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Research Article

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The Mediator Role of Resilience and Rumination in the Relationship between Forgiveness and Marital Adjustment

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Abstract

In the current study, the mediator role of resilience and rumination in the relationship between forgiveness and marital adjustment was examined. The participants of the study are 494 married individuals and 357 (72.3%) of them are female and 137 (27.7%) are male. Their ages are between 18 and 65 ($M = 40.49 \pm 7.96$). The Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale, The Resilience Scale-Short Form, the Ruminative Response Scale-Short Form and the Heartland Forgiveness Scale were used as the data collection tools in the study. In the analysis of the collected data, Pearson correlation analysis and structural equation model were used. As a result of the study, it was seen that resilience and rumination had a full mediator role in the relationship between forgiveness and marital adjustment. The obtained findings were discussed in reference to the literature.

Key Words

Marital adjustment • Forgiveness • Resilience • Rumination

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Introduction

Marriage is expressed as a life event in which social approval is received, many psychological, physiological and social needs are met and which involves the deepest interaction between couples (Demircan-Çaşka, 2023). Marriage is a system in which two people who require mutual responsibility and are willing to spend time together support each other in any problem they encounter (Cutlar & Radford, 1999). Marriage, which is considered a system that contributes to people's happiness and personality development, plays an important role in shaping the social and moral standards of societies (Cott, 2002; Glenn, 1991). Marriage, a social institution in which interpersonal interaction is very intense, forms the basis of the family. It is thought that couples who communicate with each other on issues related to marriage and can solve their problems positively in agreement have high marital adjustment (Özgen, Koç, & Bir, 2022). Marital adjustment has a very decisive role in whether the relationship is healthy or not (Demircan-Çaşka, 2023).

The marital adjustment refers to the tendency to avoid or resolve conflicts, the feeling of satisfaction with the marriage, the sharing of common interests and activities, and the satisfaction of the spouses' mutual marital expectations (Locke & Williamson, 1958). Marital adjustment forms the basis of feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction in the relationship (Johnson, White, Edwards, & Booth, 1986). Robles, Slatcher, Trombello, and McGinn (2014) explained marital adjustment as spouses' high satisfaction with their relationship, their having positive attitudes towards each other, and negative behaviours being almost non-existent. According to Sinha and Mukerjee (1990), marital adjustment is the state of spouses being happy and satisfied with both each other and their marriage. As a result, marital adjustment can be expressed as spouses getting used to each other in order to continue their marriage (Bar-On & Parker, 2006).

Marital adjustment is characterized as a quality of the relationship dynamic between spouses and a feature of the interaction between two people. Therefore, it can be said that marital adjustment reflects the nature of the relationship between spouses (Ünal & Akgün, 2022). The existence of mutual love between spouses, their caring for each other and mutual satisfaction of needs positively affect marital adjustment (Halford, Lizzio, Wilson, & Occhipinti, 2007). According to Halford, Kelly, and Markman (1997), spouses' being able to communicate well, participating in activities where they can have fun together and developing positive feelings and thoughts about each other indicate a harmonious marriage. In addition, marital adjustment is related to communication skills (Dilmaç and Bakırcioğlu, 2019) as well as life satisfaction (Dilmaç & Sakarya, 2020; Zhumgalbekov & Efilti, 2023).

Problems experienced in the relationship can prevent the enjoyment of marriage and cause mutual dissatisfaction between spouses. Problems in marital adjustment lead to the dissolution of the marriage (Naemi, 2018). According to Ahmad and Jahangir (2020), marriage is built on adjustment. Problems arise when there is a lack of adjustment between spouses, and if these problems are not handled effectively, the relationship may end. The increase in divorces, especially in today's world, suggests that it is necessary to investigate the factors affecting marital adjustment. Spainer (1976) stated that marital adjustment should be focused on in order for the marriage to progress happily, peacefully and healthily. Similarly, Fincham and Beach (2010) consider marital adjustment as one of the most important determinants of a happy marriage. According to Denli (2016), marital adjustment comes to the fore

for the continuity of marriage. In light of all this information, it was thought that it was necessary to address the factors affecting marital adjustment. Therefore, in the current study, the predictive effects of forgiveness, resilience and rumination on marital adjustment were examined.

In the study, forgiveness was considered as the first variable that could have an impact on marital adjustment. Forgiveness is defined as the desire to end negative judgment, behaviour and resentment towards anyone who has hurt you (Enright & Coyle, 1998). McCullough, Worthington, and Rachal (1997) defined forgiveness as a decrease in the desire to take revenge and stay away from the person who made a mistake and an increase in the tendency to show goodwill towards and make peace with the person despite his/her harmful behaviour. Similarly, Kachadourian, Fincham, and Davila (2005) defined forgiveness as a motivational transformation in which negative emotions decrease and positive emotions towards the person who made a mistake increase. Thompson et al. (2005) addressed forgiveness in three dimensions: self-forgiveness, others-forgiveness and situational-forgiveness. Self-forgiveness refers to adopting a tolerant approach towards oneself after one's own wrong behaviour. Others-forgiveness is the ability of a person to voluntarily give up the negative feelings that he/she develops against the offending person after this person's negative attitude or behaviour, and as a result, to reshape behaviours with positive and constructive feelings. Finally, situational-forgiveness refers to making peace with situations such as a natural or life event that is beyond one's control and accepting the situation with neutral emotions instead of negative emotions.

According to Hargrave and Sells (1997), forgiveness contributes to restoring trust in the relationship and improving the relationship, despite the hurtful behaviour being subjected to. In every relationship, it is inevitable to experience conflicts and disagreements from time to time. In this case, forgiving hurtful behaviours is considered a necessity in order to maintain the relationship (Şamatacı, 2013). Baumeister, Exline, and Sommer (1998) considered forgiveness as a source of healing. This healing refers to a recovery that includes the person himself/herself and the relationship in which the offence occurred. McDonald, Olson, Lanning, Goddard, and Marshall (2017) stated that forgiveness has a positive effect on marital adjustment. Forgiveness makes it easier to remove the obstacles that arise between spouses, especially due to hurt that occurs in conflicts (Fincham, 2000). According to Hodgson and Wertheim (2007), the person who hurt can accelerate the forgiveness process by listening to the person he/she hurt and looking at the situation from his/her partner's perspective, empathizing, apologizing, improving the situation, or repairing the damage he/she has done to his/her partner.

Another variable whose relationship with marital adjustment has been examined is resilience, which is defined as a process that facilitates successful coping with and adaptation to the difficulties encountered in life (Rutter, 1987). According to Luthans, Avolio, Avey and Norman (2007), resilience is the ability to successfully cope with many negative situations such as frustration, strain and uncertainty. Joseph (1994) defined resilience as the ability to recover after a challenging situation, adapt to change and manage difficulties. Masten, Best, and Garmezy (1990) explained that the concept of resilience is used to describe the positive results observed in individuals living in risky environments, maintaining adaptation despite long-term stressful conditions and quick recovery after negative experiences. Masten (1994) stated that resilience plays an important role in staying strong and recovering or recovering quickly in the face of any crisis, negative event or stressful life event. According to Henderson and

Milstein (1996), highly resilient individuals have developed skills such as establishing and maintaining positive relationships, problem solving, sense of humour and looking positively towards the future. Married life is a process full of ups and downs. In other words, spouses experience multifaceted problems in their marriage. Resilience, which plays a vital role in coping with stressful situations, also positively affects marital adjustment (Ahmad & Jahangir, 2020). According to Koçak (2021), highly resilient individuals have higher marital adjustment. Similarly, Khalaf and AL-Hadrawi (2022) stated that there is a significant relationship between resilience and marital adjustment. When resilience is high, individuals are more likely to have better marital adjustment.

The last variable whose relationship with marital adjustment was examined in the current study is rumination. Rumination is defined as the person's engaging in behaviours and thoughts that passively focus his/her attention on distressing symptoms and all possible causes and consequences of these symptoms (Nolen-Hoeksema, 1991). Martin and Tesser (1996) considered rumination as a form of thought that occurs repeatedly and can be triggered by internal or external sources. Rumination leads to repetitive thoughts about the situation such as "Why did I experience this?", "Why do I feel sad?" (Nolen-Hoeksama & Morrow, 1991). According to Nolen-Hoeksema and Jackson (2001), people who believe that emotions are generally uncontrollable and that the appropriate response to these emotions is to focus on themselves are likely to develop a ruminative response. Ruminative responses to stressful life events make it difficult to cope with stress and lead to many psychological disorders, especially depressive mood (Treyner, Gonzalez, & Nolen-Hoeksema, 2003). Although rumination, which is considered an ineffective coping method (Nolen-Hoeksama & Morrow, 1991), is perceived as a problem-solving attempt, it usually ends in failure and perpetuates negative emotions and cognition (Jostmann, Karremans, & Finkenauer, 2011; Mattheews & Wells, 2004).

The tendency to rumination makes communication and interaction between spouses and with other family members difficult (Papageorgiou & Wells, 2004). In addition, a high tendency to rumination threatens the continuity of positive emotions towards the relationship or partner (Jostmann et al., 2011). Similarly, Schweers (2012) suggested that spouses' deep thoughts about their negative experiences in marriage lead to anger towards the person who is the source of these experiences and a decrease in motivation to forgive. Moreover, according to Elphinston, Feeney, Noller, Connor, and Fitzgerald (2013), relationship satisfaction is negatively affected by rumination. As a result, it can be thought that dissatisfaction between spouses may make marital adjustment difficult.

In line with the explanations above, it appears that the variables of forgiveness, resilience and rumination are effective on marital adjustment. In addition, according to the relevant literature, forgiveness increases resilience and reduces rumination (Çapan & Arıcıoğlu, 2014; Çolak & Güngör, 2020; Fatfouta, 2015; Kravchuk, 2021; Ostendorf, 2000). Kravchuk (2021) stated that there is a positive relationship between the tendency to forgive and resilience and that the tendency to forgive predicts resilience. According to Gupta and Kumar (2015), forgiveness is an important factor for resilience. Çolak and Güngör (2020) stated that ruminative thoughts can be reduced by increasing forgiveness levels in individuals. Toussaint, Lee, Hyun, Shields, and Slavich (2023) also revealed that forgiveness reduces ruminative thoughts, leading to beneficial effects on depression. In the light of all this information, a

structural model was designed in the current study that aimed to examine the mediator role of resilience and rumination in the relationship between forgiveness and marital adjustment (Figure 1).

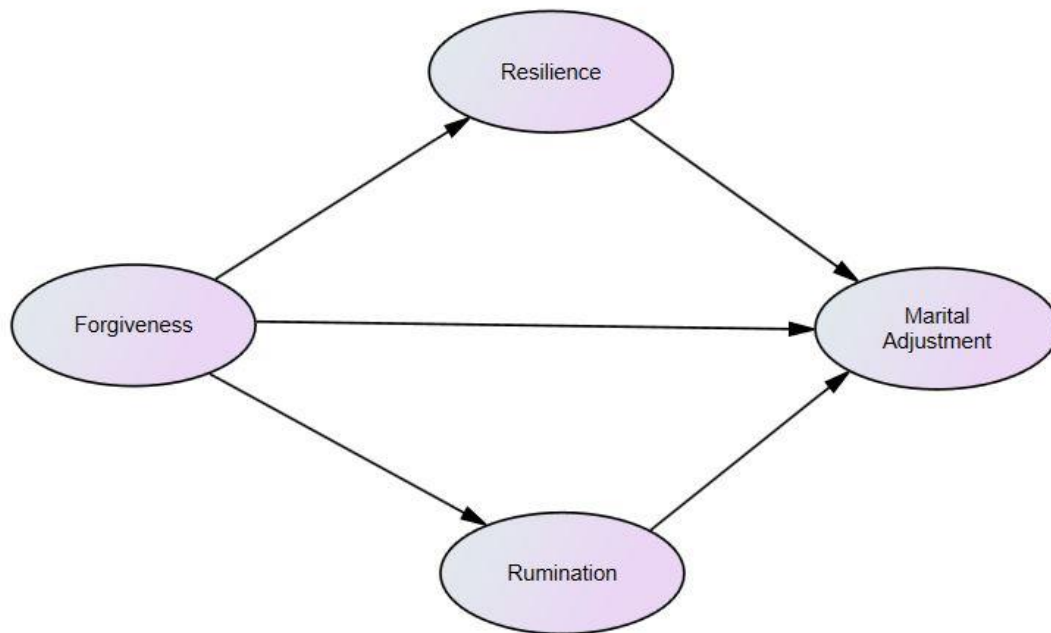


Figure 1. Proposed model

As a result, marital adjustment can be considered as one of the basic features sought for the healthy continuity of marriages. Therefore, it is thought that investigating the variables that may affect and contribute to marital adjustment will be very valuable in terms of literature. It is also thought that the findings from this study may contribute to the practices of mental health professionals (e.g. family and marriage therapists, family counsellors) working in this field.

Method

Research Design

In the current study, the relational survey model, one of the quantitative methods, was used to determine the predictive role of the resilience, rumination and forgiveness variables on marital adjustment. The main purpose of the relational survey model, which is a research design used to determine the level of change that occurs simultaneously in two or more variables, is to explain events, situations or objects as they were in the past or they are today, without any intervention (Büyüköztürk, Kılıç-Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz, & Demirel, 2020; Karasar, 2012).

Study Group

The sample of this study consisted of 494 married participants, 357 (72.3%) female and 137 (27.7%) male, aged between 18 and 65 ($M = 40.49 \pm 7.96$). Of the participants, 319 (64.6%) stated that they got married out of love/flirtation. The majority of the participants (51.2%, $n = 253$) have been married for 11-20 years. While 39 (7.9%)

stated that they did not have children, the highest proportion was made up of participants with two children (53.8%, $n = 266$). The demographic characteristics of the participants are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographic characteristics of the participants

Variables		n	%
Gender	Female	357	72.3
	Male	137	27.7
Type of Marriage	By loving/flirting	319	64.6
	Arranged marriage	175	35.4
Marriage Duration	Less than 10 years	96	19.4
	11-20 years	253	51.2
	21 years and more	145	29.4
Number of Children	None	39	7.9
	One child	76	15.4
	2 children	266	53.8
	3+ children	123	22.9
Total		494	100.0

In the selection of the participants, the convenience sampling method, which is a non-random sampling method, was preferred. In this method, researchers form study groups starting from the most easily accessible participants until they reach the sample size they need (Büyükoztürk et al., 2020).

Data Collection Tools*Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (RDAS)***Research Instruments and Processes**

The original scale is the Dyadic Adjustment Scale, which consists of 32 items and four subscales, developed by Spanier (1976). Busby et al. (1995) reorganized the scale and developed the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale, which consists of 14 items and 3 sub-dimensions. Bayraktaroğlu and Çakıcı (2017) adapted the scale to Turkish culture. Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the whole scale and the sub-dimensions of satisfaction, consensus and cohesion was calculated to be .87, .80, .80, .74, respectively. In the study by Bayraktaroğlu and Çakıcı (2017), the Cronbach alpha coefficient of the scale was calculated to be .88. The highest score to be taken from this 5-point Likert scale is 70. A high score from the scale indicates high marital adjustment.

Resilience Scale Short Form (RSSF)

The scale was developed by Smith et al. (2008) to determine individuals' resilience levels. RSSF is a 5-point Likert type, 6-item, self-report measurement tool. An exploratory factor analysis was conducted to determine the construct validity of the scale. As a result of the analysis, a single-factor structure emerged, explaining 61%, 61%, 57% and 67% of the total variance for 4 different sample groups, respectively. The reliability of the scale was calculated using Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency and test-retest methods. The Cronbach's Alpha internal

consistency reliability coefficient was found to vary between .80 and .91. The test-retest reliability coefficient was found to be between .62 and .69. The Turkish validity and reliability study of the scale was conducted by Doğan (2015). As a result of the exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, it was determined that the scale had a single-factor structure like the original one. The Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient of the Turkish form was calculated to be .83. The highest score to be taken from the scale is 30, and a high score indicates high resilience.

Ruminative Response Scale-Short Form (RRS-SF)

The Ruminative Response Scale-Short Form, developed by Treynor et al. (2003), consists of 2 subscales: brooding and reflection, and 10 items. The scale is a 4-point Likert scale. It was determined that the original version of the scale developed by Nolen-Hoeksema and Morrow (1991) showed a high correlation ($r = 0.90$). Internal consistency coefficients for the whole scale, brooding and reflection subscales were calculated to be .85, .72 and .77, respectively. The Turkish adaptation study of the scale was carried out by Erdur-Baker and Bugay (2012). It was determined that the Turkish form of the scale had a factor structure similar to the original scale. The internal consistency coefficients for the whole score and sub-scales were found to be .85, .77, .75, respectively.

Heartland Forgiveness Scale (HFS)

The scale developed by Thompson et al. (2005) was adapted into Turkish by Bugay and Demir (2010). The scale, which consists of eighteen 7-point Likert-type items, has three subscales: self-forgiveness, others-forgiveness and situational forgiveness. The score to be taken from the scale varies between 18 and 126 and the score to be taken from each sub-dimension varies between 6 and 42. A high score from the scale indicates a high level of forgiveness. The Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient of the Turkish form of the scale was calculated to be .64 for the self-forgiveness sub-dimension, .79 for the others-forgiveness sub-dimension, .76 for the situational forgiveness sub-dimension and .81 for the whole scale. In addition, as a result of the confirmatory factor analysis, it was determined that the 3-factor structure of the scale showed a good fit.

Data Collection

The data of the current study were collected through a form presented online to married individuals after the ethics committee approval had been received from Necmettin Erbakan University Social and Humanities Scientific Research Ethics Committee (Date: 15/ 03/2024; Decision No: 2024/263). The participants were given information about the study at the beginning of the form. It was clearly stated that participation was completely on a volunteer basis and that they could withdraw from the study at any time. The completion of the form lasted 20 minutes on average.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analysed by using the IBM SPSS 25.0 and IBM SPSS AMOS 25 software programs and the level of significance was taken as $p < .05$. First, the data collected during the research process were checked for accuracy and it was seen that all the items were within the normal range and that there were no incorrect or missing responses. Moreover, univariate and multivariate normality analyses were conducted on the data set. Skewness and kurtosis values, histograms and Q-Q plot values were examined to test whether the data met the assumption of

univariate normality. It was seen that the kurtosis and skewness values of each variable were within the reference range of -1.00 to +1.00, and histograms and Q-Q plots met the assumption of normal distribution (Çokluk, Şekercioğlu, & Büyüköztürk, 2014). Then, Mahalanobis distance coefficients were calculated for multivariate outlier analysis, and no data indicating multivariate outliers with values less than .001 were found in the data set (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). In addition, as a result of the correlation analysis, it was seen that there was no multicollinearity problem (Çokluk et al., 2014). In summary, it can be seen that the data met all the assumptions for conducting parametric analyses. Write down the data analysis of your research without changing the format. Write down the data analysis of your research without changing the format.

Results

Table 2 presents the smallest and largest values, mean and standard deviations, kurtosis and skewness values and Cronbach Alpha values of the research variables. As stated before, all the values are within the required range. The mean score for forgiveness was calculated to be $4.48 \pm .84$, the mean score for resilience was calculated to be $3.23 \pm .75$, the mean for rumination was calculated to be $2.06 \pm .55$ and the mean score for marital adjustment was calculated to be $3.73 \pm .68$. These findings are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Descriptive statistics of forgiveness, resilience, rumination and marital adjustment (n= 494)

Variables	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	S	Skewness	Kurtosis	Cronbach Alpha
Forgiveness	1.33	7.00	4.48	.84	.221	.325	.75
Resilience	1.00	5.00	3.23	.75	-.017	.139	.79
Rumination	1.00	4.00	2.06	.55	.572	.360	.86
Marital Adjustment	1.00	4.86	3.73	.68	-.846	.569	.90

When the correlations between forgiveness, resilience, rumination and marital adjustment were examined, it was found that there were positive and medium to high level significant correlations between all the variables ($p < .001$). The correlations between the variables were found to vary between .438 and .679. These findings are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Correlations between forgiveness, resilience, rumination and marital adjustment

Variables	Forgiveness	Resilience	Rumination
Forgiveness	1		
Resilience	.446**	1	
Rumination	-.325**	-.380**	1
Marital Adjustment	.201**	.293**	-.301**

*** $p < .001$

The main purpose of this study is to test the mediator role of resilience and rumination in the relationship between forgiveness and marital adjustment. The independent variable of the study is forgiveness, the dependent variable is marital adjustment, and the mediator variables are resilience and rumination. Each of the four variables was represented by three indicator variables. While the dimensions of forgiveness and marital adjustment were represented by their sub-dimensions, three indicator variables were created for resilience and rumination each using the item parcelling method. The analyses were conducted through the AMOS 25 program and using the maximum likelihood estimation method.

Before testing the proposed theoretical model, the measurement model was conducted to determine the extent to which the indicator variables represent the latent variables and to determine the structural correlations between the latent variables. The results showed that the data fit the model well, $\chi^2(47, N = 494) = 103.137, p > .05, (\chi^2/df = 2.19, GFI = .97, AGFI = .95, NFI = .96, TLI = .97, CFI = .98, SRMR = .03$ and $RMSEA = .05$. When the results are examined, it can be seen that the factor loadings of the indicator variables vary between .55 and .88. In addition, all the structural correlations between the latent variables are low to medium level and significant ($p < .001$).

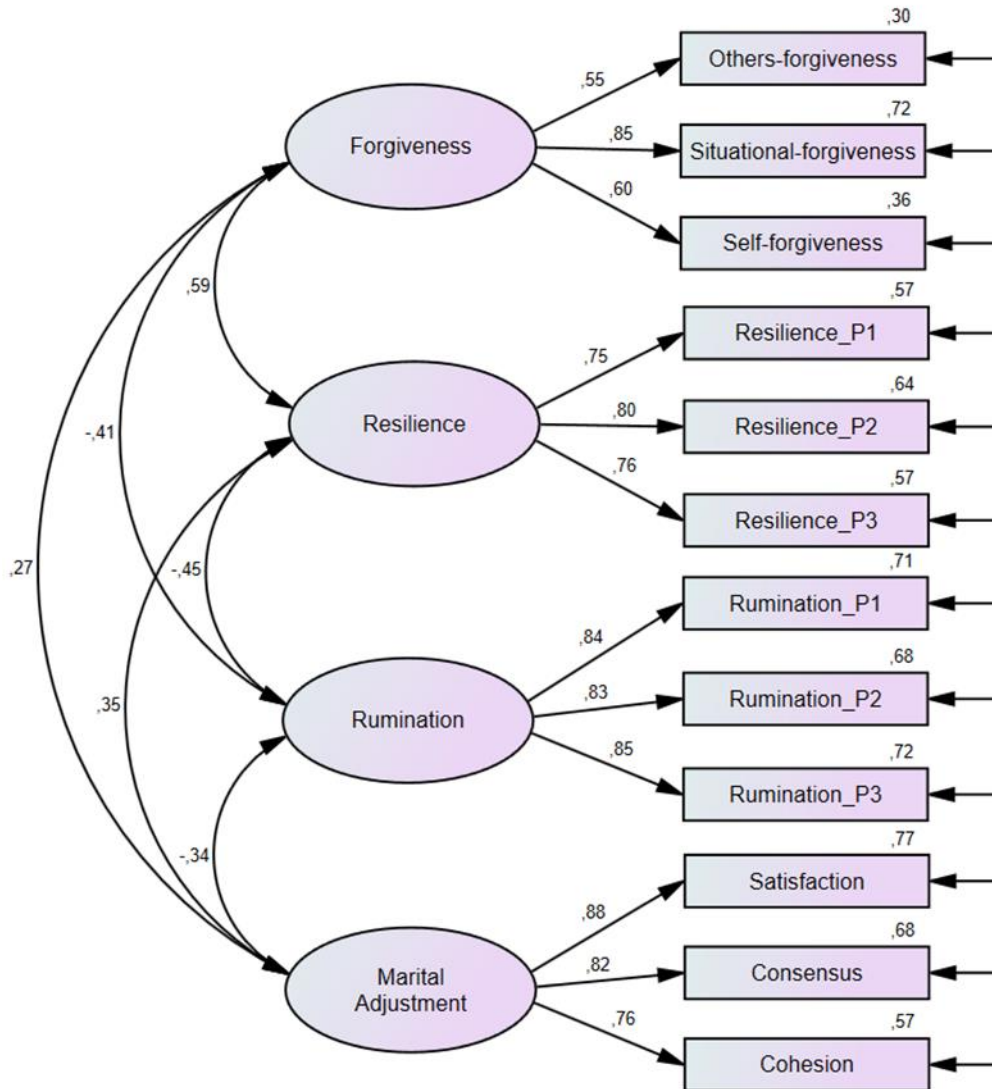


Figure 2. Measurement model

After it was seen that the measurement model had a good fit with the data, the structural model was tested. SEM results also showed that the data fit the model very well, $\chi^2(48, N = 494) = 103.502, p > .05, (\chi^2/df = 2.16, GFI = .97, AGFI = .95, NFI = .96, TLI = .97, CFI = .98, SRMR = .03$ and $RMSEA = .05$.

The results showed that forgiveness predicted resilience positively and significantly ($\beta = .59, p < .001$), and rumination negatively and significantly ($\beta = -.41, p < .001$). At the same time, while resilience predicted marital adjustment positively and significantly ($\beta = .25, p < .001$), rumination predicted marital adjustment negatively and significantly ($\beta = -.22, p < .001$).

Forgiveness explained 35% of the variance in resilience and 17% of the variance in rumination. At the same time, resilience and rumination explained 17% of the variance in marital adjustment.

There are both direct and mediating effects in the model. Forgiveness directly predicted resilience and rumination. Moreover, resilience and rumination directly predicted marital adjustment. Finally, forgiveness predicted marital adjustment through resilience and rumination.

Holmbeck (1997) mentions two types of intervening effects: mediating effect and indirect effect. A mediating effect exists when an initially statistically significant relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable is significantly reduced or eliminated by the inclusion of the mediator variable in the analysis. In the model where the direct path is added to the analysis, the statistically insignificant correlation between the dependent and independent variables indicates full mediation. On the other hand, a significant correlation but a slight decrease in the level of the standardized value of this path indicates partial mediation. The correlation analysis results presented before moving on to the main analysis showed that the correlation between forgiveness and marital adjustment was significant ($r = .201, p < .001$). In the structural equation model, it was observed that this significant correlation disappeared. Thus, it is possible to say that resilience and rumination played a mediator role in the relationship between forgiveness and marital adjustment. These findings are presented in Figure 3.

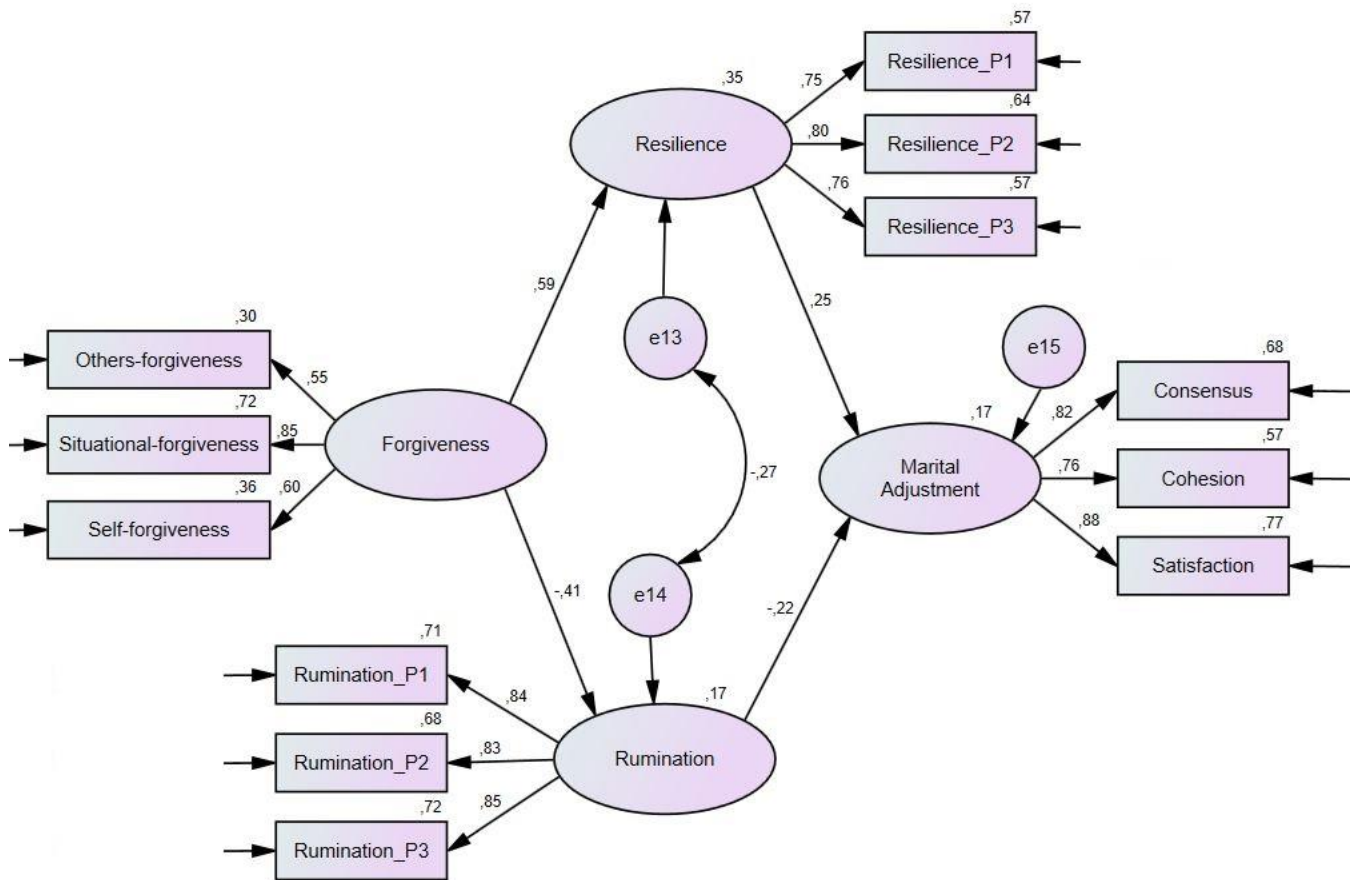


Figure 3. Structural equation model

Discussion, Conclusion & Suggestions

As a result of the study, it was first found that forgiveness has a significant predictive effect on marital adjustment. According to this finding, a high tendency to forgive in individuals contributes positively to marital adjustment. Similarly, [McDonald et al. \(2017\)](#) stated that forgiveness directly and positively affects marital adjustment. In another study, [Solomon, Dekel, and Zerach \(2009\)](#) found that as the level of forgiveness increases, marital adjustment increases as well. According to [Sabatelli \(1988\)](#), marital adjustment refers to marriages in which spouses actively use communication processes, conflicts occur rarely and conflicts can be resolved with mutual understanding and satisfaction. In this regard, [Gordon and Baucom \(1998\)](#) emphasize that forgiveness is a critical factor for healing in marriages. The ability of spouses to forgive each other can be considered an integral component of maintaining a close relationship ([Fincham, 2009](#)) because forgiveness is related to basic structures of marriage such as forgiveness, conflict resolution, healthy relationship and commitment ([Fincham & Beach, 2007](#)). As a result, forgiveness strengthens marital adjustment by playing an effective role in resolving problems that may occur between spouses.

The second finding of the study is that forgiveness has a significant effect on resilience, which is one of the mediator variables. Accordingly, increasing the tendency to forgive in individuals plays an important role in increasing resilience. Similarly, [Kumar and Dixit \(2014\)](#) revealed that there is a significant correlation between resilience and forgiveness and that resilience is predicted by forgiveness. In another study, [Faison \(2007\)](#) concluded that as the level of forgiveness increases, resilience also increases. In fact, people with a high tendency to forgive can adapt more easily to stressful situations or moments of crisis and exhibit more competent behaviour in challenging life situations ([Kravchuk, 2021](#)). In this regard, it becomes clear that increasing the tendency to forgive is important in order to improve resilience in individuals.

The third finding of the study is that forgiveness negatively affects the other mediator variable, rumination. This finding shows that the tendency to forgive is an important factor in reducing ruminative thoughts in individuals. Previous research on the subject also supports this finding. For example, [Suchday, Friedberg, and Almeida \(2006\)](#) stated that forgiveness is negatively correlated with rumination and that low levels of forgiveness predict increased rumination. In another study, it was found that the level of rumination decreases as the level of forgiveness increases ([McCullough, Bellah, Kilpatrick, & Johnson, 2001](#)). In addition, [Mróz, Kaleta, and Sołtys \(2020\)](#) stated that individuals with a high tendency to forgive exhibit a low rumination tendency. Therefore, forgiveness can be considered an important factor in reducing ruminative thoughts.

The fourth finding of the study is that resilience has a significant effect on marital adjustment. This finding is consistent with previous research findings ([Goli, 2021](#); [İlmen & Driver, 2022](#); [Qurit'e & al-Gazo, 2018](#); [Karimi & Esmaeili, 2020](#); [Serpen & Mackan, 2017](#)). Resilience has an important function in overcoming the problems and changes encountered in daily life and being able to return to the old state ([Ramirez, 2007](#)). The relationships of spouses who can reach a consensus on issues related to marriage and family and solve the problems experienced in the relationship positively are considered harmonious marriages ([Erbek, Beştepe, Akar, Eradamlar, & Alpkan, 2005](#)).

Therefore, it can be said that resilience increases marital adjustment by contributing to the ability of spouses to cope with problems.

The fifth finding of the study is that rumination negatively affects marital adjustment. In other words, rumination decreases marital adjustment. Similarly, Göztepe-Gümüş and Tutarel-Kışlak (2019) stated that there is a negative correlation between rumination and marital adjustment. Repetitively thinking about negative experiences between spouses causes negative emotions, makes it difficult to forget these experiences, and therefore can negatively affect marital adjustment. Papageorgiou and Wells (2004) pointed out that rumination can often cause problems to be perceived as unsolvable as a result of a more pessimistic attitude.

Finally, the current study showed that resilience and rumination play a mediating role in the relationship between forgiveness and marital adjustment. According to this result, increasing spouses' tendency to forgive strengthens their resilience and reduces ruminative thoughts. Therefore, strong resilience and less rumination tend to contribute to increased marital adjustment. In other words, what increases the marital satisfaction of spouses who are inclined to forgive is their increased resilience and reduced ruminative thoughts resulting from their tendency to forgive. Therefore, since spouses' tendency to forgive actually contributes to a more harmonious and satisfying relationship in the long run, it can be considered as a favour to the other spouse as well as to the relationship and even especially to the person himself/herself.

Although this study makes important contributions to the relevant literature, it has some limitations. First, the collection of the research data through self-report measurement tools can be stated as a limitation. It is thought that using only self-report scales in this study and the completion of the scales for all the variables of the study only by the participants increased the shared method variance. For this reason, it is thought that obtaining information from both spouses, instead of getting information from only one of them, will reduce the shared method variance in future studies. Additionally, since the study was conducted using a cross-sectional method, it is not appropriate to make a causal inference about the direction of the relationships. For example, as an alternative model to this model in which forgiveness increases marital satisfaction, a model in which marital satisfaction increases forgiveness can be presented. Therefore, longitudinal studies are needed to understand the direction of the relationships more accurately. Finally, it is recommended that qualitative data be collected in addition to quantitative data in future studies. Thus, in-depth information about the variables can be obtained. Despite the limitations listed, this study contributed to our understanding of the potential effects of forgiveness on marital satisfaction and the evaluation of the role of resilience and rumination in this relationship. For this reason, it can be said that it contains results that may be valuable for the literature.

Ethic

The ethics committee approval had been received from Necmettin Erbakan University Social and Humanities Scientific Research Ethics Committee (Date: 15/ 03/2024; Decision No: 2024/263).

Author Contributions

First author: Literature review, data collection process, results and conclusions.

Second author: Methodology, data collection process, data analysis and results.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest in the research.

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