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## Research Paper

The role of the relationship with the four existential domains (God, self, others and nature) in the quality of marriage; Presenting a causal model with a mediating role of subjective well-being



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### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** The aim of present study was to determine the predictors of quality of marriage and also test the mediating role of subjective well-being in the relationship between four existential domains and quality of marriage.

**Methods:** In terms of purpose, this study was an applied research and used structural equation modeling. The statistical population of research included all married people of Kermanshah city in 1400. The sample consisted of 441 married men and women who were selected by convenience random sampling method and questionnaires were completed by electronic survey method. Dehshiri Spiritual well-being Scale, Norton Quality of marriage Index and Warwick-Edinburgh subjective well-being Scale were used to collect data. SPSS and AMOS software version 26 were used to analyze the data and the data were analyzed using the structural equation model method.

**Results:** The results of structural equation showed that relationship with self and relationship with nature have a significant relationship, both directly and indirectly, with the quality of marriage. subjective well-being has only directly and relationship with God only indirectly related to the quality of marriage, so that relationship with God through subjective well-being has a significant relationship with quality of marriage.

**Conclusion:** The results of the research showed that a good relationship with God leads in good relationships with self and nature, and results of these good relationships strengthen people's subjective well-being, and this in turn increases the quality of marriage. As we know, one of the dimensions of consultants' work is prevention. Therefore, it is recommended that counselors and psychologists provide the necessary training on establishing and enriching the four existential relationships to clients who seek premarital counseling or in individual counseling to clients. Counselors and psychotherapists in evaluating the problems of couples, as one of the variables affecting marital relationships, should also consider the extent of the four existential relationships and try to solve the problems of couples, to enrich these relationships.

## 1. Introduction

The existential approach of human nature is infinite, flexible and has a wide range of experiences. This

approach claims that there is no fixed self and that we are constantly in the process of transforming (Jordan,

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2008). Jordan (2008) said that Heidegger believed that people were not just isolated people living in the world, rather, they are connected to the world. In fact, one of the most important issues in the existential tradition is the issue of life - being in the world and clarifying the meaning of being alive (Binswanger, 1963; Frankl, 1963; Yalom, 1980; Deurzen, 2007). Being in the world is a complex concept of the German philosopher Martin Heidegger that refers to the understanding of human existence. If we want to understand the basic aspects of the meaning of being alive, we will have to consider people and their openness to the world, because we as human beings must be understood in the light of our experiences (Rendtorff, 2004). In the meantime, Heidegger (1957) clearly stated that human beings have complex and multiple relationships in the world. In his book, Van Deurzen (2015) points out that in general, existential dimensions are described in three dimensions: physical, social and personal, which are usually rooted in the German words Umwelt or the world of objects, Mitwelt or the interpersonal world, and Eigenwelt or the intrapersonal world (Binswanger, 1946; Boss, 1963). Authors such as Buber (1923), Jaspers (1931, 1951) and Tillich (1952) also consider a fourth dimension: The spiritual dimension or the transcendental world to which three dimensions must be added and clarified (Deurzen-Smith, 1984).

The world of objects or the world around us describes the natural world with its physical and biological dimensions; Where one is likely to behave instinctively. The interpersonal world, or being a world, describes the public world with the social dimension of human relationships and interactions, where one possibly behaves in a culturally learned manner. The inner world or intrapersonal world describes the private world with the psychological dimension of personal and intimate experience, where one is most likely to feel identity and ownership. This is where we come into close contact with ourselves, and the question arises, "Who are we?" I become an actor connected to me and gradually develop a sense of personal ego. The transcendental world or the sublime world describes the ideal world with the spiritual and philosophical dimension of beliefs, goals, desires and inspirations; Where we connect to the ideas that matter to us. Everyone creates a worldview and lives according to it. In this dimension, attention is paid to the values that we know to be eternal and most important. This is where we give meaning to our being (Van Deurzen, 2015:122).

In view of the above, as it turns out, the perspective of this research stems from the existential approach. Jordan (2008) stated that the existential approach in

psychotherapy is most closely related to positive psychology. On the other hand, Eryilmaza (2015) stated that subjective well-being is the most important part of positive psychology that has been studied by many researchers. subjective well-being emerged in the late 1950s in search of useful quality of life indicators to monitor social change and improve social policies (Land, 1975). The term was first coined by Diener (1984). subjective well-being refers to the cognitive and emotional components of human health (Diener, 1984, 2000). The cognitive component of subjective well-being is often regarded as the evaluation of life; It means thinking about whether life is going well. The emotional component also includes positive and negative emotion in which more positive emotion and less negative emotion indicate higher subjective well-being (Tay, Myers, & Diener, 2014). According to Abdel-Khalek and Lester (2013), subjective well-being is a positive aspect of mental health. The World Health Organization has noted that subjective well-being in the research community is considered an indicator of quality of life (Weinberg, Bennett & Cummins, 2016). subjective well-being reflects a person's positive thoughts and feelings, at the emotional level, people with high subjective well-being have positive emotions and therefore have a positive evaluation of life events. On the other hand, people with low subjective well-being evaluate situations and events as unfavorable, so they experience undesirable emotions such as depression, anxiety, and aggression (Shah Siah et al., 2011; Quoted from Ashian, 2013). Undoubtedly, all these experiences are effective in the married life of the couple. A person who evaluates life more generally positively and has higher self-esteem evaluates intimate relationships and marriage positively (Todorovic, 2005; Vidanovic, Todorovic, Hedrih, 2006; Matejevic and Todorovic, 2012). Public satisfaction with life as one of the components of subjective well-being is a personal component that can be effective in marital satisfaction (Cudina-Obradovic and Obradovic, 2006). As far as we know, many researches have been done on the subject of marital life. Spanier and Lewis (1980) argue that one of the most important developments in the marital research in the seventies is the clear identification that the quality of marriage is a multidimensional phenomenon. Satisfaction with the relationship is the degree to which a person feels in his or her intimate relationship. As part of relationship satisfaction, the quality of marriage is introduced as an overall assessment of marriage in which factors such as different characteristics of marriage, attitudes, behaviors, and communication patterns are used (Fincham and Bradbury, 1987; quoted by

Maroufizadeh et al., 2019). Slatcher (2010) and Carr et al. (2014) stated that in order to examine the quality of marriage, some characteristics of the relationship such as relationship satisfaction, type of attitude towards the partner, and low levels of aggression and hostility can be examined. Finally, Yakleh et al. (2018) said that the quality of marriage is a subjective assessment of a couple's relationship, which includes concepts such as marital happiness, well-being, dissatisfaction, compatibility, and marital satisfaction. Carr et al. (2014) and Liu & Waite (2014) have shown that the quality of marriage is associated with health and well-being problems, feelings of happiness, economic factors, psychological effects, and general aspects of quality of life. According to Wolcott & Hughes (1999), the low quality of marriage causes couples, if not all, to lose many benefits of a healthy marriage. Problems in relationships and marital decline have been reported to lead in severe depression and anxiety (Kurdek, 1998) and suicide, and have been involved in many family homicides (Lefrancois, 1993). In addition, staying in a low-quality, unsatisfactory marriage seems to increase psychological distress and even significantly affect public health and cause social problems (Hawkins & Booth, 2005).

However, there is evidence of chronic divorce rates around the world that high quality of marriage is not easily possible (Rosen-Grandon, Myers & Hattie, 2004) and understanding the variables affecting it is of particular importance, as Abd Manaf (2009) in his qualitative research among Malaysian Muslims found that they include four factors of religious belief system, communication and conflict management, social network and support resources and personal characteristics and relationship virtues in their good marriage. Also, Tošić Radev, Bogdanovic and Andelkovic (2019) in their research entitled "What determines the quality of marriage?" concluded that neurosis, duration of marriage, doubts about partner loyalty, and partner dissatisfaction with the division of household responsibilities negatively affect marital quality. Xu and Zhao (2020) in a study entitled the relationship between self-homogeneity and the quality of marriage of working women, concluded that the higher the personality match, the higher the quality of marriage.

Therefore, considering the need to maintain and strengthen the foundation of the family and marital relations, also considering the systematic research gap

and scientific methodology in research texts, which has studied at the factors affecting the quality of marriage from an existential point of view, the aim of the present study was to investigate the role of the four existential relationships including relationship with God, self, others and nature in the quality of couples' marriages according to the mediating role of subjective well-being, and to answer the fundamental question of whether subjective well-being can play a mediating role in the relationship between the four existential relations and the quality of marriage.

## 2. Materials and Methods

This descriptive research was done by structural equation modeling method. The statistical population of the study included all married people living in Kermanshah in 1400 who were selected by available sampling method. Considering that the total sample size in structural equations based on the rule (Bentler and Chu, 1984; quoted by Hooman, 2009) for each parameter is at least 5 subjects (Bashlideh, 2015), also, the minimum sample size is 200 people, therefore, according to the probability of fall and estimation of 80 free parameters in the proposed model, 441 people were selected to participate in the study. To reduce the error variances, sampling was attempted in a wide area of the city and among all classes, occupations and neighborhoods. Questionnaires were prepared electronically with special emphasis on ethical considerations and confidentiality of answers, then their links were widely placed in all channels of family, student, office and guild social networks, and people voluntarily entered the relevant web page and responded to the items. Due to the electronic nature of the questionnaires, there was no drop due to the distortion of the questionnaires.

**Scales Spiritual Well-being Questionnaire:** This questionnaire was developed by Dehshiri et al. (2013), based on the model proposed by the National Association of Inter-religions (1975) among students of Tehran universities. The questionnaire consists of 40 items on a 5-point Likert scale from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree, and measures 4 subscales of communication with God, communication with self, communication with nature, and communication with others. Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the whole questionnaire was 0.94 and the alpha coefficients of its subscales were 0.93, 0.92, 0.91 and 0.85, respectively. Also, the reliability coefficient of the total retest of the questionnaire was 0.86 and its subscales were 0.81, 0.89, 0.81 and 0.80, respectively. The convergence validity coefficient of this questionnaire with the

transcendent well-being questionnaire was 0.62, with the religious well-being scale was 0.43 and with the existential well-being scale was 0.66 and its divergent validity coefficient with the mental disorder scale was -0.72 (Dehshiri et al., 2013). In the present study, the reliability of the scale Cronbach's alpha was reported 0/96.

**Quality of Marriage Index (QMI):** This questionnaire was developed in 1983 by Norton. This scale is a 6-item tool that measures marital quality using general terms (like we have a good marriage). In the first 5 questions, the subject expresses his/her degree of agreement in the range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The sixth question is a general question that the subject expresses his/her degree of agreement in the range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 10 (strongly agree). Fincham, Paleari and Regalia (2002) reported the reliability of this questionnaire for both men and women using Cronbach's alpha method 0.94. Khojasteh Mehr, Karaei and Rajabi translated and used this questionnaire in 2010. In their study, the construct validity coefficient of this questionnaire was calculated by associating its questions with 10 questions related to the marital satisfaction variable of the Enrich Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire, 0.77 (significance level 0.001). Reliability coefficient was calculated by Cronbach's alpha method of 0.94 (Khojasteh mehr et al., 2010). In the present study, the reliability of the scale Cronbach's alpha was reported 0/97.

**Warwick-Edinburgh subjective Well-Being Scale (WEMWBS):** This scale was compiled in 2007 by Tenant et al., Which contains 14 items in the 5 Likert scale (1 = not at all up to 5 = all the time). The range of scores varies from 14 to 70, and higher scores indicate a higher level of psychological well-being. Rajabi (2012) in a study entitled Validity of the Persian version of the subjective Well-Being Scale in Cancer Patients, translated this questionnaire into Persian, and then he received the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of this scale for the student sample of 0.89 and for the community 0.91 and the retest reliability coefficient of 0.83. The correlation of the total score

with the individual items of this instrument was calculated from 0.52 to 0.80 (for student sample) and 0.51 to 0.75 (normal sample) and simultaneous validity coefficients of Warwick-Edinburgh (2007) subjective well-being with general health scale 0.43, with psychological well-being 0.74, with short form of happiness depression 0.73, with 5 items of global health 0.77, with emotional intelligence questionnaire 0/48 and with the subscale of life satisfaction was calculated to be 0.53. Swart, Kortekaas and Aleman (2009) reported a correlation between the 14-item scale and the 7-item edition of the Warwick Edinburgh psychological well-being scale 0/95. Clark (2010) also found the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of this scale to be 0/87, and the correlation of the total score with each of the items was 0/20 up to 0/80, the retest reliability was 0/66, the correlation coefficients of the subjective well-being scale with other scales such as psychological well-being was 0/59, the short form of the mental health continuum showed 0/65, the global health well-being index 0/57, the 12-item general health questionnaire -0/40, and also showed the suitability of the one-factor model. In the present study, the reliability of the scale Cronbach's alpha was reported 0/95.

### 3. Results

Some of the demographic characteristics of the participants were as follows: The average age of participants was 35.41 years and the minimum was 17 and the maximum was 62; The number of women was 299 (67.8%) and the number of men was 142 (32.2%); marriage period for 56 people was under one year (12.7%), 86 people 1 to 5 years (19.5%), 86 people 5 to 10 years (19.5%) and 213 people more than 10 years (48%). 308 people (69.8%) had children and 133 people (30.2%) had no children. Education level for 31 people was (7%) undergraduate, 96 people (21.8%) diploma, 27 people (6.1%) postgraduate, 188 people (42.6%) bachelor, 87 people (19.7%) had a master's degree and 12 (2.7%) had a doctorate; 170 (38.5%) were housewives, 193 (43.8%) were employees, 70 (15.9%) were non-government and 8 (1.8%) were unemployed.

**Table 1. Model fit indices**

CMIN/DF	df	GFI	IFI	CFI	TLI	RMSEA
2.76	1695	0.72	0.86	0.86	0.85	0.064

The results of Table 2 show that the model does not have a good fit and needs to apply correction indicators. Therefore, the original model was modified; in this way, the variable of relationship with God as an exogenous variable and the variables of

relationship with self, nature and others along with subjective well-being were designed as endogenous variables (mediators). The image view of the modified model is reported in Figure 1.

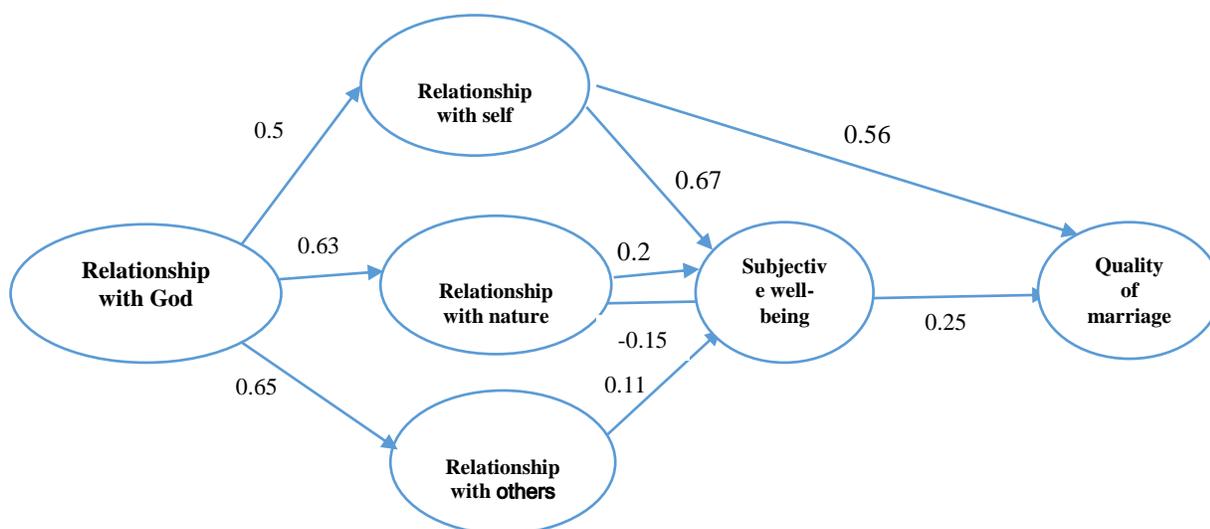


Figure 1. Image view of the modified model

In the recent model, 7 subscales of the relationship with God were defined as the indicator variable for the latent variable of relationship with God, 8 items from the subscale of relationship with self as an indicator of latent variable of relationship with self, 10 items of subscale of relationship with others as indicator of latent variable of relationship with others, 9 items of subscale of relationship with nature as indicator of latent variable of relationship with nature, and 14 items of Edinburgh well-being tools were identified as marker variables of the latent variable of subjective

well-being and 6 items of marriage quality tools were determined as indicators for the latent variable of quality of marriage. Marker variables that have a coefficient of not less than 0.4 were also entered into the analysis. Therefore, items 35 and 38 were removed from the relationship with God, item 10 was removed from the relationship with nature, item 11 was removed from the relationship with oneself, and items 1 and 5 were removed from the relationship with others.

Table 2. Model fit indices

CMIN/DF	df	GFI	IFI	CFI	TLI	RMSEA
2.29	1408	0.78	0.91	0.9	0.9	0.055

The results of this table show that all fit indices except GFI have reached an acceptable level and therefore the

model has a good fit. Based on this, the direct and indirect path coefficients can be considered.

Table 3. Direct coefficient of the final model

	Non-standard estimates	standard estimates	The standard error	Critical ratio	Significance level
relationship with God → relationship with self	0.53	0.5	0.06	9.38	0.001
relationship with God → relationship with others	0.54	0.65	0.05	11.87	0.001
relationship with God → relationship with nature	0.58	0.63	0.05	10.99	0.001
relationship with God → Quality of marriage	-0.11	0.04	0.15	-0.7	0.5
relationship with God → subjective well-being	-0.12	0.03	0.06	-1.94	0.053
relationship with self → subjective well-being	0.73	0.67	0.06	11.72	0.001
relationship with others → subjective well-being	0.16	0.11	0.09	1.79	0.07
relationship with nature → subjective well-being	0.25	0.2	0.05	4.94	0.001
relationship with self → quality of marriage	1.44	0.56	0.16	8.98	0.001

	Non-standard estimates	standard estimates	The standard error	Critical ratio	Significance level
relationship with others → quality of marriage	0.06	0.03	0.19	0.33	0.74
relationship with nature → quality of marriage	-0.43	-0.15	0.12	-3.56	0.001
subjective well-being → quality of marriage	0.59	0.25	0.15	4.07	0.001

The results of Table 4 show that the coefficients of the direct path of the relationship with God to the relationship with the self ( $P < 0.001$ ;  $\beta = 0.5$ ); relationship with God to the relationship with others ( $P < 0.001$ ;  $\beta = 0.65$ ); relationship with God to the relationship with nature ( $P < 0.001$ ;  $\beta = 0.63$ ); relationship with self to subjective well-being ( $P < 0.001$ ;  $\beta = 0.67$ ); relationship with nature to subjective well-being ( $P < 0.001$ ;  $\beta = 0.2$ ); relationship with self to marriage quality ( $P < 0.001$ ;  $\beta = 0.56$ ); relationship with nature to the quality of marriage ( $P < 0.001$ ;  $\beta = -0.15$ ); subjective well-being to the quality of marriage ( $P < 0.001$ ;  $\beta = 0.25$ ) became significant,

and indirect path coefficients of relationship with others to the quality of marriage ( $P < 0.74$ ;  $\beta = 0.03$ ); relationship with others to subjective well-being ( $P < 0.07$ ;  $\beta = 0.11$ ); relationship with God to subjective well-being ( $P < 0.053$ ;  $\beta = 0.03$ ); relationship with God to the quality of marriage ( $P < 0.5$ ;  $\beta = 0.04$ ) became non-significant. It should be noted that since the variable of relationship with others could not establish a significant relationship with the two variables of subjective well-being and quality of marriage, so it cannot act as a mediating variable and will be removed from the structure of the final model.

**Table 4. Significance test of indirect effect by bootstrap method**

Indirect path			Standard estimate	High limit	Low limit	Significance level
Relationship with God →	Relationship with self and nature →	subjective well-being	0.46	0.53	0.38	0.001
Relationship with God →	Relationship with self and nature and subjective well-being →	Quality of marriage	0.3	0.38	0.22	0.001
Relationship with nature →	Subjective well-being →	Quality of marriage	0.05	0.08	0.02	0.005
Relationship with self →	Subjective well-being →	Quality of marriage	0.17	0.29	0.08	0.005

As shown in Table 5, indirect paths of relationship with God to subjective well-being through mediation of relationship with self and relationship with nature ( $P < 0.001$ ;  $\beta = 0.46$ ); relationship with God to the quality of marriage through mediation of relationship with self, relationship with nature and subjective well-being to the quality of marriage ( $P < 0.001$ ;  $\beta = 0.3$ ); relationship with nature to the quality of marriage mediated by subjective well-being ( $P < 0.005$ ;  $\beta = 0.05$ ); relationship with self and quality of marriage mediated by subjective well-being ( $P < 0.005$ ;  $\beta = 0.17$ ) became significant. This model was finally able to explain 0.53 variance of marriage quality.

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

The results of data analysis showed that relationship with self and relationship with nature have a direct and indirect relationship with the quality of marriage. subjective well-being is only directly and

communication with God is only indirectly related to the quality of marriage, so that the relationship with God through two stages of mediation of dual relationships (relationship with self and nature) and then subjective well-being have significant relationships with the quality of marriage. As direct and indirect relationships are shown in the above tables, in this section, each significant direct and indirect paths of the model are discussed. There is a significant causal relationship between relationship with God and relationship with nature. This meaningful relationship indicates that relationship with God affects relationship with nature. In the researcher's study of internal and external sources, no study was found that examined the relationship between the two variables of relationship with God and relationship with nature. The belief system in each person is one of the main determinants of her behaviors and actions, and religion and its teachings

play a key role in shaping the belief system of individuals in a society. In the Islamic society of Iran, the teachings of the religion of Islam play a major role in determining the beliefs and consequently the behaviors of individuals in society.

In explaining the causal relationship with God and the relationship with nature, it can be said that a person who has a good and deep relationship with God Almighty is always obedient to God's command, and observes the divine command regarding the use of nature, its optimal use, as well as its protection and maintenance. It can also be said that such a person, in relation to nature, sees God as watching over and present in his actions, Hence, he never harms the natural phenomena that have a special place in the sight of God Almighty, and this means creating an interactive relationship between man and nature. According to [Rajabi Bagherabad \(2014\)](#), it is only the neglect of the essence of God that leads to the transgression of natural elements and the disruption of the balanced relations of nature. [Malekian \(2010\)](#) also stated that if man does not believe in the existence of God, he looks at nature as a commodity to satisfy his needs and desires. Such a person will have no mercy on nature because he is willing to harm and suffer the environment in pursuit of his short-term interests and desires; such an idea gives a harsh view of nature. Therefore, in short, it can be said that relationship with God and following the divine commands regarding respecting the elements of nature, makes man respect and establish a good relationship with nature.

There is a significant causal relationship between relationship with God and relationship with others. This meaningful relationship indicates that relationship with God affects relationship with others. In the researcher's study of internal and external resources, no study was found that examined the relationship between the two variables of relationship with God and relationship with others. In explaining this relationship, it can be said that a person who has a deep and sincere relationship with God Almighty is aware of the fact that all human beings are created by God and respected, so he treats other human beings with respect and in the dignity of the high position of their humanity. In addition, such a person always tries to establish his relations with other human beings in a proper way and in accordance with God's instructions, for example, such a person is always trying to help others and has a good verbal communication with others. [Joshaghani \(2017\)](#) stated that one of the desirable traits of believers is sensitivity about

problems, needs and social disorders. People who have made a covenant of friendship based on faith in the origin and resurrection and other sacred things, do not consider themselves separate from others and always think of their fellow human beings and friends. Therefore, a person who has a strong relationship with God always puts the teachings of God at the forefront of his social relationships. Such a human being will certainly have a deep and genuine respect for other human beings who are God's creatures. This genuine respect is one of the important foundations for building a strong connection between human beings. There is a significant causal relationship between the relationship with God and the relationship with oneself. This meaningful relationship indicates that relationship with God has an effect on relationship with oneself. In the researcher's study of internal and external resources, no study was found that examined the relationship between the two variables of relationship with God and relationship with self. In explaining this relationship, it can be said that a person who has a good and deep relationship with God knows that God has made him caliph and representative on earth, and gives him a high position. Therefore, because this person knows his position and value, he always tries to communicate with himself in accordance with this position and to respect himself. But man who does not know that he is the caliph of God on earth and does not know the purpose of his creation, will undoubtedly escape from himself, and do the useless deeds that cause him to be further away from him and harm himself, like spending day and night with fleeting and useless hobbies, guilt, drug use, suicide or ...

There is a significant causal relationship between relationship with nature and subjective well-being. This meaningful relationship indicates that communication with nature has an effect on subjective well-being. In the researcher's study of internal and external resources, no study was found that examined the relationship between the two variables of relationship with nature and subjective well-being. But by searching for similar keywords, three studies were found that were more similar to this relationship. [Mohammadi et al. \(2017\)](#) conducted a study entitled "Assessing the relationship between participation in tourism activities with the subjective well-being of rural women" by descriptive-analytical method among 90 rural women in Sarvabad city, and found that the presence of women in tourism activities, Increases and improves the subjective well-being of rural women.

Tavakoli and Alipour (2012) in a study entitled "The effect of nature therapy on the indicators of well-being, happiness and hours of absence from the workplace of women working in Tehran hospital", found that there is a significant difference between well-being, happiness and absence from work in employees with a designed landscape and employees in a normal environment of the hospital without a perspective. In this way, people who work in an environment designed with natural elements and made according to the principles of environmental psychology have more well-being and happiness than people who work in a normal hospital environment. Alitajer and Mostaghimi (2016) in their research entitled "the effect of the presence of nature in the interior and exterior of the treatment environments of cancer patients in order to increase the quality of life" found that images of natural scenes and artificial plants in hospital rooms and observing plant elements even outside the hospital rooms increase the quality of life of cancer patients.

As we know, being in nature always brings peace, comfort and happiness to human beings. All of us human beings have more or less experienced that having fun, being in nature and watching its beauties bring happiness to human beings. On the other hand, as mentioned earlier, subjective well-being consists of three components: life satisfaction, positive emotion and absence of negative emotion (Diener, 2000; Diener et al., 2003; Diener et al., 2012; Diener et al., 1999; Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Therefore, in explaining the causal relationship between the variables of relationship with nature and subjective well-being, it can be said that people who establish a good relationship with nature, spend a lot of time in nature and at the same time are diligent in preserving and maintaining nature, receive positive energy from watching the beauties of nature, also, the physical and mental health caused by recreation and circulation increases the subjective well-being of these people. It can be said that a good relationship with nature causes people to experience more positive emotions such as feelings of ecstasy, vitality and happiness, and negative emotions such as sadness, depression, stress and anorexia, etc., are less common to them. As a result, by experiencing more positive emotions and fewer negative emotions, they have a better evaluation of their lives and experience more life satisfaction.

There is a significant causal relationship between the relationship with self and subjective well-being. This meaningful relationship indicates that the relationship with the self has an effect on subjective well-being. In the researcher's study of internal and external

resources, no study was found that examined the relationship between the two variables of relationship with self and subjective well-being. In explaining this relationship, it can be said that a person who has a good, deep and cognitive relationship with himself, knows his talents and tries to realize them, so he has more dynamism. Therefore, in the shadow of this effort, he feels joy, happiness and empowerment by achieving various successes. On the other hand, a person who has a good relationship with himself and knows himself well, because he knows his abilities and creative thinking, copes well with problems and, as a result, has more self-esteem. On the contrary, a person who does not have a good and correct relationship with himself and does not know himself well, constantly experiences failure by not being aware of his abilities, etc., and thus his self-esteem is impaired. In general, it can be said that people who have a better relationship with themselves, due to activity and dynamism, achieve more success, positive emotions and more life satisfaction and less negative emotions, therefore, it can be said that an effective relationship with oneself can affect the subjective well-being of human beings. There is a significant inverse relationship between the relationship with nature and the quality of marriage. This significant relationship indicates that the more people have a relationship with nature, the lower the quality of marriage. In the researcher's study of internal and external resources, no study was found that examined the relationship between two variables related to the nature and quality of marriage. In explaining this relationship, it can be said that if a married person has a personal relationship with nature (not with his/her spouse and family), this can damage the quality of marriage. Such a person causes dissatisfaction in the spouse and family by being present in nature and individual excursions, because during his travels, his wife has to do things related to life. If both men and women are having fun individually and with friends, this will not help to improve the couple's relationship and may even be harmful, because the presence in nature and couple tours strengthens the couple's relationship. On the other hand, sometimes there are some people who become too obsessed with nature and think too much about protecting the environment, in such a way that they spend most of their time doing this and do not maintain a balance between connection with nature and connection with family, as a result, they spend less time with their spouse and in the service of the family, which also causes the spouse to be dissatisfied and can damage the quality of the marriage.

There is a significant causal relationship between the relationship with self and the quality of marriage. This significant relationship indicates that the relationship with oneself affects the quality of marriage. In the researcher's study of internal and external resources, no study was found that examined the relationship between two variables related to self and the quality of marriage. In explaining this relationship, it can be said that a person who has a good and deep relationship with himself and knows himself well, by being aware of his weaknesses and negative characteristics, can accept them more easily and at the same time try to change them, and in this way, he can help the quality of their marriage in relation to his wife. On the other hand, these people, with their knowledge of themselves, know that their spouse, like themselves, has weaknesses and shortcomings, therefore, just as they have accepted their own faults, they also accept their spouse's faults and more easily cope with the behavioral shortcomings of their spouse's personality, this feature, in turn, helps spouses to improve the quality of their marriage.

There is a significant causal relationship between subjective well-being and the quality of marriage. This significant relationship indicates that subjective well-being affects the quality of marriage. However, there have been few studies on the quality of marriage variable and no research has been done on the relationship between subjective well-being and the quality of marriage, however, a number of studies have examined the causal relationship between subjective well-being and variables similar to quality of marriage such as marital quality (e.g., [Shahsiah et al., 2011](#)), marital satisfaction (e.g., [Canary et al., 2002](#); [Schumacher & Leonard, 2005](#)) and marital adjustment (e.g., [Allah Babakhshi and Qamari, 2017](#)). Explaining this finding, it can be stated that people who have higher subjective well-being will express more love and affection for each other due to more life satisfaction and more positive emotions and less negative emotions that they experience, and at the same time the negative emotions hidden or expressed in their words will be less towards each other. This makes them more harmonious and compatible with each other, and this can be a factor in the high quality of their marriage. On the other hand, people with higher subjective well-being are more optimistic and have a positive view of events and conflicts in married life. In fact, such people are more inclined to look at the half-full glass or the bright side of things and have less bad thoughts, and this will make it easier for them to cope with the problems in their relationship and

solve it. On the other hand, since subjective well-being has a cognitive component (life satisfaction assessment), it can be said that people who have higher subjective well-being, are less likely to make cognitive errors such as magnification, labeling, mind reading, and negative inferences in their assessments of their lives as well as in conflicts, which in turn can increase the quality of a couple's marriage. Evidence for this claim can be found in the opinion of [Scorsolini-Comin and Dos Santos \(2012\)](#) who in their research stated that life satisfaction (as a factor of subjective well-being) and dual satisfaction have a positive and significant correlation, which shows that people who are satisfied in different areas of life do the same in relation to marital experiences.

There is a significant indirect relationship between the relationship with nature and the quality of marriage mediated by subjective well-being. This significant relationship indicates that relationship with nature, through enhanced subjective well-being, leads to an increase in the quality of marriage. In the researcher's study of internal and external resources, no study was found that examined the relationship between the three variables of relationship with nature, subjective well-being and the quality of marriage. As explained in explaining the direct relationship between nature and subjective well-being, relationship with nature has a significant effect on people's subjective well-being. Therefore, subjective well-being resulting from a good and deep relationship with nature causes a person to experience many positive emotions with the feeling of peace and vitality that he receives from watching nature, being in nature and protecting it. Also, the physical and mental health that a person achieves by walking and being in nature, increases life satisfaction. Undoubtedly, all these emotions and experiences flow into married life and will have positive effects on the quality of the couple's marriage.

There is a significant indirect relationship between relationship with self and quality of marriage mediated by subjective well-being. This meaningful relationship indicates that the relationship with oneself leads to an increase in the quality of marriage by enhancing subjective well-being. In the researcher's study of internal and external resources, no study was found that examined the relationship between the three variables of relationship with self, subjective well-being and the quality of marriage.

As stated in explaining the direct relationship between relationship with self and subjective well-being, a good and deep relationship with self has a significant effect on subjective well-being.

Therefore, the subjective well-being caused by the relationship with oneself causes a person to experience many positive emotions by recognizing his talents and trying to cultivate and actualize them and relying on his abilities in solving marital problems. Also, when a person achieves success in various areas of personal and marital life by relying on his / her abilities, his / her overall satisfaction with life and marital life increases, and in general, it can be said that the more people experience positive emotions in their personal lives and enjoy being with themselves, no doubt these positive emotions will be injected into the marital relationship and ultimately will bring a higher quality of marriage.

There is a significant indirect relationship between relationship with God and subjective well-being through the mediation of dual relationships (relationship with self and nature). This meaningful relationship indicates that relationship with God through strengthening the dual relationship (relationship with self and nature) increases subjective well-being. If we consider spirituality as a word close to and almost equivalent to a relationship with God, so far, many studies have shown the direct effect of spirituality on subjective well-being (e.g. Villani et al., 2019; Walker, 2009; Fabricatore et al., 2000) or its indirect effect through mediators such as optimism and meaning (e.g., Aglozo et al., 2021), resilience (e.g., Masten, 1999; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998), strengthening internal and social resources (e.g., Lim & Putnam, 2010); However, in the researcher's study of internal and external resources, no study was found that examined the relationship between these variables.

According to Malekian (2010), the fourfold relationship is a series of relationships that start from God and reach self, others and nature. In fact, according to him, the type of relationship with God has an undeniable effect on man's relationship with himself, others and nature (Malekian, 2010). Therefore, in explaining this relationship, it can be said that a person who has a good and deep relationship with God always sees God in all aspects and affairs of life as an observer and present in his actions and acts according to God's commands and prohibitions. For example, in a dual relationship with oneself and nature, such a person is purely obedient to God's commands and always tries to observe the limits and sanctity that God has drawn so that he does not commit sin and transgression, hence, he works very well in relation to himself and nature. So, when a person performs well in their dual relationship, they will generally have more life satisfaction. On the other

hand, when such a person establishes a good relationship with himself and nature, he experiences more positive emotions such as cheerfulness, calmness, love, etc., and has fewer negative emotions such as depression, anger, hatred, etc.; these, in turn, increase a person's subjective well-being. This meaningful relationship can also be expressed in this way: A person who has a deep and good relationship with God views problems as a divine test and since he hopes for God's mercy and help in solving problems, he has a beautiful view of life's problems (Tavanaei and Salimzadeh, 2010) and this makes him more resilient in the problems related to himself and nature. As Masten (1999) and Masten and Coatsworth (1998) stated that religion and spirituality lead to resilience. Lazarus & Folkman (1984) also stated that spiritual people have the ability to cope with stress. On the other hand, a deep relationship with God creates traits and characteristics such as tolerance, forgiveness, kindness, etc. in the person, that each of these characteristics, by affecting the three domains of cognition, emotion and behavior, causes a person to be careful in his relations with himself and nature, his thoughts, feelings and finally his behaviors, and with proper performance in these two areas, it increases life satisfaction and positive emotions and reduces negative emotions, and thus increases the subjective well-being of the individual.

There is a significant indirect relationship between relationship with God and the quality of marriage through the two stages of mediation of dual relationships (relationship with self and nature) and the dimension of subjective well-being. This meaningful relationship indicates that the relationship with God increases the quality of marriage by strengthening man's relationship with himself and nature and consequently strengthening subjective well-being. If we consider spirituality as a word that is close to and almost equivalent to a relationship with God, so far several studies have directly or indirectly examined the effect of spirituality on marital life variables such as marital satisfaction (e.g. Fincham et al., 2011), marital quality (e.g. Muezzin Jami et al., 2017), marital adjustment (e.g. Javadi Elmi and Jangi, 2017), marital happiness (e.g. Seydi et al., 2015). Another research related and almost similar to this hypothesis is Ismaili's study (2015) which has pointed to the self-healing factors in marital conflicts arising from the relationship with God, self, others and existence. But none of the studies have examined the relationship between relationship with God and the quality of marriage mediated by dual relationships and subjective well-being.

As explained in the previous relationship, in explaining this path to justify the relationship between relationship with God and the quality of marriage through the mediation of dual relationships and subjective well-being, it can be said when a person establishes a good and deep relationship with God, due to acceptance in the presence of God, enduring problems and meaning in relationships with the world around him, he acquires special characteristics and traits such as tolerance, patience, forgiveness, commitment, etc. in the dual relationship with himself and nature, hence, the successes and positive emotions resulting from these positive dual relationships enhance his subjective well-being. Over time, these positive emotions and characteristics will be institutionalized in him and will flow into his married life and will have a positive effect on many aspects of married life and thus a relationship with God provides a higher quality of marriage. Among the limitations of this research, it can be said the research was conducted during the corona pandemic and the questionnaires were given to the participants electronically which was not planned, so the honesty of the subjects and the accuracy of the answers is a matter of caution. Also, due to the electronic nature of the questionnaire, it was difficult to gain the cooperation and trust of the participants, especially men, therefore, the population of men participating in the study was small and this made it impossible to compare the results between women and men.

## 5. Ethical Considerations

### Compliance with ethical guidelines

The purpose of the research was explained to the participants and while emphasizing the voluntary participation in the research, they were assured that the answers will remain confidential and will only be used for this research. The ethics committee of Razi University has also approved this research.

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### Authors' contributions

All authors participated in all stages of writing and conducting research.

### Conflicts of interest

The authors had no conflict of interest.

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