



Evli ve Çalışan Bireylerde Evlilik Doyumu ve İş Tatmini: Duygusal Şiddetin Rolü

Marital Satisfaction and Job Satisfaction Among Married and Employed Individuals: The Role Of Emotional Abuse

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ÖZ

Bu çalışma, evli ve çalışan bireylerde evlilik doyumu, iş tatmini ve duygusal şiddete maruz kalma arasındaki ilişkileri incelemektedir. Araştırmanın örneklemini basit rastgele örnekleme yöntemiyle seçilen 279 evli ve çalışan birey oluşturmaktadır. Veriler Evlilik Doyum Ölçeği, İş Tatmin Ölçeği ve Duygusal Şiddete Maruz Kalma Ölçeği kullanılarak toplanmıştır. Bulgular, duygusal şiddetin hem evlilik doyumunu hem de iş tatminini anlamlı düzeyde azalttığını, evlilik doyumu ile iş tatmini arasında ise pozitif yönde anlamlı bir ilişki olduğunu göstermektedir. Elde edilen sonuçlar, duygusal şiddetin bireylerin hem özel yaşam hem de çalışma yaşamı üzerindeki olumsuz etkilerine dikkat çekmekte ve önleyici ile müdahaleye yönelik uygulamaların önemini ortaya koymaktadır.

ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationships between marital satisfaction, job satisfaction, and exposure to emotional abuse among married and employed individuals. The sample of the study consists of 279 married and employed individuals selected using a simple random sampling method. Data were collected using the Marital Satisfaction Scale, the Job Satisfaction Scale, and the Emotional Abuse Exposure Scale. The findings indicate that emotional abuse significantly reduces both marital satisfaction and job satisfaction, while marital satisfaction is positively and significantly associated with job satisfaction. The results highlight the negative effects of emotional abuse on individuals' private and working lives and underscore the importance of preventive and intervention-oriented practices.

Atıf Bilgisi / Reference Information

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1. Introduction

Marriage and work constitute two of the most influential domains of adult life, directly affecting psychological well-being, life satisfaction, and social functioning. The quality of one's marital relationship and job satisfaction often intersect, influencing both individual happiness and societal functioning (Clements & Swensen, 2000). Within these domains, emotional abuse represents a subtle yet profoundly harmful dynamic that negatively impacts psychological adjustment. Unlike physical abuse, emotional abuse is less visible, but its long-term consequences may be equally damaging (Stith et al., 2008).

Previous research has indicated that emotional abuse can have detrimental effects on both individuals' work life and marital relationships. In this context, five primary hypotheses are proposed: First, it is expected that there is a negative relationship between emotional abuse and job satisfaction. Second, marital satisfaction is hypothesized to have a positive relationship with job satisfaction. Third, a negative relationship is anticipated between emotional abuse and marital satisfaction. Furthermore, the fourth hypothesis posits that exposure to emotional abuse negatively predicts job satisfaction. Finally, the fifth hypothesis suggests that emotional abuse negatively predicts marital satisfaction. These hypotheses provide a framework for understanding the significant adverse effects of emotional abuse at both individual and relational levels.

The findings are expected to contribute to clinical practice, workplace interventions, and policy, given that marital distress and workplace dissatisfaction are associated with increased stress, poorer mental health outcomes, and decreased productivity.

2. Literature Review

Marital satisfaction refers to an individual's subjective evaluation of the quality of their marital relationship (Fowers & Olson, 1993). High marital satisfaction has been associated with better psychological adjustment, improved physical health, and greater life satisfaction. Factors influencing marital satisfaction include effective communication, intimacy, problem-solving skills, and socio-demographic characteristics such as age, education, and income (Karney & Bradbury, 1995).

Job satisfaction, defined as the degree to which individuals feel fulfilled and content with their occupational roles, also plays a crucial role in overall well-being (Locke, 1976). Prior research has consistently demonstrated a bidirectional link between job satisfaction and marital satisfaction, with strain in one domain often spilling over into the other (Crouter, 1984).

Emotional abuse involves behaviors that diminish an individual's sense of self-worth, including criticism, humiliation, intimidation, and emotional neglect. Research has shown that emotional abuse within intimate relationships is strongly associated with lower levels of marital satisfaction and increased risk of depression and anxiety (Stith et al., 2008).

Research has also examined gender differences in experiences of emotional abuse and sexual satisfaction, though the findings remain inconsistent. Men may underreport emotional abuse due to social desirability, while women may be more sensitive to relational dynamics (Ali & Naylor, 2013). Furthermore, higher education and income levels are often correlated with increased job satisfaction, likely due to greater autonomy, career opportunities, and financial security (Clark, 1997).

Given these findings, the present study situates itself at the intersection of marital satisfaction, job satisfaction, and emotional abuse, seeking to contribute empirical evidence from a Turkish sample.



3. Aim of the Study and Hypotheses

The aim of this study is to examine the relationships between marital satisfaction, job satisfaction, and exposure to emotional abuse among married and employed individuals. In line with this aim, the following hypotheses were tested:

H1: There is a significant negative relationship between emotional abuse and job satisfaction.

H2: There is a significant positive relationship between marital satisfaction and job satisfaction.

H3: There is a significant negative relationship between emotional abuse and marital satisfaction.

H4: Emotional abuse negatively predicts job satisfaction.

H5: Emotional abuse negatively predicts marital satisfaction.

4. Method

4.1. Participants

The study sample consisted of 279 married and employed individuals (See in Table 1). Participants were recruited through simple random sampling. Demographic information such as gender, age, educational level, and income were collected.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

Variable	Category	n	%
Age	25-34	68	24.4
	35-44	123	44.1
	45-54	68	24.4
	55 and above	20	7.2
Gender	Female	154	55.2
	Male	125	44.8
Marital Status	Married	279	100.0
Duration of Marriage	1-10 years	82	29.4
	10-20 years	93	33.3
	20 years and above	104	37.3
Education Level	Primary School	27	9.7
	High School	70	25.1
	Associate Degree	37	13.3
	Bachelor's Degree	103	36.9
	Master's Degree	42	15.1
Having Children	Yes	243	87.1



	No	36	12.9
Number of Children	One	56	23.0
	Two	118	48.6
	Three or more	69	28.4
Responsibility for Others Beyond Children	Yes	33	11.8
	No	246	88.2
Employment Status	Employed	241	86.4
	Unemployed	38	13.6
Years of Work Experience	Less than 1 year	23	8.2
	1-5 years	45	16.1
	5-10 years	60	21.5
	11 years and above	151	54.1
Work Type	Fully On-site	229	82.1
	Fully Online	13	4.7
	Hybrid	37	13.3
Daily Working Hours	1-4 hours	21	7.5
	4-6 hours	30	10.8
	6-8 hours	101	36.2
	8-10 hours	95	34.1
	10 hours and above	32	11.5
Place of Residence	District	46	16.5
	Metropolitan	233	83.5
Sector of Employment	Private Sector	204	73.1
	Public Sector	75	26.9
Monthly Income	Low	47	16.8
	Medium	208	74.6
	High	24	8.6
Total	—	279	100.0

In Table 1, the majority of participants (44.1%) were aged between 35 and 44 years. Most participants were female (55.2%). All participants (100%) were married, and the largest proportion (37.3%) had been married for 20 years or more. The majority of participants (36.9%) had a bachelor's degree. Most participants (87.1%) had children, with the largest group of parents (48.6%) having two children. The majority (88.2%) did not have any dependents other than their children. Most participants (86.4%) were employed, and more



than half (54.1%) had been working for 11 years or longer. Nearly all participants (82.1%) worked fully in-person, and the majority (36.2%) worked 6–8 hours per day. Most participants (83.5%) lived in metropolitan areas. A majority (73.1%) were employed in the private sector, and most participants (74.6%) had a medium monthly income.

4.2. Data Collection

This study employed instruments designed to collect scientific data on the research topic. A four-part survey form was administered to participants, comprising the following sections: the Demographic Information Form, the Marital Satisfaction Scale, the Job Satisfaction Scale, and the Emotional Abuse Scale.

Demographic Information Form

The first part of the survey collected participants' demographic data, including age, gender, education level, income, marital status, length of marriage, place of residence, number of children, and sector of employment. The Demographic Information Form consisted of 15 items.

Marital Satisfaction Scale

The Marital Satisfaction Scale (MSS) was used as the second data collection instrument. Its validity and reliability were established by Çelik and İnanc (2009), who tested the scale on five different sample groups. The MSS contains 13 items, with five positively worded and eight negatively worded items. Responses are recorded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” Scores range from 13 to 65, with higher scores indicating higher marital satisfaction. The scale comprises three sub-dimensions: family, sexuality, and self-esteem. Reliability analysis indicated acceptable item-total correlations for the scale and its sub-dimensions, with Cronbach's alpha values of 0.82 for the total scale, 0.83 for the family subscale, 0.81 for the sexuality subscale, and 0.75 for the self-esteem subscale. These findings suggest that the MSS and its sub-dimensions have stable properties over time

Job Satisfaction Scale

The Job Satisfaction Scale was initially developed by Brayfield and Rothe (1951) and later revised and shortened by Judge et al. (1998). The Turkish adaptation was conducted by Başol and Çömlekçi (2020). This scale consists of five items measuring a single factor, with scores ranging from 5 to 25 on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Higher scores indicate higher levels of job satisfaction. Cronbach's alpha was 0.929, indicating high internal consistency and reliability, exceeding the commonly accepted threshold of 0.60 in social sciences (Taber, 2018). Item-total correlations ranged from 0.756 to 0.886.

Emotional Abuse Scale

The Emotional Abuse Scale, developed by Eskici and Tinkır (2019), consists of 29 items across five sub-dimensions: obstruction (9 items), threat (5 items), humiliation (6 items), harm (6 items), and verbal degradation (3 items). Responses are rated on a five-point Likert scale, with scores ranging from 29 to 145. Higher scores indicate greater exposure to emotional abuse. Reliability analysis yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.92, confirming the scale's validity and reliability.

4.3. Procedure

This study was reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee of İstanbul Topkapı University, with the decision dated 31/05/2023 and numbered E-49846378-302.14.1-2300006615. Prior to data collection, ethical permission obtained from İstanbul Topkapı University's ethical commission and scale permissions was obtained from the developers of the Marital Satisfaction Scale, Job Satisfaction Scale, and Emotional

Abuse Scale via email. The survey was then created using Google Forms and distributed to participants via email and social media platforms. Participants were informed about the study, assured of confidentiality, and informed that participation was voluntary. They were also told that personal data would not be collected, results would not be shared with third parties, and collected data would be used solely for scientific purposes.

4.4. Data Analysis

Statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS 27. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were used to assess the reliability of the scales, all of which exceeded 0.60, indicating high reliability (Kılıç, 2016). Normality of the data was evaluated using skewness and kurtosis, following the recommended range of -2 to +2 (Hahs-Vaughn & Lomax, 2020). Relationships among the scales were examined using Pearson correlation analysis. Differences based on demographic variables were analyzed using independent samples t-tests and ANOVA. Multiple linear regression analyses were conducted to examine predictive relationships. All analyses were performed at a 95% confidence interval with a significance level of $p < 0.05$.

5. Results

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships among the research variables. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Correlations Among Job Satisfaction Scale, Marital Satisfaction Scale, and Emotional Abuse Scale

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Job Satisfaction	1										
2. Marital Satisfaction	.09	1									
3. Sexuality	.12*	.72**	1								
4. Family	.03	.79**	.25**	1							
5. Self-Esteem	.05	.67**	.30**	.37**	1						
6. Emotional Abuse	-	-	-	-	-	1					
	.19**	.47**	.32**	.38**	.32**						
7. Obstruction	-	-	-	-	-	.93**	1				
	.23**	.48**	.32**	.39**	.34**						
8. Threat	-.02	-	-	-	-	.70**	.61**	1			
		.27**	.19**	.20**	.21**						
9. Humiliation	-.09	-	-	-	-	.75**	.54**	.48**	1		
		.34**	.26**	.29**	.17**						
10. Harm	-.13*	-	-	-	-	.82**	.66**	.47**	.56**	1	
		.37**	.25**	.29**	.27**						
11. Verbal Degradation	-	-	-	-	-	.81**	.67**	.56**	.68**	.58**	1
	.16**	.31**	.23**	.26**	.16**						

As shown in Table 4.2, a low positive correlation was observed between the Sexuality subdimension of the Marital Satisfaction Scale and the Job Satisfaction Scale ($r = .12$, $p < .05$). This indicates that participants who reported higher sexual satisfaction in their marriage also tended to have higher levels of job satisfaction.

Significant low negative correlations were found between Emotional Abuse and Job Satisfaction ($r = -.19$, $p < .01$), as well as between Job Satisfaction and the subdimensions of Emotional Abuse, including Obstruction ($r = -.23$, $p < .01$), Harm ($r = -.13$, $p < .05$), and Verbal Degradation ($r = -.16$, $p < .01$). These results suggest that higher exposure to emotional abuse is associated with lower job satisfaction.

Further examination of Table 4.2 reveals significant negative correlations between Emotional Abuse and Marital Satisfaction ($r = -.47$, $p < .01$). Specifically, the subdimensions of Emotional Abuse showed the following correlations with Marital Satisfaction: Obstruction ($r = -.48$, $p < .01$), Threat ($r = -.27$, $p < .01$), Humiliation ($r = -.34$, $p < .01$), Harm ($r = -.37$, $p < .01$), and Verbal Degradation ($r = -.31$, $p < .01$), indicating low to moderate negative relationships.

In addition, Emotional Abuse was negatively correlated with Sexuality ($r = -.32$, $p < .01$). The subdimensions of Emotional Abuse also exhibited low to moderate negative correlations with Sexuality: Obstruction ($r = -.32$, $p < .01$), Threat ($r = -.19$, $p < .01$), Humiliation ($r = -.26$, $p < .01$), Harm ($r = -.25$, $p < .01$), and Verbal Degradation ($r = -.23$, $p < .01$). These results suggest that individuals experiencing higher levels of emotional abuse report lower levels of sexual satisfaction in their marriage.

Similarly, Emotional Abuse was negatively associated with Family subdimension scores ($r = -.38$, $p < .01$). The subdimensions of Emotional Abuse correlated with Family as follows: Obstruction ($r = -.39$, $p < .01$), Threat ($r = -.20$, $p < .01$), Humiliation ($r = -.29$, $p < .01$), Harm ($r = -.29$, $p < .01$), and Verbal Degradation ($r = -.26$, $p < .01$). These findings indicate that emotional abuse within the family context is linked to lower quality of family relationships.

Finally, Emotional Abuse was negatively correlated with Self-Esteem ($r = -.32$, $p < .01$). The subdimensions of Emotional Abuse were also negatively associated with Self-Esteem: Obstruction ($r = -.34$, $p < .01$), Threat ($r = -.21$, $p < .01$), Humiliation ($r = -.17$, $p < .01$), Harm ($r = -.27$, $p < .01$), and Verbal Degradation ($r = -.16$, $p < .01$). This suggests that individuals who experience higher levels of emotional abuse tend to have lower self-esteem, or conversely, individuals with lower self-esteem are more likely to be subjected to emotional abuse.

In this section, multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to evaluate the predictive effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable. However, independent variables that did not meet the linearity assumption (i.e., variables that were not significantly correlated with the dependent variable) were excluded from the regression model. The findings are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Predictive Effects of Emotional Abuse on Job Satisfaction

Variable	B	SE	β	t	p	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper
Constant	20.84	0.83	-	24.98	<.001***	19.20	22.49
Obstruction	-0.17	0.06	-0.24	-2.78	0.006**	-0.28	-0.05
Harm	0.07	0.11	0.05	0.62	0.537	-0.14	0.27
Verbal Degradation	-0.06	0.20	-0.03	-0.32	0.748	-0.45	0.33

Model Summary: $R = .23$, $R^2 = .04$, $F(3, 275) = 5.25$, $p < .01$

Note. *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$; CI = Confidence Interval

Examination of the results presented in Table 4.3 indicates that the subdimensions of Emotional Abuse, specifically Harm and Verbal Degradation, did not have a significant effect on Job Satisfaction. However,

Obstruction was found to negatively predict Job Satisfaction. The R^2 value of the model was .04, indicating that the predictors explained 4% of the variance in the dependent variable ($F(3, 275) = 5.25, p < .01$). Overall, the findings suggest that Obstruction negatively predicts Job Satisfaction ($\beta = -.24, p < .01$).

Table 4. Predictive Effects of Emotional Abuse on Marital Satisfaction

Variable	B	SE	β	t	p	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper
Constant	63.63	2.13	-	29.85	<.001***	59.43	67.83
Obstruction	-0.62	0.12	-0.44	-5.31	<.001***	-0.85	-0.39
Threat	0.30	0.43	0.05	0.69	0.489	-0.55	1.15
Humiliation	-0.58	0.28	-0.15	-2.06	0.041*	-1.13	-0.02
Harm	-0.21	0.20	-0.08	-1.03	0.304	-0.60	0.19
Verbal Degradation	0.55	0.42	0.11	1.30	0.194	-0.28	1.37

Model Summary: $R = .50, R^2 = .23, F(5, 273) = 17.73, p < .001$

Note. *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$; CI = Confidence Interval

Examination of the results presented in Table 4 indicates that the independent variables Threat, Harm, and Verbal Degradation did not significantly predict Marital Satisfaction. However, Obstruction and Humiliation were found to be significant predictors of Marital Satisfaction. The R^2 value of the model was .23, indicating that the predictors explained 23% of the variance in the dependent variable ($F(5, 273) = 17.73, p < .001$). Overall, the findings suggest that both Obstruction and Humiliation negatively predict Marital Satisfaction, with Humiliation showing a standardized coefficient of $\beta = -.15 (p < .05)$.

6. Discussion

Based on the correlation analysis conducted to examine the effect of emotional abuse on marital satisfaction, it was found that emotional abuse has a negative impact on marital satisfaction. Individuals exposed to emotional abuse reported lower levels of sexual satisfaction in their marriages, reduced self-esteem, and weaker family relationships.

Regression analysis examining the effects of emotional abuse on marital satisfaction indicated that emotional abuse, as a whole, decreases marital satisfaction. Specifically, among its subdimensions, blocking and humiliation were found to contribute more significantly to the reduction of marital satisfaction. In other words, increases in the level of emotional abuse lead to a decline in marital satisfaction, while other dimensions of emotional abuse did not have a statistically significant effect.

The literature contains numerous studies examining factors affecting marital satisfaction. For instance, Seider et al. (2009) found that when couples have high-quality communication skills, emotional abuse does not occur, and marital satisfaction is high. Couples who used positive and “I” language instead of blaming or critical language demonstrated better problem-solving skills and were able to discuss marital expectations openly with both their families and each other, reducing potential problems in their marriage and thereby increasing marital satisfaction. In contrast, unclear communication, sarcastic remarks, and unrealistic expectations contribute to communication problems and emotional abuse, ultimately reducing marital satisfaction (Jackl, 2016). Similar findings regarding the positive effect of communication skills on marital satisfaction have been reported in other studies (Baran & Okanlı, 2015; Üstünel, 2011; Erbek et al., 2005; Acar, 1998; Noller & Fitzpatrick, 1990). The common conclusion of these studies is that positive



communication between spouses enhances marital satisfaction, while communication problems increase emotional abuse and are major contributors to divorce.

Regarding the relationship between emotional abuse and job satisfaction, correlation analysis revealed that emotional abuse has a low to moderate negative effect on job satisfaction. Individuals exposed to obstacles and undermining behaviors in the workplace exhibited lower levels of job satisfaction. Similarly, those subjected to emotional harm and verbal abuse reported reduced job satisfaction.

Regression analysis examining the effect of emotional abuse on job satisfaction indicated that among the subdimensions of emotional abuse, blocking had a significant and negative effect on job satisfaction. Most studies in the literature examining job satisfaction focus on the concept of mobbing, which is closely related to workplace and occupational violence and produces effects similar to those of emotional abuse. For example, Dinçer (2010), in a study with nurses, found high levels of exposure to emotional abuse and low levels of job satisfaction. Similarly, research with university faculty members revealed a negative relationship between exposure to emotional abuse (mobbing) and job satisfaction (Çivilidağ, 2011). Carroll and Lauzier (2014) examined the relationship between emotional abuse (mobbing) and job satisfaction in the context of social support. Their study, conducted with 249 employees in Canada, showed that employees with strong social support were better protected against the effects of emotional abuse (mobbing), and even when exposed to such abuse, their job satisfaction remained high.

Another study by Erdoğan and Yıldırım (2017) investigated the relationship between job satisfaction and exposure to emotional abuse (mobbing) among healthcare workers. Results indicated high levels of exposure to emotional abuse, characterized as direct attacks on personality and disturbing behaviors. It was also observed that nurses experienced more emotional abuse from doctors than from other colleagues. Consequently, exposure to emotional abuse in healthcare settings led to lower levels of job satisfaction.

Pollmann et al. (2019) also reported a significant negative relationship between emotional abuse exposure and job satisfaction. Other studies corroborating the negative impact of emotional abuse (mobbing) on job satisfaction include Vartia-Väänänen (2003) and Josipović-Jelić et al. (2005). The study further examined whether the level of exposure to emotional abuse (mobbing) differed according to demographic variables. The results indicated that younger employees were more frequently exposed to blocking behaviors compared to employees over 40 years old. Single employees experienced more blocking than married employees, and their relationships with colleagues were weaker. Regarding years of service, employees in the early years of their careers were exposed to higher levels of emotional abuse (mobbing) and faced more obstacles in their work and career compared to those with longer tenure. Similarly, new employees in a workplace encountered more obstacles from colleagues with longer service, resulting in lower job satisfaction.

Çimen et al. (2017) discussed the reasons for different outcomes of emotional abuse (mobbing) according to demographic characteristics. They concluded that emotional abuse does not have the same meaning for every participant, that perceptions of emotional abuse vary among individuals, and that behaviors defined as emotional abuse do not produce identical effects in all individuals. In other words, differences in study findings are attributed to the context of the research and the fact that the concept of emotional abuse (mobbing) is not uniformly understood across participants.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study highlights the detrimental role of emotional abuse in diminishing both marital and job satisfaction. By confirming the positive association between marital and job satisfaction, the findings underscore the interconnectedness of relational and occupational well-being. Interventions aimed at preventing and addressing emotional abuse may yield broad benefits for individuals, families, and workplaces. In line with the findings, it is recommended that emotional abuse be addressed at an early stage

within family counseling services, and that awareness-raising and support programs for employees be developed within organizations.

This study has several limitations. One of the most significant limitations is that the scales used for data collection were administered digitally, requiring participants to complete them online. Although online participation has become increasingly common, especially during the pandemic, it is important to recognize that researchers often face challenges in ensuring that participants thoroughly complete the surveys. Participants may become bored or respond inattentively while filling out the questionnaires, which could pose a limitation for the validity of the results. Another limitation is that the participants were not evaluated as couples. Conducting research with couples would be more advantageous for comparing the relationships among marital satisfaction, job satisfaction, and exposure to emotional abuse.

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