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Turkish Journal of Religious Studies
cilt / volume: 26 • sayı / issue: 1 • yaz / summer 2026

The Role of Spirituality and Spiritual Care in Marital Conflicts

Evlilik Çatışmalarında Maneviyatın ve Manevi Bakımın Rolü

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Article Type / Makale Tipi
Research Article / Araştırma Makalesi

DOI: 10.33420/marife.1864505

Article Information / Makale Bilgisi
Received / Geliş Tarihi: 15.01.2026
Accepted / Kabul Tarihi: 29.06.2026
Published / Yayın Tarihi: 30.06.2026

Cite as / Atıf: Macic, Merve Altınlı – Akbaş, Sultan. "The Role of Spirituality and Spiritual Care in Marital Conflicts". *Marife* 26/1 (2026) 347-373. https://doi.org/10.33420/marife.1864505

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Ethical Statement / Etik Beyan: ** This article is adapted from the non-thesis master's completion project of the se-cond author in the Spiritual Care and Counseling program at the Institute of Social Sciences, İzmir Kâtip Çelebi University. / Bu makale ikinci yazarın İzmir Katip Çelebi Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Manevi Destek ve Danışmanlık tezsiz yüksek lisans programını bitirme projesinden uyarlanmıştır.*

The Role of Spirituality and Spiritual Care in Marital Conflicts

Summary

The family, founded on the institution of marriage, constitutes one of the most fundamental and enduring structures of social life, shaped by expectations of happiness, emotional security, stability, and peace. Marriage is not merely a legal or social contract but also a deeply relational and moral bond that requires continuous emotional investment and mutual commitment. However, contemporary social conditions—such as rapid social change, increasing individualism, economic pressures, cultural diversity, and evolving gender roles—have made marital relationships more complex and vulnerable. Personality differences, unmet emotional needs, communication problems, and value conflicts frequently lead to marital dissatisfaction, emotional distance, and relational crises. In this context, identifying protective and restorative factors that enhance marital resilience has become increasingly important.

This study aims to examine the role of spirituality and spiritual care in addressing marital difficulties and in strengthening resilience, harmony, and emotional well-being within the marital relationship. Rather than approaching marriage solely from psychological or sociological perspectives, the study emphasizes spirituality as a multidimensional resource that integrates meaning-making, moral orientation, emotional regulation, and relational responsibility. The research adopts a qualitative methodology based on an extensive literature review of books, peer-reviewed articles, and graduate theses in the fields of spirituality, family studies, counseling psychology, and the psychology of religion.

The analysis focuses particularly on the functions of key spiritual care elements—such as intention, gratitude, patience, trust in God (tawakkul), empathy, forgiveness, and maintaining a positive perspective—within marital dynamics. These elements are examined not as abstract religious ideals but as practical attitudes and values that shape spouses' perceptions, emotional responses, and interaction patterns. The literature suggests that spirituality provides individuals with a coherent framework for interpreting marital challenges as meaningful experiences rather than purely negative or threatening events. Through this framework, difficulties are often perceived as opportunities for growth, moral reflection, and relational maturation.

Findings from the literature consistently indicate that spirituality contributes positively to both individual and relational well-being. Spouses with higher levels of spiritual well-being tend to demonstrate greater emotional awareness, hope, empathy, and psychological resilience when confronted with marital stressors. Spiritual practices and beliefs support self-regulation, reduce impulsive reactions during conflicts, and foster constructive communication. Moreover, spirituality offers a moral and ethical foundation that encourages forgiveness, responsibility, compassion, and mutual support, thereby reducing destructive patterns such as blame, hostility, and withdrawal.

From a relational perspective, spiritual care elements function not only as individual coping resources but also as shared values that strengthen marital bonds. When spirituality is integrated into marital life, it promotes a sense of shared meaning, commitment, and transcendence that goes beyond daily conflicts. This shared spiritual orientation enhances marital satisfaction, deepens emotional intimacy, and contributes to long-term relational stability. Furthermore, spirituality supports the continuity of the family by reinforcing values that sustain social cohesion and intergenerational transmission of moral principles.

In conclusion, the study highlights the significance of spirituality and spiritual care as protective and restorative resources within marital relationships. Integrating spirituality into marital counseling, family education, and spiritual care practices can enhance emotional resilience, improve marital harmony, and strengthen the family as the core unit of society. These findings underscore the need for interdisciplinary approaches that incorporate spiritual dimensions alongside psychological and social interventions in addressing contemporary marital challenges.

Keywords: *Psychology of Religion, Family, Marriage, Spirituality, Spiritual Care.*

Evlilik Çatışmalarında Maneviyatın ve Manevi Bakımın Rolü

Özet

Aile, evlilik kurumu üzerine inşa edilmiş olup; mutluluk, duygusal güvenlik, istikrar ve huzur beklentileriyle şekillenen, toplumsal hayatın en temel ve kalıcı yapılarından birini oluşturmaktadır.

Evlilik yalnızca hukuki ya da toplumsal bir sözleşme değil, aynı zamanda sürekli duygusal yatırım ve karşılıklı bağlılık gerektiren derin bir ilişkisel ve ahlaki bağdır. Bununla birlikte hızlı toplumsal değişim, artan bireyselleşme, ekonomik baskılar, kültürel çeşitlilik ve değişen toplumsal cinsiyet rolleri gibi çağdaş koşullar, evlilik ilişkilerini daha karmaşık ve kırılgan hâle getirmiştir. Kişilik farklılıkları, karşılanmayan duygusal ihtiyaçlar, iletişim sorunları ve değer çatışmaları; sıklıkla evlilik doyumsuzluğuna, duygusal uzaklaşmaya ve ilişkisel krizlere yol açmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, evlilikte dayanıklılığı artıran koruyucu ve onarıcı faktörlerin belirlenmesi giderek daha önemli hâle gelmiştir.

Bu çalışma, evlilik ilişkilerinde yaşanan güçlüklerle başa çıkmada ve evlilikte dayanıklılık, uyum ve duygusal iyilik hâlini güçlendirmede maneviyat ve manevi bakımın rolünü incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Evliliğe yalnızca psikolojik ya da sosyolojik perspektiflerden yaklaşmak yerine, maneviyat; anlam üretme, ahlaki yönelim, duygusal düzenleme ve ilişkisel sorumluluk boyutlarını bütünleştiren çok boyutlu bir kaynak olarak ele alınmıştır. Araştırma, maneviyat, aile çalışmaları, psikolojik danışmanlık ve din psikolojisi alanlarındaki kitaplar, hakemli makaleler ve lisansüstü tezlerden oluşan kapsamlı bir literatür taramasına dayanan nitel bir yöntemle yürütülmüştür.

Analiz sürecinde özellikle niyet, şükür, sabır, Allah'a tevekkül, empati, bağışlama ve olumlu bakış açısı gibi temel manevi bakım unsurlarının evlilik dinamikleri içindeki işlevleri üzerinde durulmuştur. Bu unsurlar, soyut dinî idealler olarak değil; eşlerin algılarını, duygusal tepkilerini ve etkileşim biçimlerini şekillendiren pratik tutum ve değerler olarak ele alınmıştır. Literatür, maneviyatın bireylere evlilikte karşılaşılan güçlükleri yalnızca olumsuz ya da tehdit edici yaşantılar olarak değil, anlamlı deneyimler olarak yorumlamalarını sağlayan tutarlı bir çerçeve sunduğunu göstermektedir. Bu çerçeve içerisinde evlilikte yaşanan zorluklar, çoğu zaman kişisel gelişim, ahlaki farkındalık ve ilişkisel olgunlaşma için birer fırsat olarak değerlendirilmektedir.

Literatür bulguları, maneviyatın hem bireysel hem de ilişkisel iyilik hâline anlamlı katkılar sunduğunu tutarlı biçimde ortaya koymaktadır. Manevi iyilik düzeyi yüksek olan eşlerin, evlilik stresörleriyle karşılaştıklarında daha fazla duygusal farkındalık, umut, empati ve psikolojik dayanıklılık sergiledikleri görülmektedir. Manevi inançlar ve uygulamalar, duygusal öz-düzenlemeyi desteklemekte, çatışma anlarında dürtüsel tepkileri azaltmakta ve yapıcı iletişimi teşvik etmektedir. Ayrıca maneviyat; bağışlama, sorumluluk alma, merhamet ve karşılıklı destek gibi ahlaki tutumları güçlendiren bir değerler sistemi sunarak suçlama, düşmanlık ve geri çekilme gibi yıkıcı iletişim örüntülerinin azalmasına katkı sağlamaktadır.

İlişkisel açıdan bakıldığında, manevi bakım unsurları yalnızca bireysel başa çıkma kaynakları olarak değil, aynı zamanda evlilik bağını güçlendiren ortak değerler olarak işlev görmektedir. Maneviyatın evlilik yaşamına dâhil edilmesi, gündelik çatışmaların ötesine geçen ortak bir anlam, bağlılık ve aşkınlık duygusu oluşturmaktadır. Bu ortak manevi yönelim, evlilik doyumunu artırmakta, duygusal yakınlığı derinleştirmekte ve uzun vadeli ilişkisel istikrarı desteklemektedir. Bunun yanı sıra maneviyat, aile bütünlüğünü ve kuşaklar arası ahlaki değer aktarımını güçlendirerek toplumsal sürekliliğe katkı sağlamaktadır.

Sonuç olarak bu çalışma, maneviyat ve manevi bakımın evlilik ilişkilerinde koruyucu ve onarıcı kaynaklar olarak önemli bir işleve sahip olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Maneviyatın evlilik danışmanlığı, aile eğitimi ve manevi bakım uygulamalarına entegre edilmesi; duygusal dayanıklılığı artırmakta, evlilik uyumunu güçlendirmekte ve toplumsal yapının temelini oluşturan aile kurumunu desteklemektedir. Bu bulgular, çağdaş evlilik sorunlarının ele alınmasında psikolojik ve sosyal müdahalelerin yanı sıra manevi boyutları da içeren disiplinlerarası yaklaşımların gerekliliğine işaret etmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Din Psikolojisi, Aile, Evlilik, Maneviyat, Manevi Bakım.*

Introduction

The family, established through marriage, constitutes the smallest and most fundamental social unit in modern societies. Marriage, as the foundation of a healthy family structure, involves individuals committing to a shared life with expectations of harmony, peace, happiness, and positive values, grounded in a promise of lifelong fidelity. Although marriage is built upon the pursuit of happiness, unmet expectations and the imbalance between its voluntary nature and inherent

responsibilities may lead to marital difficulties. Factors such as family background, cultural context, individual differences, disproportionate expectations, and divergent secular or religious-spiritual value orientations play a significant role in the emergence of marital problems. As a major life transition, marriage—similar to events such as death or childbirth—is often interpreted and given meaning through religious attitudes and practices. In this sense, spirituality reflects individuals' inner meanings and values, and differences in spouses' spiritual orientations and coping styles may generate additional challenges within the marital relationship.

Despite its intimate nature, marriage entails differentiated roles and responsibilities for spouses. Inequitable role distribution, insufficient mutual understanding, the pressures of modern life, and imbalances in emotional investment may undermine marital harmony. When such disruptions extend beyond the private domain, they may contribute to broader social strain, including increased conflict and divorce rates. Consequently, spirituality and spiritual care have gained scholarly attention as potential resources for preventing the escalation of marital conflict and supporting relational stability.

In recent decades, spirituality has received increasing scholarly attention within the fields of psychology, family studies, and counseling. Researchers such as Pargament, Mahoney, Walsh, and Gottman have emphasized that spiritual beliefs and practices may function as important relational resources that influence coping, meaning-making, forgiveness, commitment, and emotional regulation within marital relationships. Pargament conceptualizes spirituality as a search for the sacred that shapes individuals' coping processes, while Mahoney highlights the role of sanctification and shared spiritual meaning in family functioning. Similarly, Walsh emphasizes spirituality as a source of resilience, and Gottman's work demonstrates the importance of emotional attunement, empathy, and shared meaning for marital stability. These theoretical perspectives suggest that spirituality may contribute not only to individual well-being but also to relational adjustment and conflict resolution within marriage.

A substantial body of research has subsequently examined the role of spirituality in marriage. Belen[1] addressed spiritual psycho-social approaches in family communication and demonstrated that spirituality is a significant factor in individuals' self-actualization processes. Dursun[2] investigated the relationship between spirituality and the sense of meaning in life among married and single individuals, finding that spirituality enhances perceived meaning in life. Korkmaz and Karaşahin[3] explored the marital adjustment and spiritual well-being of married

[1] Fatma Zeynep Belen, *Aile İçi İletişime Manevi Psiko-Sosyal Yaklaşım* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, 2010).

[2] Neslihan Dursun, *Evli Ve Bekâr Bireylerin Yaşamın Anlamı Ve Maneviyat Düzeyleri Arasındaki İlişkinin İncelenmesi* (İstanbul: İstanbul Sabahattin Zaim Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, 2019).

[3] Zeynep Korkmaz - Hakkı Karaşahin, "Evlilik Uyumu Ve Manevi İyi Oluş Hali Üzerine Bir Araştırma", *Türkiye Din Eğitimi Araştırmaları Dergisi* 15 (28 Haziran 2023), 169-198.

women. Tunç[4] reported a significant relationship between spiritual well-being and family satisfaction, noting that family support and cohesion mediate this relationship. Similarly, Çalışkan[5] showed that spiritual well-being contributes to increased family resilience and a stronger sense of meaning in life. In a study focusing on marital dynamics, Şahin[6] examined the relationships among empathy, forgiveness, and marital satisfaction, emphasizing that empathy, together with marital awareness, enhances satisfaction. Özasma[7] evaluated spouses' perceptions of God, conflict resolution styles, and spirituality, concluding that religious and emotional coping strategies become more prominent among couples at risk of divorce. Kılınçer[8] developed a spiritually oriented family counseling model and found that spirituality provides couples with trust and support within the counseling process. Additionally, Tunç and Totan[9] discussed the contributions of spirituality to family life in the contexts of marriage, parenting, and family relationships. The relationship between marital adjustment and spirituality has also been explored in the literature. [10] Overall, existing studies generally indicate that spirituality and elements of spiritual care may enhance marital adjustment, family satisfaction, and resilience, while strengthening feelings of trust, commitment, and solidarity within marriage.

However, despite this growing body of literature, several important gaps remain. First, existing studies are predominantly empirical and correlational in nature, often focusing on the positive associations between spirituality and marital outcomes while offering limited theoretical explanations of the underlying mechanisms through which spirituality functions in the context of marital conflict. Second, the literature largely treats spirituality as an individual-level variable rather than examining its relational and interactional dynamics within the marital process. Third, there is a notable lack of integrative frameworks that bring together socio-psychological perspectives with culturally embedded religious contexts—particularly within Islamic traditions—into a coherent analytical model.

[4] Büşra Tunç, *Manevi İyi Oluşla Aile Doyumu Arasındaki İlişkide Aile Desteği Ve Bütünlüğünün Rolü* (Aydın: Adnan Menderes Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, 2020).

[5] Şüheda Çalışkan, *Evli Bireylerde Manevi İyi Oluş, Ailede Yılmazlık Ve Yaşamın Anlamı Arasındaki Yordayıcı İlişkiler* (Konya: Necmettin Erbakan Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, 2020).

[6] Yahya Şahin, *Evlilikte Empati İle Evlilik Doyumu Ve Affetme Arasındaki İlişkide Evlilik Farkındalığının Rolü* (İstanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Doktora Tezi, 2020).

[7] Halil İbrahim Özasma, *Eşler Arası İletişim Ve Maneviyat* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Phd Thesis, 2021).

[8] Hatice Kılınçer, *Maneviyat Yönelimli Aile Danışmanlığı: Yaşantısal Aile Danışmanlığı Çerçevesinde Bir Model Önerisi* (İstanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Doktora Tezi, 2021).

[9] Büşra Tunç - Tarık Totan, "Aile Yaşamında Maneviyat: Aile Psikolojik Danışmasında Maneviyatın Yerine Yönelik Bir İnceleme", *Dumlupınar Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü Dergisi* 5/1 (2021), 1-20.

[10] Burcu Şura Bozbay, *Yeni Evli Çiftlerde Eşler Arası Uyum Ve Merhamet Arasındaki İlişkinin Manevi Danışmanlık Bağlamında İncelenmesi* (Bursa: Bursa Uludağ Üniversitesi, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2025).; Sümeyra Sarı Beyatlı, *Maneviyat Ve Tanrıya Bağlanmanın Evlilik Uyumu İle İlişkisi Üzerine Bir Araştırma* (Bursa: Bursa Uludağ Üniversitesi, Doktora Tezi, 2024).; Sümeyye Aydın Özdemir, *Evlilik Uyumunun İlişki Özyeterliği ve Spiritüel İyi Oluş İle İlişkisi* (İstanbul: İstanbul 29 Mayıs Üniversitesi, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Ts.).

Addressing these gaps, the present study aims to develop an integrative conceptual framework that examines marriage through both socio-psychological and Islamic perspectives, with a particular focus on marital problems and coping strategies. Specifically, the study explores how individual differences shaped by personality traits and life experiences are reflected in marital dynamics, and how spirituality and spiritual care function not merely as background variables but as active resources in managing marital conflict.

1. Method

This study employed an integrative qualitative literature review design to examine the role of spirituality and spiritual care in marital conflicts from the perspective of the psychology of religion. Integrative literature reviews enable researchers to synthesize theoretical, conceptual, and empirical studies in order to develop a comprehensive understanding of a particular phenomenon. Unlike systematic reviews that focus primarily on empirical evidence and predefined outcome measures, integrative reviews allow the inclusion of diverse forms of knowledge and facilitate conceptual interpretation. The present study adopts an interpretive and conceptual approach, aiming to integrate findings from the fields of psychology of religion, family studies, counseling psychology, spirituality, and Islamic studies. Rather than testing causal relationships, the study seeks to explore how spirituality and spiritual care function as meaning-making, coping, and relational resources within marital relationships.

The literature reviewed in this study consists of books, peer-reviewed journal articles, master's theses, doctoral dissertations, and theoretical studies published in Turkish and English. Relevant studies were identified through searches in national and international databases, including TR Dizin, YÖK National Thesis Center, Google Scholar, Scopus, and Web of Science. The search process was conducted using combinations of the following keywords: spirituality, spiritual care, marriage, marital conflict, marital adjustment, family religious coping, psychology of religion, spirituality and marriage, maneviyat, manevi bakım, evlilik, evlilik uyumu, aile, dinî başa çıkma

The literature selection process was guided by predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria were: studies focusing on spirituality, spiritual well-being, spiritual care, or religious coping within marital or family contexts; empirical, theoretical, and conceptual studies related to marriage and spirituality; peer-reviewed journal articles, graduate theses, and academic books; studies published in Turkish or English. The exclusion criteria included: studies focusing exclusively on clinical psychiatric disorders unrelated to marital relationships; studies examining only divorce processes without considering spirituality; publications lacking sufficient methodological or theoretical information; non-academic publications and popular literature.

The selected literature was analyzed using an interpretive thematic approach. The analysis involved repeated reading of the literature, identification of recurring concepts and themes, and the synthesis of related findings. Particular

attention was given to the ways spirituality and spiritual care function within marital relationships. Through this process, six major spiritual care elements emerged as recurrent themes in the literature: Intention, Gratitude, Patience, Positive Outlook, Trust in God (Tawakkul), Empathy. These themes were not predetermined categories but were identified through repeated patterns appearing across the reviewed literature. The themes were subsequently interpreted within the framework of the psychology of religion and family relationships.

Since this study is conceptual and interpretive in nature, its findings should be understood within the boundaries of the reviewed literature. The conclusions do not aim to establish causal relationships or statistical generalizations. Instead, the study offers a theoretical framework for understanding how spirituality and spiritual care may contribute to marital relationships. To enhance the credibility of the study, diverse sources from multiple disciplines were included, and both Turkish and international literature were considered. Future empirical studies employing qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-method designs may further examine and test the conceptual relationships proposed in this study.

The findings of this study should be understood within the boundaries of theoretical analysis. While prior research indicates that spirituality is associated with marital satisfaction, resilience, and constructive conflict resolution, the present study aims to clarify how spiritual resources function as relational and meaning-centered processes within marriage. Future empirical studies - particularly longitudinal and mixed-method designs - may further test and refine the conceptual relationships proposed here.

The study is structured into two main sections. The first section presents the conceptual background of marriage, including its definition, development, and foundational principles. The second section examines marital values, common problems, and proposed solutions, with particular emphasis on spirituality-based approaches and spiritual care. The analysis is conducted from an Islamic perspective, focusing on spousal relationships within the framework of family life.

In addition, relationships between variables such as gender, age, level of education, duration of marriage, and psychological well-being are considered within the reviewed literature. In line with these aims, the study addresses the following research questions:

1. What types of marital problems may arise from factors experienced during the premarital period, such as neglecting compatibility, unrealistic expectations, and social pressures?
2. In what ways can communication problems, economic difficulties, sexual incompatibility, family interference, and child-related issues generate conflict during the marital process?
3. How do spouses' perceptions of marital values and their views on spirituality influence levels of marital satisfaction and adjustment?
4. How can spirituality (e.g., patience, gratitude, empathy) function as a coping resource in resolving conflicts between spouses?
5. What contributions can elements of spiritual care (e.g., intention,

positive outlook, trust in God) make to the prevention and resolution of marital problems?
6. How might spiritual care influence trust, fidelity, commitment, and communication skills within marriage?
7. In what ways do spirituality-based approaches to coping with marital problems differ from secular approaches?

2. Conceptual Background Definition of Marriage

Marriage is a phenomenon on which there is no complete consensus, yet it occupies a central role for both the individual and society. According to Sakarya[11], marriage is an integrative union in which individuals coexist in solidarity, gain social approval, and meet their sexual needs legitimately. Güner[12], on the other hand, defines marriage as a legal system that secures the rights of the spouses and children and requires social, religious, and civil approval. Similarly, Canel[13] describes marriage as a contract entered into by individuals of the opposite sex with the aim of meeting their biological, social, and psychological needs within a framework of love, trust, and solidarity.

From a religious perspective, marriage constitutes a set of legitimate normative principles that regulate everyday life, legitimize sexual relations, and define divorce and mutual responsibilities.[14] According to Artır[15], a healthy marriage balances physical, emotional, economic, and social dimensions. In Islamic law, marriage (nikāḥ) is a divinely sanctioned bond that ensures family continuity, lineage preservation, mutual support, and shared well-being.[16] Marriage, as a requirement of human creation, functions as a form of social security.[17] The Qur'an also emphasizes that spouses support one another and that marriage constitutes a responsibility-bearing contract.[18]

[11] Emine Sakarya, *Evli Bireylerin Evlilik Uyum, Yaşam Memnuniyeti Ve Yaşam Bağlılıkları Arasındaki Yordayıcı İlişkiler* (İstanbul: İstanbul Sabahattin Zaim Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, 2018), 1.

[12] Zeynep Kargın Güner, *Erken Dönem Uyumsuz Şemalar, İlişkilerdeki Bilişsel Süreçler, Yüklemeler, Evlilikte Sorunlarla Başa Çıkma Yollarının Evlilik Uyumu İle İlişkisi* (İstanbul: Maltepe Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, 2014), 1.

[13] Azize Nilgün Canel, *Evlilik Ve Aile Hayatı* (Ankara: Türkiye Cumhuriyeti, Aile Ve Sosyal Hizmetler Bakanlığı, Aile Eğitim Programı, 2011), 20.

[14] Ahmet Rifat Geçioğlu - Ertuğrul Döner, "İslâm'da Evlilik Ve Aile Bağlamında Günümüzde Tartışılan Konular Üzerine Psiko-Sosyal Bir Değerlendirme", *Çukurova Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 19/2 (2019), 605.

[15] Farika Teymur Artır, *İyi Günde Kötü Günde Evlilik* (İzmir: Işık Yayınları, 2014), 13.

[16] Hamdi Döndüren, *Delilleriyle İslam Hukuku: Şahıs, Aile Ve Miras* (İstanbul: İslam Hukuku Külliyatı Yayınları, 1983), 159-176.

[17] Mustafa K. Topaloğlu, *303 Soruda Evlilik Süreci* (İstanbul: Akis Yayınları, 2010), 18.

[18] Betül Hale Kaya, *Aile İçi Sorun Ve Suçların Önlenmesinde Dini-Ahlâki Değerlerin Etkisi* (Konya: Necmettin Erbakan Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, 2021), 5; İsmail Hekimoğlu, *İyi Günde Kötü Günde Evlilik* (İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2012), 34.

3. Marital Problems Between Spouses and the Search for Solutions

3.1. Spouses' Perceptions of Marital Values

Human life is shaped within a continuous process of communication extending from the prenatal period to death.[19] As a social being, the individual is in constant interaction and communication; therefore, communication constitutes a fundamental determinant of both family and social life.[20] Individuals with strong communication skills value equality, express themselves sincerely, and assert their rights without violating others', whereas weaker skills are associated with anxious, aggressive, or denial-based attitudes.[21] In marital relationships, awareness of communication differences helps to reduce the destructive effects of conflict processes.[22]

Initial communication experiences are acquired within the family, and parents' healthy communication styles play a decisive role in children's social adjustment.[23] For this reason, when spouses conceptualize marriage not merely as a legal union but as a relationship grounded in shared values, marital adjustment is enhanced.[24]

A happy marriage becomes possible when communication is structured around shared values. The Turkish Language Association defines the concept of value as "a measure of importance or worth." Values serve as criteria that guide, legitimize, and evaluate behavior.[25] In marriage, spouses' perceptions of values are direct determinants of marital adjustment and satisfaction. Individuals' personalities, upbringing, belief systems, and value orientations significantly influence marital satisfaction.[26] While ineffective communication can magnify minor problems and lead to conflict, effective communication fosters empathy and emotional closeness.[27]

Marriage meets biological and psychological needs while transmitting social values to future generations. Accordingly, a healthy marriage supports both indi-

[19] Bülent Dilmaç - Ayşe Bakırcıoğlu, "Evli Bireylerin Sahip Oldukları Değerler, İletişim Becerileri Ve Evlilik Uyumu Arasındaki Yordayıcı İlişki", *Necmettin Erbakan Üniversitesi Ereğli Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi* 1/2 (Aralık 2019), 111.

[20] Dilek Malik, *Evli Bireylerin Değer Yönelimleri İle Cinsiyetçilik Düzeylerinin Evlilik Uyumlarıyla Olan İlişkisi* (İstanbul: İstanbul Arel Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, 2017), 65.

[21] Dilmaç - Bakırcıoğlu, "Evli Bireylerin Sahip Oldukları Değerler, İletişim Becerileri Ve Evlilik Uyumu Arasındaki Yordayıcı İlişki", 120.

[22] Arif Özer - Hüdayar Cihan Güngör, "Yükleme Tarzları, Bağlanma Stilleri Ve Kişilik Özelliklerine Göre Evlilik Uyumu", *Mersin Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi* 8/2 (2012), 7.

[23] Dilmaç - Bakırcıoğlu, "Evli Bireylerin Sahip Oldukları Değerler, İletişim Becerileri Ve Evlilik Uyumu Arasındaki Yordayıcı İlişki", 155.

[24] Fatma Zeynep Belen, *Aile İçi İletişime Manevi Psiko-Sosyal Yaklaşım* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, 2010), 74.

[25] İbrahim Ethem Başaran, *Örgütsel Davranış: İnsanın Üretim Gücü* (Ankara: Gül Yayınevi, 1991), 36.

[26] Meliha Tekin Çatal - Melek Kalkan, "Evli Bireylerin Evlilik Değerleri Evlilik Doyumu Ve Evlilik Tipleri", *Yaşam Becerileri Psikoloji Dergisi* 3/6 (Aralık 2019), 182.

[27] Özer - Cihan Güngör, "Yükleme Tarzları, Bağlanma Stilleri Ve Kişilik Özelliklerine Göre Evlilik Uyumu", 7-10.

vidual well-being and social equilibrium.[28] In this regard, spouses' shared commitment to principles such as humility, tolerance, spiritual values, social morality, and human dignity within their perceptions of marital values facilitates constructive problem-solving processes.[29]

3.2. Marital Problems Between Spouses and Their Causes

Various problems may arise between spouses within the family. These difficulties are not confined to the period following marriage; challenges emerging during the premarital phase of acquaintance may also exert lasting negative effects. Accordingly, marital problems can be classified as those originating in the premarital period and those developing during the course of marriage.

Marriage entails not only happiness but also the sharing of responsibilities and hardships.[30] However, choices made under emotional intensity prior to marriage, insufficient evaluation of the engagement period, and the inability of individuals to clearly articulate their expectations may lead to disappointment in later stages.[31] Presenting oneself inconsistently with one's true character or making unrealistic promises can undermine marital stability. Social stereotypes (e.g., "the man provides," "the woman manages the home") may create mismatched expectations, while entering marriage under social or familial pressure without adequate readiness further contributes to marital problems.[32] Moreover, neglecting the principle of compatibility (e.g., age, education, economic status, culture, and moral values) constitutes a significant source of marital conflict. In Islamic tradition, the emphasis on compatibility is regarded as a factor that strengthens harmony within the family.[33]

Although economic inequalities may initially be tolerated, they can become a source of tension over time. Situations such as men earning less than their spouses or disparities between families may create power imbalances within marriage.[34] In addition, differences in socio-cultural background and educational level may limit shared areas of interaction between couples.[35] As illustrated by the example of a poet distancing himself from a spouse unable to meet his cultural needs

[28] Tekin Çatal - Kalkan, "Evli Bireylerin Evlilik Değerleri Evlilik Doyumu Ve Evlilik Tipleri", 180.
[29] Dilmaç - Bakırcıoğlu, "Evli Bireylerin Sahip Oldukları Değerler, İletişim Becerileri Ve Evlilik Uyumu Arasındaki Yordayıcı İlişki", 12.
[30] Fatma Betül Zehra Tanrıkulu, *Katolik Mezhebinde Evlilik Ve Boşanma* (Bursa: Uludağ Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, 2022), 27.
[31] Kaya, *Aile İçi Sorun Ve Suçların Önlenmesinde Dini-Ahlâki Değerlerin Etkisi*, 20; Murat Samat, *Evlilik Birliğinin Korunması* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, 2010), 22.
[32] Artır, *İyi Günde Kötü Günde Evlilik*, 30; Tanrıkulu, *Katolik Mezhebinde Evlilik Ve Boşanma*, 20.
[33] Nedim Bahçekapılı, "İslam Ve Kilise Hukuku Açısından Aile Ve Evlilik", *Islamic University Of Europa Journal Of Islamic Research Avrupa İslam Üniversitesi İslam Araştırmaları* I/1 (2008), 31.
[34] Malik, *Evli Bireylerin Değer Yönelimleri İle Cinsiyetçilik Düzeylerinin Evlilik Uyumlarıyla Olan İlişkisi*, 57; Kamil Kaya - Gizem Tan Eren, "Boşanma Ve Erken Boşanmaların Artış Nedenleri", *Sosyal, Beşeri Ve İdarî Bilimler Dergisi* 3/9 (2020), 718.
[35] Artır, *İyi Günde Kötü Günde Evlilik*, 26-40.

and forming a relationship with someone more attuned to artistic sensibilities,[36] neglecting intellectual compatibility may also lead to marital difficulties. Differences in religious attitudes can similarly give rise to disagreements and mismatched expectations within marriage.[37]

Spouses' responses to stress and adversity play a crucial role in determining the quality of communication. Accusatory, angry, and inattentive behaviors tend to intensify conflicts.[38] Differences in financial attitudes, perspectives on social life, approaches to leisure, and issues related to infidelity are among the frequently encountered marital problems.[39] Furthermore, cultural taboos or mismatched expectations regarding sexuality may lead to serious difficulties during the marital process.[40] Excessive interference from extended family can harm marital relationships if boundaries are unclear. Monotony, neglect of special occasions, and declining emotional intimacy further erode marital quality.[41]

Child-related issues are a significant source of marital strain, including infertility, parental responsibilities, and early parenthood, all of which may challenge psychological adjustment.[42] Additionally, addictions, chronic illnesses, and financial hardship represent major factors contributing to marital conflict.[43]

3.3. Proposed Solutions to Marital Problems Between Spouses

Various methods may be employed to ensure that problems arising before or during marriage either do not surface or, when they do, can be effectively resolved. Marriage requires sustained effort grounded in an awareness of happiness, duties, and responsibilities.[44] Proverbs such as "keep both eyes open before marriage and one eye closed afterward" emphasize the importance of careful consideration prior to marriage and tolerance afterward.[45] It should also be remembered that choosing a spouse simultaneously entails choosing a parent for future children.

Research by John Gottman has identified the primary factors that harm marriage as criticism, contempt, defensiveness, hostility, and persistent conflict. In contrast, focusing on positive qualities and expressing gratitude and appreciation strengthen marital relationships.[46] Courtesy in communication, apologizing when necessary, and the use of kind language are essential. Marital problems should not

[36] Artır, *İyi Günde Kötü Günde Evlilik*, 39.
[37] Hekimoğlu, *İyi Günde Kötü Günde Evlilik*, 89.
[38] Belen, *Aile İçi İletişime Manevi Psiko-Sosyal Yaklaşım*, 12.
[39] Topaloğlu, *303 Soruda Evlilik Süreci*, 8.
[40] Artır, *İyi Günde Kötü Günde Evlilik*, 80-102.
[41] Canel, *Evlilik Ve Aile Hayatı*, 10-15.
[42] Artır, *İyi Günde Kötü Günde Evlilik*, 163-166; Topaloğlu, *303 Soruda Evlilik Süreci*, 140.
[43] Kaya - Tan Eren, "Boşanma Ve Erken Boşanmaların Artış Nedenleri", 718; Hasan Tanrıverdi, *Evlilik Sultanlıktır* (İstanbul: Kariyer Yayıncılık, 2012), 40-45.
[44] Ali Bayer, "Ailede Yaşanan Anlaşmazlıklar Ve Çözüm Önerileri", *Hatay Mustafa Kemal Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 1/2 (2018), 221.
[45] Tanrıverdi, *Evlilik Sultanlıktır*, 37-45.
[46] Topaloğlu, *303 Soruda Evlilik Süreci*, 14.

be discussed in front of third parties, and family privacy must be respected. Spiritual practices, such as praying together, may also help reduce stress within marriage and family life.[47]

Listening skills constitute the cornerstone of healthy communication. Unaddressed problems tend to escalate; therefore, conflicts within the family should be handled constructively.[48] Stinnett's research indicates that couples who spend time together are less inclined toward divorce.[49] In addition, sexual compatibility should be supported by emotional and intellectual harmony.[50] Avoiding excessive expectations, refraining from financial extravagance, and remembering special occasions further contribute to relationship quality.[51]

Anger management requires discussing problems without personalizing them; otherwise, violence and coercion may emerge.[52] Excessive interference by extended family members may hinder couples' problem-solving abilities; thus, maintaining a balanced approach is essential.[53] Sacrifice enhances trust and commitment, and spouses should avoid jealousy and unfounded suspicion.[54] Moreover, repeatedly revisiting past negative experiences undermines marital stability.[55] Finally, role distribution and division of labor should be determined from the outset, and previous family models should not be replicated uncritically.[56]

3.4. The Effects of Spirituality and Spiritual Care on Marriage and Spouses

The family has been protected and safeguarded in every society throughout history.[57] Married life is shaped by values derived from spouses' individual characteristics and social norms. Values such as love, respect, trust, empathy, forgiveness, patience, gratitude, and responsibility constitute key spiritual elements that directly influence the marital relationship. Although marriage aims to provide a peaceful and fulfilling life, difficulties are inevitable; what matters is how they are addressed. Marital satisfaction is closely linked to relational skills and value orientations, and the constructive resolution of conflict largely depends on spouses' spir-

[47] Tanrıverdi, *Evlilik Sultanlıktır*, 125.
[48] Belen, *Aile İçi İletişime Manevi Psiko-Sosyal Yaklaşım*, 94-105; Kaya, *Aile İçi Sorun Ve Suçların Önlenmesinde Dini-Ahlâki Değerlerin Etkisi*, 106.
[49] Davud İbrahimi, *Evlilik Kurumu Ve Aileye Yönelik Psiko-Sosyal Hizmetler* (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Doktora Tezi, 1998), 91.
[50] Artır, *İyi Günde Kötü Günde Evlilik*, 82.
[51] Kaya, *Aile İçi Sorun Ve Suçların Önlenmesinde Dini-Ahlâki Değerlerin Etkisi*, 100-102.
[52] Tanrıverdi, *Evlilik Sultanlıktır*, 108; Çiğdem Soykan, "Öfke Ve Öfke Yönetimi", *Kriz Dergisi* 11/2 (2003), 21-22.
[53] Zahir Kızmaz - Semra Altuğ, "Aile Sorunlarının Ortaya Çıkmasında Ebeveyn Müdahalelerinin Etkisi", *Bitlis Eren Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 8/2 (2019), 548-550.
[54] Tanrıverdi, *Evlilik Sultanlıktır*, 120-128.
[55] Tanrıverdi, *Evlilik Sultanlıktır*, 57.
[56] Derya Şengül Öner, *Evli Bireylerin Evlilik Çatışması, Çatışma Çözüm Stilleri Ve Evlilik Uyumlarının İncelenmesi* (İzmir: Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi, Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, 2013), 110-125; Topaloğlu, *303 Soruda Evlilik Süreci*, 145-160.
[57] Kılınçer, *Maneviyat Yönelimli Aile Danışmanlığı: Yaşantısal Aile Danışmanlığı Çerçevesinde Bir Model Önerisi*, 264.

itual attitudes.[58]

Spirituality directly affects individual mental health, family functioning, and marital satisfaction.[59] Within marriage, spirituality supports fidelity, commitment, trust, and optimism.[60] Healthy families are characterized by flexibility, openness to communication, and the ability to cope with difficulties, while spiritual elements enhance resilience during crises.[61] Positive psychology highlights the search for meaning and spiritual well-being,[62] and research demonstrates a positive relationship between spiritual well-being and resilience.[63] A sense of meaning in life increases resilience while also fostering hope and optimism.[64] Individuals with low spiritual well-being may experience depression and meaninglessness, whereas those with higher levels tend to develop hope, psychological resilience, and a more prosocial orientation.[65] In this respect, spirituality enables individuals to transcend themselves and to engage in more constructive relational patterns.[66]

Across cultures and belief systems, spirituality has been regarded as a source of strength that empowers individuals in times of profound helplessness and restores a sense of well-being. Accordingly, it has been described as a high-level cognitive and emotional capacity.[67] In this sense, spirituality functions as a resource that supports meaning-making and enhances well-being. Spouses' belief and value systems constitute a key dimension of marital quality, as similarities or differences in spiritual orientations directly shape family communication. Accordingly, well-developed spiritual orientations contribute to healthier and more stable marital relationships.[68] Empirical studies indicate that embracing spirituality as a value has positive effects on both subjective happiness and marital adjustment.[69] Individuals who internalize spirituality and spiritual care are more likely to maintain hope in adversity and strengthen marital commitment. In this sense, spirituali-

[58] Fatma Balcı Arvas, "Öznel İyi Olma Hali İle Dini İnançlar Arasındaki İlişki Üzerine Bir İnceleme", *Uludağ Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 26/2 (2017), 65-71.

[59] Tunç - Totan, "Aile Yaşamında Maneviyat: Aile Psikolojik Danışmasında Maneviyatın Yerine Yönelik Bir İnceleme", 1.

[60] Tunç, *Manevi İyi Oluşla Aile Doyumu Arasındaki İlişkide Aile Desteği Ve Bütünlüğünün Rolü*, 80.

[61] Kılınçer, *Maneviyat Yönelimli Aile Danışmanlığı: Yaşantısal Aile Danışmanlığı Çerçevesinde Bir Model Önerisi*, 265.

[62] Çalışkan, *Evli Bireylerde Manevi İyi Oluş, Ailede Yılmazlık Ve Yaşamın Anlamı Arasındaki Yordayıcı İlişkiler*, 114.

[63] Çalışkan, *Evli Bireylerde Manevi İyi Oluş, Ailede Yılmazlık Ve Yaşamın Anlamı Arasındaki Yordayıcı İlişkiler*, 116.

[64] Abdülkerim Bahadır, *İnsanın Anlam Arayışı Ve Din* (İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2011), 134; Dursun, *Evli Ve Bekâr Bireylerin Yaşamın Anlamı Ve Maneviyat Düzeyleri Arasındaki İlişkinin İncelenmesi*, 8.

[65] Çalışkan, *Evli Bireylerde Manevi İyi Oluş, Ailede Yılmazlık Ve Yaşamın Anlamı Arasındaki Yordayıcı İlişkiler*, 110-116.

[66] Tunç - Totan, "Aile Yaşamında Maneviyat: Aile Psikolojik Danışmasında Maneviyatın Yerine Yönelik Bir İnceleme", 4-5.

[67] Hümeyra Nazlı Tan - Mualla Yıldız, "Manevi İyi Oluş Kavramının Ortaya Çıkışı Ve Tanımlanması", *Dini Araştırmalar Dergisi* 25/63 (2022), 456.

[68] Balcı Arvas, "Öznel İyi Olma Hali İle Dini İnançlar Arasındaki İlişki Üzerine Bir İnceleme", 65-71.

[69] Deniz Kublay - Vesile Oktan, "Evlilik Uyumu: Değer Tercihleri Ve Öznel Mutluluk Açısından İncelenmesi", *Turkish Psychological Counseling And Guidance Journal* 5/44 (Eylül 2015), 26.

ty guides ethical behavior grounded in moral values.[70]

Spirituality is also reported to provide an important coping resource in situations involving physical, emotional, or economic violence and abuse encountered during the marital process.[71] Failure to fulfill material or spiritual responsibilities may undermine marital relationships. In contrast, approaching responsibility from a spiritual perspective - grounded in trust and stewardship - enhances mutual trust and reduces tension. Values such as compassion and mercy further reinforce love and harmony, with mercy disrupting power-based dynamics, encouraging self-sacrifice, and deepening trust between spouses.[72] Accordingly, spirituality functions as a resource that enables individuals to make sense of themselves and their relationships with others, while facilitating the development of knowledge, love, hope, and compassion.[73] In this respect, spirituality supports marital stability and continuity, serving as a protective factor against divorce and strengthening enduring spousal bonds.[74] Moreover, spiritual sensitivity allows spouses to avoid excessive expectations and to demonstrate greater attentiveness to one another's personal characteristics.[75]

It has been found that religion and spirituality provide a strong, meaningful, and functional coping resource for the challenges experienced by immigrant families.[76] However, findings from qualitative research suggest that the role of religion and spirituality in resolving marital problems has weakened under contemporary social conditions. Processes such as postmodernization, increasing individualization, the emphasis on pleasure-oriented lifestyles, and the erosion of traditional values have limited their influence on attitudes and behaviors. Accordingly, meaning- and patience-based approaches rooted in faith are increasingly replaced by individual expectations and personal fulfillment. Among university-educated individuals, religion and spirituality continue to function as protective resources in coping with everyday marital difficulties. However, their "protective container" function appears to weaken in more severe and structural problems - particularly those involving sexuality, fidelity, intense conflict, and reduced relationship satisfaction - where spiritual resources alone may be insufficient. This does not imply ineffectiveness, but rather indicates that their impact varies depending on context, problem severity, and individuals' value orientations.[77]

In the international literature, spiritual care is addressed through overlap-

[70] Tunç - Totan, "Aile Yaşamında Maneviyat: Aile Psikolojik Danışmasında Maneviyatın Yerine Yönelik Bir İnceleme", 7.
[71] Kaya, *Aile İçi Sorun Ve Suçların Önlenmesinde Dini-Ahlâki Değerlerin Etkisi*, 39-50.
[72] Kaya, *Aile İçi Sorun Ve Suçların Önlenmesinde Dini-Ahlâki Değerlerin Etkisi*, 84-89.
[73] Dursun, *Evli Ve Bekâr Bireylerin Yaşamın Anlamı Ve Maneviyat Düzeyleri Arasındaki İlişkinin İncelenmesi*, 14.
[74] Kaya, *Aile İçi Sorun Ve Suçların Önlenmesinde Dini-Ahlâki Değerlerin Etkisi*, 172.
[75] Özasma, *Eşler Arası İletişim Ve Maneviyat*, 174.
[76] Tuba Kevser Şahin, "Aile İçi Problemlerinin Çözümünde Din Ve Maneviyat: Strazburg'daki Türk Göçmenler Üzerine Nitel Bir Araştırma", *Diyanet İlmi Dergi* 61/4 (26 Aralık 2025), 1550.
[77] Asım Yapici, "Eşlerin Dinsel Algı Ve Yaşayışına Göre Evlilikte Dindarlık Ve Maneviyat Huzur Mu", *Journal Of Turkish Studies* 13/Volume 13 Issue 2 (01 Ocak 2018), 79.

ping frameworks such as pastoral care, religiously integrated counseling, and spiritually oriented psychotherapy. In this study, it is conceptualized as a meaning-centered, value-based approach that activates individuals' spiritual, moral, and existential resources in coping with relational stressors. Rather than replacing psychological or clinical interventions, spiritual care is understood as a complementary framework that enhances emotional regulation, ethical sensitivity, and relational awareness within marriage. Positioned at the intersection of psychology of religion, family studies, and counseling psychology, it is thus approached not merely as a set of religious practices, but as a structured framework for meaning-making, moral orientation, and relational repair.

3.5. Elements of Spiritual Care in Approaching Interspousal Marital Problems

Marriage is not merely a legal or social union but a multilayered partnership in which emotions, meaning, and values intersect. Its resilience depends not only on communication skills but also on spouses' spiritual orientations, which shape how they interpret experiences. Spiritual care, in this context, is a meaning-centered approach that enhances existential flexibility, hope, and well-being by activating individuals' belief and value systems. Pargament et al. emphasize that spirituality in therapy may function both as a resource and, at times, a source of distress; accordingly, it should be integrated into - rather than separated from - the therapeutic process.[78] Within marriage, this approach addresses problems not only at the symptomatic level (e.g., conflict, anger, emotional distance) but also in terms of meaning, purpose, and values. Accordingly, six core components of spiritual care - intention, gratitude, patience, a positive outlook, trust in God, and empathy – (Table 1) emerge as key resources in coping with interspousal difficulties.

Table 1. Main Spiritual Care Elements and Their Principal Sources

Spiritual Care Element	Principal Sources
Intention	Cora (2020); Belen (2010); Canel (2011)
Gratitude	Göcen (2012); Yılmaz (2018)
Patience	Doğanay (2019); Karakaş (2018); Solmaz (2021)
Positive Outlook	Tosun (2014); Keldal (2021); Kılınçer (2021)
Trust in God (Tawakkul)	Karataş & Baloğlu (2019); Şahin & Hökelekli (2019)
Empathy	Şahin (2020); Özasma (2021)

[78] Hatice Kılınçer, "Aile Danışmanlığında Maneviyat Boyutunun Önemi", *Bingöl Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 17 (Haziran 2021), 269.

3.5.1. Intention

Intention constitutes a fundamental element of human action, shaping the evaluation of thoughts and behaviors. It refers to the individual's cognitive and volitional orientation toward an action prior to its execution. Its nature depends not only on its positive or negative direction, but also on the degree to which it is consciously and deliberately formed.[79]

Marriage is one of the most significant life decisions, and attitudes, expectations, and behaviors toward it are closely linked to intention. Negative intentions may lead to disappointment and adverse emotional experiences, whereas consciously formed positive intentions strengthen relationship quality.[80] Moral and spiritual values such as intention, gratitude, patience, a positive outlook, trust in God, and empathy shape the spiritual dimension of marriage. Ethical attitudes, including honesty and non-deceptiveness, also support psychological well-being.[81] When couples approach marriage with the intention of supporting each other's personal growth rather than attempting to change one another, they are more likely to establish a healthier family relationship. This orientation is closely associated with self-knowledge and the development of self-awareness.[82]

Every action is guided by intention, which largely determines its quality. In marriage, spouses' interpretations of events are shaped by their intentions; for example, a late return home may be perceived as either irresponsibility or devotion. Such divergent interpretations illustrate the guiding role of intention.[83] Rather than judging one another's intentions, interpreting events with goodwill fosters a healthier communicative environment. From a spiritual care perspective, this is a fundamental principle that supports family harmony.[84]

The practical principles associated with the element of intention may be summarized as follows: Declaration of intention,[85] positive presumption,[86][87] and consistency between intention and behavior.

3.5.2. Gratitude

Gratitude is defined as the expression of thankfulness in response to a benevolent act, obedience to the authority perceived as the source of blessings, and living with a sense of responsibility. In this respect, gratitude is not merely a verbal

[79] Mustafa Cora, "Kur'an Muhtevâsı Açısından Niyet Ve Önemi", *Kesit Akademi Dergisi* 6/23 (2020), 198-205.
[80] Nuran Ceren Güzel, "Evlilik Ölçeği: Evliliğe İlişkin Niyet, Evliliğe Yönelik Genel Tutumlar Ve Evliliğe Yönelik Beklenti Ölçeğinin Geçerlik Ve Güvenirlik Analizleri", *Turkish Studies - Educational Sciences* 15/1 (2020), 188.
[81] Belen, *Aile İçi İletişime Manevi Psiko-Sosyal Yaklaşım*, 51-53.
[82] Belen, *Aile İçi İletişime Manevi Psiko-Sosyal Yaklaşım*, 51-53.
[83] Canel, *Evlilik Ve Aile Hayatı*, 73.
[84] Canel, *Evlilik Ve Aile Hayatı*, 139.
[85] Cora, "Kur'an Muhtevâsı Açısından Niyet Ve Önemi", 210.
[86] Canel, *Evlilik Ve Aile Hayatı*, 139.
[87] Belen, *Aile İçi İletişime Manevi Psiko-Sosyal Yaklaşım*, 51-53.

expression of thanks but also a way of life manifested through action.[88] Practicing gratitude enables individuals to recognize the value of life in both positive and negative circumstances, to develop awareness of the blessings they possess, and to appreciate their worth.[89] Prayer is a significant expression of gratitude and, across cultures and religions, a means of seeking support from a transcendent power. It reinforces feelings of peace and security, and within marriage, prayer and gratitude can enhance spiritual resilience and support coping with negative emotions such as stress, anxiety, and sorrow.[90]

Gratitude is also described as a source of strength that enhances resilience and supports productivity, happiness, and mental health.[91] When spouses practice gratitude, they replace accusatory attitudes with appreciation and respect for shared efforts, strengthening goodwill and spiritual harmony.[92] Conversely, a lack of gratitude may lead to devaluation in marriage and increased negative emotions. Feelings of guilt and victimization can inhibit gratitude, fostering anger, resentment, and a sense of injustice; in such cases, mutual support and the cultivation of gratitude become especially important.[93]

Gratitude strengthens social bonds, deepens spirituality, and reduces negative behaviors. Empirical studies show that higher gratitude is associated with more positive and fewer negative emotions, such as anxiety and jealousy.[94] Accordingly, gratitude enhances both spouses' spiritual well-being and marital satisfaction. It reinforces love, respect, and commitment, supporting inner peace as well as the stability of the marital bond.[95] The practical principles associated with gratitude may be summarized as follows: the ritual of expressing appreciation,[96] designated times for gratitude and prayer,[97] and keeping a gratitude journal.[98]

3.5.3. Patience

Patience refers to the ability to remain calm and endure difficulties with perseverance. Psychologically, it involves emotional, cognitive, and behavioral processes that enable individuals to withstand adversity without despair.[99] Fre-

[88] Osman Yılmaz, *Hamd Ve Şükür Bilincinin İnsan Psikolojisine Etkisi* (Rotterdam: Avrupa İslam Üniversitesi, İlahiyat Fakültesi, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, 2018), 10.
[89] Gülüşan Gocen, *Şükür Ve Psikolojik İyi Olma Arasındaki İlişki Üzerine Bir Alan Araştırması* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Doktora Tezi, 2012), 43.
[90] Yılmaz, *Hamd Ve Şükür Bilincinin İnsan Psikolojisine Etkisi*, 28-30.
[91] Gocen, *Şükür Ve Psikolojik İyi Olma Arasındaki İlişki Üzerine Bir Alan Araştırması*, 45.
[92] Yılmaz, *Hamd Ve Şükür Bilincinin İnsan Psikolojisine Etkisi*, 64.
[93] Gocen, *Şükür Ve Psikolojik İyi Olma Arasındaki İlişki Üzerine Bir Alan Araştırması*, 52.
[94] Esra Özsoy, *Stresli Yaşam Olayları Ve Depresyon İlişkisinde Şükür Ve Maneviyatın Rolü* (İstanbul: İbn Haldun Üniversitesi, Lisansüstü Eğitim Enstitüsü, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, 2020), 79.
[95] Gocen, *Şükür Ve Psikolojik İyi Olma Arasındaki İlişki Üzerine Bir Alan Araştırması*, 74; Yılmaz, *Hamd Ve Şükür Bilincinin İnsan Psikolojisine Etkisi*, 28-60.
[96] Yılmaz, *Hamd Ve Şükür Bilincinin İnsan Psikolojisine Etkisi*, 64.
[97] Yılmaz, *Hamd Ve Şükür Bilincinin İnsan Psikolojisine Etkisi*, 28-30.
[98] Gocen, *Şükür Ve Psikolojik İyi Olma Arasındaki İlişki Üzerine Bir Alan Araştırması*, 45; Gocen, *Şükür Ve Psikolojik İyi Olma Arasındaki İlişki Üzerine Bir Alan Araştırması*, 74.
[99] Beyazıt Yaşar Seyhan, "Başa Çıkma Değeri Açısından Sabır Üzerine Nitel Bir Çalışma", *Akademik Bakış Uluslararası Hakemli Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 49 (2015), 127.

quently emphasized in the Qur'an, patience is regarded as one of the most fundamental moral virtues. It supports individuals in their pursuit of balance and harmony in life and facilitates the attainment of personal and moral growth.[100] Patience also occupies a prominent place in folk literature and proverbs, reflecting its significance within cultural memory.

Individuals may experience emotions such as sadness, anger, regret, and fear when facing internal and external challenges. When intense, these emotions can disrupt inner balance and hinder adaptation; patience functions as a psychological and religious coping strategy that prevents them from becoming overwhelming.[101] Within marriage, patience plays a critical role in resolving conflicts. Remaining patient in the face of negative behaviors fosters more constructive communication. As a spiritual resource, patience also enables couples to cope more effectively with both internal emotions and external stressors.[102]

Patience supports anger regulation and helps spouses avoid negative reactions. It enables the expression of concerns without harmful language and functions as a social value that strengthens family harmony.[103] In conclusion, patience emerges as a value that spiritually empowers individuals in overcoming marital difficulties. By facilitating the constructive resolution of conflicts, patience protects spouses' psychological well-being and contributes to the continuity and stability of the marital bond.

The practical principles associated with patience may be summarized as follows: The stop-think-respond protocol,[104] timed postponement,[105] and naming emotions.[106]

3.5.4. Fostering a Positive Outlook

Attitudes toward marriage are influenced by individuals' social, economic, cultural, and personal characteristics. Factors such as level of education, gender, age, marital status, and experiences within the family of origin may directly shape perspectives on marriage.[107] In particular, individuals who have witnessed a spiritually grounded family environment characterized by respect, love, and fidelity tend to develop more positive expectations regarding marriage. In contrast, young people raised in families with weakened cohesion are more likely to display favor-

[100] Süleyman Solmaz, "En Büyük Kâr Sabır", *Akademik Dil Ve Edebiyat Dergisi* 5/4 (2021), 1648; Ahmet Karakaş, "Sabır Tutumunun Sürekli Öfke İfade Tarzlarına Ve Öfke Kontrolüne Etkisi", *Türkiye İlahiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi* 2/1 (2018), 99.
[101] Süleyman Doğanay, "Zorluklarla Başa Çıkma Bağlamında Bir Model Önerisi: Sabra Yolculuğun Beş Hali", *Çukurova Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 19/1 (2019), 291.
[102] Karakaş, "Sabır Tutumunun Sürekli Öfke İfade Tarzlarına Ve Öfke Kontrolüne Etkisi", 97.
[103] Solmaz, "En Büyük Kâr Sabır", 1652-1653.
[104] Karakaş, "Sabır Tutumunun Sürekli Öfke İfade Tarzlarına Ve Öfke Kontrolüne Etkisi", 99.
[105] Solmaz, "En Büyük Kâr Sabır", 1652-1653.
[106] Doğanay, "Zorluklarla Başa Çıkma Bağlamında Bir Model Önerisi: Sabra Yolculuğun Beş Hali", 291.
[107] Gökay Keldal, "Evliliğe Bakış Açısı Ve Evlilikten Beklentiler", *Çukurova Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi* 30/1 (2021), 3.

able attitudes toward divorce.[108] In the broader social context, the meanings attributed to marriage also shape individual attitudes. In some cultures, marriage is regarded as a social obligation for individuals who reach a certain age, while religious beliefs prohibit extramarital relationships, thereby positioning marriage as a compulsory institution.[109] Accordingly, culture and religion exert a direct influence on whether individuals adopt positive or negative views of marriage.

A positive outlook serves a protective role in addressing problems before and during marriage. Viewing marriage as a source of peace and security can motivate individuals to overcome difficulties. Research indicates that qualities such as acceptance, trust, love, compassion, gratitude, and support strengthen this outlook.[110] Therefore, fostering a positive outlook constitutes an element of spiritual care that enables spouses to address experienced problems constructively, enhance marital satisfaction, and strengthen their spiritual well-being. The practical principles associated with fostering a positive outlook may be summarized as follows: mapping strengths,[111] positive reappraisal,[112] and future-oriented scenarios.[113]

3.5.5. Trust in God

Trust in God (tawakkul) is defined as exerting one's utmost effort to achieve a goal, taking the necessary precautions, and subsequently entrusting the outcome to God.[114] Tawakkul does not imply passive waiting or avoidance of responsibility; rather, it represents a spiritual attitude that integrates active effort with conscious surrender.[115] The belief that all existence unfolds according to God's will constitutes the foundation of tawakkul. This belief functions as a psychological refuge by protecting individuals from anxiety, fear, and helplessness. Accordingly, tawakkul contributes to psychological relief and fosters a solution-oriented approach to coping with difficulties.[116]

In marriage, tawakkul involves making sincere efforts, maintaining hope through prayer, and entrusting outcomes to God. This orientation reduces anxiety

[108] Kılınçer, *Maneviyat Yönelimli Aile Danışmanlığı: Yaşantısal Aile Danışmanlığı Çerçevesinde Bir Model Önerisi*, 14.
[109] Berivan Altın, *Töreye Dayalı Evlilik Türleri Ve Berdel Geleneği* (Diyarbakır: Dicle Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, 2008), 40.
[110] Fatma Tosun, *Evli Çiftlerin Sahip Olduğu Değerler, Yılmazlık Ve Çatışma Çözme Stilleri Arasındaki Yordayıcı İlişkiler* (Konya: Necmettin Erbakan Üniversitesi, Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, 2014), 38.
[111] Tosun, *Evli Çiftlerin Sahip Olduğu Değerler, Yılmazlık Ve Çatışma Çözme Stilleri Arasındaki Yordayıcı İlişkiler*, 38.
[112] Keldal, "Evliliğe Bakış Açısı Ve Evlilikten Beklentiler", 3-4.
[113] Kılınçer, *Maneviyat Yönelimli Aile Danışmanlığı: Yaşantısal Aile Danışmanlığı Çerçevesinde Bir Model Önerisi*, 14.
[114] Kasım Karataş - Mustafa Baloğlu, "Tevekkülün Psikolojik Yansımaları", *Çukurova Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 19/1 (2019), 111.
[115] Sema Eryücel, "Yaşam Olayları Ve Olumlu Dini Başa Çıkma", *Mustafa Kemal Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi* 10/23 (2003), 262.
[116] Karataş - Baloğlu, "Tevekkülün Psikolojik Yansımaları", 117.

and promotes emotional and cognitive ease.[117] Individuals who practice tawakkul tend to be more resilient and optimistic in the face of failure and recover more effectively from emotional distress. When combined with virtues such as patience and trust, it also contributes to marital satisfaction.[118]

In conclusion, tawakkul functions as an element of spiritual care that strengthens psychological resilience within marriage, alleviates anxiety, and enables spouses to develop resistance to marital stressors.[119] The practical principles associated with tawakkul may be summarized as follows: Balancing effort and surrender,[120] integrating prayer with action,[121] and embracing uncertainty.[122]

3.5.6. Empathy

Empathy refers to understanding another's emotions and thoughts from their perspective. As a communication skill, it strengthens spousal interaction and enhances marital satisfaction.[123] In marriage, empathy is reflected in spouses' willingness to listen, respect differences, and understand mutual expectations. Unconditional respect and nonjudgmental listening form the foundation of effective empathic interaction.[124] Empathy reinforces communicative bonds and facilitates the resolution of marital problems. Empirical studies show that higher empathy is associated with stronger problem-solving skills.[125]

Establishing empathy in marriage requires willingness, motivation, and patience. Given that empathic communication involves both cognitive processes and emotional awareness, it is recommended that this relational connection remain free from reactivity.[126] Through empathy, spouses better understand each other's emotions, avoid hurtful behaviors, and sustain communication. This capacity promotes equality, mutual cooperation, and marital continuity.[127] In conclusion, empathy, as a core element of spiritual care, enhances mutual understanding and supports both spiritual well-being and marital satisfaction.[128] The practical princi-

[117] Melike Şahin - Hayati Hökelekli, "Tevekkül Psikolojisi: Nedenleri, Süreci Ve Sonuçları Hakkında Bir Araştırma", *International Journal Of Social Inquiry* 12/2 (2019), 827.
[118] Edanur Terzibali Törenek, *Tevekkül, Yaşam Memnuniyeti Ve Dindarlık İlişkisi* (Erzincan: Erzincan Binali Yıldırım Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, 2021), 58.
[119] Terzibali Törenek, *Tevekkül, Yaşam Memnuniyeti Ve Dindarlık İlişkisi*, 4.
[120] Karataş - Baloğlu, "Tevekkülün Psikolojik Yansımaları", 111; Karataş - Baloğlu, "Tevekkülün Psikolojik Yansımaları", 117.
[121] Şahin - Hökelekli, "Tevekkül Psikolojisi: Nedenleri, Süreci Ve Sonuçları Hakkında Bir Araştırma", 827.
[122] Terzibali Törenek, *Tevekkül, Yaşam Memnuniyeti Ve Dindarlık İlişkisi*, 58.
[123] Şahin, *Evlilikte Empati İle Evlilik Doyumu Ve Affetme Arasındaki İlişkide Evlilik Farkındalığının Rolü*, 18.
[124] Neslişah. Adempira, *Yetişkinlerde Evlilik Uyumu İle Empatik Tutum Arasındaki İlişkinin İncelenmesi* (İstanbul: İstanbul Gelişim Üniversitesi, Lisansüstü Eğitim Enstitüsü, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, 2020), 26.
[125] Şahin, *Evlilikte Empati İle Evlilik Doyumu Ve Affetme Arasındaki İlişkide Evlilik Farkındalığının Rolü*, 20-23.
[126] Elif Figen Emrahoğlu, *Bilinçli Farkındalık, Evlilikte Bilinçli Farkındalık, Empati Ve Evlilikte Problem Çözmenin Evlilik Doyumu İle İlişkisinin İncelenmesi* (Ankara: Sağlık Bilimleri Üniversitesi, Tıpta Uzmanlık Tezi, 2021), 21.
[127] Adempira, *Yetişkinlerde Evlilik Uyumu İle Empatik Tutum Arasındaki İlişkinin İncelenmesi*, 54.
[128] Şahin, *Evlilikte Empati İle Evlilik Doyumu Ve Affetme Arasındaki İlişkide Evlilik Farkındalığının Rolü*, →

ples associated with empathy may be summarized as follows: active listening,[129] emotional validation,[130] perspective-taking exercises,[131] and sensitive language use.[132]

3.6. Discussion: Critical Reflections on the Use of Spiritual Resources in Marriage and Toward a Conceptual Model of Spiritual Care in Marriage

Spirituality as Meaning-Making in Marital Conflict: The present study suggests that spirituality in marriage should be understood not merely as an individual trait associated with well-being, but as a relational, meaning-making, and morally organizing resource shaping how spouses interpret conflict, regulate emotions, and engage in repair. Accordingly, the study moves beyond viewing spirituality as a correlational predictor of marital satisfaction and instead conceptualizes spiritual care as an interpretive framework through which marital strain may be managed and, in some cases, transformed. A key theoretical implication is that spirituality functions through relational processes rather than in isolation. Spiritual values—such as intention, gratitude, patience, trust in God, empathy, and a positive outlook—shape communication, expectations, emotional attunement, and moral evaluation. In this sense, spirituality organizes not only what spouses believe, but also how they perceive one another, respond to adversity, and sustain commitment.

Spirituality as Relational Coping: A second contribution lies in the conceptualization of spiritual care as a meaning-centered and value-based framework. Rather than reducing it to devotional practice or moral exhortation, the study frames spiritual care as a resource that supports emotional regulation, ethical sensitivity, and relational awareness. At the same time, spiritual resources should not be romanticized. Their effects depend on context, interpretation, and problem severity. Patience may reduce reactivity but also be misused as passive endurance; trust in God may foster resilience yet be interpreted as fatalism; gratitude and forgiveness may promote healing but may also obscure unresolved harm if imposed prematurely. This limitation becomes particularly salient in severe or structural problems, such as violence, coercion, or chronic betrayal. In such cases, spirituality may offer existential comfort but is often insufficient as a stand-alone coping resource.

Spiritual Care within an Islamic and Cultural Context: Another contribution of the study is its integration of spirituality within an Islamic and sociopsychological framework. Concepts such as intention, patience, gratitude, mercy, and trust in God are treated not merely as theological references but as psycholog-

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[129] Şahin, *Evlilikte Empati İle Evlilik Doyumu Ve Affetme Arasındaki İlişkide Evlilik Farkındalığının Rolü*, 18; Şahin, *Evlilikte Empati İle Evlilik Doyumu Ve Affetme Arasındaki İlişkide Evlilik Farkındalığının Rolü*, 122.

[130] Adempira, *Yetişkinlerde Evlilik Uyumu İle Empatik Tutum Arasındaki İlişkinin İncelenmesi*, 26.

[131] Şahin, *Evlilikte Empati İle Evlilik Doyumu Ve Affetme Arasındaki İlişkide Evlilik Farkındalığının Rolü*, 20-23.

[132] Şahin, *Evlilikte Empati İle Evlilik Doyumu Ve Affetme Arasındaki İlişkide Evlilik Farkındalığının Rolü*, 8.

ically meaningful categories for understanding marital life. This integrative approach addresses a gap in the literature by demonstrating how culturally embedded spiritual resources may contribute to marital coping processes. Such concepts may provide spouses with interpretive frameworks that support meaning-making, resilience, and relational continuity.

Practical Implications and Future Directions: Building on these insights, the study proposes a preliminary conceptual model of spiritual care in marriage. Core elements—intention, gratitude, patience, positive reappraisal, trust in God, and empathy—function as foundational resources influencing marital outcomes through mediating processes such as meaning-making, emotional regulation, communication quality, and relational attunement. Although theoretical, this model provides a basis for future empirical research. Subsequent studies may examine the differential and conditional effects of spiritual care elements through qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method designs. Comparative studies across different cultural and religious contexts may further contribute to a more systematic understanding of spirituality in marital processes. To clarify these relationships, the conceptual framework proposed in this study is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1. A conceptual model of spiritual care in marriage. The model illustrates how core elements of spiritual care influence marital outcomes through mediating processes such as meaning-making, emotional regulation, and communication, while these relationships are shaped by contextual and relational factors.

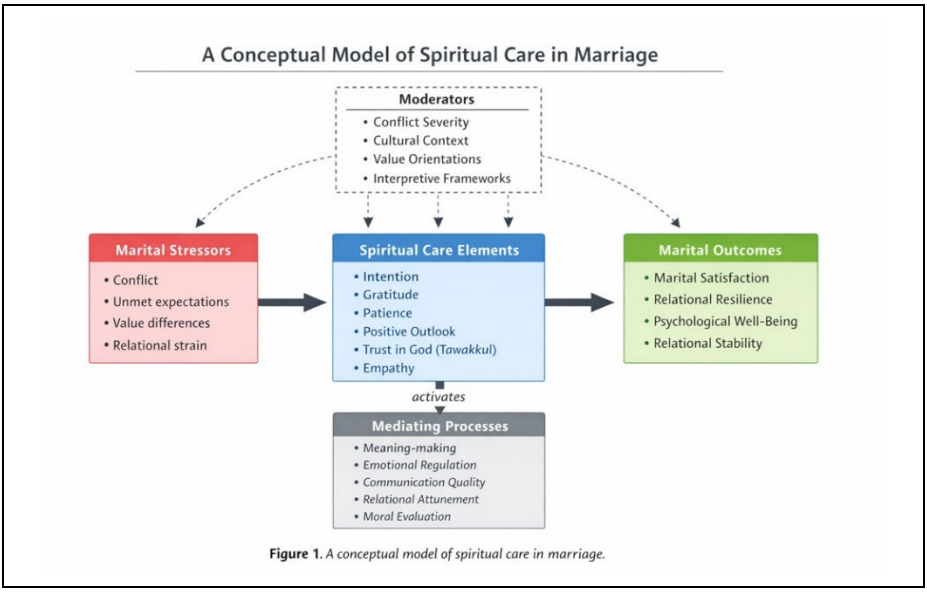

Figure 1. *A conceptual model of spiritual care in marriage.*

Conclusion and Implications for Future Research

Marriage, as a central institution in both individual and social life, is not only a legal or sociological union but also a structure shaped by meaning, values, and

moral orientation. The present study has argued that spirituality and spiritual care should be understood not merely as supportive background factors, but as relational and meaning-centered resources that influence how spouses interpret difficulties, regulate emotions, and engage in constructive interaction. This study contributes to the literature in three ways. First, it integrates socio-psychological and Islamic perspectives on marriage within a single conceptual framework. Second, it conceptualizes spirituality and spiritual care not merely as correlates of marital satisfaction but as relational and meaning-centered resources in coping with marital conflict. Third, it highlights the practical relevance of spiritual care elements such as gratitude, patience, empathy, and trust in God for contemporary marital counseling and family interventions.

The principal contribution of this study lies in reconceptualizing spirituality in marriage as a process-oriented and relational framework rather than a static individual characteristic. By integrating socio-psychological perspectives with Islamic conceptual resources, the study demonstrates that elements of spiritual care—such as intention, gratitude, patience, a positive outlook, trust in God, and empathy—function as mechanisms that shape communication patterns, moral evaluations, and relational repair processes. In this respect, spirituality emerges not only as a source of personal well-being but also as a structuring force in the maintenance and transformation of marital relationships.

From a theoretical perspective, the study contributes to the literature by offering an integrative conceptual model that links spiritual care elements to marital outcomes through mediating processes such as meaning-making, emotional regulation, communication quality, and relational attunement. This approach advances existing research, which has largely focused on correlational relationships, by highlighting the functional and processual role of spirituality in marital dynamics. At the same time, the study underscores that the effectiveness of spiritual resources is context-dependent and may vary according to the severity of conflict, relational conditions, and the ways in which spirituality is interpreted and practiced.

From an applied perspective, the findings suggest that elements of spiritual care may be meaningfully integrated into marital counseling, family therapy, and premarital education programs. Practices that cultivate intention, gratitude, patience, empathy, and trust can support couples in developing more constructive communication patterns, enhancing emotional resilience, and strengthening relational commitment. In this sense, spirituality-based approaches may complement psychological interventions by addressing the moral and meaning-oriented dimensions of marital life.

This study has several limitations. First, it is based on an interpretive conceptual review and therefore does not provide empirical evidence. Second, the reviewed literature was limited to Turkish and English sources. Third, the proposed conceptual relationships have not been empirically tested. Future research may address these limitations through qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method designs.

Future research should seek to empirically test the conceptual relationships proposed in this study through longitudinal, cross-cultural, and mixed-method designs. In particular, examining the mediating and moderating roles of spiritual care elements in marital processes would contribute to a more systematic understanding of how spirituality functions within intimate relationships. Comparative studies across different cultural and religious contexts may further illuminate similarities and differences between religious and secular forms of spirituality in marriage. Additionally, interdisciplinary research integrating psychology of religion, family studies, and counseling psychology may facilitate the development of more comprehensive and evidence-based models of spiritual care in marital contexts. Overall, this study highlights the importance of approaching marriage not only as a social institution but also as a meaning-centered relational system in which spirituality and spiritual care play a significant role in fostering resilience, continuity, and relational well-being.

Author Contribution / Yazar Katkısı: ***Research design / Çalışmanın tasarlanması:*** MAM (%50), SA (%50); ***Literature review / Literatür taraması:*** MAM (%50), SA (%50); ***Data collection / Veri toplama:*** MAM (%50), SA (%50); ***Data analysis / Veri analizi:*** MAM (%50), SA (%50); ***Writing the article / Makalenin yazımı:*** MAM (%50), SA (%50); ***Revision the article / Makale revizyonu:*** MAM (%50), SA (%50)

Funding / Finansman: This research received no external funding. / Bu araştırma herhangi bir dış fon almamıştır.

Conflicts of Interest / Çıkar Çatışması: The authors declare no conflict of interest. / Yazar, herhangi bir çıkar çatışması olmadığını beyan eder.

Artificial Intelligence Statement / Yapay Zeka Beyanı: No artificial intelligence tools were used in this study. / Bu çalışmada herhangi bir yapay zeka aracı kullanılmamıştır.

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