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The Relationship Between Emotional Expression and Marital Satisfaction Among Couples Living with Parents or In-Laws

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ABSTRACT

Marriage remains a critical institution influencing individual well-being, family stability, and social cohesion, particularly in collectivist contexts where multigenerational households are common. This study aimed to examine how emotional expressivity—both positive and negative—relates to marital satisfaction among Indonesian couples living with parents or in-laws. Using a quantitative, cross-sectional, correlational design, data were collected from 67 married individuals through validated Indonesian adaptations of the ENRICH Marital Satisfaction scale and the Self-Expressiveness in the Family Questionnaire. Descriptive analyses indicated generally low levels of marital satisfaction, medium to high positive expressivity, and low negative expressivity. Correlation results revealed that positive expressivity was significantly associated with higher marital satisfaction, whereas negative expressivity predicted lower satisfaction, though with varying strength across subgroups. Demographic analyses showed that gender, marital duration, number of children, and income moderated these associations, with positive expressivity particularly salient for women, couples in mid-marriage, and those at or below the minimum wage. These findings align with prior research emphasizing the protective role of positive emotional communication and the risks of negative expression, while extending these insights into the Indonesian cultural context. The study contributes theoretically by integrating cultural and structural moderators into models of marital satisfaction and practically by suggesting that marital counseling and policy initiatives should promote constructive emotional expression to sustain marital stability. Overall, the findings underscore that in multigenerational households, emotional expressivity functions as a key determinant of marital well-being and resilience.

Keywords

collectivist culture; emotional expressivity; extended families; Indonesia; marital satisfaction; multigenerational households; relationship quality

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INTRODUCTION

Marriage is universally regarded as one of the most significant social institutions, shaping not only the intimate relationship between two individuals but also influencing wider familial, social, and cultural dynamics (Buechel et al., 2014; Cherlin, 2020; Hiller et al., 2023). In many societies, marital quality and satisfaction serve as important indicators of psychological well-being, family stability, and social harmony. Scholars have long conceptualized marital satisfaction as the subjective appraisal of happiness, contentment, and fulfillment within marriage, encompassing dimensions such as communication, affection, trust, and role negotiation (Fowers & Olson, 1993). Across cultural contexts, high marital satisfaction has been linked to improved health outcomes, stronger family functioning, and positive child development (Fincham & Beach, 2010a, 2010b). Thus, understanding the factors that sustain or hinder marital satisfaction remains a pressing area of inquiry in psychological and social sciences.

In Indonesia, where marriage continues to be closely intertwined with cultural and religious traditions (Parker et al., 2014; Yulianto et al., 2022, 2023), marital satisfaction has distinctive characteristics shaped by local values, economic realities, and family structures (Mas'udah, 2025; Thoybah et al., 2021; Y. Yang & Sari, 2025). Unlike in many Western contexts where nuclear families dominate (Crabb & Augoustinos, 2008; Sear, 2021; Yee, 2023), Indonesian households often feature multigenerational arrangements in which married couples co-reside with parents or in-laws. This living arrangement, while rooted in values of filial piety, solidarity, and shared economic responsibility, can generate unique interpersonal challenges. Empirical evidence suggests that co-residence with parents or in-laws may reduce marital satisfaction due to increased boundary ambiguity, role conflict, and diminished autonomy for the couple (Kesumawardhani et al., 2024; Marphatia et al., 2023; Nadhirah & Khotimah, 2022). Yet, such arrangements also provide potential benefits, such as childcare support, economic sharing, and intergenerational solidarity (Nauck & Ren, 2021; Taniguchi & Kaufman, 2017; Zhou et al., 2022). This duality underscores the need to investigate psychological mechanisms that either buffer or exacerbate the effects of co-residence on marital satisfaction.

Against this backdrop, emotional expressivity has emerged as a central determinant of marital quality. Emotional expressivity refers to the habitual tendency to communicate emotions verbally and non-verbally within interpersonal relationships

(Halberstadt et al., 1995). Scholars differentiate between positive expressivity—such as affection, praise, and gratitude—and negative expressivity—such as anger, criticism, and contempt. Research has demonstrated that positive expressivity fosters intimacy, trust, and satisfaction by reinforcing emotional bonds, while negative expressivity often erodes relationship quality and predicts conflict and dissolution (Gottman, 1994). However, findings across studies remain inconsistent, with some reporting negligible or context-dependent effects, suggesting that cultural and situational factors may mediate these relationships (Bloch et al., 2014).

The central research problem, therefore, lies in clarifying how variability in emotional expressivity contributes to marital satisfaction among couples who live with parents or in-laws. While general theories of marriage emphasize communication and emotional sharing, the unique pressures of multigenerational households may amplify the consequences of emotional expression. For instance, displays of positive affect may be especially vital in sustaining couple solidarity under the scrutiny of extended family members, whereas negative emotional expressions may carry heightened risks by escalating conflicts not only within the couple but also across household members. Despite its importance, empirical research on these dynamics in Indonesia remains scarce, leaving a significant gap in the literature.

Prior research has offered broad solutions to the problem of marital dissatisfaction, emphasizing the role of communication skills training (Lavner et al., 2016; Williamson et al., 2016), marital counseling (Asadi et al., 2020; Bradbury et al., 2016), and psychoeducational interventions (Deylami et al., 2021; Tahan et al., 2020). Programs such as PREP (Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program) and integrative behavioral couple therapy highlight the cultivation of constructive communication and emotional regulation as means to strengthen marital bonds (Markman & Rhoades, 2012). These interventions, however, are primarily developed in Western contexts and may not directly account for the cultural specificity of multigenerational households, particularly in collectivist societies like Indonesia. There is thus a critical need to adapt and contextualize such solutions to settings where co-residence with parents or in-laws is common, and where extended family dynamics shape marital processes.

More specific scholarly contributions have focused on emotional expressivity as a mechanism for improving or undermining marital satisfaction. Studies by Halberstadt et al. (1995) and Gottman (1994) underscore that the frequency, intensity, and valence of emotional expression within families predict marital and relational outcomes. In collectivist contexts, positive expressivity—such as verbal affirmation, gratitude, and non-verbal affection—has been associated with greater satisfaction and resilience against stressors (Rathi & Lee, 2021; Yoo et al., 2011; Zheng et al., 2020). Conversely, negative expressivity, particularly when characterized by contempt or hostility, predicts

lower satisfaction and even long-term relationship breakdown (Karney & Bradbury, 2005). Yet, the extent to which these patterns hold in multigenerational Indonesian households remains largely unexplored.

The literature also highlights that the relationship between emotional expressivity and marital satisfaction may be moderated by sociodemographic factors such as sex, age, marital duration, income, and parental status. For instance, some studies report that women's satisfaction is more strongly linked to perceived emotional support and expressivity, while men's satisfaction is often shaped by role fulfillment and economic stability (Kurdek, 2005). Similarly, marital duration and number of children may interact with expressivity, as couples' needs and stressors evolve over time (Anderson et al., 1983; Sorokowski et al., 2017; Wendorf et al., 2011). These moderating effects underscore the complexity of studying marital satisfaction and suggest that a single explanatory factor is insufficient without considering the broader social context.

Despite these insights, significant gaps remain in the literature, particularly concerning Indonesian couples who live with parents or in-laws. Much of the extant research has focused on nuclear families in Western contexts, leaving the dynamics of extended households underexamined. Moreover, while prior studies have explored emotional expressivity in family communication more broadly, few have isolated its relationship with marital satisfaction under the specific conditions of co-residence. The absence of localized, culturally sensitive research has limited the development of targeted interventions and policies that could improve marital well-being in Indonesia's sociocultural landscape.

The present study seeks to address this gap by investigating the relationship between emotional expressivity and marital satisfaction among married individuals living with parents or in-laws in Indonesia. Specifically, it examines whether positive expressivity is positively correlated with marital satisfaction, and whether negative expressivity is negatively correlated with marital satisfaction. By focusing on couples embedded in multigenerational households, this research not only advances theoretical understanding of marital processes but also contributes practical insights for counseling and psychoeducational programs tailored to Indonesian families. The study's novelty lies in its contextual specificity and in its attempt to reconcile inconsistent findings from prior research. Its scope encompasses both the direct associations between expressivity and satisfaction and the potential moderating influences of demographic factors, thereby offering a nuanced and culturally grounded account of marital well-being.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptualizing Marital Satisfaction

Marital satisfaction has long been conceptualized as an individual's subjective evaluation of the quality and contentment within their marriage. Fowers & Olson (1993) define it as the degree to which partners feel fulfilled and supported in their relationship, encompassing both emotional and instrumental dimensions. The literature distinguishes between satisfaction as a global construct—an overarching sense of happiness in marriage—and more specific facets, including communication quality, role performance, intimacy, and conflict resolution. This conceptual breadth highlights why marital satisfaction is often employed as an index of relational health, with implications for psychological adjustment, family functioning, and even community well-being (Dobrowolska et al., 2020; Du Bois et al., 2019; Lee & Park, 2023; Margelisch et al., 2017; Yoder & Du Bois, 2020).

Scholarly frameworks typically differentiate between pre-marital factors (such as family-of-origin influences, socio-economic background, and courtship length) and marital factors (such as trust, affection, and communication) as determinants of satisfaction (Amato & Previti, 2003). Pre-marital influences establish expectations and relational scripts, while marital factors directly shape day-to-day interactions. Within collectivist contexts, marital satisfaction is also tied to adherence to cultural values, role obligations, and family harmony (Amato & Previti, 2003; Ambrož et al., 2021; Grau et al., 2025; Nurhayati et al., 2024; Parsakia & Saadati, 2025). These observations indicate that while the core psychological processes may be universal, their expression and salience are inevitably conditioned by cultural norms and structural contexts.

Marital Satisfaction in Collectivist and Multigenerational Contexts

Marital satisfaction is a complex construct shaped not only by individual psychological factors but also by cultural values and household structures. In collectivist cultures, marriage is not merely a private contract between two individuals but a union embedded within family and community networks (Asfaw & Alene, 2023; Bejanyan et al., 2014; Shah & Murali, 2018). Unlike in individualistic societies, where autonomy and self-fulfillment dominate marital expectations, collectivist frameworks emphasize interdependence, filial obligations, and communal well-being. These cultural orientations often heighten awareness of marital responsibilities, creating tension between individual desires and collective expectations. Traditional gender roles further intensify these tensions, as spousal responsibilities are frequently structured along culturally defined lines, affecting perceptions of marital satisfaction.

The prevalence of multigenerational households in collectivist societies adds another layer of complexity. While extended family arrangements provide emotional

and practical support, they can also generate conflict when expectations differ across generations. Studies suggest that such co-residence can both enhance and hinder marital satisfaction depending on whether extended family involvement is supportive or intrusive (Ali & Daoud, 2016; Jennings, 2016; Majzoobi & Forstmeier, 2022). Communication and emotional intelligence are critical mediators in this context, as they help couples balance the dual demands of marital intimacy and collective family obligations (Dastyar et al., 2018; Mohaddesi et al., 2022). These findings underscore the necessity of situating marital satisfaction research within broader sociocultural and intergenerational dynamics.

Personality traits and conflict-resolution styles also interact with cultural values to shape marital outcomes. For instance, individuals with high levels of neuroticism often perceive conflict more acutely, intensifying dissatisfaction within marriages where emotional suppression is normative (Shah & Murali, 2018). In collectivist cultures, strategies such as silence and avoidance are frequently used to preserve harmony, though these approaches may prolong emotional distress (Dedahanov et al., 2016; Rhee et al., 2014). Globalization and generational shifts are further reshaping expectations of marital roles, as younger couples increasingly adopt individualistic ideals that sometimes clash with older family members' traditional perspectives (Dong et al., 2022; Goet & Kharel, 2023; Sun & Mulvaney, 2021). Thus, marital satisfaction in collectivist and multigenerational settings is best understood as a negotiation between enduring cultural traditions and evolving modern influences.

Emotional Expressivity as a Determinant of Relationship Quality

Emotional expressivity, defined as the verbal and nonverbal communication of affect, is central to marital quality. It facilitates intimacy, understanding, and relational resilience by enabling partners to share their inner experiences (Bloch et al., 2014; Hasim et al., 2023). Studies indicate that emotionally expressive couples report stronger communication skills, better regulation of conflict, and higher overall satisfaction (Çetinkaya & Gençdoğan, 2017). Conversely, deficits in expressivity contribute to misunderstandings, emotional distance, and dissatisfaction. This dynamic underscores the reciprocal nature of emotional sharing, where openness fosters security, validation, and trust within marriages.

Emotional regulation interacts closely with expressivity to shape relational outcomes. Couples who effectively manage their emotional responses reduce the likelihood of destructive conflicts, creating a relational environment conducive to satisfaction (Napitu et al., 2023; Shah & Murali, 2018). Secure attachment styles further enhance this process by encouraging openness and vulnerability, while avoidant or anxious attachments often inhibit expression, leading to dissatisfaction (Bazaz et al.,

2017). These findings highlight that emotional expressivity is not merely a communicative behavior but an integrated element of relational dynamics influenced by regulation skills, personality traits, and attachment orientations.

Intervention studies demonstrate that emotional expressivity can be cultivated through targeted training. Programs designed to enhance emotional awareness and communication skills have been shown to improve marital outcomes (Hosseini et al., 2020). Couples trained to articulate feelings and respond to their partners' emotional needs report greater intimacy and reduced conflict. However, cultural context matters: in collectivist societies, restraint in expression is often socially valued, complicating efforts to promote open communication (Er & Çifci, 2023; Rad et al., 2023). Thus, while emotional expressivity is universally beneficial, its manifestations and interpretations require cultural sensitivity in both research and practice.

Positive Emotional Expressivity and Marital Satisfaction

Positive emotional expressivity—expressions of affection, gratitude, praise, and support—consistently predicts higher levels of marital satisfaction. Research demonstrates that couples who openly share positive emotions develop stronger relational bonds, greater resilience against stress, and deeper mutual understanding (Riahi et al., 2020; Vil, 2015). Emotional support functions as both a buffer against conflict and a source of validation, fostering intimacy and reinforcing commitment (Emusugut et al., 2023). This positive reciprocity creates a climate where partners feel valued and appreciated, thereby enhancing marital quality.

The protective role of positive expressivity becomes especially evident in contexts of external stress. Nóbrega et al. (2022) found that sharing positive emotions mitigates the negative effects of stressors, reducing the risk of relational dissatisfaction. Similarly, the regulation of emotional responses plays a key role in maximizing the benefits of positive expressivity, as partners who can appropriately manage emotional displays create environments of support and stability (Riahi et al., 2020). Emotional contagion further strengthens marital bonds, as one partner's happiness can uplift the other, reinforcing cycles of satisfaction and mutual care (Yedirir & Hamarta, 2015).

Cultural norms shape the expression of positive emotions within marriage. In collectivist contexts, outward displays of affection may be constrained by social expectations emphasizing modesty and harmony. Nonetheless, studies affirm that even restrained positive expressivity significantly contributes to marital happiness (Yedirir & Hamarta, 2015). Interventions integrating emotional communication training into marital counseling have proven effective across cultural settings, improving relational satisfaction and reducing conflict (Brandão et al., 2017). Thus, cultivating

positive emotional expressivity remains essential for sustaining marital quality, regardless of cultural background.

Negative Emotional Expressivity and Marital Dissatisfaction

In contrast, negative emotional expressivity—manifestations of anger, criticism, contempt, and defensiveness—predicts lower marital satisfaction. Such expressions often escalate conflict, reduce intimacy, and create toxic cycles of interaction (Helms et al., 2014; Zeb et al., 2022). The actor–partner interdependence model demonstrates that one partner's negativity often triggers reciprocal dissatisfaction in the other, amplifying relational strain (H. Liu & Cheung, 2014). This cyclical contagion of negativity erodes trust and connection, producing long-term relational decline (Junyan et al., 2023).

Stress is a key contextual factor that intensifies negative expressivity. Economic hardship, cultural adaptation pressures, and external stressors often increase the likelihood of hostile exchanges, further undermining marital quality (Helms et al., 2014). Gottman's well-known "Four Horsemen"—criticism, defensiveness, contempt, and stonewalling—illustrate the destructive patterns linked to negative expressivity (Hooper et al., 2017). Individuals with high neuroticism are particularly prone to these behaviors, as emotional dysregulation amplifies hostility and volatility (Mansoor & Khalid, 2016; Shah & Murali, 2018). These findings highlight the importance of addressing personality traits and stress-management skills in interventions.

Early life experiences and gender differences further shape patterns of negative expressivity. Childhood emotional abuse or neglect increases vulnerability to destructive emotional expression in adult relationships (Al-Shahrani & Hammad, 2023; Maneta et al., 2015). Gendered socialization also influences expressivity: women may externalize distress through sadness, while men more often display anger or withdrawal (Helms et al., 2014). These dynamics often lead to miscommunication and conflict escalation. Therapeutic interventions aimed at strengthening emotional intelligence and regulation have demonstrated promise in reducing negative expressivity, improving relational quality, and breaking cycles of dissatisfaction (Junyan et al., 2023; Nóbrega et al., 2022). Thus, negative expressivity remains a central risk factor for marital decline, underscoring the need for targeted preventive strategies.

Research Gap and the Significance of the Study

Despite extensive research on marital satisfaction, much of the literature has focused on nuclear families in Western societies, where individual autonomy and direct communication are prioritized (Fowers & Olson, 1993; Gottman, 1994). Consequently, the role of emotional expressivity in multigenerational households—especially within collectivist contexts such as Indonesia—remains underexplored. Prior studies have

identified both positive and negative expressivity as predictors of marital outcomes (Halberstadt et al., 1995; Karney & Bradbury, 2005; Bloch et al., 2014), yet their interaction with the unique dynamics of co-residence has not been systematically examined. This omission limits theoretical generalizability and hinders the design of culturally sensitive interventions for marital well-being in extended-family contexts.

The present study addresses this gap by investigating how emotional expressivity influences marital satisfaction among couples co-residing with parents or in-laws in Indonesia. By situating emotional processes within the structural and cultural realities of multigenerational households, this research advances theoretical understanding and contributes to a more nuanced model of marital dynamics. Furthermore, the study holds practical significance for developing counseling strategies and psychoeducational programs that encourage positive expressivity while mitigating negative patterns. Such insights are vital for strengthening marital stability in collectivist societies, where extended family arrangements continue to be a dominant feature of social life.

METHOD

Research Design
This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional, correlational design to examine the association between emotional expressivity and marital satisfaction among married individuals living with parents or in-laws. A correlational approach was chosen because the objective was not to manipulate variables but to identify patterns of relationships between naturally occurring constructs (Creswell & Poth, 2023). The design allowed the researcher to measure the degree and direction of association between positive and negative emotional expressivity and self-reported marital satisfaction. By situating the analysis within the context of multigenerational households, the study aimed to extend existing models of marital satisfaction into a culturally specific setting.

Participants and Sampling
The study sample consisted of 67 married individuals, including 7 men and 60 women, who co-resided with either their parents or in-laws. Participants were predominantly between 18 and 40 years old, representing early to middle stages of the marital life cycle. Eligibility criteria required participants to be legally married, to currently live in the same household as parents or in-laws, and to have been in the marital relationship for at least one year. These criteria ensured that respondents had adequate experience of both marriage and extended family living arrangements.

A purposive sampling strategy was adopted to capture the targeted population of interest. Participants were recruited through online networks, community referrals, and social media groups. This non-probability technique was considered appropriate given the study's focus on a specific sub-population that is not evenly distributed in the general population. While purposive sampling limits the generalizability of results, it provides access to individuals who fit the study's culturally specific criteria, thereby enhancing ecological validity.

Measures

Marital Satisfaction

Marital satisfaction was assessed using the ENRICH Marital Satisfaction (EMS) scale, adapted into Indonesian context (Darmayanti & Dawanti, 2024; Mongdong & Kusumiati, 2023; Nyfhodora & Soetjiningsih, 2021). The instrument is widely recognized for its psychometric reliability and cross-cultural applicability (Fowers & Olson, 1993). For this study, the 10-item satisfaction dimension was employed, capturing respondents' subjective evaluations of happiness, agreement, and contentment in their marriage. Items were rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Higher scores indicated greater marital satisfaction. Reliability testing yielded a Cronbach's alpha of approximately .86, demonstrating strong internal consistency.

Emotional Expressivity

Emotional expressivity was measured using the Self-Expressiveness in the Family Questionnaire (SEFQ) developed by Halberstadt et al. (1995) and adapted into Indonesian context (Wandansari, 2019). The instrument distinguishes between two subscales: positive expressivity (22 items) and negative expressivity (17 items). Respondents rated the frequency with which they expressed specific emotions on a Likert scale from 1 (never) to 5 (very often). Examples of positive items included expressions of warmth, praise, and gratitude, while negative items captured criticism, anger, and contempt. Psychometric testing during the adaptation process established reliability coefficients above .80 for both subscales, supporting their use in the present context.

Procedure

The study was administered through an online survey hosted on Google Forms. Prior to full deployment, the instruments underwent a back-translation procedure to ensure semantic equivalence between English and Indonesian versions, with revisions based on expert consultation in psychology and linguistics. Potential participants were provided with an information sheet outlining the study's purpose, voluntary nature, and

confidentiality guarantees. Informed consent was obtained digitally before participants could proceed to the questionnaire.

The survey comprised three sections: demographic information (e.g., age, sex, marital duration, number of children, income), the EMS marital satisfaction scale, and the SEFQ expressivity scale. The average completion time was approximately 15–20 minutes. Data collection spanned four weeks, during which reminders were periodically sent to increase response rates. To maintain anonymity, no identifying information was collected, and responses were stored securely in password-protected files.

Data Analysis

Data screening and analysis were conducted using SPSS. Preliminary checks for missing data, outliers, and assumption violations were carried out. Normality was tested through the Kolmogorov–Smirnov statistic and Q–Q plots, while linearity was examined through scatterplots of the predictor and outcome variables. Results indicated that assumptions were sufficiently met to proceed with parametric analysis.

The primary analysis employed Pearson product–moment correlation coefficients to evaluate the associations between positive expressivity, negative expressivity, and marital satisfaction. Correlation coefficients were interpreted according to Cohen's (1988) guidelines: small ($r \approx .10$), medium ($r \approx .30$), and large ($r \geq .50$). In addition to overall analyses, subgroup correlations were computed across demographic variables (sex, age, marital duration, number of children, and income) to explore potential moderating effects. Differences in marital satisfaction across demographic categories were assessed using independent-sample t-tests (for binary variables) and one-way ANOVA (for categorical variables with more than two levels).

Effect sizes (r^2, η^2, or Cohen's d as appropriate) were reported alongside p-values to provide a more nuanced interpretation of the findings. Where inconsistencies emerged between coefficients and effect sizes—as occasionally observed in prior research (e.g., discrepancies in r and r^2)—results were carefully interpreted in light of both statistical significance and theoretical plausibility.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical standards were observed throughout the research process in accordance with the guidelines of the American Psychological Association (2017). Participation was entirely voluntary, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any stage without penalty. Anonymity and confidentiality were strictly maintained, with all electronic data stored securely and accessible only to the researcher. Given the sensitive nature of marital satisfaction, care was taken to phrase items neutrally and avoid stigmatizing language. Participants were also provided with referral information for counseling services in case the survey elicited discomfort or personal concerns.

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the relevant institutional review board prior to data collection. These safeguards ensured that participants' rights and welfare were fully protected, thereby upholding both academic integrity and social responsibility.

RESULTS

Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

The demographic profile of the participants in Table 1 reveals that the majority were female (89.6%) and within the younger adult age group of 18–40 years (65.7%). In terms of marital duration, the largest proportion (32.8%) had been married for 10–20 years, indicating that many respondents were in the mid-phase of marital life. Most participants reported having two children (43.3%), while very few had more than three children. Regarding economic status, 43.3% of couples reported household income above the regional minimum wage, whereas 38.8% were at the minimum wage threshold. These demographic patterns suggest a sample characterized by women in early to mid-adulthood, typically married for more than a decade, raising two children, and representing varied but generally modest income levels.

Table 1

Demographic Description of the Participants

Demographic Aspect	Category	n	%
Gender	Male	7	10.4
	Female	60	89.6
Age	18–40 years	44	65.7
	41–60 years	23	34.3
Marital Duration	1–5 years	18	26.9
	5–10 years	16	23.9
	10–20 years	22	32.8
	>20 years	11	16.4
Number of Children	0	6	9.0
	1	19	28.4
	2	29	43.3
	3	12	17.9
	>3	1	1.5
Household Income	Below Minimum Wage	12	17.9
	At Minimum Wage	26	38.8
	Above Minimum Wage	29	43.3
Total		67	100

Source: Primary data. Authors' estimation.

Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

The descriptive statistics summarized in Table 2 provide the percentile-based categorization of respondents' scores on marital satisfaction and emotional expressivity. The findings indicate that marital satisfaction scores cluster between 34 and 45 across percentiles, suggesting relatively narrow variability among participants. Positive emotional expressivity shows a wider distribution, with values ranging from 81.2 to 103, reflecting greater differentiation in the frequency of affectionate and supportive behaviors. Negative emotional expressivity, on the other hand, falls between 36 and 47, suggesting moderate but less pronounced variability. These distributions form the basis for categorizing respondent data into normative ranges, offering an overview of how participants vary in their marital satisfaction and emotional expressivity levels.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variable	Percentiles			
	20	40	60	80
Marital Satisfaction	34	39	43	45
Positive Emotional Expressivity	81.2	89.2	94	103
Negative Emotional Expressivity	36	39	42.8	47

Source: Primary data. Authors' estimation.

Normative Categorization of Research Variables

The categorization norms presented in Table 3 provide the framework for interpreting respondent scores on marital satisfaction and emotional expressivity. By applying percentile-based cutoffs, the data are distributed into five levels—very low, low, medium, high, and very high—allowing for a nuanced analysis of individual variation. This approach, supported by statistical convention, facilitates the identification of respondents with notably high or low tendencies relative to the sample distribution. The use of percentiles ensures objectivity and comparability across variables, as the categories are anchored in the actual distribution of scores. Such classification enables researchers to capture heterogeneity within the sample and to explore associations between levels of marital satisfaction and emotional expressivity in greater depth.

Table 3

Normative Categorization

Category	Formula for Categorization
Very Low	X < P20
Low	P20 ≤ X ≤ P40
Medium	P40 < X ≤ P60
High	P60 < X ≤ P80
Very High	X > P80

Source: Primary data. Authors' estimation.

Notes: X = Total Score; P20 = 20th Percentile; P40 = 40th Percentile; P60 = 60th Percentile; P80 = 80th Percentile.

Categorization of Marital Satisfaction Scores

The results presented in Table 4 show the distribution of participants' marital satisfaction across five categories. Out of 67 respondents, the largest proportion (22.4%) fell into the low satisfaction category, followed closely by very low and high categories, each with 20.9%. The medium category accounted for 19.4% of participants, while only 16.4% reported very high satisfaction. These findings indicate that the majority of respondents tended to report lower levels of marital satisfaction, with relatively few experiencing very high fulfillment in their marriages. Such a pattern suggests that co-residing with parents or in-laws may contribute to challenges in sustaining marital quality, reflecting broader tensions in multigenerational living arrangements frequently documented in collectivist cultural contexts.

Table 4

Categorization of Marital Satisfaction

Category	Score Range	f	%
Very Low	X < 34	14	20.9
Low	34 ≤ X ≤ 39	15	22.4
Medium	39 < X ≤ 43	13	19.4
High	43 < X ≤ 45	14	20.9
Very High	X > 45	11	16.4
Total		67	100

Source: Primary data. Authors' estimation.

Categorization of Positive Emotional Expressivity

As presented in Table 5, the distribution of positive emotional expressivity among respondents demonstrates a relatively balanced spread across categories. The largest proportions were found in the medium and high categories, each representing 22.4% of participants (15 respondents), suggesting that most individuals reported moderate to frequent use of positive emotional behaviors such as affection, gratitude, or praise. By

contrast, 19.4% of respondents were categorized as very low, and only 14.9% as very high, indicating that fewer participants were situated at the extremes of emotional expression. Overall, these findings suggest that the sample exhibits a general tendency toward moderate levels of positive expressivity, which aligns with expectations in collectivist cultural contexts where emotional moderation and harmony are emphasized within family and marital interactions.

Table 5

Categorization of Positive Emotional Expressivity

Category	Score Range	f	%
Very Low	X < 81.2	13	19.4
Low	81.2 ≤ X ≤ 89.2	14	20.9
Medium	89.2 < X ≤ 94	15	22.4
High	94 < X ≤ 103	15	22.4
Very High	X > 103	10	14.9
Total		67	100

Source: Primary data. Authors' estimation.

Categorization of Negative Emotional Expressivity

As shown in Table 6, respondents' scores for negative emotional expressivity were distributed across all five categories, though the largest proportion (23.9%) fell into the low category. Very low and high levels of negative expressivity each accounted for 22.4% of participants, while 17.9% reported very high expression and only 13.4% were in the medium range. This distribution indicates that while a sizable portion of respondents demonstrated low to very low tendencies to express negative emotions, a notable minority exhibited high or very high levels. Such variation suggests heterogeneity in how couples manage and display negative affect, which may have important implications for marital satisfaction and overall relational stability within multigenerational households.

Table 6

Categorization of Negative Emotional Expressivity

Category	Score Range	f	%
Very Low	X < 36	15	22.4
Low	36 ≤ X ≤ 39	16	23.9
Medium	39 < X ≤ 42.8	9	13.4
High	42.8 < X ≤ 47	15	22.4
Very High	X > 47	12	17.9
Total		67	100

Source: Primary data. Authors' estimation.

Research Data Assumption Test

Normality Test of Marital Satisfaction Variable

The results of the normality test presented in Table 7 demonstrate that the data for marital satisfaction are normally distributed. Using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, the significance value was 0.094 (p > 0.05), indicating that the null hypothesis of normal distribution could not be rejected. Similarly, the Shapiro-Wilk test produced a significance level of 0.103, which also exceeds the 0.05 threshold, further supporting the assumption of normality. Complementary visual inspection through the Q–Q Plot in Figure 1 confirmed that the distribution of marital satisfaction scores followed the diagonal line, with data points clustering closely around it. Together, these results justify the use of parametric statistical procedures in subsequent analyses, ensuring that inferential tests such as Pearson's correlation are conducted on data that meet normality assumptions.

Table 7

Normality Test of Marital Satisfaction Variable

Variable	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Marital Satisfaction	0.100	67	0.094	0.970	67	0.103

Source: Primary data. Authors' estimation.

Figure 1

Q-Q Plots of Marital Satisfaction Variable
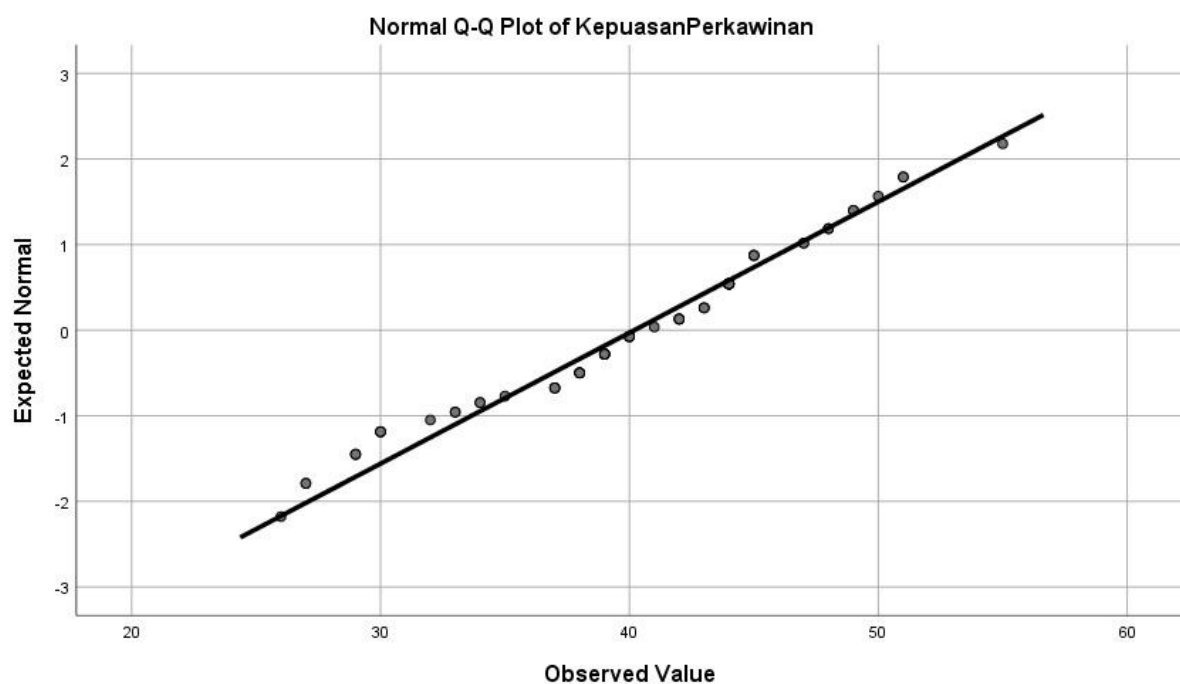
Source: Primary data. Authors' estimation.

Normality Test of Positive Emotional Expressivity

The results in Table 8 indicate that the distribution of positive emotional expressivity scores meets the assumption of normality. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test produced a significance value of 0.200 ($p > 0.05$), confirming that the null hypothesis of normal distribution could not be rejected. Similarly, the Shapiro-Wilk test yielded a significance value of 0.454, which further supports the conclusion that the data are normally distributed. Visual inspection through the Q–Q Plot (Figure 2) also corroborated this result, as data points closely followed the diagonal line, indicating a normal distribution pattern. Together, these findings confirm that the positive emotional expressivity variable is suitable for parametric statistical analyses, thereby strengthening the reliability of subsequent inferential testing.

Table 8

Normality Test of Positive Emotional Expressivity

Variable	Kolmogorov–Smirnov			Shapiro–Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Positive Emotional Expressivity	0.078	67	0.200	0.982	67	0.454

Source: Primary data. Authors' estimation.

Figure 2

Q-Q Plots of Positive Emotion Expression Variables
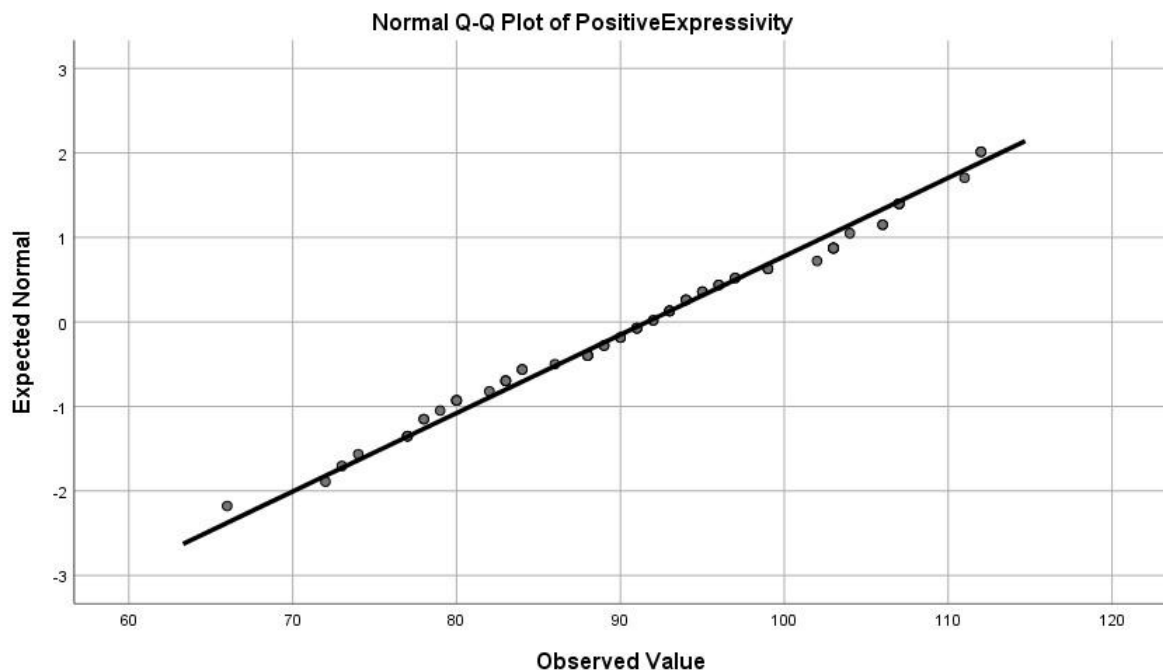
Source: Primary data. Authors' estimation.

Normality Test of Negative Emotional Expressivity

The results presented in Table 9 confirm that the distribution of negative emotional expressivity scores satisfies the normality assumption. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test yielded a significance value of 0.200 ($p > 0.05$), while the Shapiro-Wilk test produced a value of 0.697, both of which are above the 0.05 threshold. These findings indicate that the data are normally distributed, allowing for the application of parametric statistical tests in subsequent analyses. Supporting this conclusion, the Q–Q Plot (Figure 3) showed that the data points aligned closely with the diagonal line, suggesting a normal distribution pattern. Taken together, these results provide strong evidence that the negative emotional expressivity variable meets the assumption of normality, ensuring reliability in inferential statistical testing.

Table 9

Normality Test of Negative Emotional Expressivity

Variable	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro–Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Negative Emotional Expressivity	0.079	67	0.200	0.987	67	0.697

Source: Primary data. Authors' estimation.

Linearity Test of Positive Emotional Expressivity and Marital Satisfaction

The results in Table 10 indicate that the relationship between positive emotional expressivity and marital satisfaction fulfills the assumption of linearity. The test of linearity yielded a significance value of 0.014 ($p < 0.05$), confirming that the two variables are linearly associated. Furthermore, the test for deviation from linearity produced a non-significant result ($p = 0.377$), which suggests that the observed relationship does not deviate from a straight line. Taken together, these findings provide robust statistical evidence that positive emotional expressivity and marital satisfaction are related in a linear manner. This outcome validates the application of parametric correlation techniques such as Pearson's product–moment correlation for subsequent hypothesis testing and ensures the integrity of inferential conclusions drawn from the data.

Table 10

Linearity Test of Positive Emotional Expressivity and Marital Satisfaction

Variable	Source of Variation	F	Sig.	Note
Marital Satisfaction	Linearity	6.670	0.014	Significant linearity
Positive Emotional Expressivity	Deviation from Linearity	1.120	0.377	No deviation from linearity

Source: Primary data. Authors' estimation.

Linearity Test of Negative Emotional Expressivity and Marital Satisfaction

The results in Table 11 show that the relationship between negative emotional expressivity and marital satisfaction does not meet the statistical assumption of linearity. The linearity test yielded a non-significant value ($p = 0.419 > 0.05$), indicating that a linear relationship could not be established. However, the deviation from linearity test also produced a non-significant result ($p = 0.430 > 0.05$), suggesting that the data do not significantly deviate from a straight-line model. Taken together, these results imply that while the association between negative emotional expressivity and marital satisfaction cannot be confirmed as linear, it also does not exhibit systematic departures from linearity. This indicates a more complex relationship that may not be adequately captured by simple linear models and warrants careful interpretation in subsequent analyses.

Table 11

Linearity Test of Negative Emotional Expressivity and Marital Satisfaction

Variable	Source of Variation	F	Sig.	Note
Marital Satisfaction	Linearity	0.665	0.419	Not linear
Negative Emotional Expressivity	Deviation from Linearity	1.051	0.430	No deviation from linearity

Source: Primary data. Authors' estimation.

Hypothesis Testing

The hypothesis testing in this study was conducted after verifying that the prerequisite assumption tests were met. Results from the normality tests demonstrated that the data for marital satisfaction as well as for positive and negative emotional expressivity were normally distributed. This finding confirmed that the distribution of scores was appropriate for parametric statistical procedures. Furthermore, the linearity test indicated that marital satisfaction and positive emotional expressivity had a statistically significant linear relationship, thereby meeting the assumption required for correlation analysis.

By contrast, the linearity test between marital satisfaction and negative emotional expressivity yielded a non-significant result, indicating that the association could not be confirmed as linear. However, since the test of deviation from linearity was also non-significant, the data did not exhibit a systematic departure from linearity. Thus, despite the weaker evidence of linearity in this case, the assumption tests overall were considered to be satisfied. These results provided the necessary justification for applying Pearson's product–moment correlation in testing the research hypotheses regarding the relationships between emotional expressivity and marital satisfaction.

Correlation Between Marital Satisfaction and Positive Emotional Expressivity

As shown in Table 12, the results of Pearson's correlation test demonstrate a significant positive relationship between marital satisfaction and positive emotional expressivity. The correlation coefficient (r = 0.299) indicates a moderate but meaningful association, with a significance level of p = 0.007 (p < 0.05). This suggests that higher levels of positive expressivity, such as expressions of affection, praise, and gratitude, are associated with greater marital satisfaction. The coefficient of determination (r^2 = 0.089) further reveals that positive expressivity accounts for 8.9% of the variance in marital satisfaction, highlighting its explanatory power within this sample. These findings confirm the research hypothesis that positive emotional expressivity is positively correlated with marital satisfaction, and they provide empirical support for theoretical models emphasizing the role of constructive emotional communication in sustaining marital quality.

Table 12

Correlation Test of Marital Satisfaction and Positive Emotional Expressivity

Variables	r	r^2	p	Note
Marital Satisfaction and Positive Emotional Expressivity	0.299	0.089	0.007	Significant

Source: Primary data. Authors' estimation.

Correlation Between Marital Satisfaction and Negative Emotional Expressivity

As presented in Table 13, the Pearson correlation analysis revealed a significant negative relationship between marital satisfaction and negative emotional expressivity. The correlation coefficient (r = −0.100) suggests that higher levels of negative expressivity—such as criticism, anger, or contempt—are associated with lower marital satisfaction. The significance value of p = 0.010 (p < 0.05) supports the conclusion that this relationship is statistically meaningful. Moreover, the coefficient of determination (r^2 = 0.211) indicates that negative expressivity explains approximately 21.1% of the variance in marital satisfaction, a considerable proportion relative to the observed effect. These findings confirm the research hypothesis that negative emotional expressivity adversely influences marital satisfaction, reinforcing theoretical perspectives that emphasize the detrimental impact of hostile emotional patterns on relational stability and overall marital quality.

Table 13

Correlation Test of Marital Satisfaction and Negative Emotional Expressivity

Variables	r	r^2	p	Note
Marital Satisfaction and Negative Emotional Expressivity	−0.100	0.211	0.010	Significant

Source: Primary data. Authors' estimation.

Additional Data Analysis Test

Correlation by Gender

As shown in Table 14, the correlation analysis between positive emotional expressivity and marital satisfaction reveals contrasting results across genders. For male respondents, the coefficient was negative ($r = -0.208$) and statistically non-significant ($p = 0.327$), indicating that positive expressivity was not a reliable predictor of marital satisfaction among men. In contrast, for female respondents the coefficient was positive and significant ($r = 0.316$, $p = 0.007$), with an r^2 of 0.100, meaning that positive expressivity explained approximately 10% of the variance in marital satisfaction. These findings suggest that positive emotional behaviors play a more critical role in shaping marital satisfaction among women, reflecting gendered expectations around emotional communication and relational bonding.

Table 14

Correlation Test of Positive Emotional Expressivity and Marital Satisfaction by Gender

Gender	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Significance (p)	Determination Coefficient (r²)
Male	−0.208	0.327	0.043
Female	0.316	0.007	0.100

Source: Primary data. Authors' estimation.

As presented in Table 15, the correlation between negative emotional expressivity and marital satisfaction also varied by gender. For men, the coefficient was positive ($r = 0.234$), though non-significant ($p = 0.307$), suggesting that higher negative expressivity did not consistently predict dissatisfaction. For women, however, the coefficient was negative ($r = -0.164$) and approached statistical significance ($p = 0.105$), indicating a trend in which greater negative expression corresponded to lower satisfaction. The explanatory power of these associations was modest, with r^2 values of 0.055 for men and 0.027 for women. Taken together, these findings imply that while gender differences exist in the patterns of emotional expression, the influence of negative expressivity is less robust than positive expressivity, yet still potentially relevant for understanding marital quality in collectivist and multigenerational contexts.

Table 15

Correlation Test of Negative Emotional Expressivity and Marital Satisfaction by Gender

Gender	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Significance (p)	Determination Coefficient (r²)
Male	0.234	0.307	0.055
Female	−0.164	0.105	0.027

Source: Primary data. Authors' estimation.

Mean Difference in Marital Satisfaction by Gender

As shown in Table 16, the independent sample t-test was used to examine whether marital satisfaction differed significantly between male and female respondents living with parents or in-laws. The test produced a significance value of p = 0.258 (p > 0.05), indicating that no statistically significant difference was found between the two groups. However, descriptive statistics reveal that men reported a slightly higher mean score of marital satisfaction (M = 42.85) compared to women (M = 39.88). Although this difference was not statistically significant, the pattern suggests a tendency for men to perceive greater marital satisfaction than women in this context. These results highlight the importance of interpreting both significance levels and mean differences when assessing gender variations in marital satisfaction, especially within multigenerational household settings.

Table 16

Independent Sample t-Test of Marital Satisfaction by Gender

Variable	p	Mean (Male)	Mean (Female)
Gender and Marital Satisfaction	0.258	42.85	39.88

Source: Primary data. Authors' estimation.

Correlation by Age

As displayed in Table 17, the correlation between positive emotional expressivity and marital satisfaction was positive across both age groups, though not statistically significant. For respondents aged 18–40 years, the correlation coefficient was r = 0.246 (p = 0.054), explaining 6.0% of the variance. Among those aged 41–60 years, the correlation was slightly stronger (r = 0.350, p = 0.051), accounting for 12.2% of the variance. These results suggest a general trend in which greater positive expressivity is associated with higher marital satisfaction, particularly among older participants, but the lack of statistical significance indicates that age alone may not be a decisive moderator of this relationship.

Table 17

Correlation Test of Positive Emotional Expressivity and Marital Satisfaction by Age

Age Group	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Significance (p)	Determination Coefficient (r²)
18–40 years	0.246	0.054	0.060
41–60 years	0.350	0.051	0.122

Source: Primary data. Authors' estimation.

As presented in Table 18, correlations between negative emotional expressivity and marital satisfaction varied by age. For respondents aged 18–40 years, the correlation was negative but non-significant (r = −0.098, p = 0.264), accounting for only 1.4% of variance. Conversely, among those aged 41–60 years, the association turned positive

(r = 0.235), though it also failed to reach statistical significance (p = 0.140). These mixed results suggest that younger respondents may experience lower marital satisfaction when negative expressivity is present, while older respondents may interpret or regulate negative expressions differently, potentially mitigating their detrimental effects. However, the non-significant outcomes highlight the need for cautious interpretation.

Table 18

Correlation Test of Negative Emotional Expressivity and Marital Satisfaction by Age

Age Group	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Significance (p)	Determination Coefficient (r^2)
18–40 years	−0.098	0.264	0.014
41–60 years	0.235	0.140	0.055

Source: Primary data. Authors' estimation.

Mean Difference in Marital Satisfaction by Age

As shown in Table 19, the independent sample t-test was conducted to examine whether marital satisfaction differed significantly between younger (18–40 years) and older (41–60 years) respondents. The test yielded a significance value of p = 0.893 (p > 0.05), indicating that no meaningful difference was found between the two age groups. The mean scores were nearly identical, with the younger group averaging 40.27 and the older group 40.04. These findings suggest that, within this sample, marital satisfaction levels are relatively stable across age categories, implying that other factors such as emotional expressivity, gender, or socioeconomic conditions may play more prominent roles in shaping marital quality than age alone.

Table 19

Independent Sample t-Test of Marital Satisfaction by Age

Variable	p	Mean (18–40 years)	Mean (41–60 years)
Age and Marital Satisfaction	0.893	40.27	40.04

Source: Primary data. Authors' estimation.

Correlation by Marital Duration

As presented in Table 20, the correlation between positive emotional expressivity and marital satisfaction varied considerably across marital duration. In early marriage (1–5 years), the association was positive but non-significant (r = 0.422, p = 0.240). Similarly, for couples married 5–10 years, the relationship was negligible and non-significant (r = 0.012, p = 0.482). By contrast, among couples married for 10–20 years, the correlation was stronger and statistically significant (r = 0.488, p = 0.011), with positive expressivity explaining 23.8% of variance in satisfaction. Interestingly, for couples married longer than 20 years, the relationship turned negative (r = −0.279), though non-significant (p = 0.203). These results suggest that positive expressivity plays a particularly important

role during mid-marriage, a stage often characterized by heightened stress and multiple role demands.

Table 20

Correlation Test of Positive Emotional Expressivity and Marital Satisfaction by Marital Duration

Marital Duration	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Significance (p)	Determination Coefficient (r²)
1–5 years	0.422	0.240	0.178
5–10 years	0.012	0.482	0.000
10–20 years	0.488	0.011	0.238
>20 years	−0.279	0.203	0.078

Source: Primary data. Authors' estimation.

As shown in Table 21, the relationship between negative emotional expressivity and marital satisfaction was predominantly negative across most marital durations, though non-significant. For couples married 1–5 years, the association was minimal ($r = -0.058$, $p = 0.410$), and slightly stronger for those married 5–10 years ($r = -0.147$, $p = 0.293$). Couples with 10–20 years of marriage showed a moderately negative, yet still non-significant, correlation ($r = -0.271$, $p = 0.111$). Interestingly, for those married over 20 years, the correlation shifted direction, becoming positive ($r = 0.210$, $p = 0.268$). Although none of these results reached statistical significance, the overall pattern suggests that negative expressivity may be most detrimental during the first two decades of marriage, while in later years its impact appears weaker or possibly interpreted differently, perhaps due to greater marital adaptation over time.

Table 21

Correlation Test of Negative Emotional Expressivity and Marital Satisfaction by Marital Duration

Marital Duration	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Significance (p)	Determination Coefficient (r²)
1–5 years	−0.058	0.410	0.003
5–10 years	−0.147	0.293	0.022
10–20 years	−0.271	0.111	0.073
>20 years	0.210	0.268	0.044

Source: Primary data. Authors' estimation.

Mean Difference in Marital Satisfaction by Marital Duration

As shown in Table 22, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to examine whether marital satisfaction differed significantly by marital duration among couples co-residing with parents or in-laws. The test yielded a significance value of $p = 0.612$ ($p > 0.05$), indicating that no statistically significant differences were observed across the four marital duration groups. Despite the lack of significance, the descriptive results show that couples married for more than 20 years reported the highest mean marital satisfaction

(M = 42.45), while those married between 10 and 20 years reported the lowest mean (M = 39.22). These findings suggest that, although marital satisfaction may vary slightly across different stages of marital duration, such differences are not pronounced enough to reach statistical significance within this sample.

Table 22

One-way ANOVA Test of Marital Satisfaction by Marital Duration

Marital Duration	Mean	p
1–5 years	40.33	
5–10 years	39.81	
10–20 years	39.22	
>20 years	42.45	
Total	—	0.612

Source: Primary data. Authors' estimation.

Correlation by Number of Children

As displayed in Table 23, the correlation between positive emotional expressivity and marital satisfaction varied according to the number of children. For childless couples, the relationship was negative but non-significant (r = −0.042, p = 0.468). For couples with one child, the relationship was positive and statistically significant (r = 0.397, p = 0.046), explaining 15.8% of the variance in satisfaction. Couples with two children reported a positive, though non-significant, correlation (r = 0.283, p = 0.187). For couples with three children, the correlation was stronger (r = 0.476), approaching significance (p = 0.059). These results suggest that positive expressivity is particularly salient in families with one or three children, likely reflecting the heightened relational demands of early parenthood and larger family structures.

Table 23

Correlation Test of Positive Emotional Expressivity and Marital Satisfaction by Number of Children

Number of Children	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Significance (p)	Determination Coefficient (r²)
0	−0.042	0.468	0.000
1	0.397	0.046	0.158
2	0.283	0.187	0.080
3	0.476	0.059	0.226

Source: Primary data. Authors' estimation.

As presented in Table 24, the correlation between negative emotional expressivity and marital satisfaction also varied with family size. For childless couples, the correlation was negative (r = −0.394), though not significant (p = 0.220), accounting for 15.5% of variance. For couples with one child, the association was minimal (r = −0.021, p = 0.467). For couples with two children, the correlation remained negative but weak (r

= −0.163, p = 0.199). Interestingly, among couples with three children, the relationship turned slightly positive (r = 0.018, p = 0.477), though essentially negligible. These findings indicate that negative expressivity tends to reduce marital satisfaction across most family sizes, especially in childless marriages, but its predictive strength diminishes as the number of children increases, possibly due to the redistribution of emotional focus within larger families.

Table 24

Correlation Test of Negative Emotional Expressivity and Marital Satisfaction by Number of Children

Number of Children	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Significance (p)	Determination Coefficient (r^2)
0	−0.394	0.220	0.155
1	−0.021	0.467	0.000
2	−0.163	0.199	0.027
3	0.018	0.477	0.000

Source: Primary data. Authors' estimation.

Mean Difference in Marital Satisfaction by Number of Children

As presented in Table 25, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to assess whether marital satisfaction differed significantly based on the number of children among couples living with parents or in-laws. The test yielded a significance value of p = 0.645 (p > 0.05), indicating that there were no statistically significant differences across groups. However, descriptive results reveal some variation in the mean scores: couples with two children reported the highest marital satisfaction (M = 40.82), followed closely by those with three children (M = 40.41), while couples with one child had the lowest satisfaction (M = 38.84). Although these differences were not significant, the descriptive trend suggests that family size may shape relational experiences, with couples balancing parenting responsibilities differently depending on the number of children.

Table 25

One-way ANOVA Test of Marital Satisfaction by Number of Children

Number of Children	Mean	p
0	39.66	
1	38.84	
2	40.82	
3	40.41	
Total	—	0.645

Source: Primary data. Authors' estimation.

Correlation by Income

As presented in Table 26, the correlation analysis showed distinct patterns depending on income level. For participants earning below the minimum wage, the correlation

between positive expressivity and marital satisfaction was negative and non-significant (r = −0.023, p = 0.471). Among those at the minimum wage level, however, the relationship was positive and statistically significant (r = 0.507, p = 0.004), with positive expressivity explaining 25.7% of the variance in satisfaction. For participants with income above the minimum wage, the association remained positive but non-significant (r = 0.183, p = 0.176). These findings suggest that positive expressivity exerts the greatest influence on marital satisfaction among couples at the minimum wage level, possibly reflecting its compensatory role under financial constraints.

Table 26

Correlation Test of Positive Emotional Expressivity and Marital Satisfaction by Income

Income Level	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Significance (p)	Determination Coefficient (r²)
Below Minimum Wage	−0.023	0.471	0.001
At Minimum Wage	0.507	0.004	0.257
Above Minimum Wage	0.183	0.176	0.034

Source: Primary data. Authors' estimation.

As shown in Table 27, negative emotional expressivity demonstrated predominantly negative associations with marital satisfaction for couples earning below or at the minimum wage, though these relationships were not statistically significant. For respondents below the minimum wage, the correlation was r = −0.322 (p = 0.154), accounting for 10.3% of variance. At the minimum wage level, the correlation was slightly weaker (r = −0.309, p = 0.062), explaining 9.6% of variance. Interestingly, for couples with income above the minimum wage, the relationship shifted direction to a negligible positive value (r = 0.018, p = 0.464). This pattern suggests that financial strain may amplify the negative impact of hostile emotional expression, while greater economic security may buffer its detrimental effects on marital satisfaction.

Table 27

Correlation Test of Negative Emotional Expressivity and Marital Satisfaction by Income

Income Level	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Significance (p)	Determination Coefficient (r²)
Below Minimum Wage	−0.322	0.154	0.103
At Minimum Wage	−0.309	0.062	0.096
Above Minimum Wage	0.018	0.464	0.000

Source: Primary data. Authors' estimation.

Mean Difference in Marital Satisfaction by Income

As presented in Table 28, a one-way ANOVA test revealed significant differences in marital satisfaction by income level. The test produced a significance value of p = 0.008 (p < 0.05), indicating that marital satisfaction varied meaningfully across income

groups. Descriptive results show that couples with income above the minimum wage reported the highest marital satisfaction (M = 42.37), followed by those at the minimum wage (M = 39.88). In contrast, couples earning below the minimum wage reported the lowest satisfaction (M = 35.58). These findings suggest that financial security plays a crucial role in shaping marital quality, reinforcing the idea that adequate income provides stability and reduces stressors that might otherwise undermine relationship satisfaction.

Table 28

One-way ANOVA Test of Marital Satisfaction by Income

Income Level	Mean	p
Below Minimum Wage	35.58	
At Minimum Wage	39.88	
Above Minimum Wage	42.37	
Total	—	0.008

Source: Primary data. Authors' estimation.

DISCUSSION

Positive Emotional Expressivity and Marital Satisfaction

The results of this study demonstrate a clear positive association between positive emotional expressivity and marital satisfaction among couples co-residing with parents or in-laws. Participants who frequently expressed warmth, gratitude, and affection reported significantly higher satisfaction in their marriages. This finding suggests that positive expressivity acts as a protective factor, reinforcing intimacy and cohesion even in the potentially stressful environment of multigenerational households. Moreover, the analysis revealed that this association was particularly salient in specific demographic groups, including women, couples married for 10–20 years, and those with one child. These results highlight the central role of constructive emotional expression in sustaining relational quality under conditions of heightened familial demands.

These findings are consistent with a substantial body of research affirming the benefits of positive emotional expressivity. Gottman (1994) emphasizes that couples maintaining a high ratio of positive-to-negative interactions are more likely to sustain long-term stability. Similarly, Bloch et al. (2014) find that verbal affirmations and affectionate gestures predict higher satisfaction across cultural contexts. Previous studies (Rathi & Lee, 2021; Yoo et al., 2011; Zheng et al., 2020) demonstrate in collectivist societies that positive emotional communication serves as a critical buffer against family stressors. Thus, the present study not only aligns with prior work but also extends

these insights into the context of Indonesian extended households, where positive expressivity appears particularly vital for maintaining marital harmony.

The theoretical implications of this result are significant. It reinforces models that situate emotional processes at the core of marital satisfaction and provides empirical support for the universality of positive expressivity as a predictor of relational quality. Practically, these findings point toward the value of counseling interventions and psychoeducational programs that cultivate gratitude, praise, and affectionate behavior among couples. Policy-wise, the results suggest that initiatives promoting marital health in Indonesia should incorporate modules on constructive communication and emotional expressivity, recognizing their role in buffering against the unique challenges of co-residence. In doing so, policy interventions may strengthen not only marital quality but also broader family resilience.

Negative Emotional Expressivity and Marital Dissatisfaction

The study also revealed that negative emotional expressivity was negatively associated with marital satisfaction, even if the strength of the correlation was modest. Participants who more frequently expressed anger, criticism, or contempt reported lower satisfaction levels, consistent with theoretical models that view hostile communication as corrosive to marital stability. While the statistical inconsistency between reported r and r^2 values warrants caution, the overall direction of the findings underscores the risks posed by negative emotional patterns. This effect was particularly pronounced in the general sample but did not consistently appear across subgroups, suggesting contextual moderation.

These results corroborate existing research demonstrating the detrimental effects of negative expressivity. Gottman (1994) identifies contempt as one of the strongest predictors of divorce, while Karney & Bradbury (2005) emphasize that criticism and hostility undermine trust and intimacy. Bloch et al. (2014) similarly report that negative expressivity erodes communication, reducing overall satisfaction. Although the strength of the correlation observed here was lower than in some prior studies, the direction aligns with established evidence. The variation across subgroups may reflect cultural norms in collectivist societies, where individuals may suppress or moderate negative expression to maintain household harmony.

The implications of these findings are multifaceted. Theoretically, they confirm that even within cultures that discourage open conflict, negative expressivity remains a significant predictor of dissatisfaction. Practically, they highlight the importance of interventions aimed at reducing hostile communication and promoting conflict resolution skills. On a policy level, programs supporting marital health should incorporate training in anger management and constructive disagreement,

particularly in contexts of co-residence where negative expressions can escalate tensions beyond the couple to include extended family members. Such approaches may help mitigate the risks of marital breakdown and strengthen overall household stability.

Moderating Effects of Gender and Age

The subgroup analyses highlighted interesting demographic patterns, particularly regarding gender. Among women, positive emotional expressivity showed a significant positive association with satisfaction, whereas the same pattern was absent among men. Although the limited number of male participants restricts firm conclusions, this finding is suggestive of gendered differences in the salience of emotional expression. Women's satisfaction appears more closely tied to the quality of emotional exchange, consistent with prior research that underscores the centrality of intimacy and validation in women's relational well-being.

These results echo findings in the broader literature. Kurdek (2005) reports that women's marital satisfaction is more strongly predicted by perceived emotional support and communication quality, while men's satisfaction is often linked to role performance and economic stability. Other studies (S. S. Liu et al., 2021; K. Yang & Girgus, 2019) note that in collectivist settings, women rely heavily on positive emotional signals to sustain marital harmony. At the same time, the absence of strong patterns among men in this study may reflect both sample size limitations and cultural expectations, where men may be socialized to value pragmatic contributions over emotional expressivity.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings underscore the importance of considering gender as a moderator in marital satisfaction research. Practically, interventions may need to be tailored by gender, with greater emphasis on cultivating emotional communication skills among women and reinforcing supportive role behaviors among men. At the policy level, marital education programs in Indonesia could integrate gender-sensitive approaches, acknowledging the different pathways through which men and women derive satisfaction in marriage. Such sensitivity would ensure that interventions are both culturally appropriate and responsive to demographic realities.

Moderating Effects of Marital Duration and Parental Status

The analysis also revealed that marital duration and parental status moderate the relationship between expressivity and satisfaction. Positive expressivity was especially significant for couples married between 10 and 20 years, suggesting that mid-marriage is a stage where emotional affirmation plays a vital role. For couples with one child, positive expressivity likewise emerged as a significant predictor, indicating that

emotional resources are crucial during the transition to parenthood. These findings reflect the evolving demands of marriage across the life course.

Prior studies support this interpretation. Karney & Bradbury (2005) argue that marital satisfaction fluctuates across stages of marriage, often dipping during periods of high role strain such as childrearing and stabilizing later in life. Research on early parenthood indicates that the arrival of children often intensifies stress and reduces couple time, making positive expressivity essential for sustaining closeness (Bloch et al., 2014). The mid-marriage finding aligns with work suggesting that couples at this stage face accumulated pressures from work, parenting, and finances, necessitating stronger emotional resources.

The theoretical implication is that marital satisfaction cannot be understood in static terms but must be contextualized within life course transitions. Practically, interventions could target couples at high-risk stages, such as early parenthood or mid-marriage, by providing psychoeducation on maintaining emotional expressivity during stressful transitions. Policy implications include the development of family support programs that provide resources for parents of young children and couples in mid-marriage, recognizing that these stages pose unique risks for marital dissatisfaction.

Income as a Contextual Moderator

Income differences also played a notable role, with significant disparities in marital satisfaction across income groups. Participants earning above the minimum wage reported higher satisfaction, while those at or below minimum wage exhibited lower levels. Moreover, positive expressivity was particularly predictive of satisfaction among participants at the minimum wage level, suggesting that emotional resources become especially valuable when financial resources are constrained. These results illustrate the interplay between structural and psychological determinants of marital well-being.

This finding aligns with prior research linking economic stability to marital quality. Amato & Previti (2003) highlight the role of financial strain as a contributor to marital conflict and dissatisfaction. Other scholars (Neff & Karney, 2017; Pietromonaco et al., 2022; Williamson et al., 2013) argue that external stressors, including low income, exacerbate the impact of negative communication patterns. Other scholars (Gilligan et al., 2020; Taniguchi & Kaufman, 2017) note that in collectivist societies, extended family support can partially buffer economic strain, but emotional expressivity remains crucial in sustaining couple solidarity. The present findings, therefore, extend these insights by showing how emotional expressivity may compensate for limited material resources.

The implications are significant across theoretical, practical, and policy domains. Theoretically, the results underscore the interaction between structural and

interpersonal factors in determining marital satisfaction. Practically, they suggest that interventions aimed at financially constrained couples should emphasize the cultivation of emotional expressivity as a compensatory mechanism. Policy implications include the design of family support programs that integrate economic assistance with relational education, ensuring that couples are equipped with both material and emotional resources to sustain marital health.

Integrative Implications

Taken together, the findings highlight the dual roles of positive and negative expressivity in shaping marital satisfaction within multigenerational households. Positive expressivity consistently emerged as a protective factor, while negative expressivity posed risks to relational quality. These patterns were moderated by gender, marital duration, parental status, and income, demonstrating that the impact of expressivity is context-dependent. By situating these dynamics within the Indonesian cultural context, the study extends the generalizability of existing models and underscores the need for culturally grounded research.

These findings are consistent with and extend prior literature while also highlighting areas of divergence. Although the overall associations align with established models (Gottman, 1994; Karney & Bradbury, 2005; Bloch et al., 2014), the moderating effects of demographic and contextual factors emphasize that the influence of expressivity cannot be assumed to be uniform. Cultural norms of collectivism, expectations around gender roles, and the realities of co-residence all shape how emotional expressivity is enacted and interpreted. As such, the Indonesian context provides a valuable case for refining broader theories of marital satisfaction.

The implications span theoretical, practical, and policy domains. Theoretically, the findings advance relational models by integrating cultural and structural moderators into the study of emotional expressivity. Practically, they underscore the need for targeted interventions that cultivate positive expressivity and minimize negative patterns, particularly at high-risk stages of marriage or under financial strain. Policy implications include the integration of marital education into broader family support initiatives, recognizing that strong marriages contribute to broader social stability. In sum, the study contributes not only to scholarly understanding but also to the design of culturally responsive strategies for promoting marital well-being.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the relationship between emotional expressivity and marital satisfaction among Indonesian couples living with parents or in-laws. The results confirmed that positive expressivity, such as gratitude and affection, was significantly

associated with higher marital satisfaction, while negative expressivity, such as criticism and anger, predicted lower satisfaction. Subgroup analyses further revealed that the influence of expressivity varied by gender, marital duration, number of children, and income level, indicating that contextual and demographic factors play a role in shaping marital dynamics. These findings highlight the dual impact of emotional expression in either strengthening or weakening marital bonds in multigenerational households.

The results support prior theories emphasizing the importance of communication and emotional processes in marital well-being (Gottman, 1994; Karney & Bradbury, 2005), while extending this knowledge to collectivist and extended-family contexts. In particular, the study demonstrates that in households where couples share space with parents or in-laws, positive expressivity functions as a vital resource for maintaining intimacy and cohesion. Conversely, negative expressivity threatens not only marital stability but also the harmony of extended family relations. By situating these associations in the Indonesian context, the study expands the generalizability of marital satisfaction research beyond Western nuclear families.

The study's contributions are both theoretical and practical. Theoretically, it underscores the need to incorporate cultural and structural factors—such as co-residence and financial strain—into models of marital satisfaction. Practically, it provides insights for counselors, educators, and policymakers seeking to strengthen marriages in collectivist settings. Programs that encourage positive expressivity and reduce negative communication could serve as effective strategies for enhancing marital stability. In doing so, the research contributes to broader efforts to foster resilient families and communities in Indonesia.

Limitations of the Study

Several limitations must be acknowledged when interpreting the results. First, the study employed a cross-sectional design, which restricts the ability to make causal inferences about the relationship between expressivity and marital satisfaction. Longitudinal designs would be better suited to track changes over time and establish temporal precedence. Second, the sample was relatively small and imbalanced in gender distribution, with women constituting the overwhelming majority. This limits the ability to generalize findings, particularly concerning male perspectives on emotional expressivity and satisfaction. Additionally, the reliance on self-report measures raises the possibility of social desirability bias, especially in collectivist cultures where harmony is highly valued.

Another limitation concerns the cultural and contextual specificity of the sample. All participants were Indonesian and lived with parents or in-laws, which may not

represent the experiences of couples in nuclear households or other cultural contexts. Furthermore, the study used adapted instruments, and while psychometric reliability was established, subtle differences in meaning or interpretation could influence responses. Finally, statistical inconsistencies, particularly in the reporting of correlation coefficients and r^2 values, suggest that findings should be interpreted cautiously. These methodological and contextual constraints highlight the need for cautious generalization and point to directions for more robust future research.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future studies should consider employing longitudinal designs to establish causal relationships between emotional expressivity and marital satisfaction. Tracking couples over time would allow researchers to examine how positive and negative expressivity influence marital outcomes across different life stages, such as early marriage, mid-marriage, and retirement. In addition, future research should include larger and more balanced samples, particularly increasing male participation, to capture potential gendered differences in emotional dynamics. Employing mixed-method approaches that integrate quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews could provide richer insights into how couples interpret and negotiate emotional expression in multigenerational households.

Further research should also explore cultural comparisons, examining how emotional expressivity influences marital satisfaction across collectivist and individualist societies. Such comparative studies could clarify whether the protective role of positive expressivity and the risks of negative expressivity are universal or culturally contingent. Moreover, exploring the role of external stressors such as economic hardship, work–life balance, and caregiving responsibilities could deepen understanding of contextual moderators. Finally, applied research should investigate the effectiveness of counseling and psychoeducational programs designed to enhance positive expressivity. These practical applications could inform culturally sensitive interventions and family policies that strengthen marital resilience in diverse social settings.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization: A.E.P. & F.A.K.; Data curation: A.E.P. & F.A.K.; Formal analysis: A.E.P. & F.A.K.; Funding acquisition: A.E.P. & F.A.K.; Investigation: A.E.P. & F.A.K.; Methodology: A.E.P. & F.A.K.; Project administration: A.E.P. & F.A.K.; Resources: A.E.P. & F.A.K.; Software: A.E.P. & F.A.K.; Supervision: A.E.P. & F.A.K.; Validation: A.E.P. & F.A.K.; Visualization: A.E.P. & F.A.K.; Writing – original draft: A.E.P. & F.A.K.; Writing – review & editing: A.E.P. & F.A.K. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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Informed Consent Statement

Informed consent was obtained before respondents filled out the questionnaire for this study.

Data Availability Statement

The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to institution's policy.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Declaration of Generative AI and AI-Assisted Technologies in the Writing Process

During the preparation of this work the authors used ChatGPT, Grammarly, and PaperPal in order to translate from Bahasa Indonesia into English, and to improve clarity of the language and readability of the article. After using these tools, the authors reviewed and edited the content as needed and took full responsibility for the content of the published article.

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