



Determining the Differences of Marriage Compatibility Between Infertile and Fertile Women

İnfertil Kadınlar ile Fertil Kadınlar Arasında Evlilik
Uyumu Farklarının Belirlenmesi

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Makale Bilgisi/Article Information

Makale Türü/Article Types: Araştırma Makalesi/Research Article

Geliş Tarihi/Received: 24 Ekim/October 2022

Kabul Tarihi/Accepted: 16 Mayıs/May 2023

Yıl/Year: 2023 | **Cilt – Volume:** 8 | **Sayı – Issue:** 2 | **Sayfa/Pages:** 429-441

Atıf/Cite as: Karaca Bıçakçı, N., Türk Delibalta, R. "Determining the Differences of Marriage Compatibility Between Infertile and Fertile Women" Journal of Samsun Health Sciences 8(2), Ağust 2023: 429-441.

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DETERMINING THE DIFFERENCES OF MARRIAGE COMPATIBILITY BETWEEN INFERTIL AND FERTILE WOMEN

ABSTRACT

Aim: This research was conducted as a descriptive study to determine the marital adjustment differences between infertile and fertile women.

Method: This cross-sectional study was conducted in a city center in eastern Turkey between January 2017 and December 2017. No sample selection was made, all volunteer women were included in the study, and the study was conducted on 96 women in total, n=48 infertile, n=48 fertile women. The data were collected by snowball method using the questionnaire form prepared by the researchers and the marital adjustment scale (MAS). Evaluation of the data was carried out using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 20.0) package program.

Results: 37.5% of infertile women and 70.8% of fertile women state that they have a happy marriage, and women with a happy marriage are higher in the fertile group. 93.8% of the infertile group and 68.8% of the fertile group stated that it is necessary to have children for a happy marriage. While 54.2% of infertile women stated that they felt worthless, only 2.1% of fertile women stated that they felt worthless. Mean marital adjustment score of infertile women is 34.58 ± 10.18 , (min-max=0-60) mean score of marital adjustment scale of fertile women is 40.60 ± 9.80 , (min-max=0-60) is higher found. It was determined that the marital adjustment scale scores of the women included in the study were higher than those who received support from their spouses, did not receive support, those who had good communication with their spouses, those who did not have good communication, those whose spouses were interested in them, and those who did not receive attention from their spouses.

Conclusions and Suggestions: In this study, it was determined that infertility brought along various problems in women's marriages. For this reason, it is recommended to increase supportive multidimensional studies that deal with the social and psychological dimensions of infertility.

Keywords: Marital Adjustment, Fertility, Infertility, Fit Difference.



İNFERİL KADINLAR İLE FERTİL KADINLAR ARASINDA EVLİLİK UYUMU FARKLARININ BELİRLENMESİ

ÖZ

Amaç: Bu araştırma, infertil ve fertil kadınlar arasında ki evlilik uyum farklarının belirlenmesi amacıyla tanımlayıcı olarak yapılmıştır.

Yöntem: Araştırma Türkiye'nin doğusunda bir şehir merkezinde Ocak 2017-Aralık 2017 tarihlerinde yapılmıştır. Örneklem seçimine gidilmemiş, gönüllü tüm kadınlar çalışmaya dâhil edilmiş olup, araştırma, n=48 infertil, n=48 fertil kadın olmak üzere toplam 96 kadın ile karşılaştırılmalı olarak yürütülmüştür. Veriler araştırmacılar tarafından hazırlanan anket formu ve evlilikte uyum ölçeği (EUÖ) kullanılarak kartopu yöntemiyle toplanmıştır. Verilerin değerlendirilmesinde Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 20.0) paket programı kullanılarak yapılmıştır.

Bulgular: İnfertil kadınların %37.5'i ve fertil kadınların %70.8'i mutlu bir evliliklerinin olduğunu belirtmekte olup, mutlu bir evliliğe sahip olan kadınlar fertil grupta daha yüksek orandadır. İnfertil grubunun %93.8'i ve fertil grubun %68.8'i mutlu bir evlilik için çocuk sahibi olmak gerektiğini belirtmişlerdir. İnfertil kadınların %54.2'si kendini değersiz hissettiklerini belirtirken, fertil kadınların yalnızca %2.1'i kendini değersiz hissettiklerini belirtmişlerdir. İnfertil kadınların evlilikte uyum ölçeği puan ortalamaları 34.58 ± 10.18 , (min-max=0-60) fertil kadınların evlilikte uyum ölçeği puan ortalamaları 40.60 ± 9.80 , (min-max=0-60) daha yüksek bulunmuştur. Çalışma kapsamına alınan kadınların eşinden destek alanların, destek alamayanlara, eşiyle iyi iletişimi olanların, iyi iletişimi olmayanlara, eşlerinin kendilerine karşı ilgili olanların, eşlerinden ilgi alamayanlara göre evlilikte uyum ölçek puanlarının daha yüksek olduğu belirlenmiştir.

Sonuçlar ve Öneriler: Bu çalışmada infertilitenin kadınların evliliklerinde çeşitli sorunları beraberinde getirdiği belirlenmiştir. Bu nedenle infertilitenin sosyal ve psikolojik boyutuyla ele alan destekleyici çok yönlü çalışmaların artırılması önerilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Evlilik Uyumu, Fertil, İnfertil, Uyum Farkı.



INTRODUCTION

Infertility, which is defined as a disease of the reproductive system that results in inability to conceive despite regular, unprotected sexual intercourse for one year or longer, is a global health problem affecting millions of people of reproductive

age in the world. Available data show that globally 186 million people are infertile worldwide. Infertility is observed in 10-20% of couples in Turkey (WHO, 2021). According to the Bulletin of the World Health Organization, infertility can occur due to female factors, male factors, a combination of male and female factors, but in many societies infertility is associated only with women, so it is often violence, divorce, social distancing, stigma, emotional stress, depression, anxiety and low self-esteem seem to have significant, negative social effects on women's lives (WHO, 2021). Although infertility affects the lives of individuals, it causes psychological, economic, inter-partner and family problems in individuals. On the basis of these problems, the pressure of individuals from families and society has a great effect. Due to the role of being a parent that society imposes on the individual and the lack of the individual's ability to continue her generation, the individual can see herself as inadequate and many problems are experienced. Infertility can cause accusatory attitudes between couples and end marriages (Sarı & Erciyes, 2021).

Marital harmony, couples having a sense of equality, developing both intellectual and physical closeness condition. In other words, it is satisfaction with marriage (Yalçın, 2014). Marital adjustment requires spouses to adapt to their daily lives and changing conditions (Kublay & Oktan, 2015). Infertility directly or indirectly affects marital adjustment. The effect of infertility on marital adjustment of married couples. When the effect is examined, it is seen that it increases conflict in both women and men, decreases sexual satisfaction, self-confidence in sexuality and frequency of sexual intercourse (Eren Bodur et al, 2013). On the other hand, some studies investigating the effects of infertility on the marital harmony of couples have stated that there are conflicting results. It is stated that infertility has positive effects on the marital harmony of couples, brings couples closer to each other and strengthens the marriage, increases the harmony between the stresses and grief experienced in infertility and contributes to the development of couples, while having children in marriage reduces marital satisfaction (Şen et al, 2014; Yücesoy et al, 2021). As a health problem, infertility creates problems in the family and social lives of both individuals and couples. In this study, it is aimed to determine the marital adjustment differences between infertile women and fertile women.

Research Questions:

1. Does infertility negatively affect women's marital adjustment?
2. Is marital adjustment of fertile women higher than infertile women?

MATERIAL METHOD

Type of Research

This research was conducted as a descriptive study to determine the marital adjustment differences between infertile and fertile women.

Place and Time of Research

It was carried out using the snowball method between January 2017 and December 2017 in a city center in eastern Turkey.

The Universe and Sample of the Research

The population of the study consisted of infertile and fertile women living in a city center in eastern Turkey. Sample selection was not made, and all volunteer women were included in the study. The research was conducted on a total of 96 women, n=48 infertile and n=48 fertile women. While the marital adjustment levels of the sample groups constitute the dependent variables of the study, the socio-demographic characteristics of the women and the marital data constitute the independent variables.

Data Collection (Data Collection Tools)

In data collection, a questionnaire prepared by the researchers using the literature and a marital adjustment scale were used.

Question Form; *It consists of 14 questions that include the socio-demographic characteristics of individuals, their marital characteristics and data on relationships between spouses (Onat Bayram, 2009; Taşçı et al, 2008).*

Marriage Adjustment Scale (MAS): *Developed by Locke and Wallace (1959) and adapted into Turkish by Tutarel Kışlak and tested for validity and reliability, the Marriage Adjustment Scale (MAS) aims to measure marital satisfaction and marital adjustment (Tutarel Kışlak, 1999). The scale consists of 15 items with different number of options. Each item is scored according to its options; Item 1 0-6 points, 2-9. Items 5-0 reversed, 10th item 0-2 points, 11th item 3-0 inverse points, 12th item 0-1 points, 13th item 0-3 points, 14th item 1-0 inverse points, and 15 The item is evaluated between 0-4 points. The total score obtained from the scale ranges from 0 to 60. Those who score above 43 points are considered compatible in terms of marital relations, and those below are considered incompatible. Tutarel Kışlak, found the Cronbach's alpha coefficient to be 84 in her study for the reliability of the marital adjustment scale (Tutarel Kışlak, 1999).*

Evaluation of Data

Statistical analysis of the data was performed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 20.0) package program. Significance level was accepted as $p < 0.05$. It was used to determine the descriptive statistics (number, percentage, mean, standard deviation) regarding the questions in the questionnaire prepared by the researchers. The scores of the women's marital adjustment scale and the variables were analyzed with the t-test and Anova test.

Ethical Principles

For the research, permission was obtained from the clinical research ethics committee of Kafkas University. Ethics committee decision no: 2016/59

Limitations of the Research

The fact that the research was conducted in a city center in eastern Turkey constitutes the limitations of the research. Research results can only be generalized according to the place where the research was conducted.

RESULTS

Table 1. Distribution of women according to socio-demographic characteristics (n=96)

Socio-Demographic Characteristics	Infertile Women		Fertile Women	
	n	%	n	%
Age				
15-24	2	4.2	1	2.1
25-34	32	66.7	27	56.3
35-44	14	29.2	2	37.5
45 Years and Older	0	0.0	2	4.2
Education Status				
Illiterate	1	2.1	2	4.2
Primary School	28	58.3	20	41.7
High School	15	31.3	17	35.5
University and Higher Education	4	8.3	9	18.8
Working Status				
Working	12	25.0	25	52.1
Not working	36	75.0	23	47.9
Civil Marriage				
Yes	48	100	48	100
No	0	0.0	0	0.0

Have Social Security				
Yes	48	100	48	100
No	0	0.0	0	0.0
Income Status				
Income Less Than Expense	29	60.4	25	52.1
Income Equal to Expenses	17	35.4	15	31.3
Income More Than Expenses	2	4.2	8	16.7
Family Type				
Nuclear Family	38	79.2	37	77.1
Extended Family	10	20.8	11	22.9
Wedding Year				
1-3 Years	7	14.6	2	4.2
4-5 Years	16	33.3	12	25.0
7-9 Years	18	37.5	19	39.6
10 Years and Above	7	14.6	15	31.3

Table 1 shows the socio-demographic characteristics of the women included in the study. Included in the research 66.7% of the infertile women and 56.3% of the fertile women included in the study are between the ages of 25-34, 58.3% of the infertile women and 41.7% of the fertile women are secondary school graduates, only % of the women in the infertile group It was determined that while 25.0 of them were working, 52.1% of the women in the fertile group were working. In addition, 60.4% of the women in the infertile group and 52.1% of the women in the fertile group have low incomes, 79.2% of the women in the infertile group and 77.1% of the women in the fertile group live in a nuclear family, 14.6% of the women in the infertile group and 31.3% of the women in the fertile group were married for more than 10 years (Table 1).

Table 2. Distribution of women according to their thoughts on marriage (n=96)

Marriage and Spousal Relationship Characteristics	Infertile Women		Fertile Women	
	n	%	n	%
The State of Thinking That They Have a Happy Marriage				
Yes	18	37.5	34	70.8
No	30	62.5	14	29.2
It is Necessary to Have Children for Happiness				
Yes	45	93.8	33	68.8
No	3	6.2	15	31.2
Ability to Deal with Problems				
Yes	29	60.4	36	75.0
No	19	39.6	12	25.0
Feeling Worthless				
Yes	26	54.2	1	2.1
No	22	45.8	47	97.9

Feeling Emotionally Close to Your Spouse				
Yes	35	72.9	41	85.4
No	13	27.1	7	14.6
Getting Spousal Support				
Yes	36	75.0	43	89.6
No	12	25.0	5	10.4
Good Communication with Spouse				
Yes	24	50.0	44	91.6
No	24	50.0	4	8.4
Spousal Interest				
Yes	26	54.2	42	87.5
No	22	45.8	6	12.5

In Table 2, information about some marital characteristics of women and their thoughts on spousal relations is given comparatively between infertile and fertile groups (n=96). It was determined that 37.5% of the infertile group had a happy marriage and 93.8% thought that it was necessary to have children for a happy marriage, while 70.8% of the fertile group thought that they had a happy marriage and 68.8% thought that they should have children for a happy marriage. While the thought that the infertile group has a happy marriage was found to be lower than the fertile group, the rate of those who thought that having a child for a happy marriage was higher in the infertile group than the fertile group. It was determined that 54.2% of the infertile group and 2.1% of the fertile group felt themselves worthless, and the rate of feeling worthless in infertile women was significantly higher than in fertile women. While 50.0% of the infertile group stated that they had good communication with their spouses, it was determined that 91.6% of the women in the fertile group had good communication with their spouses. It was determined that the rate of having good communication with the spouses of the fertile group was higher than the infertile group (Table 2).

Table 3. Mean marital adjustment scale scores of infertile and fertile women according to some variables (n=96)

	n	Number of Items	X±SD	Min-Max	Cronbach Alfa	Cronbach Alfa
Infertile Women	48	15	34.58±10.18	0-60	0.84*	0.89
Fertile Women	48	15	40.60±9.80	0-60	0.84*	0.82
Properties and Variables	Infertile Group		Fertile Group			
Working Status						
Working	37.63±11.35	t=1.28	37.56±4.19			t=2.34
Not Working	33.50±9.69	p=0.20	43.91±12.62			p=0.02

Family Type				
Nuclear Family	34.60±10.34	t=0.29	38.86±9.19	t=2.36
Extended Family	34.50±10.11	p=0.97	46.45±9.96	p=0.02
The State of Thinking That They Have a Happy Marriage				
Yes	39.41±10.83	t=2.57	47.93±7.02	t=3.75
No	31.95±8.91	p=0.01	37.59±9.24	p=0.00
It is Necessary to Have Children for Happiness				
Yes	33.64±10.33	t=1.17	37.52±9.37	t=3.63
No	37.72±9.44	p=0.24	47.40±7.07	p=0.00
Ability to Deal with Problems				
Yes	37.89±10.51	t=2.85	48.67±7.20	t=3.63
No	29.95±7.80	p=0.00	37.92±9.11	p=0.00
Feeling Worthless				
Yes	30.04±6.75	t=3.24	37.73±7.38	t=3.32
No	38.76±11.11	p=0.00	46.93±9.49	p=0.00
Feeling Emotionally Close to Your Spouse				
Yes	39.78±10.46	t=3.12	51.57±6.55	t=3.58
No	31.17±8.56	p=0.00	38.73±9.05	p=0.00
Getting Spousal Support				
Yes	40.52±10.54	t=4.12	50.80±4.56	t=3.90
No	29.96±7.16	p=0.00	38.95±8.92	p=0.00
Good Communication with Spouse				
Yes	38.67±9.93	t=3.71	51.69±3.65	t=3.78
No	28.85±7.56	p=0.00	38.93±8.87	p=0.00
Spousal Interest				
Yes	38.72±10.45	t=2.77	53.50±4.50	t=3.93
No	31.07±8.68	p=0.00	38.76±8.84	p=0.00
Age				
15-24	40.50±2.12	F=0.34	37.00±5.58	F=1.30
25-34	34.37±10.61	p=0.71	39.01±6.87	p=0.28
35-44	34.21±10.02		40.60±9.80	
45 Years and Older	...		43.94±12.95	
Education Status				
Illiterate	42.00±10.18		43.45±12.26	
Primary School	33.17±10.19	F=1.25	40.60±9.80	F=1.97
High School	35.13±10.54	p=0.23	37.53±7.88	p=0.13
University and Higher Education	40.50±9.25		38.11±3.88	

Income Status				
Income Less Than Expense	33.32±10.47	F=0.84	33.63±5.44	F=5.22
Income Equal to Expenses	35.23±9.98	p=0.43	38.00±5.50	p=0.00
Income More Than Expenses	43.00±5.65		44.40±11.25	
Wedding Year				
1-3 Years	36.28±9.51		36.00±8.48	
4-5 Years	35.25±10.37	F=0.14	38.25±4.37	F=2.24
7-9 Years	33.66±11.87	p=0.93	38.47±7.91	p=0.09
10 Years and Above	33.71±6.77		45.80±13.39	

(Cronbach Alpha: Marriage Adjustment Scale =0.84* Tutarel Kışlak 1999)

Table 3 provides information about the marital adjustment scale scores of women. While the marital adjustment scale mean score of the women in the infertile group was determined as 34.58±10.18, the mean score of the women in the fertile group was determined as 40.60±9.80. It was determined that the marital adjustment scale scores of the infertile group were lower than the fertile group. While there was no statistically significant relationship between employment status and marital adjustment scale scores in the infertile group ($p>0.05$), no statistically significant relationship was found for both conditions in the fertile group ($p<0.05$). There was no statistically significant relationship between the marital adjustment scale scores of the women who thought they had a happy marriage in both the infertile group and the fertile group ($p<0.05$). In both groups, no statistically significant correlation was found between the states of being able to cope with problems, feeling worthless, feeling emotionally close to their spouses, having good communication with their spouses, receiving attention and support from their spouses, and marital adjustment scale scores ($p<0.05$). In both infertile and fertile groups, no statistically significant relationship was found between age groups, educational status, years of marriage and marital adjustment scale scores ($p>0.05$). A statistically significant relationship was found between the income status of the women in the fertile group and the marital adjustment scale scores ($p<0.05$).

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study, which was conducted to determine the marital adjustment differences between infertile and fertile women in a city center in eastern Turkey, will be discussed in this section. It has been determined that infertile and fertile women have similar characteristics in terms of age groups, educational status, income status and family types, all of the women in both groups have social security and official marriage, while the rate of employment in infertile women is lower than fertile women. (Table 1). In another study, age, duration of marriage, education level and duration of wanting a child were reported as variables affecting hopelessness in infertile women, and it was reported that hopelessness and adjustment increased in infertile women as age and duration of marriage increased and

education level decreased (Kargin & Ünal, 2011). In studies on marital adjustment, infertility and marital adjustment, it was determined that results similar to the results of this study were found in terms of age ranges, educational status, monthly income status, family type and employment status of women (Aktepe, 2019; Ege-lioğlu Cetişli et al, 2018; Eren, 2008; Eren Bodur et al, 2013; Şen et al, 2014; Taşçı et al, 2008; Yalçın, 2014). While the rate of women in the infertile group to think that they have a happy marriage compared to the women in the fertile group, it was determined that almost all of the infertile women thought that it was necessary to have children for a happy marriage. In addition, it was determined that the rate of women in the infertile group to be able to cope with problems and to feel emotionally close to their spouses was lower than the women in the fertile group, while the rate of infertile women who felt worthless was higher than that of fertile women. When evaluated in terms of spousal relationship characteristics, the rates of women in the infertile group receiving spousal support, communicating well with their spouses, and receiving attention from their spouses were found to be lower than fertile women (Table 2). In the study of Eren, it was stated that 8.7% of them could not share their infertility problems with anyone (Eren, 2008). In the study of Akyüz et al, in which the effects of infertility on marital violence were investigated, it was stated that infertile women had higher violence scale mean scores than fertile women, and that there was a statistically significant difference between infertile and fertile women's economic, emotional and sexual violence mean scores (Akyüz et al, 2013). Similarly, In the study conducted by Dayıcan Özbek, it was determined that there is a positive relationship between marital adjustment and social support received from spouse, family and private individuals (Dayıcan Özbek, 2016). It has been reported that women such as loss of control, psychological inadequacy, loss of self in infertile women feel excluded from society, lonely, lack of social role and decrease in self-esteem (Şen et al., 2014). In studies in the literature, it is reported that the burden of maternal status on women in social roles causes women to feel inadequate and feel less female, which causes women to experience more stress in the personal and civil sphere (Arya & Dibb, 2016; Sis Çelik & Kırca, 2018).

Similarly, the infertility process has been reported to be difficult and traumatic for couples, sharing feelings and concerns between spouses, supporting each other and coping with the problem together, reducing stress and improving communication between partners, strengthening the relationship and creating a new space of safety (Repokari et al. 2007). In the study, the marital adjustment scale mean score of the women in the infertile group was determined as 34.58 ± 10.18 , while the mean score of the women in the fertile group was determined as 40.60 ± 9.80 . It was determined that the marital adjustment scale scores of the infertile group were lower than the fertile group. According to the study conducted by Taşçı et al., it was stated that the mean score of marital adjustment of women was 46.29 ± 6.98 , unlike the study, it was stated that infertile women had higher dyadic adjustment

scale scores than fertile women, and that infertility increased the rapprochement between couples in marriage (Cousineau & Domar, 2007). Bektaş and Kahyaoğlu Süt, in their study with infertile and fertile women, reported that there was a significant difference between the perceived stress scale scores of the infertile and fertile groups, and the perceived stress scale scores of infertile women were higher (Bektaş & Kahyaoğlu Süt, 2021). In another study, it was stated that 80.4% of the participants had a marital adjustment scale average score of 43 points and above (Can Halıcı & Saatci, 2021).

While there was no statistically significant relationship between employment status and marital adjustment scale scores in the infertile group ($p>0.05$), no statistically significant relationship was found for both conditions in the fertile group ($p<0.05$). In both groups, a statistically significant relationship was found between the states of being able to cope with problems, feeling worthless, feeling emotionally close to their spouses, having good communication with their spouses, receiving attention and support from their spouses, and marital adjustment scale scores ($p<0.05$). In the study conducted by Taşçı et al., it was stated that there was no statistically significant difference between the education level, income status and duration of marriage of infertile women, and the mean score of adjustment in marriage (Taşçı et al, 2008). In another study, it was stated that there was no significant relationship between the type of family that women lived in and their marital adjustment, and there was a statistically significant relationship between the duration of marriage, their feelings towards their spouses, their evaluation of their marriage and their feelings towards their spouse (Yalçın, 2014).

In the study conducted by Can Halıcı and Saatçi, it was stated that there was no significant relationship between having children, age of the participants, family type and marital adjustment (Can Halıcı & Saatci, 2021). In the study of Eren Bodur et al, it was stated that there was no significant difference between the groups in terms of marital adjustment, perceived social support, depression and anxiety between infertile and non-infertile women (Eren Bodur et al, 2013). In a study, it was stated that as the education level and income level of women increased, their marital adjustment scores increased.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the study, it was determined that in addition to the negative effects of infertility on women's mood and psychology, infertility also affects the level of relationship between couples and reduces the level of marital adjustment.

It is recommended by healthcare professionals to obtain detailed information in interviews with infertile women so that women can express their emotional states, and to provide professional support that can be effective on fertility.

Ethics Committee Approval

The study was approved by Kafkas University Faculty of Medicine Ethics Committee. Date: 27.04.2016 Decision no: 59.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest between the authors.

Financial Support

No financial support was received from any institution or person for the study.

Author Contribution

Design of Study: NKB(%50), RTD(%50)

Data Acquisition: NKB(%100)

Data Analysis: NKB(%50), RT(%50)

Writing Up: NKB(%50), RT(%50)

Submission and Revision: NKB(%100)

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