



The Influence of Religiosity and Love on Marital Satisfaction Among Adult Wives

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Abstract

Marital satisfaction is an important indicator of family quality, particularly among adult wives. This study aims to examine the influence of religiosity and love on marital satisfaction, as well as the mediating role of love in the relationship between religiosity and marital satisfaction. This research employed a quantitative approach using covariance-based Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Data were collected using the ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale, the Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRS-15), and the Triangular Love Scale, all of which demonstrated good validity and reliability. The findings revealed that religiosity has a positive and significant effect on both love and marital satisfaction. In addition, love was found to have a positive and significant effect on marital satisfaction. The overall model indicated that religiosity and love jointly contribute strongly to marital satisfaction. Furthermore, the mediation analysis confirmed that love plays a significant role in mediating the relationship between religiosity and marital satisfaction. These findings highlight the importance of religiosity in enhancing love, which in turn strengthens marital satisfaction.

Keywords: Love, Marital Satisfaction, Religiosity, Adult Wives.

INTRODUCTION

Marriage in Islam holds a noble position as an act of worship and a sacred covenant (*mītsāqan ghalīẓan*) that encompasses moral, spiritual, and social responsibilities. The Qur'an emphasizes that the ultimate purpose of marriage is the realization of *sakinah*, *mawaddah*, and *rahmah*, which form the foundation of a harmonious and fulfilling family life (Q.S. Ar-Rūm [30]: 21). In this context, marital satisfaction represents a key indicator of both psychological and spiritual well-being within the family system.

From a psychological perspective, marital satisfaction reflects individuals' subjective evaluation of their marital relationship, including feelings of fulfillment, emotional security, and relational harmony (Fowers & Olson, 1993; Fincham & Beach, 2010). Previous studies have identified multiple determinants of marital satisfaction, such as communication quality, emotional intimacy, commitment, role balance, and religiosity (Karney & Bradbury, 2020). In highly religious societies such as Indonesia, religiosity is often regarded as a central pillar in maintaining marital harmony, as it provides a framework of meaning, moral guidance, and constructive coping strategies in dealing with marital stressors (Mahoney, 2010).

Empirical evidence suggests that higher levels of religiosity are generally associated with greater marital satisfaction, as religious values promote empathy, patience, responsibility, and commitment between spouses (Fincham et al., 2019). However, religiosity alone does not automatically guarantee marital happiness. Several studies indicate that ritualistic or externally oriented religiosity, when not accompanied by internalized spirituality and relational skills, may coexist with unresolved emotional conflicts and relational distress (Markman & Rhoades, 2012; Lichter & Carmalt, 2009). This phenomenon highlights a “religious paradox,” in which religiosity can function both as a source of meaning and as a potential source of relational tension if applied rigidly or normatively.

In addition to religiosity, love constitutes a fundamental component of marital satisfaction. According to Sternberg’s Triangular Theory of Love (1986), love consists of intimacy, passion, and commitment, and the balance of these components is crucial for marital stability and satisfaction. Empirical studies have consistently shown that strong emotional intimacy and commitment are significant predictors of marital satisfaction (Acker & Davis, 1992; Hatfield & Rapson, 2011). Nevertheless, love that is not supported by mature spiritual values may become vulnerable to emotional exhaustion and conflict, particularly under conditions of economic pressure or role imbalance (Wang & Amato, 2019).

Marital satisfaction is also closely related to psychosocial developmental stages. Erikson’s theory of psychosocial development posits that early adulthood is characterized by the crisis of intimacy versus isolation, in which individuals are challenged to form deep, committed, and emotionally secure relationships (Erikson, 1963). For adult women, marriage often becomes the primary context for fulfilling emotional attachment needs, personal meaning, and relational security. Failure to achieve emotional intimacy at this stage may result in loneliness, dissatisfaction, and relational distress.

Despite increasing levels of religious engagement in Indonesian society, national data indicate a persistent rise in divorce rates, particularly among couples in early and middle adulthood (BPS, 2023; Supreme Court of Indonesia, 2024). Many divorces are attributed to chronic conflict, emotional dissatisfaction, and lack of harmony, suggesting that external religiosity and maturity of age do not necessarily translate into healthy emotional relationships. Qualitative observations further reveal that women in religious communities may experience internal conflicts between religious values, emotional needs, and marital realities.

Although prior studies have examined religiosity and love as separate predictors of marital satisfaction, research that simultaneously investigates both

variables particularly with love as a mediating mechanism remains limited. Moreover, few studies focus specifically on adult women within religious communities, where spiritual expectations and emotional demands often intersect. This gap underscores the need for a more integrative model that explains how religiosity and love jointly influence marital satisfaction. Therefore, this study aims to examine the influence of religiosity and love on marital satisfaction among adult women, as well as to test the mediating role of love in the relationship between religiosity and marital satisfaction. By integrating psychological and Islamic perspectives, this study is expected to contribute to the literature on family psychology and provide practical insights for strengthening marital well-being through balanced spiritual and emotional development.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a quantitative approach with a correlational design and a mediation causal model to examine the structural relationships among religiosity, love, and marital satisfaction, as well as the mediating role of love. Data analysis was conducted using covariance-based Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with LISREL version 8.80. The participants consisted of 118 married adult women aged 20–40 years who had been living with their husbands for at least one year. A non-probability purposive sampling technique was applied, with inclusion criteria including Indonesian citizenship, legally married status, and not being in a long-distance marital relationship. Data were collected using three Likert-type scales: the ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale, the Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRS-15), and the Triangular Love Scale, all of which had been adapted into Indonesian.

Data collection was conducted online through Google Forms distributed via WhatsApp, preceded by informed consent explaining the purpose of the study, confidentiality, and voluntary participation. Data were then cleaned to ensure completeness and suitability with the research criteria. Validity testing was conducted using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), while reliability was assessed using Construct Reliability (CR), with all instruments meeting acceptable standards. Data analysis included testing the measurement and structural models, and the mediating role of love was examined using the Sobel test.

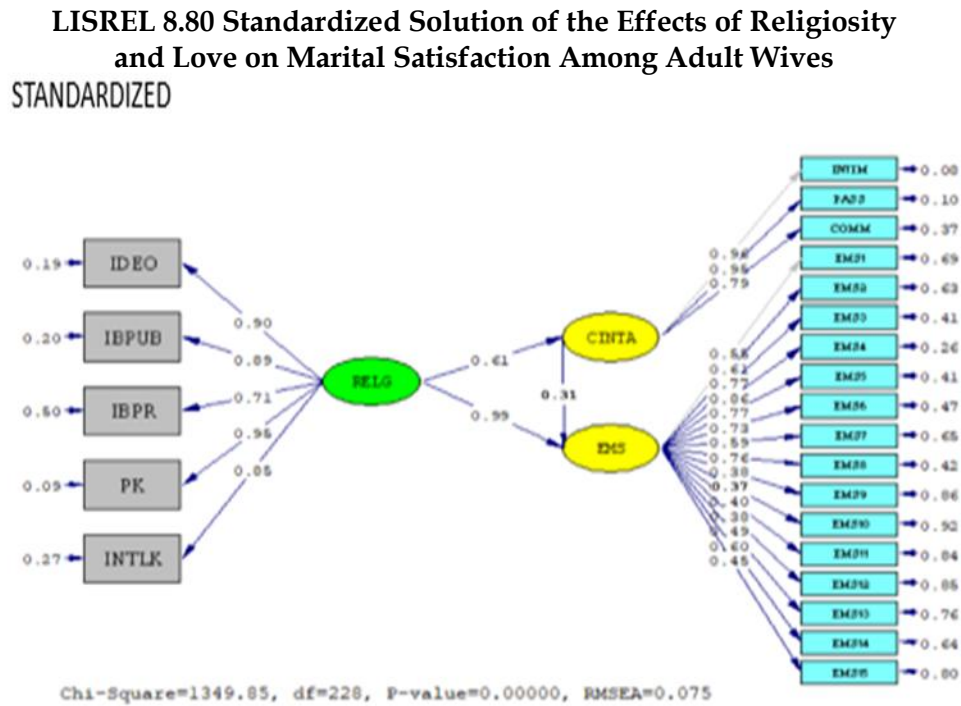
RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Structural Model and Goodness of Fit

The structural model was analyzed using covariance-based Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with LISREL 8.80. The standardized solution of the final model is presented in Figure 1. The model demonstrated an acceptable fit to the data, with a chi-square value of $\chi^2 = 1349.85$ ($df = 228$, $p < .001$) and RMSEA = 0.075, indicating a reasonable approximation of the population covariance matrix. The

coefficient of determination (R^2) for marital satisfaction was 0.97, indicating that religiosity and love jointly explained 97% of the variance in marital satisfaction among adult wives. This suggests a very strong explanatory power of the proposed model.

Figure 1



Source: Primary Data, 2026

Direct Effects

The results of the t-value tests indicated that all hypothesized direct paths in the model were positive and statistically significant, as all t-statistics exceeded the critical value of 1.96 at the 5% significance level. First, religiosity had a positive and significant effect on love (REL → LOVE), with a t-value of 6.86. This result indicates that higher levels of religiosity are associated with higher levels of perceived love within marriage. Second, love showed a positive and significant effect on marital satisfaction (LOVE → MS), with a t-value of 3.29. This finding confirms that love plays a crucial role in enhancing marital satisfaction. Third, religiosity also had a direct positive and significant effect on marital satisfaction (REL → MS), with a t-value of 6.32, suggesting that religiosity independently contributes to marital satisfaction.

Indirect Effects

The indirect effect of religiosity on marital satisfaction through love was also examined. The results showed that religiosity significantly influenced love ($t = 6.86 > 1.96$), and love significantly influenced marital satisfaction ($t = 3.29 > 1.96$), indicating a mediating mechanism. The Sobel test further confirmed the

significance of the mediation effect, yielding a Sobel statistic of 2.97 with a p-value of 0.003. Since the p-value was below 0.05 and the test statistic exceeded the critical value of 1.96, the indirect effect was statistically significant. These findings indicate that love functions as a partial mediator in the relationship between religiosity and marital satisfaction among adult wives.

Discussion

The present study demonstrates that religiosity significantly influences marital satisfaction both directly and indirectly through love. However, the central contribution of this study lies in identifying love as an affective mechanism that strengthens the relationship between religiosity and marital satisfaction among adult wives. From a psychological perspective, religiosity provides a system of meaning, moral orientation, and behavioral guidelines that shape how individuals interpret marital roles, commitment, and relational challenges. For adult wives, who are typically in a developmental phase characterized by emotional maturity, role consolidation, and long-term relational evaluation, religiosity serves as an internal resource that promotes patience, acceptance, and resilience within marriage. Nevertheless, the findings indicate that religiosity alone is not sufficient to fully explain marital satisfaction. The mediating role of love suggests that religious values must be emotionally internalized and relationally expressed to exert their optimal impact. Love translates abstract religious values into concrete relational behaviors such as empathy, emotional warmth, sacrifice, and sustained commitment.

These findings are consistent with research in relationship psychology and spirituality, which emphasizes that the positive effects of religiosity on marital quality are stronger when accompanied by emotional closeness and healthy affectional bonds (Mahoney, 2020). Love enables spouses to interpret religious teachings in a more relational and compassionate manner, shifting religious practice from mere ritual compliance to relational engagement. From the perspective of Islamic psychology, the findings align strongly with the thought of Imam Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah. Ibn Qayyim asserted that true religiosity (*iman*) must give rise to *mahabbah* (love), as the heart cannot attain tranquility without love grounded in faith. He emphasized that love rooted in faith (*mahabbah fillah*) produces emotional balance, patience, and mercy in interpersonal relationships, including marriage.

In the context of adult wives, Ibn Qayyim's framework suggests that religiosity that is deeply internalized will foster a form of love that is not dependent solely on external conditions or spousal behavior. Instead, it is anchored in spiritual meaning, allowing wives to regulate emotions more effectively, respond to marital difficulties with wisdom, and maintain relational harmony. This explains why individuals with similar levels of religiosity may experience

different levels of marital satisfaction depending on the extent to which love is emotionally present and expressed.

Furthermore, Ibn Qayyim warned that excessive emotional dependence on created beings without grounding in faith may lead to disappointment and emotional distress. The current findings support this view, as religiosity without the mediation of love may remain cognitive or normative, whereas religiosity accompanied by love fosters adaptive communication, constructive conflict resolution, and stable long-term commitment. Overall, this study confirms that marital satisfaction among adult wives is not determined by spiritual or affective factors in isolation, but by the dynamic interaction between religiosity and love. Love functions as a significant mediating variable that allows religious values to be embodied in daily relational experiences. This integrated perspective strengthens the conceptual model of the study and contributes to both contemporary marital psychology and Islamic psychological scholarship.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to examine the effects of religiosity and love on marital satisfaction among adult wives, as well as the mediating role of love. The findings indicate that religiosity and love are positively associated with marital satisfaction, both directly and indirectly, with love acting as a partial mediator. Religiosity was found to enhance love by fostering values such as patience, empathy, and commitment, which support emotional closeness within marriage. In turn, love significantly contributes to marital satisfaction by strengthening intimacy, affection, and resilience in facing relational challenges. Additionally, religiosity directly influences marital satisfaction by promoting shared meaning, commitment, and constructive conflict resolution. However, its impact may vary depending on individual and contextual factors. The mediation analysis shows that religiosity also affects marital satisfaction indirectly through love, suggesting that religious values become more meaningful when expressed through emotional and relational processes. From an Islamic psychology perspective, these findings emphasize that true religiosity should be reflected in faith-based love, which fosters harmonious marital relationships characterized by emotional warmth and mutual commitment.

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