

## A Systematic Literature Review on The Importance of Spiritual Intelligence in Marital Satisfaction

### *Sorotan Literatur Sistematis Terhadap Kepentingan Kecerdasan Spiritual dalam Kepuasan Perkahwinan*

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#### ABSTRACT

*Spiritual intelligence is a growing concept that extends beyond personal development, significantly shaping interpersonal relationships, particularly within marriage. This study seeks to systematically review and analyze the impact of spiritual intelligence on marital satisfaction among married couples. The review follows the PRISMA framework (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses), ensuring a structured and transparent approach to synthesizing relevant literature. It delves into the intricate ways in which spiritual intelligence influences the quality and stability of marital bonds. To gather pertinent studies, Web of Science (WoS) and Scopus were used to source peer-reviewed research focusing on the connection between spiritual intelligence and marital satisfaction. Through content analysis, the study identified four core themes: (a) stability, (b) wisdom, (c) love, and (d) security, focusing on the sense of emotional safety and trust nurtured by spiritual practices and beliefs. The findings highlight the crucial role of spiritual intelligence in strengthening marriages by enhancing resilience and promoting healthier relationships. Moreover, these insights serve as a foundation for further scholarly exploration and practical implementation. The study suggests that both researchers and policymakers can leverage these findings to develop specialized programs and interventions aimed at improving marital satisfaction through the integration of spiritual intelligence. Ultimately, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of how spiritual intelligence can be utilized to fortify marriages and enhance couples' overall well-being.*

*Keywords: marital satisfaction; spiritual intelligence; married couples; spirituality; relationship*

#### ABSTRAK

*Kecerdasan spiritual merupakan konsep yang semakin berkembang yang melangkaui pembangunan diri serta memainkan peranan penting dalam membentuk hubungan interpersonal, khususnya dalam perkahwinan. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk menyoroti dan menganalisis secara sistematis kesan kecerdasan spiritual terhadap kepuasan perkahwinan dalam kalangan pasangan yang telah berkahwin. Sorotan literatur ini menggunakan kerangka PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) bagi memastikan pendekatan yang tersusun dan telus dalam mensintesis literatur yang relevan. Ia meneliti secara mendalam bagaimana kecerdasan spiritual mempengaruhi kualiti dan kestabilan ikatan perkahwinan. Bagi mendapatkan kajian yang berkaitan, pangkalan data Web of Science (WoS) dan Scopus telah digunakan untuk menelusuri penyelidikan berkaitan hubungan antara kecerdasan spiritual dan kepuasan perkahwinan. Melalui analisis kandungan, kajian ini mengenal pasti empat tema utama iaitu kestabilan, kebijaksanaan, kasih sayang dan keselamatan, dengan tumpuan kepada kestabilan emosi serta kepercayaan yang dipupuk melalui amalan dan kepercayaan spiritual. Dapatan kajian menekankan peranan penting kecerdasan spiritual dalam memperkukuh institusi perkahwinan dengan meningkatkan daya tahan pasangan serta memupuk hubungan yang lebih sihat. Selain itu, penemuan ini menjadi asas kepada penerokaan ilmiah lanjutan dan pelaksanaan praktikal. Kajian ini mencadangkan agar para penyelidik dan pembuat dasar dapat memanfaatkan hasil ini untuk membangunkan program dan intervensi khusus yang bertujuan meningkatkan kepuasan perkahwinan melalui integrasi kecerdasan spiritual. Ternyata, penyelidikan ini menyumbang kepada pemahaman yang lebih mendalam tentang bagaimana kecerdasan spiritual dapat dimanfaatkan untuk memperkukuh perkahwinan serta meningkatkan kesejahteraan keseluruhan pasangan.*

*Katakunci: kepuasan perkahwinan; kecerdasan spiritual; pasangan berkahwin; spiritualiti; hubungan*

## INTRODUCTION

Marriage is a sacred bond that has existed historically for ages, deeply embedded within societies. It has been emphatically highlighted by several religions and deemed as a prized human relationship as it lends meaning and value to lives. One of the simplest institutions of the human world, marriage is built on divine instruction and formal rituals to make it universally available. According to the Quran, the ultimate means of achieving peace and contentment in life is through a husband-wife relationship, as in the case of Adam and Eve (Elmali, 2022). This marriage is viewed as the beginning of the union of married life (Elmali, 2022). In human society, the core of marriage is the creation of pairs where a woman and a man unite to create a fulfilling and sTABLE relationship (Kazim & Rafique, 2021). The strength of marriage mostly depends on the marital happiness that is a factor of both the divorce rate, individual well-being, physical health, and children's welfare (Wang & Zhao, 2022). While sexual orientation is a top priority in marriage, other factors, such as financial stability, security, emotional nourishment, tranquillity, and the need for companionship, are also a top priority. Marital satisfaction is a condition where the spouses are content and cheerful in the union. It is a critical determinant of maintaining a sTABLE marriage unit and the mental well-being of the spouses and their children (Abreu et al., 2021). It includes dimensions such as conflict resolution, emotional intimacy, mutual appreciation, and willingness to keep the marriage. Conversely, marital instability poses significant threats to the mental and physical well-being of the individual.

There are several reasons behind marital satisfaction. According to Purnamasari et al. (2021), these include strength of commitment, interaction patterns in the early years of the marriage, age at marriage, flexibility in resolving problems, religiosity, emotional support, and differences in spousal expectations. Divorce rates vary across the globe, with some nations having higher divorce rates compared to others. Sharma & Borah (2020) reported that in the United States and Canada, nearly 40% of marriages are divorce-oriented, whereas in Japan, it is as low as 1.2%. These variations rely on cultural customs, religion, and economic conditions. It is important to know why these conditions retard the decline in marital satisfaction (Murray et al., 2011). Among these, religion and spiritual intelligence particularly strongly influence marital satisfaction (Piotr Sorokowski et al., 2019).

Spiritual intelligence (SQ) is a new term that came after Gardner and Hatch (1989) theory of multiple intelligences in his book *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*. Towards the late 20th and early 21st centuries, SQ was regarded as the end intelligence that blended rational intelligence (IQ) and emotional intelligence (EQ). This form of intelligence enables one to be flexible, creative, and morally intelligent and form a close bond with the inner self (Skrzypinska, 2020). SQ enables one to remain concentrated both in their career and life and gives a sense of wisdom, sympathy, and inner peace regardless of the world outside (Chan & Siu, 2016). Spiritual intelligence has been discovered through research to be very crucial in marital bliss. Studies by Fard et al. (2013) and Aman et al. (2019) postulated that religious practice and worship enhance marital happiness. Dhote (2018) demonstrated that SQ elements training has the possibility of enhancing marital satisfaction, while Fatourechi et al. (2018) confirmed that couples in lasting marriages are most likely to refer to religion as the most necessary factor in upholding their marriage. Also, Hoesni et al. (2021) posited that SQ is a critical factor in stabilizing marriage because it helps spouses maintain the balance between goals, values, and purpose in life. Spiritual intelligence is part of human nature and can serve as a guiding principle for increasing marital harmony (Eksi & Kardas, 2017).

A study by Aman et al. (2018) found that Muslim couples perceive a happy marriage as one built on responsibility, mutual understanding, balance (in education, work, income, and religious values), and honesty. Despite this, marital instability remains a concern. In 2021, approximately 140 divorce applications were filed daily from March 2020 to August 2021, with 121 cases per day involving Muslim couples (Silma, 2023). The alarming rate of five divorces per hour among Muslim spouses raises concerns about the role of SQ in maintaining marital satisfaction. Rahmawati et al. (2019) found a significant correlation between SQ and marital satisfaction, as spirituality shapes individuals' thoughts and guides their actions in daily life. However, there is a gap in knowledge regarding how SQ is experienced among married couples, as previous research has not fully explored this dimension. Given that marital satisfaction is closely tied to the acceptance and belief in specific values, particularly religious approaches to life, the present study aims to examine the significance of spiritual intelligence in fostering marital satisfaction. To achieve this, two primary objectives have been outlined: (i) to explore the practices of spiritual intelligence by the couples and (ii) to understand the importance of spiritual intelligence in marital satisfaction. The findings may add to existing research on SQ in marriage, offering insights for future academic inquiry and practical applications.

## METHODOLOGY

### PRISMA STATEMENT (PREFERRED REPORTING ITEMS FOR SYSTEMATIC REVIEWS AND META-ANALYSES)

In this systematic review study, the PRISMA statement was used as the main guideline for conducting the study. PRISMA is a minimum evidence-based list of surveillance elements for systematic analysis and meta-analysis. The overall goal of the PRISMA statement is to improve the transparency and the scientific merit of a reported systematic review or meta-analysis. The PRISMA 2020 statement, therefore, is intended to reflect this recent evolution in the identification, selection, appraisal, and synthesis of research (Cherry et al., 2023).

### FORMULATION OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION

The formulation of the research questions was based on PICO, a tool that assists authors in developing appropriate research questions for review. PICO is based on three main concepts, namely i) Population or problem, ii) Interest, and iii) Context. The PICO model is by far the most widely used model for formulating research questions. The proposed PICOS approach is intended to serve as a guide for the authors and help them efficiently and thoroughly describe their research methodology while reporting their original studies. Additionally, it will also serve as a checklist guide for the reviewers and editors to more thoroughly review the manuscripts under their evaluation and hence ensure their scientific validity and statistical robustness (Cabrera et al., 2023). Based on these concepts, three main aspects were included in the review in this study: married couples (population), spiritual intelligence (interest), and marital satisfaction (context). Therefore, this systematic review study asks the following questions: (1) What are the importance of spiritual intelligence on marital satisfaction? (2) What are the practices of spiritual intelligence by the couples?

### SYSTEMATIC SEARCHING STRATEGIES

The systematic searching strategies involved three main strategies, which were identification, screening, and eligibility, as shown in FIGURE 1.

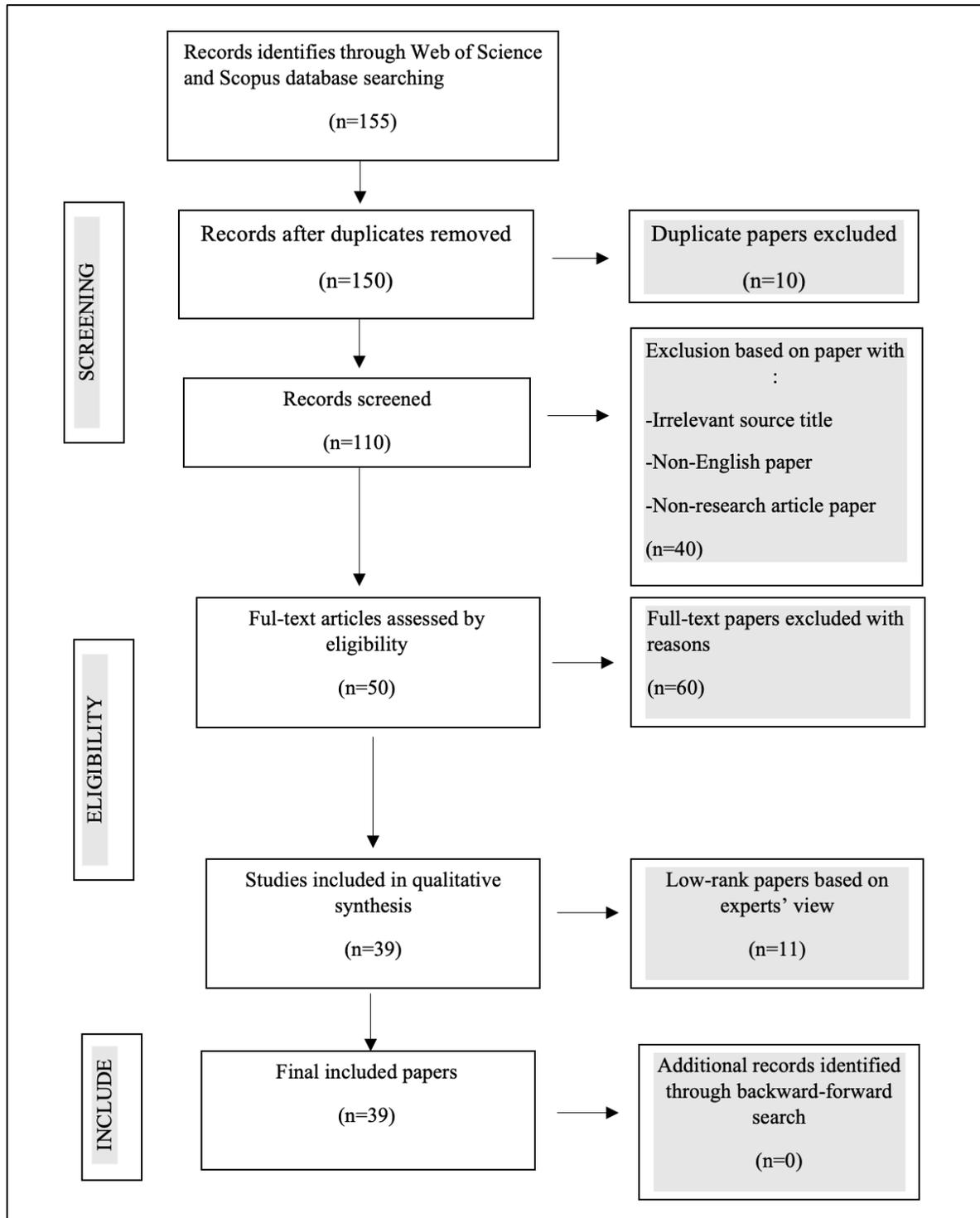


FIGURE 1. A flow diagram of the process

## IDENTIFICATION

Identification is the process of searching for the right keywords based on research questions. In this study, three keywords and their synonyms, related terms, and variations were used. The keywords were <spiritual intelligence>, <married couple>, and <marital satisfaction>. The keywords were developed based on the research question, and the identification process relied on online thesauruses, keywords used by previous researchers, suggested keywords by Web of Science (WoS), and keywords suggested by experts. As shown in TABLE 1.0, this study managed to generate a series of keyword strings using the WoS database and Scopus to search for the required articles. WoS and Scopus are websites that provide subscription-based access to multiple databases and have comprehensive data for many academic disciplines (Pranckute, 2021). The search process using both databases resulted in 39 articles that were compatible with this study's research objectives.

TABLE 1. The search strings

| Database       | Search Strings  |
|----------------|---|
| Web of Science | TOPIC : (Spiritual Intelligence OR religious understanding OR religious knowledge)<br>Refined by : TOPIC (married couple OR married pair) AND TOPIC : (Marital satisfaction OR matrimonial fulfillment OR marriage happiness)     |
| Scopus         | TITLE-ABS-KEY (spiritual AND understanding OR religious AND intelligence) AND (married AND couple OR married AND pair) AND (marital AND satisfaction OR matrimonial AND satisfaction) AND (marriage AND fulfillment OR HAPPINESS) |

## SCREENING

All 155 articles were first screened to filter out any duplicate records. A total of 10 papers were excluded from the record due to duplication, and the remaining 150 articles left. The remaining were screened again to ensure the quality of the review in which only articles with empirical data and published in a journal were selected. The screening process also chooses English articles only to avoid any language barriers and misunderstanding in reviewing. This process excluded 40 articles as they did not fit the inclusion criteria. The remaining 110 articles were used for the third process, which is eligibility.

In the third process, the authors manually monitored the selected articles to ensure all the 110 remaining articles fit the criteria. This process was executed by reading the titles and abstract of the articles. A total of 60 articles were excluded due to a focus on sexual orientation among young women, history of marriage in revolutionary era and religious practices in building family or a focus on review, not empirical data, or the methodology section was not clearly defined, or the articles were published in the form of a chapter in a book, a book, proceedings, or conference papers. Thus, there were only 50 articles remaining at the eligibility stage.

## APPRAISAL OF QUALITY

The remaining articles were presented to two experts for quality assessment to ensure the quality of the papers that they would be reviewing. The experts ranked the remaining articles into three quality categories, namely, high, moderate, and low. Only articles categorized as high and moderate risk were reviewed. The experts focused on the methodology of the articles to determine the rank of the quality. Both authors had to agree that the quality of the paper must at least be at a moderate level for it to be included in the study (Remington, 2020). Any disagreement was discussed between them before deciding on the inclusion or exclusion of the articles for the review. After this process, 30 articles were ranked as high, 9 articles as moderate, and 10 articles as low. Therefore, only 39 articles were eligible and selected for the review.

## DATA ANALYSIS

In this study, thematic analysis was used to generate themes. Thematic analysis is used to identify the themes and sub-themes used about note patterns and themes, clustering, counting, and noting the similarities and relationships that exist within the abstracted data (Hagerty, 2002). Any similar or related abstracted data were clustered in a group. After a thorough analysis, a total of 5 themes were developed in this study, which were (i) stability, (ii) wisdom, (iii) love, and (iv) security.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### SPATIAL AND TEMPORAL ANALYSIS OF SELECTED ARTICLES.

This study analyzed a total of 39 articles after a meticulous and neat method of selection. Based on FIGURE 2a, the country with the highest number of articles was The United States of

America with 11 articles, followed by Iran (8), China (3) and 1 article from Turkey, Indonesia Poland, Jordan, India, Egypt, Jordan, Italy, Ethiopia, Canada, Malaysia, China and Nigeria.

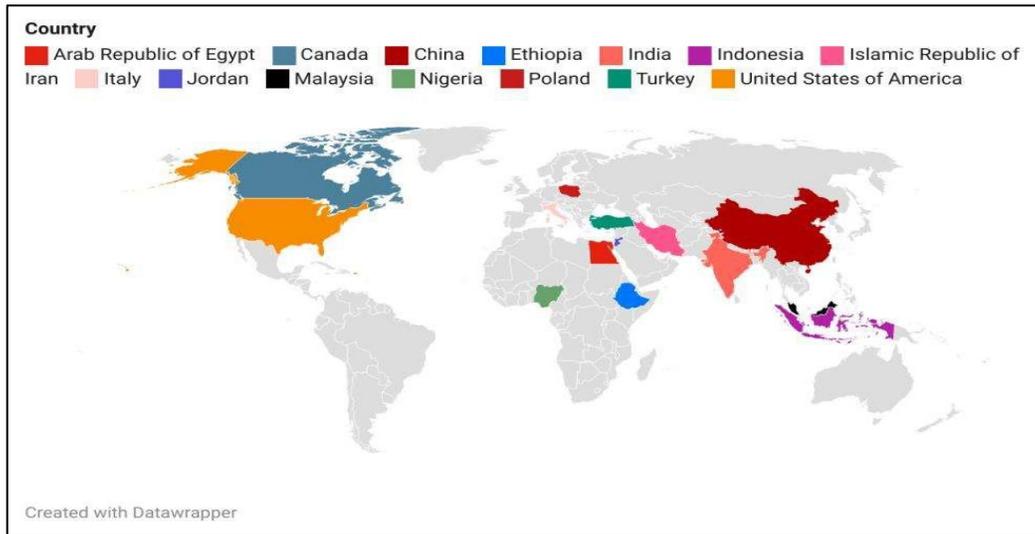


FIGURE 2a. Spatial distribution of the selected articles.

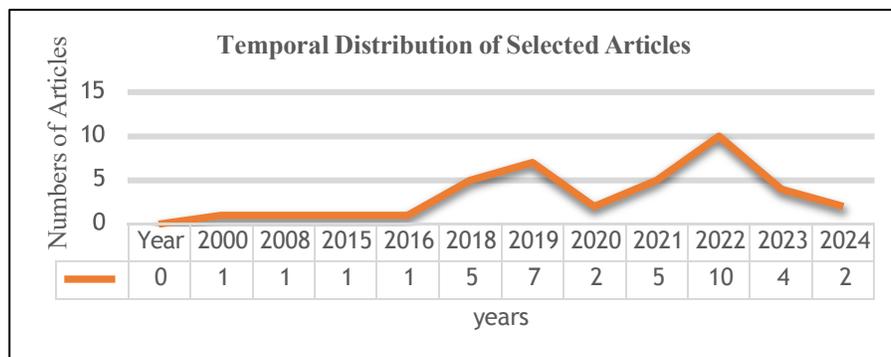


FIGURE 2b. The temporal distribution of the selected articles.

Based on FIGURE 2b, there are only 39 articles published from the year 2000 until 2024. The most articles were published in 2022 with 10 articles, followed by 2019 with 7 articles, both 2021 and 2018 with 5 articles, and only one related article found in 2000, 2008, 2015, 2016, 2019, and 2 articles were in 2020 and 2024. The trendline shows a significant increment in articles published related to this study, especially from 2020 to 2022, and this may be due to the interest in the research subject and the contemporary issue that arose about the subject.

#### THE IMPORTANCE OF SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE IN MARITAL SATISFACTION- CONTEXTUAL ISSUES

Three contextual issues were addressed from the analysis of the selected articles: the type of method used (FIGURE 3a) and (b) the types of married couples (FIGURE 3b). Based on FIGURE 3a, there were three main methods used from the selected articles, with 77% (30 articles) using surveys as the prime method to conduct the study, followed by interviews with

15% (6 articles), and observation with 8% (3 articles). Based on FIGURE 3b, there were three different backgrounds of couples studied from the selected articles, with the most common are the middle-aged couples with 38% (18 articles), followed by old couples with 32% (15 articles), and lastly young couples with 29% (6 articles) found.

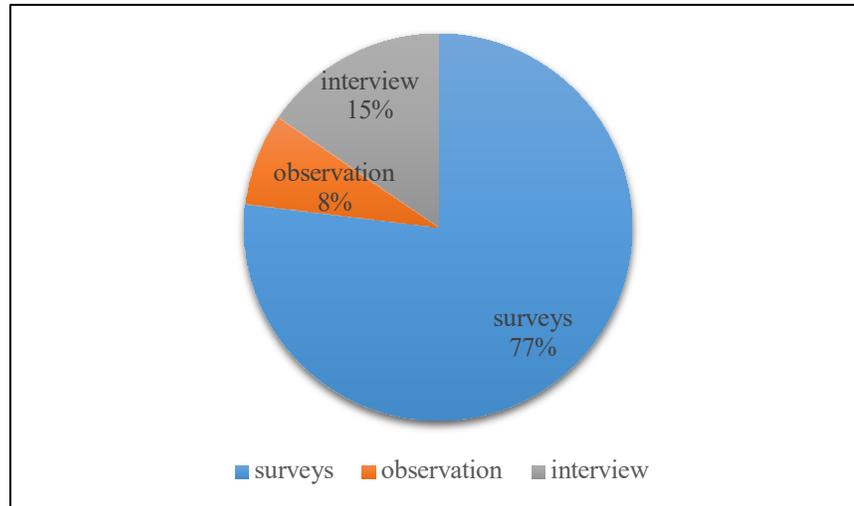


FIGURE 3a. Methods used in articles

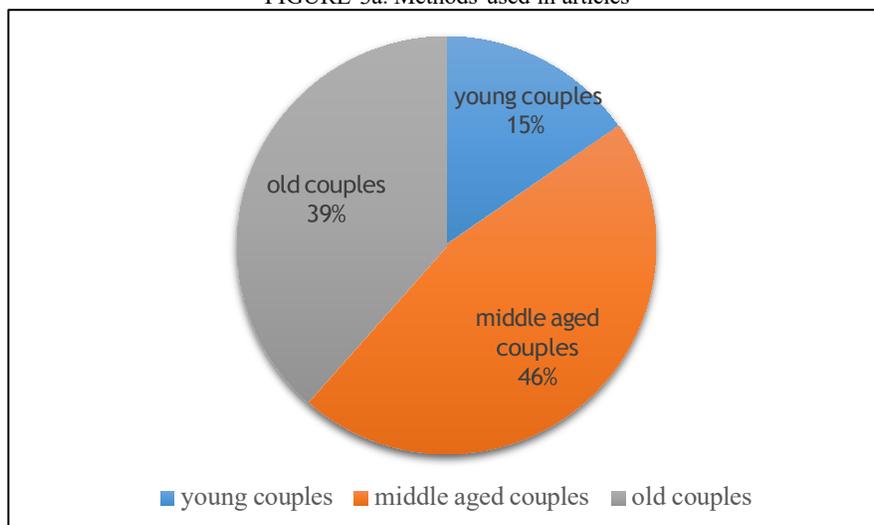


FIGURE 3b. Types of married couple

#### THE IMPORTANCE OF SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE IN MARITAL SATISFACTION: THEMATIC ANALYSIS

A total of four themes of the importance of spiritual intelligence were extracted from all 39 articles: (a) Stability, (b) wisdom, (c) love, and (d) security. Based on FIGURE 4, 47% of the studies raised the importance of spiritual intelligence for marital stability, followed by wisdom with 32%, love with 18%, and security with 3%.

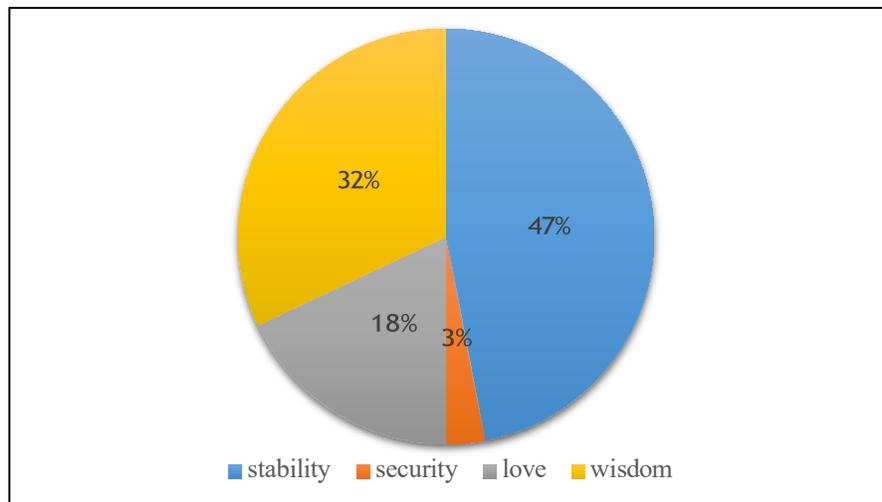


FIGURE 4. The Importance of Spiritual Intelligence in Marital Satisfaction

#### a. Stability

The spiritual elements emphasize the importance of love, commitment, loyalty, mutual support, and forgiveness. These skills and attitudes have been shown to play an important role in the quality and stability of marriages (Rahmawati et al., 2019). Research on the relationship between spirituality and relationships generally shows that deeply religious married couples, on average, have somewhat higher levels of commitment, marital stability, and marital satisfaction than non-religious couples, so their marriages may work better. Thus, religion and spirituality positively affect relationship quality (Zuhri et al., 2023) by reinforcing values, beliefs, and behaviors that support marriage, empathy, altruism, and nonaggression.

From cross-sectional and longitudinal studies of newlyweds in America (Rose et al., 2018), couples who imparted spirituality in their marriages are typically predicted to have stronger relationship stability, greater relationship satisfaction, and fewer incidences of domestic abuse and divorce. The article also shows that religion moderates the adverse link between relationship satisfaction and marital risk variables (such as a large age gap and partner neuroticism). High-commitment religious married couples find it more difficult to consider divorce (Tuttle & Davis, 2015). These couples are more likely than non-religious couples to seek assistance when their relationships are in trouble. All of this enhances the relationship's quality, happiness, and stability over time. According to the article involving expectant couples or parents of young children, spirituality in marriage tends to be accompanied by a higher commitment to the relationship and more time spent together (Dew et al., 2020). Highly spiritual couples usually experience more varied and stronger positive feelings about pregnancy and birth, such as admiration, respect, and gratitude, and they also offer more support to each other. All these factors strengthen relationship stability, relationship satisfaction, and long-term commitment.

In most studies in Iran, the role of religion in marriage has been highlighted. In moments of hardship, religion and spirituality become the coping strategies that give couples commitment, the capability to accept adversity, and a sense of family, community, and stability. Similarly to the present study, numerous studies have emphasized the role of religion in marital stability and the prevention of divorce (Beverly Rosa Williams et al., 2020). Religious affiliation and attendance contribute to couples' well-being and support and foster marital relationships (Sadeghi & Agadjanian, 2019). Highly spiritual couples tend to seek guidance and

spend quality time together, further strengthening their bond. Ultimately, spiritual intelligence cultivates a deep sense of connection and purpose in marriage, leading to greater satisfaction and long-term stability.

b. Wisdom

Spiritual intelligence plays a crucial role in providing wisdom that enhances marital satisfaction by guiding couples in assessing and managing relationship challenges with clarity, emotional maturity, and a deeper sense of purpose. It enables individuals to develop a broader perspective on their relationship, allowing them to navigate difficulties with resilience, patience, and understanding (Clarke et al., 2022). Those with high spiritual intelligence rely on faith, trust, and inner wisdom to approach conflicts constructively, seeing hardships as opportunities for growth rather than as punishments or irreparable damages. This mindset fosters positive coping strategies, where individuals believe that challenges can strengthen their relationship through mutual support and perseverance rather than weakening it through blame and resentment (Parise, 2017). Spiritual intelligence also influences how couples manage stress and conflicts, which are inevitable in any marriage. A study by George (2023) in USA has shown that partners respond to conflicts in different ways, including constructive engagement (actively resolving conflicts), destructive engagement (escalating tensions), and conflict avoidance (ignoring problems). Those with higher levels of spiritual intelligence are more likely to engage in constructive conflict resolution as they possess the wisdom to communicate openly, listen empathetically, and seek solutions that benefit both partners. Rather than responding to disagreements with impulsivity, anger, or defensiveness, spiritually intelligent individuals remain calm, practice self-reflection, and prioritize long-term relationship stability over temporary emotional reactions. They are also more inclined to embrace forgiveness, recognizing that mistakes and misunderstandings are a natural part of any relationship.

Another study by Sumari et al. (2021) found that spiritual intelligence enhances emotional intelligence, equipping couples with the ability to regulate emotions, practice empathy, and offer unconditional support to one another. Fostering emotional resilience helps partners remain patient and compassionate even in difficult times, reducing the likelihood of emotional withdrawal or harsh criticisms that can erode marital satisfaction (Karney & Bradbury, 2020). In moments of crisis, such as financial hardships, health struggles, or major life transitions, spiritually intelligent individuals rely on wisdom to stay composed, work collaboratively with their spouse, and maintain a hopeful outlook. As couples transition through different stages of life, including pregnancy and early parenthood, spiritual intelligence plays a crucial role in sustaining marital satisfaction. During these transformative periods, many couples experience increased stress, shifting responsibilities, and emotional challenges that can strain their relationship (Dalin, 2024). However, spiritual wisdom helps them stay grounded by reinforcing gratitude, mutual appreciation, and a sense of shared purpose (Amoo et al., 2018). Additionally, a study by Khatatnesh and Showbaki (2021) found that when couples view their marriage as sacred and recognize the deeper meaning behind their union, they are more likely to practice dyadic coping, where both partners actively work together to manage stress, support each other emotionally, and maintain a strong marital bond. This collaborative approach strengthens their connection and reinforces their commitment, leading to greater relationship satisfaction and long-term stability (Jamalnik et al., 2020). Ultimately, spiritual intelligence provides couples with the wisdom to approach their marriage with patience, compassion, and a higher sense of purpose (Rajafi et al., 2020). By promoting positive coping strategies, constructive conflict resolution, and emotional resilience, it fosters an

environment of trust, understanding, and unwavering commitment. This deep-rooted wisdom not only enhances marital satisfaction but also ensures that couples can weather life's inevitable challenges while maintaining a fulfilling and enduring relationship.

c. Love

Spiritual intelligence plays a profound role in enhancing love within a marriage, leading to deeper emotional connection, trust, and ultimately greater marital satisfaction. Love in a relationship is not merely an emotion but a conscious practice that requires self-awareness and emotional regulation, which are cultivated through spiritual intelligence. By fostering qualities such as empathy, patience, forgiveness, and gratitude, spiritual intelligence enables couples to build a foundation of unconditional love that strengthens their bond and sustains their marriage over time. One of the primary ways spiritual intelligence enhances love is by promoting self-love and self-awareness, which directly impact how partners express and receive love (Ahmed & Mohamed, 2022). When individuals possess a deep understanding of their own emotions, thoughts, and spiritual values, they are more capable of loving their spouse in a healthy, constructive way. The study by Brudek and Kaleta (2023) showed that spiritually intelligent individuals recognize that love is not just about receiving but also about giving with sincerity and selflessness. This article also emphasizes how this enables them to appreciate their partner's unique qualities and express love in ways that nurture emotional security and trust. Such individuals do not rely solely on external validation for happiness but instead find fulfillment in shared emotional and spiritual growth, leading to a more stable and satisfying marriage.

Spiritual intelligence also deepens commitment and loyalty by reinforcing the sacred nature of marriage. A study by Haryati (2023) on happiness, self-acceptance, and family harmony indicates that spiritual intelligence also helps couples view their relationship not just as a personal commitment but as a shared spiritual journey where both partners contribute to each other's growth and well-being. This perspective instills a sense of higher purpose, making it less likely for couples to abandon their relationship during difficult times (Hajihassani & Sim, 2018). Spiritually intelligent individuals remain committed not out of obligation but out of genuine devotion and respect for their partner, which enhances long-term relationship satisfaction (King et al., 2020). Furthermore, spiritual intelligence nurtures gratitude and appreciation, which are essential in keeping love alive (Li et al., 2022). Many marriages struggle due to partners taking each other for granted. However, spiritually intelligent individuals consciously practice gratitude, acknowledging and appreciating even the smallest gestures of love and kindness from their spouse (Erus & Deniz, 2020). This fosters a culture of mutual respect and admiration, reinforcing the emotional bond and increasing overall marital happiness.

Another study by Azhar and Hoesni (2023) also showed that spiritual intelligence influences intimacy and emotional connection, which are vital aspects of love in marriage. While physical intimacy is important, Karimi et al. (2019) argued that spiritually intelligent couples recognize that true intimacy extends beyond the physical realm; it involves deep emotional and spiritual connection. These couples engage in meaningful conversations, share their dreams, fears, and aspirations, and cultivate a sense of emotional closeness that transcends physical attraction (Lawrens et al., 2019). This profound connection leads to greater relationship satisfaction as both partners feel truly seen, heard, and valued. Spiritual intelligence enhances love by fostering self-awareness, empathy, forgiveness, commitment, gratitude, and deep emotional connection (Mat Din, 2021). It transforms love from a fleeting emotion into a lasting bond rooted in wisdom and

spiritual depth. By cultivating these qualities, couples create a relationship that is not only fulfilling but also resilient, ensuring a marriage that thrives on love, harmony, and long-term satisfaction.

#### d. Security

Spiritual intelligence plays a vital role in establishing security within a marriage, providing partners with the emotional stability, trust, and resilience necessary for long-term marital satisfaction. Security in a relationship is not just about physical or financial stability; it is deeply rooted in emotional, psychological, and spiritual reassurance, which is a sense that both partners are committed, trustworthy, and deeply connected (Karaagac & Owolabi, 2023). When couples develop spiritual intelligence, they navigate challenges with patience, understanding, and faith, ensuring that their relationship remains a safe and nurturing space for both individuals to grow. According to Rosifah et al. (2019), a key aspect of spiritual intelligence in fostering marital security is its ability to enhance trust and emotional safety. Spiritually intelligent individuals cultivate inner peace, self-awareness, and emotional regulation, which allows them to create an environment where their partner feels valued and secure. They engage in meaningful conversations, express their emotions honestly, and provide reassurance, reinforcing a sense of emotional safety. Instead of allowing fear or insecurity to dictate their reactions, they rely on their spiritual wisdom to respond with compassion and patience, reducing unnecessary conflicts and misunderstandings. Furthermore, spiritual intelligence strengthens commitment, a fundamental element of security in any marriage. Commitment is more than just a vow, it is an ongoing decision to remain loyal, dedicated, and resilient in the face of hardships. Spiritually intelligent individuals view marriage as a sacred bond, recognizing that love is not merely about emotions but also about shared purpose and growth (Asfaw & Alene, 2023). This perspective prevents them from giving up easily during difficult times, reinforcing the stability of the relationship. Their commitment is not based on temporary feelings but on a deep spiritual conviction that their marriage has meaning and value beyond individual desires.

Spiritual intelligence fosters a shared identity and purpose, further reinforcing relationship security. When couples see themselves as a unified pair working toward common goals, whether personal growth, family stability, or spiritual fulfillment, they strengthen their bond. They view their marriage as a sacred partnership, which instills a deeper sense of belonging and emotional grounding. This shared identity ensures that both partners feel valued, appreciated, and secure in their role within the marriage. According to the study by Ortiguiera and Siassi (2022), in collectivist cultures, where maintaining family unity and harmony is crucial, spiritual intelligence plays an even greater role in restoring balance and reinforcing security. Couples who prioritize spiritual intelligence are more likely to resolve conflicts peacefully, seek guidance from religious or community support systems, and uphold values that promote marital stability. This collective approach provides an additional layer of security, ensuring that couples do not feel isolated during difficult times (Khatatneh & Showbaki, 2021). By fostering emotional safety, forgiveness, stability, and a shared purpose, spiritual intelligence creates an unshakable foundation for marital satisfaction. When both partners feel truly secure in their love, their relationship thrives, marked by deep connection, unwavering loyalty, and lifelong harmony.

## DISCUSSION

The spatial and temporal analysis of the selected articles highlights the growing scholarly interest in the role of spiritual intelligence in marital satisfaction. The dominance of studies from the United States, Iran, and China suggests that this research topic has been significantly explored in regions where spirituality and marital stability are integral to cultural values. The relatively lower number of studies from other countries, such as Malaysia, Canada, and Nigeria, suggests potential research gaps that future studies could address. The temporal analysis indicates a sharp increase in publications between 2020 and 2022, peaking in 2022 with ten articles. This trend suggests that contemporary social issues, such as increasing divorce rates and evolving marital expectations, have driven academic interest in understanding the relationship between spirituality and marital satisfaction. The fluctuation in research output across different years also indicates that while this field has gained traction, consistent exploration is needed to strengthen its theoretical and empirical foundations.

The methodological analysis reveals that surveys dominate as the primary research method, accounting for 77% of the studies. This preference for quantitative approaches suggests a focus on statistical correlations between spiritual intelligence and marital satisfaction. However, the lower percentage of qualitative methods, such as interviews (15%) and observations (8%), suggests that future research should integrate more in-depth exploratory methods to gain richer insights into personal experiences and perceptions. The demographic distribution of studied couples shows that middle-aged couples (38%) were the most researched group, followed by older couples (32%) and young couples (29%). This trend suggests that researchers may perceive middle-aged couples as a crucial group for understanding marital satisfaction since they have had sufficient time to experience and reflect on the influence of spiritual intelligence in their relationships. However, the relatively lower percentage of studies on young couples indicates a research gap, as early marriage experiences can shape long-term marital dynamics.

#### THE PRACTICE OF SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE AMONG MARRIED COUPLES

Spiritual intelligence plays a crucial role in fostering a fulfilling and harmonious marriage. It enhances emotional connection, improves conflict resolution, and strengthens relationship stability. Several practices rooted in spiritual intelligence contribute to marital satisfaction, including self-awareness, unconditional love, wisdom, trust, and spiritual commitment. Self-awareness is a fundamental component of spiritual intelligence that enables individuals to understand their emotions, thoughts, and behaviours. When applied to marriage, self-awareness helps partners recognize their strengths and weaknesses, allowing them to manage emotions effectively and avoid impulsive reactions. Emotional regulation, which is closely linked to spiritual intelligence, enables individuals to control negative emotions and transform them into constructive responses (Hyson, 2013). Similarly, Marks et al. (2008) discovered that spiritual intelligence elements like self-awareness, love, and passion improved marital satisfaction for male workers in Ahvaz. The research by Park et al. (2023) discovered that mutual creative communication and spiritual life stand out as the strongest indicators of marital satisfaction, demonstrating how spirituality influences relationship dynamics. By mastering emotional regulation, couples can maintain inner peace and create a positive atmosphere in their relationship. Unconditional love is another essential aspect of spiritual intelligence that encourages partners to appreciate each other without judgment. This form of love fosters empathy, understanding, and emotional closeness, which are crucial for long-term marital satisfaction (Dew et al., 2020). Couples who integrate spirituality into their relationship tend to be more supportive and

compassionate, expressing love through acts of service, verbal affirmation, and emotional presence. By continuously nurturing love and empathy, partners strengthen their bond and enhance their marital satisfaction.

Wisdom in marriage enables couples to approach challenges with patience, understanding, and sound judgment. Spiritually intelligent individuals possess strong capacities for reflective communication, active listening, and perspective-taking, which reduce misunderstandings and promote constructive conflict resolution (Sumari et al., 2021). Additionally, wisdom fosters forgiveness and reconciliation, which are essential in maintaining harmony within a marriage (Rose et al., 2018). Rather than allowing conflicts to escalate, spiritually intelligent couples prioritize healing and relational growth, ensuring a peaceful and fulfilling marital life. Trust is one of the strongest predictors of marital satisfaction, and spiritual intelligence helps establish a culture of honesty, transparency, and emotional security within a relationship (Rosifah et al., 2019). Couples with high spiritual intelligence perceive marriage as a sacred commitment rather than a conditional agreement, which strengthens their dedication to the relationship (Schafer & Kwon, 2019). This sacred perspective fosters a secure relational foundation, allowing partners to express their fears, hopes, and concerns openly without fear of judgment. An environment of emotional safety enables couples to support each other during challenging times, further strengthening their marriage.

Spiritual commitment also plays a significant role in sustaining a high-quality marriage. When partners share similar spiritual and moral principles, they develop a sense of togetherness and purpose in their relationship (Sadeghi & Agadjanian, 2019). This alignment fosters mutual respect and cooperation, ensuring that both partners remain committed to nurturing and sustaining their marriage. Moreover, couples who integrate spirituality into their relationship often experience a deeper sense of unity and interdependence, contributing to their emotional and psychological well-being. By practicing self-awareness, nurturing unconditional love, fostering wisdom, enhancing trust, and maintaining spiritual commitment, couples can build a resilient and fulfilling marriage.

#### THE IMPORTANCE OF SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE IN MARITAL SATISFACTION

Spiritual intelligence development increases the commitment and perseverance required for the sustenance of sTABLE marriages. A healthy marriage is not characterized by the lack of challenges but by how well the partners can handle conflict and keep relational harmony intact effectively. Mahshid Gharagozloo et al. (2020) found that religious African American women had more sTABLE decision-making and love relationships because they were better able to deal with marriage issues. The literature suggests that spiritually intelligent people are likely to view problems as a chance to develop both personally and relationally instead of as threats (Hajihassani, 2019). When couples consider their marriage to be sacred and meaningful, they become stronger when faced with challenges because they see their union in spiritual and moral terms (Tuttle & Davis, 2015). Spiritual intelligence facilitates relational stability through the diminution of impulsive behavior and emotional instability and motivates partners to utilize positive conflict resolution methods instead of negative styles like avoidance or hostility (Tavakol et al., 2016). This congruence fosters togetherness and purposefulness, with both partners committed to developing and sustaining the relationship in the long term. In recent times, scholars have begun studying marital satisfaction among long-duration marriages (Brown et al., 2024). Some findings indicate that marital satisfaction remains high in long-duration marriages (Rostami & Gol, 2014), and others indicate that relationship satisfaction is curvilinear, dropping during the early years

before increasing later (Birni & Eryilmaz, 2022). Other studies, nonetheless, state that marital happiness declines over time, with age, more than marriage duration, a stronger predictor of marital quality. Current research highlights the heterogeneity of long-term married couples (Ardianto & Tubagus, 2018). There are couples with sTABLE marriages despite low subjective relationship satisfaction, highlighting the distinction between relationship stability and marital happiness (Clarke et al., 202). These findings reflect that stability is not always satisfaction, reconfirming the importance of emotional connection, communication, and shared values for the persistence of a satisfactory marriage.

Spiritual intelligence enforces the principle of unconditional love and urges people to perceive their spouse with appreciation and empathy and not judge them. It enables couples to understand that love is an ever-evolving process that demands ongoing effort, emotional involvement, and self-development. Research suggests that the couples who incorporate spirituality into their relationship enjoy higher relational satisfaction and emotional closeness as they appreciate supportiveness and shared morality (Dew et al., 2020). Furthermore, the ability to be in a position to exhibit love in more than one manner, either by acts of service, by word, or by emotional presence, is enhanced as it is aided by spiritual understanding and ethical intelligence.

Wisdom is an important aspect of marital happiness since it enables couples to resolve interpersonal issues with understanding, patience, and sound judgment. Spiritual intelligence enhances wisdom by inspiring self-awareness, emotional balance, and moral sensitivity, all of which play a significant role in having a successful marriage (Parise, 2018). Rather than fuming with anger or allowing differences to escalate, the recent study by Sharkawi and Saili (2022) suggested that spiritually intelligent couples prioritize healing and relational reconciliation, which supports their marital satisfaction. Wisdom derived from spiritual intelligence allows couples to discern whether a difference is a triviality or a fundamental relational concern so that unnecessary arguments are not escalated into significant conflicts. This ability to judge things in their entirety and respond with tempered judgment facilitates a more peaceful marital life (Marks et al., 2008). Jamalnik et al. (2019) also discovered that the couples who make decisions using spirituality are relationally more satisfied as they refer to ethical considerations and shared values while addressing marital challenges.

Marital security entails emotional stability, trust, and a sense of belonging, all of which are enhanced by the development of spiritual intelligence (Shahi et al., 2011). Spiritual intelligence constructs emotional security by enhancing vulnerability and openness. When partners feel safe to express their fears, hopes, and concerns to one another without judgment, the two become closer emotionally and feel more trusting (Clarke et al., 2022). This environment of emotional safety allows couples to support each other through life's uncertainties so that their marriage remains strong. Rosifah et al. (2019) believed that spiritual intelligence is particularly crucial in collectivist cultures for ensuring relational harmony and social belonging. With the inclusion of spirituality in their marital dynamic, couples build a more profound sense of oneness and interdependence, which also contributes to their emotional and psychological safety.

The interplay of love, security, wisdom, and stability is necessary in a bid to achieve marital bliss, and spiritual intelligence acts as a unifying element that brings out these aspects. By its emphasis on ethical decision-making, emotional resilience, empathy, and commitment in relationships, spiritual intelligence gives couples the ability to establish a rich and enduring marriage (Shirzadi et al., 2021). Through profound emotional bonds, the provision of stability in adversity, the promotion of wisdom in decision-making, and the establishment of trust and safety, spiritual intelligence emerges as an important indicator of marital bliss (Reed & Neville, 2014).

When spiritual intelligence is utilized within marriage, not only are marriages not just friendship but highly intertwined and fulfilling, but also because couples do not only experience relational success but rich personal and spiritual growth. Subsequent research must continue monitoring the empirical outcomes of spiritual intelligence in different settings of marriage to continue solidifying its role as one of the fundamentals of marital quality.

### FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTION

A satisfaction in marriage is fundamental for personal welfare as well as for social stability. With relationships evolving to become increasingly complex with changes in culture, society, and economic status, identifying determinants of stable and satisfying marital bonds has become the focus of much modern research. Spiritual intelligence is one of these important, less-noticed factors that is highly associated with marital satisfaction. Future research should build on this evidence, limiting the linguistic and cultural biases found in many studies while also utilizing a greater range of databases. It is suggested to conduct a more inclusive and cross-cultural approach to widen the social and cultural diversity of findings, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of how spiritual intelligence influences marital satisfaction across various regions and communities. Further studies could explore demographic variables, such as religious affiliation, economic status, number of children, remarriage status, and age at marriage, to understand how these factors interact with spiritual intelligence in developing marital satisfaction. A longitudinal research approach would be particularly valuable in exploring the dynamic nature of spiritual intelligence over time. This would provide deeper insights into how spiritual intelligence engages with key themes such as stability, wisdom, love, and security throughout different stages of marriage. Examining these links over the marital lifespan could clarify the evolving role of spirituality in achieving relationship satisfaction.

Aside from theoretical developments, future studies should be directed toward creating and implementing activities aimed at improving spiritual intelligence among married couples. Researchers could analyze spirituality-specific programs such as workshops, counseling sessions, or marital aids for their usefulness in increasing marital satisfaction. These activities may be more effective if they are designed for particular stages of the marriage cycle, such as premarital preparation, mid-life relationship crises, and later life companionship, as they would address issues relevant at these specific stages. In addition, future studies should seek to broaden the scope of the impact of spiritual intelligence so that its influence on parenting, career, and emotional well-being, in addition to marital satisfaction, can be assessed. The understanding of spiritual intelligence and its implications would greatly benefit from an interdisciplinary strategy that combines information from psychology, sociology, and cultural studies. Working with policymakers and community leaders would enable them to develop and implement comprehensive programs that embed the promotion of spiritual intelligence as an important aspect of marriage education on the community level. This could mean changing attitudes towards using propounding training exercises on spiritual intelligence at the community level.

### CONCLUSION

This study reviewed 39 papers on the importance of spiritual intelligence in marital satisfaction among married couples to gain insight into how the role of spirituality can play a part in

marriage satisfaction. This study also revealed the current scenarios and trends in spiritual practices and their impacts on marital satisfaction. The number of papers published in this area has been increasing since 2020. This study covers the published papers from different countries across the continents. From the content analysis, four themes were developed: a) stability, b) wisdom, c) love, and d) security. These studies proved that spiritual intelligence practices in marital relationships enhance marital satisfaction through these four themes that have been discussed.

This paper complements some limitations and gaps in the existing research on the importance of spiritual intelligence in marital satisfaction among young married couples. Most studies only focus on religious traditions' role in the age of marriage but seldom touch on its effect on marital satisfaction. This study has some important limitations that should be considered. First, the search was conducted only in the English language. Access to articles in other languages would have increased the breadth of the study and its social and cultural richness. This limitation may have caused us to miss several valuable research studies. Second, we did not search for a comprehensive set of databases, so there might have been important articles in uninvestigated databases that were not included in the current study. Another limitation is that some important data, such as couples' religion, number of children, economic status, age at the time of marriage, and status in terms of remarriage, were not investigated because few articles presented data on those factors. It is possible that information on these parameters would influence the interpretation of our findings. For further studies, it is recommended that the researchers expand this study to more countries and communities.

This research could be a foundation for deeper studies to investigate the importance of spiritual intelligence in different aspects of life satisfaction. Spiritual life sub-scale of spiritual intelligence, and more efficient action should be taken for couple's growth and excellence in improving marriage satisfaction. Finally, it is recommended that given the role of spiritual intelligence in increasing marriage satisfaction, the authorities may consider organizing programs related to nurturing spiritual intelligence at all levels either before or during marriages.

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