

Emotional Expression and Spousal Support as Predictors of Marital Satisfaction: The Case of Turkey*

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Abstract

This study examines the relationship between spousal support and the ability to express feelings of marital satisfaction, and the extent to which spousal support and the ability to express feelings can predict marital satisfaction. Research was conducted in accordance with general survey models. The study group comprised 195 married couples (N = 390) residing in one of the biggest cities in central Anatolia. The Marital Life Scale, Spousal Support Scale, and Emotional Expression Scale were applied to the married couples and a Personal Information Form was provided. The data analysis used the Pearson moment correlation coefficient, multiple regression analysis, and the Kendall correlation coefficient. The results indicated that there was a relationship between all the sub-dimensions of spousal support and marital satisfaction; moreover, spousal support was found to be a significant predictor of marital satisfaction. While a significant correlation was found between marital satisfaction and the expression of proximity emotion, one of the sub-dimensions of the Emotional Expression Scale, no significant correlation was found between the expression of negative and positive emotions. In addition, according to the results of the multiple regression analysis, the expression of feelings did not predict marital satisfaction.

Keywords: Marital satisfaction • Spousal support • Emotional expression

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Many people take the first step toward marriage with the expectation of happiness. Marital satisfaction appears to be a concept that seeks to represent the happiness perceived by individuals concerning their marital relationship. It is important to expand research on this concept in terms of determining what affects the quality of marital relationships. Marital satisfaction is defined as “the perception of an individual with regard to the level to which his/her needs in marriage relationship are accommodated” (Tezer, 1986). A marriage of good quality and subsequent marital satisfaction may indicate that the individual in question has a strong marriage (Kirby, 2005). In addition, a high level of marital satisfaction and spousal attachment are considered as important indicators of long-term relationships (DeMoss, 2004), and these are also important variables that affect the general well-being of individuals (Larson & Holman, 1994). In addition, it can be said that marital satisfaction is a crucial variable related to concepts such as empathy (Tutarel, Kışlak, & Çabukça, 2002), emotional intelligence (Cingisiz, 2010), the values of spouses (Hamarta, Deniz, Dilmaç, & Arslan, 2015), couple burnout (Çapri & Gökçakan, 2013), retirement satisfaction (Bozoğlan, 2015), and psychological well-being (Yeşiltepe & Çelik, 2014), as well as to fields such as couple relations, interpersonal relationships, and health.

Many variables that affect marital satisfaction were considered. It is a common opinion that spousal support affects the marital relationship. Many adults perceive marriage as a source of privileged support and emotional intimacy (Levinger & Huston, 1990; Weiss & Halford, 1996). Moreover, supportive actions are considered important for preventing the start of a set of cognitive and emotional events that would make relationships forced or cause disruptions and conflicts in relationships (Lawrence et al., 2008). According to Rugel (1997), lack of support is the basis for many problematic marriages, whereas supportive behavior prevents the increase of marital conflicts. Cutrona (1996a) states that perceived spousal support in stressful situations prevents emotional withdrawals, which cause harm to marriages, and that it increases people’s belief that they are not alone and that they can easily overcome the situation in question. Because of the importance of spouses’ perception of support in stressful situations, some research has been conducted on patient support provided by his/her spouse, and on the patient’s perception of the support he/she received, namely, how and to what extent it affected the patient. Research conducted regarding breast cancer patients in Korea found

that there is a positive relationship between perceived spousal support and stress management, health responsibility, interpersonal relations, spiritual growth, and nutrition (Kim & Park, 2014). Boeding et al.’s (2014) research revealed that higher levels of perceived partner support for women with breast cancer resulted in higher levels of marital satisfaction for their husbands. Low levels of stress management in couples are considered to be an important predictor of divorce (Bodenmann, 2005; Bodenmann & Cina, 2006). Spouses primarily turn to each other in stressful situations (Dakof & Taylor, 1990) and they regard their spouse as supporter in all kinds of situations, initially as emotional support transferring empathy and interest (Beach, Martin, Blum, & Roman, 1993) because the support that married individuals obtain from their social network does not equal the support they obtain from their spouses (Coyne & DeLongis, 1986). According to Cutrona (1996b), four aspects of spousal support are considered useful for increasing marital satisfaction and for the continuation of a marriage. Firstly, spousal support helps prevent emotional withdrawal and depression in stressful situations. In their research on the predictive effect of marital satisfaction on subsequent depressive symptoms, Miller et al. (2013) concluded that low levels of perceived partner support causes depression. Khan and Aftah (2013) also studied the mediating role of perceived social support between marital satisfaction and depression, and concluded that perceived social support is an important variable, which predicts marital satisfaction and depression. Secondly, spousal support prevents disputes from turning into destructive behavior and prevents increase of conflicts. Thirdly, supportive communication strengthens emotional ties between spouses, and fourthly, it leads to a positive marital experience.

The communication between spouses is another variable related to marital satisfaction. Weak communication between spouses causes a series of problems and may decrease marital satisfaction (Gur-Aryeh, 2010). According to Bischoff (2008), constructivist communication is a key component of satisfaction and adjustment in relationships. Emotional expression is also a kind of communication. Emotional expression is defined by Rauer and Volling (2005) as verbal and non-verbal manners of expression that an individual displays in situations that are focused on emotions. Gur-Aryeh (2010), however, defined it as verbal and non-verbal expressions of emotions.

According to Miller, Caughling, and Huston (2003), spouses that express their emotions to each other may affect their behavior toward each other. When a wife thanks and shows her appreciation to her husband for something he did in relation to their marriage, it will consolidate the behavior that is displayed and will cause her husband to display more positive behavior in the future, thereby increases their marital satisfaction. This will likewise positively develop her spouse's thoughts and perceptions regarding their marriage, and the value that the spouses attribute to each other and the extent to which they share their feelings with each other will increase (Gur-Aryeh, 2010).

Previous studies on marital satisfaction and emotional expression generally indicate a close relationship between emotional expression and marital satisfaction (Geist & Gilbert, 1996; Shapiro, Gottman, & Carrere, 2000). However, some studies indicate the exact opposite (Johnson et al., 2005; Lavee & Ben-Ari, 2004). This can be explained by the fact that marital satisfaction can change, depending on whether emotions are positive or negative (Gur-Aryeh, 2010) and on how the culture of the society in question affects tendencies for emotional expression (Ingoldsby, Horlacher, Schvaneveldt, & Matthews, 2005).

Planalp (2003) considers emotional expression to be the dark area of close relationships, and states that more studies need to be conducted on this subject. Similarly, Ingoldsby et al. (2005) state that many studies have been conducted on emotions in western culture and that it is necessary to conduct research on different marriage models in diverse cultures from different, developing countries. Within this context, this study is a very important contribution to current research, since it examines emotional expression and marital satisfaction based on a sample selected from

Turkish families, which represent a non-western culture. However, studies on the role of support in close relationships are limited in Turkey. Moreover, psychological counselors that work with couples are expected to provide important knowledge regarding their understanding of the relationship between spousal support, emotional expression, and marital satisfaction. Based on the literature, this study aims to examine the relationship between marital satisfaction and partner support and between expression of the emotions and predictive ability. Accordingly, the main research questions are as follows: Is there a significant relationship between marital satisfaction, partner support, and expression of emotions? Can partner support and expression of emotions predict marital satisfaction? Additionally, previous studies have indicated that it is still not certain whether gender difference plays a role in marital satisfaction. While the studies conducted by Canel (2007), Hatipoğlu (1993), and Çağ and Yıldırım (2013) indicate that differences in marital satisfaction depend on gender factors, the studies conducted by Çelik and Tümkaya (2012), Yeşiltepe and Çelik (2014), Hamamcı (2005), and Fışıoğlu (1992) found no significant differences between marital satisfaction and gender factors. Because of this uncertainty, our study examines the relationship between partner support, expression of emotions, and predictive ability through couples as well as through men and women separately.

Methodology

Participants

Participants consisted of volunteer married couples residing in one of the biggest cities in central Anatolia, who were selected by means of the convenience

Table 1
Demographic Variables with Regard to Married Couples in the Study Group

Variable	N	Variable	N
Gender	Female	Length of marriage	Less than a year
	195		13
	Male		1-5
	195		72
Age	20-71 (Average 37.7)		6-10
			102
Education Level	Primary School		11-15
	70		59
	Secondary School		16-20
	19		55
	High School		21 and over
58		89	
Undergraduate		The way	Dating
	174		196
	Graduate	Marriage Started	Arranged marriage
69		185	
Family's Monthly Income Level	500-1000		Other
	47		9
	1001-2000	Number of Children	No
	78		39
	2001-3000		1
102		102	
3001-4000		2	
59		134	
4001 and over		3	
104		83	
		4 and over	32

sampling method between the years of 2012–2013. Since previous studies have already mentioned difficulties with regard to data collection from married couples (Azizoğlu-Binici & Hovardaoglu, 1996; Bradbury & Karney, 2004; Honeycutt & Brown, 1998), the instrument packets used in this study were distributed among 350 married couples, and many individuals in the study group were contacted via acquaintances. Two hundred and twenty couples completed the scales and returned them. The demographic characteristics of the study group are presented in Table 1.

Instruments

Personal Information Form: This form consists of questions regarding gender, age, education level, monthly income level of the family, length of marriage, type of marriage, and number of children.

Marriage Life Scale (MLS-EYÖ): The scale was developed by Tezer (1996) to measure the general satisfaction level of spouses regarding their marital relationship. The scale is composed of 10 items. The participants assessed to what extent each item defined them, by using a 5 point Likert scale (1 = I absolutely do not agree, 5 = I absolutely agree). The highest point on the scale is 50, and the lowest point is 10.

The scale was administrated to divorced and married individuals to determine its validity. Significant differences were determined between the means of the groups ($t = 6.23, p < .01$). This finding was presented as evidence of the scale's validity according to external criteria. In addition, comparisons were made between the scores obtained from the Personal Behavior Survey, which was developed to measure social appreciation and to understand whether or not individuals were affected by social appreciation tendencies. The results showed that the Marriage Life Scale was affected by social appreciation tendencies to a very small extent ($r = .21$). This finding was presented as indirect evidence of the scale's reliability. The reliability coefficient determined by means of the test-retest method was .85, while the Cronbach internal consistency coefficient was .88 for the male group and .91 for the female group. These findings show that the scale is reliable (Tezer, 1996). The Cronbach Alfa internal consistency coefficient in this study was determined as .88.

Spousal Support Scale (SSS-EDÖ): The SSS was developed by Yıldırım (2004) to determine perceived spousal support. The SSS is a scale composed of a total of 27 three-point Likert items. The highest score on this scale is 81, and the lowest

score is 27. Obtaining high points on this scale indicates a high level of spousal support, while obtaining low points indicates a low level of spousal support. The SSS was validated for a total number of 248 married individuals, 131 of whom were female and 117 of whom were male. The spouses' ages varied between 29 and 58.

The structural validity of the SSS was examined in terms of its basic components. The results of the analyses revealed four factors of the SSS: emotional support, instrumental and information support, appraisal support, and social companionship support. In addition, a significant relationship was determined between the Beck Depression Scale (BDS) (Turkish Form) and the SSS ($r = -.27$). The SSS' reliability was calculated in two ways: firstly, the Cronbach Alfa coefficient was determined ($\alpha = .95$); and secondly, test-retest reliability coefficient was calculated ($r = .89$) (Yıldırım, 2004). The scale's reliability was taken into consideration within the scope of this study, and the Cronbach Alfa coefficient was determined as .86.

Emotional Expression Scale: This scale was developed by King and Immersive (1990), and was adapted to Turkish by Kuzucu (2006). Its development was based on its administration to university students in order to measure the extent to which emotions are expressed verbally and non-verbally. The Turkish form includes 15 items. The items on the scale assess to what extent "negative" and "positive" emotions and "intimacy" emotions are expressed. It is a 7 point Likert type scale, and is marked according to the expressions "I absolutely agree - I absolutely do not agree." The scale provides information regarding the expression of emotions both in relation to interpersonal relationships and regardless of them. The lowest correlation between the items on the scale was determined as .06, while the highest correlation was determined as .59. The mean score on the scale is 4.6, while the standard deviation is .76. The EES's internal consistency, which was measured with the Cronbach Alfa, is .78.

Procedure

The scales were distributed to spouses in separate envelopes, so that they would fill them in more realistically. The participants' responses to the data collection tools were reviewed before the data analysis, and as a result of this examination, the responses of 195 couples were analyzed. Responses were excluded if one or both of the spouses did not fill in the scales, if many of the items on the scales were left blank, or if some individuals answered the

control items incorrectly, which indicated that he or she did not fill in the scales properly.

Data Analysis

The data obtained at the end of the study were entered into computers and analyzed using the SPSS 15 package program. The Pearson correlation coefficient and multiple regression analyses were used for data analysis. Q-Q plot charts were examined for regression analysis in order to determine whether or not a normal distribution occurred, and it was observed that the data did not display a serious deviation from the norm.

Results

The results of the correlation and regression analyses of emotional expression and spousal support, which were discussed as predictors of marital satisfaction of married couples, are presented in tables 3 and 4. Table 2 shows the means and standard deviations of the scales separately for men and women, and for their combined total.

Means and Standard Deviation of the Scales

The scores obtained from all sub-scales of the Marriage Life Scale indicate a positive situation. The higher scores obtained from the sub-scales of the Emotional Expression Scale represent the higher level of Expression of Positive Emotions, Expression Intimacy, and Expression of Negative Emotions.

Correlation Results with Regard to Marital Satisfaction of Men, Women, and Married Couple

The result for the male group showed that there was a significantly positive relation between marital satisfaction and the sub-dimensions of the marital support scale, such as emotional support, instrumental and information support, appraisal support, and social companionship support ($p < .01$). While the emotional expression scale demonstrated a significantly positive close relationship with expression of intimacy at a high level ($p < .05$), no significant relationship was determined between marital satisfaction and the sub-dimensions of the expression of positive and negative emotions ($p > .05$).

Table 2
Means, Standard Deviations of the Marriage Life Scale, Spousal Support Scale and the Emotional Expression Scale Sub-scales

	Women			Men			Couple		
	N	M	Sd	N	M	Sd	N	M	Sd
Marital Satisfaction	195	39.74	6.94	195	41.56	6.92	390	40.65	6.98
Emotional Support		21.63	3.13		22.30	2.81		21.98	2.99
Instrumental and Information Support		15.79	1.90		16.54	1.26		16.16	1.65
Appraisal Support		18.97	2.78		19.58	2.59		19.28	2.70
Social Companionship Support		7.34	1.49		19.58	2.59		7.40	1.38
Expression of Positive Emotions		23.99	4.48		22.48	4.44		23.24	4.52
Expression Intimacy		29.11	5.419		27.75	5.268		28.43	5.38
Expression of Negative Emotions		17.81	3.69		18.76	3.21		18.28	3.48

Table 3
The Results of Correlation between Marital Satisfaction and Spousal Support and Emotional Expression

Independent Variables	Marital Satisfaction					
	Men		Women		Couple	
	N	r	N	r	N	r
Emotional Support		.494*		.577*		.544*
Instrumental and Information Support		.194*		.327*		.289*
Appraisal Support		.460*		.561*		.519*
Social Companionship Support	195	.386*	195	.565*	390	.482*
Expression of Positive Emotions		.048		.472		.027
Expression Intimacy		.158**		.123		.121**
Expression of Negative Emotions		.017		.105		.080

* $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$.

The result of the female group determined that there was a significantly positive relation between marital satisfaction and the sub-dimensions of the spousal support scale, such as emotional support, instrumental and information support, appraisal support, and social companionship support ($p < .01$). No significant relationship was determined between female marital satisfaction and emotional expression ($p > .05$).

The result of the couple group showed that there was a significantly positive relation between marital satisfaction and the sub-dimensions of the spousal support scale, such as emotional support, instrumental and information support, appraisal support, and social companionship support ($p < .01$). While a significantly positive close relationship was determined between the emotional expression scale and expression of intimacy at a high level ($p < .05$), no significant relationship was determined between marital satisfaction and the sub-dimensions of expression of positive and negative emotions ($p > .05$).

Regression Results with Regard to Marital Satisfaction of Men, Women, and Married Couples

The results of the multiple regression analysis regarding their predictive ability for the marital satisfaction of married men, as shown in Table 4, demonstrated that emotional support, instrumental and information support, appraisal support, and social companionship support, as well as sub-dimensions of spousal support and of the emotional expression scale, such as expression of positive emotions, expression of intimacy, and expression of negative emotions, were treated as predictors of

marital satisfaction. The result of multiple regression showed that all processed variables explain 28% of men's marital satisfaction ($R = .529, R^2 = .280, F = 10.371, p < .001$). The results regarding the variables that explain men's marital satisfaction showed that emotional support ($\beta = .333, p < .01$) and expression of intimacy ($\beta = .149, p < .05$) were the most important predictors of men's marital satisfaction.

The results of the multiple regression analysis regarding their predictive ability for the marital satisfaction of married women, as shown in Table 4, demonstrated that emotional support, instrumental and information support, appraisal support and social companionship support, as well as sub-dimensions of spousal support and of the emotional expression scale, such as expression of positive emotions, expression intimacy and expression of negative emotions, were treated as predictors of marital satisfaction. The result of the multiple regression showed that all processed variables explain 41% of women's marital satisfaction ($R = .642, R^2 = .413, F = 18.777, p < .001$). The results regarding the variables that explain women's marital satisfaction showed that emotional support ($\beta = .237, p < .01$), appraisal support ($\beta = .271, p < .01$) and social companionship support ($\beta = .195, p < .05$), along with other sub-dimensions of marital support, were the most important predictors of women's marital satisfaction.

The results of the multiple regression analysis regarding the predictive ability for the marital satisfaction of married couples, as shown in Table 4, demonstrated that emotional support, instrumental and information support, appraisal support and social companionship support, as well as sub-dimensions of spousal support and of the emotional expression scale,

Table 4
Regression Analysis Results with the Regard to the Predictive Power of Spouse Support and Emotional Expression to Marital Satisfaction of Men, Women, and Married Couples

Independent Variables	Marital Satisfaction														
	Men					Women					Couple				
	R	R ²	F	B	t	R	R ²	F	B	t	R	R ²	F	B	t
Emotional Support				.333	3.213**				.237	2.475**				.293*	4.257*
Instrumental and Information Support				-.023	-.319				.027	.410				.019	3.93
Appraisal Support				.190	1.783				.271	3.518**				.237*	3.833*
Social Companionship Support	.529	.280	10.371	.030	.301	.642**	.413**	18.777**	.195	2.134*	.588*	.346*	28.854*	.096	1.490
Expression of Positive Emotions				-.058	-.822				-.038	-.609				-.067	-1.458
Expression of Intimacy				.149	2.107*				.022	.343				.082	1.740
Expression of Negative Emotions				.009	.137				.039	.651				.043	.991

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

such as expression of positive emotions, expression intimacy and expression of negative emotions, were treated as predictors of marital satisfaction. The result of multiple regression showed that all processed variables explain 35% of the married couples' marital satisfaction ($R = .588$, $R^2 = .346$, $F = 28.854$). The results regarding the variables that explain married couples' marital satisfaction showed that emotional support ($\beta = .293$, $p < .01$) and appraisal support ($\beta = .237$, $p < .01$), along with other sub-dimensions of marital support, were the most important predictors of married couples' marital satisfaction.

Discussion

This study was conducted to explain to what extent spousal support and emotional expression can predict marital satisfaction. The results of this study show a positive relationship between spousal support and marital satisfaction, and it was observed that spousal support could predict marital satisfaction. Contrary to the results regarding spousal support, it was concluded that none of the sub-dimensions of emotional expression, apart from men's expression of intimacy, correlated with marital satisfaction, and that it therefore cannot predict marital satisfaction.

This result shows that the support that spouses receive from each other plays an important role as variable for providing happiness in married couples' relationships. These results are supported by the literature (Acitelli & Antonucci, 1994; Dakof & Taylor, 1990; Julien & Markman, 1991). For married men and women, their spouses are the most important source of support (Dakof & Taylor, 1990), and a high level of support from their spouses is related to a high level of marital satisfaction, thus making it an important predictor of marital satisfaction (Acitelli & Antonucci, 1994; Julien & Markman, 1991). Additionally, it was found that the stress management of partners who perceived that they were given support in challenging situations played a positive role in health responsibility, personal development, and interpersonal relations (Kim & Park, 2014). In addition to this, the relationship between marital satisfaction and perceived support contributed to the prevention of depression (Khan & Aftab, 2013). This result reveals how important perceived support is for the individual's health. The results of this study show that spousal support is a predictor of marital satisfaction, and that there is a positive relationship between these two variables. Many studies suggest that individuals who are supported by their spouses have higher marital satisfaction than individuals who are not supported

by their spouses, which is also suggested by this study's above-mentioned result (Acitelli & Antonucci, 1994; Cramer, 2004; Çağ & Yıldırım, 2013; Cutrona & Suhr, 1994; Katz, Beach, & Anderson, 1996; Pasch & Bradbury, 1998; Wright & Aquilino, 1998).

When we aim to determine which sub-dimensions of spousal support can best predict marital satisfaction, the results showed that emotional support, appraisal support and social companionship support were the most effective sub-dimensions. Similarly, while Leggett, Pittman, Byczek, and Morse (2012) found a positive relationship between marital satisfaction and activities that are done together, such as visits to friends, which are indicators of social interest behavior, Holman and Jacquart (1988) found that spare time spent together by spouses was an important predictor of marital satisfaction. Moreover, marital satisfaction will be high and conflicting behavior will be low in marriages that involve emotional support (Mickelson, Claffey, & Williams, 2006).

No correlation was found between instrumental and information support, which is one of the sub-dimensions of spousal support, and the couples' marital satisfaction. In contrast to this research, some studies suggest that there is a correlation between instrumental and information support and marital satisfaction, while other studies suggest that there is no correlation. Erickson (1993) studied the effect of instrumental (financial) support and emotional support in working couples and unemployed couples as predictors of marital quality, and concluded that emotional support predicted marital satisfaction better than financial support, regardless of the employment status of the couples in question.

Contrary to expectations, the variable of emotional expression was not observed to affect marital satisfaction. This result seems to indicate that, contrary to American culture, emotional expression is not an important factor for marriage in Turkish culture. In addition, it can be understood that Turkish families prefer not to express their emotions in their marital relationship, which affects both personal qualities and social learning. The literature regarding emotional expression shows that many studies suggest a close relation between marital satisfaction and emotional expression (Carstensen, Gottman, & Levenson, 1995; Feeney, 2002; Geist & Gilbert, 1996; Halberstadt, Cassidy, Stifter, Parke, & Fox, 1995). However, this study's result is contrary to expectations. This may be attributed to the incomplete revelation of the relation between marital satisfaction and emotional expression (Bardabury, Fincham, & Beach 2000), the multi-factorial structure of emotional expression (Gross & John, 1998), and the indirect way

in emotions affect marital satisfaction (Trierweiler, Eid, & Lischetzke, 2002). According to Gur-Aryeh (2010), one of the variables that influence emotional expression and marital satisfaction is personality type; especially extroverts, who actively interact with their social environment, are better at emotional expression. According to Kennedy-Moore and Watson, (2001), different purposes can determine the existence or lack of emotional expression. Such purposes may be intimacy, self-protection, or control. Nyklicek, Vingerhoets, and Denollet (2002) stated that people who are unable to express their emotions deliberately choose not to express their emotions to avoid conflicts with others or to please other people. This situation may give spouses the tendency to keep their emotions hidden within their marital relationship from time to time.

According to Lutz (1987), there are some intercultural differences regarding emotional expression. Studies carried out in different cultures were examined, since the correlation between emotional expression and marital satisfaction in Turkish culture has not yet been researched. Gross and John (1995) examined four different cultures, namely, Asian, African-American, Caucasian, and Spanish cultures, and their study's results showed that Asians were the least determined to express their feelings. Ingoldsby (1980) studied the relation between emotional expression and dyadic adjustment by means of a comparison between samples from America and Colombia, and his results showed a relation between emotional expression and dyadic adjustment in the American samples, but no correlations in the Colombian samples.

The results of these intercultural studies suggest that the difference between the results of this study, which was conducted in our country for the first time, and the general understanding in the literature results from cultural differences.

Moreover, Kağıtçıbaşı's (2000) suggestion that emotional expression and speaking about emotions are not supported in Turkish culture generally supports this study's results.

In conclusion, this study on married couples constitutes a step toward revealing the effects of spousal support among couples and of emotional expression on marital satisfaction. It is expected that the results obtained within the scope of the study will contribute to the new studies and to the researchers who will implement these studies. Especially because spousal support is shown to be an important variable that affects marital satisfaction, family and marriage consultants working in this field can base supportive tasks and homework on these results, such as discussing social interests and sharing housework intended for the other spouse. Since spousal appreciation is an important predictor of marital satisfaction, appreciation and positive feedback between spouses should be encouraged. In addition, support programs intended for spouses have proved to be effective.

Since no relation was determined between emotional expression and marital satisfaction, future studies can examine how to what extent the correlation between emotional expression and marital sub-dimension was affected by personal qualities, and ask whether or not instrumental variables played a role in the interaction between emotional expression and marital satisfaction. Since emotional expression was observed to have no effect on marital satisfaction in the Turkish sample, which was here studied for the first time, a comparative intercultural study should be conducted to reveal the effects of different cultures on the function of emotional expression in close relationships or in different samples.

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