjust world. Studies indicate that marriage age increases maturity and enhances marital adjustment (Dindar 2020). As the age of marriage decreases, the likelihood of making mistakes in partner selection increases, and there is more involvement of the environment and family in marriage, accompanied by a decrease in financial resources (Kalmijn et al. 2004).

In the study, it was found that there was a positive relationship between marital adjustment and spiritual well-being, and a negative relationship between marital adjustment and locus of control. As marital adjustment increases, it was found that individuals tend to have decreased belief in luck, belief in the meaninglessness of making an effort, and belief in an unjust world, indicating a decrease in an external locus of control. The finding is considered consistent with the literature. Individuals with an internal locus of control are reported to have higher marital adjustment/satisfaction, make use of positive problem-solving skills (Zhang et al. 2023; Miller et al. 1986; Scanzoni and Arnett 1987), and exhibit more positive feelings and behaviors regarding trust in their relationships (Ryon and Gleason 2014; Mlott and Lira 1977). It is suggested that individuals with an internal locus of control are more proactive in solving problems compared to those with an external locus of control, and married individuals with an internal locus of control tend to have higher marital adjustment (Basat 2004; Ganji and Navabinezhad 2012).

In the study, when examining the relationship between spiritual well-being, marital adjustment, and locus of control, it was found that there is a positive relationship between the sub-dimension of transcendence in spiritual well-being and marital adjustment, and a negative relationship with an external locus of control. There is a negative relationship between harmony with nature and marital adjustment, as well as a negative relationship with an external locus of control. There is a negative relationship between anomie and marital adjustment, and a positive relationship with an external locus of control. The finding is considered consistent with the literature. Individuals who emphasize transcendence in their lives tend to have higher marital adjustments and an internal locus of control. Similarly, harmony with nature, viewed as the creation of a creator, is positively related to marital adjustment and an internal locus of control. As the sense of meaninglessness in life increases, marital adjustment and internal locus of control decrease (Aviad and Cohen-Louck 2021). At this point, it can be interpreted that spirituality and consequently spiritual well-being are important variables in increasing internal locus of control.

In married individuals, it was observed that the most influential variable affecting the meaning of life is spiritual well-being. There is a positive and significant correlation between spiritual well-being and the meaning of life in married individuals (Robinson et al. 2019; Çalıřkan and Dilmaç 2022). In studies examining the relationship between spirituality and marital adjustment, it is suggested that individuals with high levels of spiritual and religious feelings have higher marital adjustment compared to those with lower levels of spiritual and religious feelings (Mirghafourvand et al. 2019; Geçiođlu and Kayıklık 2019; Korkmaz and Karařahin 2023). In summary, spiritual tendencies and religious beliefs play a significant role in the high level of adjustment in marriage.

4. Limitations

Participants in these studies may encounter the place and time they studied through their answers to scales that are formulas in the form of a summary for everyone.

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