

## Relationship of Romantic Beliefs to Marital Adjustment in Married Individuals Through *Ta'aruf* Process

Devianti, Sri Maslihah, Gemala Nurendah

Department of Psychology, Faculty of Educational Science, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Bandung

**Abstract.** Marital adjustment is considered an important process for individuals engaging in *ta'aruf*. Furthermore, one of the key factors influencing this adjustment is the presence of unrealistic beliefs about marriage, which can lead to mismatches in the marital relationship. This risk increases due to the brief *ta'aruf* introduction period, which makes it challenging for individuals to interact in the early stages of marriage. Therefore, this research evaluated the impact of romantic beliefs on marriage marital adjustment among couples married through the *ta'aruf* process, employing a quantitative research methodology with a correlational design. Data were collected from 98 individuals who married through *ta'aruf* from 3 to 13 years using Relationship Beliefs Inventory (RBI) and the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (RDAS) questionnaire. The data collected were then analyzed using simple regression analysis. The result showed that unrealistic beliefs about marriage had a negative correlation with marital adjustment. Furthermore, individuals with unrealistic beliefs handle conflicts poorly and avoid direct communication, making it more challenging to adapt to marriage.

**Keywords:** marital adjustment, romantic beliefs, *ta'aruf*

## Hubungan *Romantic Beliefs* terhadap Penyesuaian Pernikahan pada Individu yang Menikah Melalui Proses *Ta'aruf*

**Abstrak.** Bagi individu yang menjalani *ta'aruf*, penyesuaian pernikahan dianggap sangat penting. Salah satu faktor yang memengaruhi penyesuaian pernikahan adalah keyakinan yang tidak realistis tentang pernikahan, yang dapat menyebabkan ketidaksesuaian dalam hubungan pernikahan. Risiko ini meningkat karena masa perkenalan *ta'aruf* yang singkat membuat orang kesulitan berinteraksi pada masa awal pernikahan. Studi ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui bagaimana *romantic beliefs* tentang pernikahan berdampak pada penyesuaian pernikahan pada pasangan yang menikah melalui proses *ta'aruf*. Studi ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan desain korelasional. Sampel penelitian terdiri atas 98 individu yang menikah melalui *ta'aruf* (dengan rentang usia pernikahan 3-13 tahun). Data penelitian dikumpulkan menggunakan kuesioner *Relationship Beliefs Inventory* (RBI) dan kuesioner *Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale* (RDAS). Data dianalisis menggunakan analisis regresi sederhana. Penelitian menemukan bahwa keyakinan yang tidak realistis tentang pernikahan berkorelasi negatif terhadap penyesuaian pernikahan. Individu yang memiliki keyakinan yang tidak realistis tentang pernikahan memiliki kecenderungan untuk menyelesaikan konflik dengan buruk dan menghindari berbicara secara langsung, yang menyebabkan mereka lebih sulit untuk menyesuaikan pernikahan.

**Kata Kunci:** penyesuaian pernikahan, romantic beliefs, *ta'aruf*

**Correspondence:** Devianti. Email: devianti@upi.edu

Karim and Desiningrum (2015) stated that dating and *ta'aruf* are fundamental aspects of the pre-marital process. Dating is characterized by emotional and sexual attraction between male and female before marriage (Asmin et al, 2023). This enables potential partners to nurture love before marriage, given the absence of a time limit for introduction and physical contact. However, *ta'aruf* includes a brief introduction process, where the intending couple communicates through intermediaries, and physical contact before marriage is prohibited (Imtichanah, 2006). Process starts with the exchange of information between the prospective husband and wife, typically in the form of biodata or proposals through an intermediary called a murrabi. Individuals' meetings are limited to three times within one to two hours over three to four months. In situations where both parties feel compatible, process proceeds to the stages of family meetings, *khitbah*, and eventually marriage (Sumarna, 2015).

The achievement of successful marital adjustment is essential within the unique framework of *ta'aruf* process (Rosita & Indriana, 2014). Individuals engaged in *ta'aruf* proactively strive to adapt to one another due to the limited knowledge gained during the brief introduction period. This process is essential for ensuring the success and continuity of the evolving marital relationship, acknowledging the complexity usually encountered.

Couples who marry through *ta'aruf* process often encounter several challenges (Yani & Mila, 2011), mainly due to constrained communication. These challenges, extending from pre to post-marriage, comprise issues such as (a) uncertainties regarding family structure, (b) financial problems, (c) differences in communication, habits, and behavior, agreement on a residence, parenting principles, sexual orientation, and (d) gender role division. Therefore, couples who marry through *ta'aruf* process are urged to make effective marital adjustment to sustain the relationship, recognizing the inherent difficulty (Mas'udah & Yoenanto, 2023; Nusbah et al, 2020)

Analysis of prior research (Abbas et al, 2019; Marni, 2018) showed that couples marrying through *ta'aruf* often encountered challenges in adapting to married life. Contributing factors to these challenges include inadequate preparation, such as issues related to household skills, financial management, early marriage, unrealistic expectations, and marrying someone from a different race or religion (Ghoroghi et al, 2015). Therefore, couples may not sufficiently learn to adapt to various challenges during the courtship period, and excessive expectations often lead to disappointment (Işık et al, 2020), resulting in a lack of self-identity and difficulties in adjusting to the tasks and responsibilities associated with marriage (Mas'udah & Yoenanto, 2023).

Bali et al. (2010), stated that marital adjustment is the dynamic process of adapting

or modifying interactions between both parties to achieve optimal satisfaction in the relationship. This includes making adjustment in various aspects, such as lifestyle, needs, backgrounds, value congruence, sexual dynamics, financial matters, etc (Kumari, 2014). According to Yani and Mila (2011), there are four types of marital adjustment made by couples, namely adjustment to the personality and family of the partner, household responsibilities, and financial arrangement. These adjustments are typically time-consuming and influenced by various psychological variables (Ibrahim, 2022). Unrealistic beliefs about marriage or romance also significantly influence marital adjustment (Dwipayana et al, 2023).

Hutapea (2011) stated that unrealistic beliefs about marriage can lead to challenges in marital adjustment. Individuals holding such beliefs tend to compare with actual experiences in marriage. However, assuming there is a contradiction, both parties become dissatisfied and have poor-quality interactions (Baucom et al., 1996). In line with the present research, Farsya et al. (2022) stated that romantic beliefs about marriage, conflicting with actual experiences, play a role in influencing marital adjustment. These beliefs include partners having the ability to read minds, unavoidable conflicts damage the relationship (Pamuk & Durmus, 2015), and the expectation that sexual interactions will always be satisfying (Epstein & Eidelson, 1981). In the context of *ta'aruf*, both

parties discuss certain expectations and beliefs before marriage, aiming to realize these ideas after tying the knot (Sari et al, 2016). Many idealized or romantic beliefs about marriage revolve around the nature of the partner, differences in physical appearance, preferences, and background (Yani & Mila, 2011).

The nature of spousal interaction plays a crucial role in influencing romantic beliefs (Sari et al, 2016). In the dating process, individuals can interact directly with partners. However, in *ta'aruf* process, communication is mediated through intermediaries and constrained by a limited timeframe (Marni, 2018). The unfamiliarity resulting from this limited interaction leads to awkward moments and unproductive interactions for married individuals (Wahyuni, 2021). In addition, these individuals also encounter challenges in sharing personal information. Based on these phenomena, the current research examines the relationship between romantic beliefs and marital adjustment in individuals undergoing *ta'aruf* process.

In accordance with the outlined explanation, the present research intends to formalize this interest into a comprehensive investigation. According to Rani (2013), romantic beliefs is a variable that influences marital adjustment. The previous paragraph focused on reporting how important adjustments need to be made in marriage, particularly for individuals undergoing *ta'aruf*

process. Despite the acknowledged importance of romantic beliefs, there exists a research gap, as no investigation to date has simultaneously examined the influence of this variable on marital adjustment in *ta'aruf* context. This study aimed to find out how romantic beliefs about marriage affect marriage adjustment in married couples through the *ta'aruf* process.

## Method

Recent research evaluated the impact of romantic beliefs on marriage marital adjustment among couples married through *ta'aruf* process. This research adopted a quantitative method to investigate the influence of romantic beliefs (X) on marital adjustment (Y). It also used regression statistics to assess the extent of influence variable (X) has on (Y). The population comprised individuals married through *ta'aruf* process, although the exact number was not determined. A non-probability sampling method, particularly purposive sampling, was used to select respondents. The criteria for selection included individuals married through *ta'aruf* process for three to 13 years. In addition, this duration must be in line with phases II, III, IV of marriage (Duvall & Miller, 1985). The Lemeshow formula (Lemeshow et al, 1990) determined the sample size, resulting in a minimum of 96 respondents. A total of 115 respondents were initially obtained, but 17 were assumed to be less reliable or failed to meet the eligibility criteria based on the Person Fit Order analysis in the Winstep

application. As a result, the final number of respondents was reduced to 98.

The instrument used to measure romantic beliefs variable is Relationship Beliefs Inventory (RBI) compiled by Epstein and Eidelson (1981), with a Cronbach alpha reliability of .66. RBI comprised 40 items categorized under five dimensions, namely destructive disagreement, predictability, consistency, sexual perfection, and incompatibility. The instrument was adjusted based on validity test results, particularly for items nine and 25. The Person Fit analysis showed that eight out of 115 respondent answers were disregarded for not meeting the Misfit standard. The reliability test results for RBI showed Cronbach Alpha and Person Reliability values of .66 and .60, in the moderate category with a very high Item Reliability of .97.

Adjustment variable was assessed through the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (RDAS), originally formulated by Spanier (1976), and subsequently developed by Busby et al (1995). This instrument was translated into Indonesian by Fadhilah and Ratnasari (2022) and comprises 14 items that measure four dimensions, namely Dyadic Consensus, Cohesion, and Satisfaction, including Affective Affirmation. Based on the results of the validity test on RDAS, there were no inappropriate items. The results of the person analysis showed that 11 out of the 115 respondents answers failed to meet the Misfit standards and were disregarded.

In addition, one of the answers was disregarded in RBI instrument. RDAS reliability test results have Cronbach Alpha and Person Reliability values of .74 and .74, included in the high category, and item reliability of .99, classified in the very high category.

The current research adopted simple regression analysis to determine the influence of romantic beliefs (X) on marital adjustment (Y), using the SPSS 26.0 for Windows application. Assumption tests were

conducted to verify the normal distribution of the data. Demographic differences between the two variables were also tested using the One-way ANOVA and T-test methods. These methods were selected based on the nature of the subcategories, with One Way ANOVA applied for categories with more than two levels and the T-test method used for categories with two levels in the subcategories.

## Results

**Table 1**

*Categorization of Levels of Romantic Beliefs*

Variable	Category	N	%
Romantic beliefs	Very high	0	0
	High	5	5.10
	Low	71	72.45
	Very low	22	22.45
	Total	98	100

Table 1 shows that out of the 98 respondents participating in this research, none had a very high level of romantic beliefs. However, five respondents, approximately 5.10%, had a high level of romantic beliefs, showing a tendency towards unrealistic expectations and idealizations in relationships. Furthermore, 71 respondents (72.45%) had a low level of romantic beliefs, while the remaining 22 (22.45%) showed a very low level. The prevalence of low romantic beliefs shows that these respondents are confident in

the relationship or marriage, leading to lack of expectations and idealizations.

The results of the gender-based difference test produced a 2-tailed significance value of .097 ( $p > .05$ ). Similarly, for the age and marriage duration categories of respondents, the 2-tailed significance values were .840 ( $p > .05$ ) and .994 ( $p > .05$ ), respectively. The 2-tailed significance values across all categories showed no significant difference in the level of romantic beliefs based on the grouping in each category.

**Table 2**  
*Categorization of Levels of Marital Adjustment*

Variable	Category	N	%
Marital adjustment	Very high	42	42.85
	High	48	48.89
	Low	8	8.17
	Very low	0	0
	Total	98	100

Table 2 shows that out of the 98 respondents participating in this research, 42 respondents, approximately 42.85%, had a very high level of marital adjustment, while 48 relatively 48.89% had a high level. This showed the ability of the respondents to effectively accommodate the needs and expectations of partners through interactions and communication. However, 8 respondents, approximately 8.17% have a low level of marital adjustment, while none 0% fell into the category of very low level of marital adjustment. This showed that respondents were unable to accommodate the needs and expectations of the partners through interactions and communication.

The results of the gender-based difference test produced a 2-tailed significance

value of .221 ( $p > .05$ ). Similarly, in the age and marriage duration categories, the 2-tailed significance values were .862 ( $p > .05$ ) and .489 ( $p > .05$ ), respectively. The 2-tailed significance values across all categories showed no significant difference in the level of marital adjustment based on the grouping in each category.

**Hypothesis test results**

In this section, the research results based on the proposed hypotheses were explained. Hypothesis testing was conducted using simple regression analysis to determine the influence of Romantic beliefs (X) on Marital Adjustment (Y).

Contribution of romantic beliefs (x) to marital adjustment (y) in individuals who marry through ta'aruf process

**Table 3**  
*Results of Regression Analysis of Romantic Beliefs on Marital Adjustment*

	B	R	R <sup>2</sup>	p
Constant	96.899			.000
Romantic beliefs	-.433	.738	.545	.000

A simple linear regression analysis was conducted to test the hypothesis. In Table 3, romantic beliefs variable significantly

influenced marital adjustment, with a significance value of .000 ( $p < .001$ ); hence,  $H_0$  is rejected. The contribution of romantic beliefs

to marital adjustment can be observed from the regression equation, stated as follows:

$$\hat{Y} = (96.899) + (-.433) X$$

In the equation, 96.899 is the constant for marital adjustment, meaning when romantic beliefs have a value of zero, marital adjustment will be 96.899. Additionally, when the coefficient for romantic beliefs is -.433, it simply means that for every one percent increase in romantic beliefs score, marital adjustment is reduced by .433. The R square value showed that romantic beliefs contributed 54.5% to marital adjustment.

### Discussion

This study aimed to find out how romantic beliefs about marriage affect marriage adjustment in married couples through *ta'aruf* process. The present research stated that romantic beliefs contributed 54.5% to marital adjustment, as depicted by the square value of the correlation ( $R^2$ ). This value depicts that 54.5% of the variability in high or low levels of marital adjustment can be attributed to romantic beliefs, while other factors influence the remaining 45.5%. The results are in line with previous research on relationship between romantic beliefs and marital adjustment (Baucom et al., 1996; McNulty & Karney, 2004). In addition, majority of individuals who married through *ta'aruf* process had a low level of unrealistic beliefs about marriage. This was attributed to the fact that both parties strive to have a prospective partner who best fits these beliefs, engaging in thorough question-and-

answer sessions to understand the perspective of each other regarding marriage.

Significant correlations were found between four dimensions of romantic beliefs and marital adjustment, namely disagreement is destructive, mindreading is expected, partners cannot change, and sexual perfection. The dimension with the strongest relationship is disagreement is destructive, with a coefficient of -.528, depicting a strong negative correlation. However, the dimension of Sexual Perfection does not show a significant correlation, with a coefficient of -.233. Individuals who believe disagreements are detrimental and destructive to relationship may be inclined to avoid communication when engaged in conflicts (Widyaningsih & Budiningsih, 2016). This avoidance can potentially lead to marital mismatch or even a desire for divorce, as conflicts are perceived as an indication of separation. The results regarding the dimension of sexual perfection also support previous research, showing a negative correlation with marital adjustment despite having the lowest correlation compared to other dimensions (Casad et al., 2015).

Couples who underwent *ta'aruf* process generally showed high levels of marital adjustment despite limited pre-marital acquaintance and few challenges in this phase. The positive outcome is attributed to the shared social network, facilitating mutual acceptance. The results showed that romantic beliefs significantly influence marital adjustment for



individuals marrying through *ta'aruf*. In addition, the higher romantic beliefs score, the lower marital adjustment scores. Individuals with high romantic beliefs may face difficulties in conflict resolution and tend to avoid direct communication, contributing to challenges in marital adjustment.

The results showed no significant difference in the level of romantic beliefs among individuals who marry through *ta'aruf* process based on gender, age of respondents, and the duration of marriage. Similarly, there is no significant difference in the level of romantic beliefs based on the age of respondents. These results are in accordance with the research by Yizengaw et al. (2014), which stated there were no significant age-related differences in the level of romantic beliefs. Theoretically, the younger the individuals, the higher the level of romantic beliefs.

In this context, the duration of marital relationship is often perceived as a variable that can influence the level of unrealistic beliefs about marriage (Heryana & Ramadhan, 2023). It was assumed that as respondents' experiences accumulate during marriage, the level of unrealistic beliefs are influenced. The current research stated that there is no significant difference in the level of unrealistic beliefs among individuals who marry through *ta'aruf*, based on the duration of marriage. A similar research conducted by Vannier and O'Sullivan (2017) stated that although relationship experience increases with the duration of

marriage, it does not affect the level of unacceptable beliefs. The following demographic factors, gender, age, and duration of marriage do not have a significant influence because social and cultural attributes theoretically and highly influence attitudes toward marriage. Stereotypes and beliefs can be formed even before marriage, influenced by stories and cultural narratives.

The result showed no significant difference in the level of marital adjustment based on gender, age of respondents, and duration of marriage. Despite the assumption that gender may influence marital adjustment due to different roles played by husbands and wives, the present research found no significant difference in the level of marital adjustment between men and women. This is in line with the research by Setiawati and Nurhayati (2020), which stated there is no significant difference in the level of marital adjustment between males and females. Furthermore, the result showed no significant difference in the level of marital adjustment among individuals who marry through *ta'aruf*, considering the age of respondents and duration of marriage. It was assumed the factors correspond to the amount of experience respondents have, showing that the level of marital adjustment is higher for older individuals with longer durations of marriage.

According to Astasari and Lestari (2016), the age of respondents does not influence the



level of marital adjustment. Similarly, Dewi and Wilani (2016) reported that there is no significant difference in the level of marital adjustment based on the duration of marriage. The demographic data has an insignificant impact because, theoretically, marital adjustment is influenced by factors such as marital differences, anxieties, satisfaction, closeness, and mutual agreement

### Conclusions

This research evaluated the impact of romantic beliefs on marriage marital adjustment among couples married through *ta'aruf* process. In conclusion, romantic beliefs influenced marital adjustment in individuals who underwent *ta'aruf* process. A higher level of romantic beliefs was associated with a lower level of marital adjustment

### Suggestion

This research has several limitations that should be considered for future investigation. Firstly, the research only measured experiences unilaterally, focusing solely on the respondents and neglecting the perceived experiences. Therefore, marital adjustment process may not be fully and comprehensively analyzed. Secondly, the research relied on limited demographic data, and it may be more informative assuming other factors, such as age differences between spouses, as well as the number and ages of children, were included. Thirdly, the research on romantic beliefs within the context of *ta'aruf* is constrained, due to limited available references.

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