



## **CORRELATION BETWEEN PERCEPTION, REGULATION OF OWN EMOTIONS AND MARITAL SATISFACTION**

***R.W.M.S.P.K. Rajapaksha<sup>1\*</sup> and D.D.K.S. Karunanayake<sup>2</sup>***

*<sup>1</sup>Department of Psychology and Counselling, The Open University of Sri Lanka*

*<sup>2</sup>Department of Psychology, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka*

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is a relatively new concept that has gained attention in recent decades. Daniel Goleman, a prominent figure in this field, proposed a model of EI comprising four key categories: perceiving one's own emotions, regulating one's own emotions, understanding others' emotions, and utilizing one's own emotions effectively. This study explores how the perception and regulation of emotions correlate with marital satisfaction. Marital satisfaction is the subjective experience of contentment and fulfilment within a marriage. The primary research question addresses whether there is any correlation between the perception and regulation of emotions and marital satisfaction. The study used a convenient sampling method to gather data from 300 married participants. Data collection was conducted using two main instruments: the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (RDAS) to measure marital satisfaction and the Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Scale (SSREIS) to determine emotional intelligence. Data analysis began with the Shapiro-Wilk test to assess the normality of the data distribution. Since the data were not normally distributed, the Spearman rank correlation was employed to analyze the relationships between variables. The study's findings indicated that there is no significant correlation between the perception and regulation of emotions and marital satisfaction. These results suggest a complex interplay between emotional regulation, perception, and marital satisfaction. Despite the lack of direct correlation found in this study, the importance of emotion regulation and perception remains significant in the context of emotional intelligence and its potential impact on nurturing a fulfilling marital relationship. This study contributes valuable insights into marital satisfaction research, particularly within the Sri Lankan context. It underscores the need for further investigation into the nuanced roles that different aspects of emotional intelligence play in marital relationships.

Keywords: Emotion, Emotional Intelligence, Marital Satisfaction, Perception, Regulation

\*Corresponding Author: [sriparamirajapaksha@gmail.com](mailto:sriparamirajapaksha@gmail.com)



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<sup>1</sup>*Department of Psychology and Counselling, The Open University of Sri Lanka*

<sup>2</sup>*Department of Psychology, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Society is a collection of individuals who interact with one another. It can be defined as groups of people who share the same culture, live in a common territory, and are governed by a common system. According to Calhoun et al., “society is an autonomous grouping of people who inhabit a common territory, have a common culture, and are linked to one another through routinized social interactions and interdependent statuses and roles.” The term 'society' comes from the Latin word “societas,” which means ‘friendly association with others.’ This highlights the importance of society, which plays a crucial role in the betterment of the world.

Within society, the family is the fundamental unit. Families, typically composed of parents and their children, form the building blocks of society. Aristotle emphasized that the family is essential for creating social virtue and forming the state. This small unit significantly influences social development, making it necessary to define what a family is.

Burgess and Locke define family as “a group of persons united by ties of marriage, blood or adoption constituting a single household interacting with each other in their respective social roles of husband and wife, mother and father, brother and sister, creating a common culture.” Marriage, as the beginning of a family, plays a prominent role in this context. The quality of the marital relationship is crucial for the well-being of other family members, particularly children. A strong and satisfying marital relationship leads to a successful family life.

Studying marital relationships is essential, especially within the Sri Lankan context. Many factors influence marital satisfaction, but this study focuses on whether the perception and regulation of emotions correlate with marital satisfaction.

Marriage exists in every society and is defined differently based on social and cultural contexts. Traditionally, marriage has been seen as a union between a man and a woman. Ember et al. in 2006 defined marriage as “a socially approved sexual and economic union, usually between a woman and a man.” Different cultures have their own traditions associated with marriage. For example, in Sinhala Buddhist culture, marriage involves the Poruwa ceremony, a certificate, and the exchange of rings (Jayasiri, 2010).

Anthropologists have broadened the definition of marriage. Miller describes it as “a more or less stable union, usually between two people, who may be, but are not necessarily, co-residential, sexually involved with each other, and procreative with each other.” This definition includes unions that are not necessarily heterosexual.

Marriage can be understood from multiple perspectives: legal, social, biological, economic, and religious. In the past, divorce was seen as a stigma, and there was a strong emphasis on maintaining marriages for a lifetime. However, modern society places less



emphasis on preserving marriages, leading to increased divorce rates in Sri Lanka. Studies have identified factors contributing to divorce, such as economic issues, domestic violence, dowry problems, excessive alcoholism, sexual issues, communication problems, lack of respect, and irresponsibility (Mohlatlole et al, 2018). By addressing these issues, it may be possible to reduce divorce rates, and promote long-lasting marriages. Weigel and Ballard-Reisch, in 1999, highlighted the importance of intimacy, similarity, communication, and equity for long-term marriages. Marital satisfaction is crucial for a long-term marriage.

It can be defined as the attitude a person has towards their marriage (King, 2016) or “an individual’s emotional state of being content with the interactions, experiences, and expectations of his or her married life” (Ahlstrom, 2009). Healthy marital satisfaction is essential for psychological and emotional well-being, leading to overall happiness and a healthy life (Othman et al., 2022). Various factors influence marital satisfaction, including age, duration of marriage, children, economic status, education, and cultural aspects. This study focuses on how a person’s ability to perceive and regulate their own emotions and others' emotions can enhance marital satisfaction.

Emotional intelligence, as defined by Daniel Goleman, is “the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships” (Haefliger, 2003). Salovey and Mayer describe emotional intelligence as a person’s capacity to perceive and use emotions to facilitate thought, understand emotions, and regulate emotions to promote personal growth.

The ability model of emotional intelligence, proposed by Peter Salovey and John Mayer, includes the following components:

1. Emotional Perception: The ability to recognize and understand one’s own emotions and those of others. This includes interpreting facial expressions, tone of voice, and cultural artifacts (Tarasuik et al., 2009).
2. Use of Emotions: The ability to use emotions appropriately in decision-making and problem-solving. This involves altering cognitive feelings based on the emotions being experienced (Neubauer et al., 2005).
3. Understanding Emotions: The ability to comprehend not only what others or oneself are feeling but also the reasons behind those emotions. This requires labeling emotions accurately and maintaining empathy towards others (Neubauer et al., 2005).
4. Managing Emotions: The ability to regulate one’s own emotions and respond appropriately to the emotions of others. This helps maintain good interpersonal relationships and can enhance and repair the moods of others (Neubauer et al., 2005).

## **Research Problem**

The present study examined whether there is a correlation between the perception and regulation of emotions and marital satisfaction.

## **Research Objectives**



1. To examine if there is a correlation between the perception of one's own emotions and marital satisfaction.
2. To examine if there is a correlation between emotional regulation and marital satisfaction.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

The researcher used a cross-sectional survey method to conduct this study. This research utilized quantitative data gathering methods to collect and analyze the data.

### **Sample and Sampling**

The population of this study included married individuals. According to the 2019 census data, out of 163,378 married individuals in Sri Lanka (Department of Census and Statistics, 2019), 300 married individuals were selected as a sample using convenience sampling. Due to the crisis period in Sri Lanka during data collection, the sample had to be selected through this method.

### **Description of Instruments**

The instruments used in this study supported the researcher in collecting data on the perception and regulation of emotions, and marital satisfaction. Data were collected using a questionnaire that included basic demographic information and two scales: the Schutte Emotional Intelligence Scale and the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale, which measure emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction, respectively.

### **Data Collection**

To conduct this study, the researcher used a demographic questionnaire and two scales to collect data. A Google Form was created for this purpose, and data were collected through this online platform.

### **Data Analysis**

The collected data were analyzed using SPSS. First, the normality of the data was tested using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. Since the results indicated that the data were not normally distributed, non-parametric tests were used for the analysis.



**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Correlation between Perception of Own Emotions and Marital Satisfaction**

*Correlations*

			Perception	Satisfaction
Spearman's rho	Perception	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.053
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.357
		N	300	300
	Satisfaction	Correlation Coefficient	.053	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.357	.
		N	300	300

*Table 1 Correlation between Perception of Emotions and Marital Satisfaction*

A Spearman’s rank-order correlation was processed to assess if there is a relationship between the perception of one’s own emotions as a part of emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction. The results indicated in table (1) could be interpreted as no significant relationship exists between Perception of Emotions and Marital Satisfaction  $r(300) = .053$ ,  $p=.357$  which accepts the null hypothesis as there is no significant relationship between perception and marital satisfaction.

**Correlation between Regulation of Own Emotions and Marital Satisfaction**

*Correlations*

			Managing	Satisfaction
Spearman's rho	Managing	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.065
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.261
		N	300	300
	Satisfaction	Correlation Coefficient	.065	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.261	.
		N	300	300

*Table 2 Correlation between Regulation of Emotions and Marital Satisfaction*

A Spearman’s rank-order correlation was processed to assess whether there is a relationship between managing own emotions as a part of emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction. The results indicated in the table (2) could be interpreted as no significant relationship between managing own emotions and marital satisfaction  $r(300) = .065$ ,  $p=.261$ . This accepts the null hypothesis as there is no significant relationship between managing own emotions and marital satisfaction.

The results of the current study revealed that there is no significant relationship between the perception of one's own emotions and marital satisfaction. This suggests that while emotional intelligence as a whole may impact marital satisfaction, the specific factor of perceiving one's own emotions does not have a direct influence. In other words, how well a person reads or interprets their own emotions does not significantly affect their marital satisfaction. Although limited literature specifically addresses the perception of one's own



emotions and marital satisfaction, several studies have examined the broader relationship between emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction.

The researcher posits that cultural factors may explain these findings. According to Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory, collectivism reflects a societal focus on the goals and well-being of the group, with self-identity defined by "We" rather than "I." In collectivist cultures, such as Sri Lanka, there is a greater emphasis on interpersonal relationships, loyalty, and social harmony. Individuals in these societies often prioritize the emotions and needs of others over their own, reinforcing the importance of maintaining group cohesion and collective well-being (Zemojtel-Piotrowska & Piotrowski, 2023). Therefore, factors involving other individuals may play a more significant role in marital satisfaction than the perception of one's own emotions. In such a culture, the values placed on collective well-being and interpersonal harmony may overshadow the importance of self-perception of emotions.

Marital satisfaction is a complex construct influenced by various factors, including communication, conflict resolution, and shared values. These factors might substantially impact on marital satisfaction more than the perception of one's own emotions. Thus, despite the current study's findings, broader aspects of emotional intelligence and interpersonal dynamics may still play crucial roles in marital satisfaction.

Furthermore, the study found no significant relationship between managing one's own emotions, another aspect of emotional intelligence, and marital satisfaction. This contrasts with much research that indicates a positive and significant relationship between emotional regulation and marital satisfaction. The contextual factors, such as the nature of the culture and society, might alter the impact of emotional regulation on marital satisfaction. In Sri Lanka's collectivistic culture, the emphasis on regulating others' emotions over one's own emotional management may affect marital satisfaction differently. This cultural emphasis on collective emotional well-being might explain why personal emotional management did not show significantly correlate with marital satisfaction in this study.

#### **CONCLUSIONS/ RECOMMENDATIONS**

In conclusion, this research delved into the intricate dynamics of the "Impact of Perception and Regulation of Emotions on Marital Satisfaction" using a survey methodology. The Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale and Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test, collected comprehensive data to analyze the various facets of emotional intelligence within the context of marital satisfaction. However, the findings of this study revealed that neither the perception nor the regulation of one's own emotions exhibited a significant correlation with marital satisfaction. Marital satisfaction is a broad concept. Future researchers are encouraged to include all aspects of emotional intelligence in their studies, such as understanding others' emotions and using emotions effectively.

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