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## MATE SELECTION, SPOUSAL SUPPORT, AND MARITAL ATISFACTION IN WOMEN OF TURKISH ORIGIN LIVING IN BELGIUM

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### **Abstract:-**

*This research was carried out to investigate the marital satisfaction and perceived spousal support in married women of Turkish origin living in Belgium. The study was carried out with a sample of 406 married women of Turkish origin and The Marital Life Scale and The Spouse Support Scale were used in the study. Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was conducted to determine whether or not marital satisfaction and perceived spousal support mean scores of participants differ according to the mate selection, education level, perceived income level and working status. Results indicated that women of Turkish origin living in Belgium have reported a medium level of marital satisfaction and perceived spousal support and no significant difference was found between mean marital satisfaction and perceived spousal support in women married with a spouse from Turkey and women married a spouse from the Turkish community in Belgium. In addition, it was determined that women with higher education and women with higher income level and women who are working have tended to have higher marital satisfaction and perceived spousal support*

**Keywords:** - *Belgium, married woman, marital satisfaction, spousal support*

## INTRODUCTION

To meet the workforce needs of the economically well developed and industrialized countries of Western Europe headed towards Turkey since the beginning of the 1960s. Turkey signed agreements on labor transfer with Germany, Belgium, and Denmark in 1961 and with Austria in 1964, with France in 1965 and with Sweden in 1967 (Manço, 2000:20).

In 1964, primarily Turkish male workers arrived in Belgium. Between 1964 and 1980, within the framework of family reunification, women and children migrated to Belgium, women and men parity were resulted, and family-centered social life has been started (Schoonvaere, 2013:32). From 1980 to today, the first generation of single employees', and the second and subsequent generations' marriages with a partner from Turkey reinforced man and woman parity in Turkish society. Today, 250,000 Turkish immigrants live in Belgium. 93% of them acquired Belgium citizenship. 64, 3% of the Turkish people living in Belgium are married and 90% of them selected a mate of Turkish origin (Torrekens and Adam, 2015:33-53). The first generation families have a role of "cornerstone" in the process of becoming a society in the country of migration. Family-centered social life has gained importance especially after the families of workers came to the migrated countries. Women have played an important role in the construction of Turkish society in the migrated countries by carrying traditions and customs (Şahin, 2008:354). Therefore, the accumulation of culture that includes family and social life has gained depth, has been restructured, preserved and transferred from generation to generation. New marriage practices and family models have emerged, depending on the marriages of next generations who were born and raised in Belgium and those who migrated to Belgium at a young age (Taş and Subaşı, 2017:43-64). Three types of marriages have been determined based on the mate selection of an individual of Turkish origin living in Belgium. These are; selecting a mate from Turkey, selecting a mate from Turkish society living in Belgium and selecting a mate from a different nationality. Marriage type and the process may influence family life and dynamics. Accordingly, it is important to define the concepts of mate selection, spouse support, and marital satisfaction and to understand the relationship between these variables

### 1. Types of Marriages in Turkish Society in Belgium

#### 1.1. Marriage with a partner from Turkey

Since the beginning of migration, immigrants of Turkish origin living in various European countries mostly preferred to select a mate from Turkey. In 1991, 74.7% of men and 68.7% of women were married to a partner from Turkey (Schoonvaere, 2013:32-34). Other studies indicated that a large majority of Turkish people (75%) living in Belgium have positive attitudes about marriage with a partner from Turkey (Kaya ve Kentel, 2007:84). Jamoulle (2010:37) stated that seven of ten Turkish people living in Belgium prefer to marry with a person from Turkey. Between 2008 and 2010, 5142 people migrated from Turkey to Belgium through marriage (Schoonvaere, 2013: 41). The distribution of immigrants from Turkey by gender is equal (Teule, Vanderwaeren and Mbah-Fongkimeh, 2012:24). Due to the new arrangements about the marriages from out of Belgium and becoming more aware of the possible problems of marriage with a partner from Turkey, the number of these types of marriages has reduced. In general, spouses who come from Turkey disconnect from a familiar environment. These individuals lose self-describing references and references that help him/her to adjust to his/her life and have difficulties to build new ones. They can have some problems in Belgium such as language, employment, and social adaptation. Economic dependence on the spouse or his/her family is especially important. In this process, the dependent spouse is suffering, family life and dynamics are damaged. Some brides may also be exposed to violence and suffered oppression by new family members (Taş, 2014:226). The difference in mentality between the couples due to the growing up in different countries may be described as an important problem. Some couples are suspicious about their husband's/wife's sincerity about marriage who came from Turkey. The partner who has grown up in Belgium may suspect or think that his/her partner who came from Turkey has married with him/her to be able to come to Belgium and may experience a sense of objectivization. According to the parents, partners from Turkey transfer language, religion, and culture to their children and protect future generations against assimilation (Taş, 2008:73)

#### 1.2. Marriage with a partner of Turkish origin living in Belgium

The number of marriages among women and men of Turkish origin born in Belgium or come to Belgium at an early age has increased. This finding is consistent with the argument that people from lower classes select mates similar to themselves which also can be called as homogamy-marriage. Partners have met in different settings and they find the opportunity to get to know each other before marriage (de Singly, 2010:43). Since both spouses know the language of the region in which they live in Belgium and recognize the institutions, they may share the responsibilities of family life in an easier way. The economic opportunities of the spouses who have been educated in Belgium and found a job easily are better. They have a common mentality in their marriage and can adapt each other's social environments. They also establish social relations with non-Turkish people easily. Spouses are also not suspicious about their marriage. In these type marriages, mostly spouses live close to their families and interfere in their life. Spouses sometimes have conflicts with father-in-law, mother-in-law or other family members. Because of the girls/women of Turkish origin who were born and grown in the migrated country have become westernized or internalized the norms of the western society in which they live regarding the gender equality discomfort their husbands and husbands' family and cause conflict related to gender issues. Women's individual independence is seen as a threat to the institution of marriage. It is pointed out that the risk of divorce is high in these types of marriages. According to the parents, the spouses who were born or grown in Belgium do not know the Turkish language, culture, and Islam well

enough. Therefore, these spouses and their children move away from Turkish culture and Islam. This process increases the likelihood of assimilation (Taş, 2008: 79)

### **1.3. Interracial marriage**

Interracial marriage is a form of marriage outside a specific group such as nationality, ethnicity, and religion. Young people of Turkish origin define interracial as 'marriage for love'. Spouses meet in common environments, have pre-marital sex with their future spouse and claim that these experiences have a positive impact on couple relationship (Taş, 2011:18-22). The interracial marriage which is viewed as a social and cultural richness also provides these young people of Turkish an opportunity to get to know a different culture, and community. In interracial marriages, spouses may equally share responsibilities in the family, involve the education process of children, find a job easily and have more economic resources. Interracial marriages are often rejected by the family of both partners. The spouses move away from family and experience loneliness. One of the spouses is compelled to change his/her religion, name and lifestyle and reconstruct his/her psychosocial identity. In interracial marriages, one of the Belgian languages, which are usually the common language, is spoken. Spouses and children forget their mother language. Spouses carry different religious and cultural values into the family life and value conflict may be experienced between the spouses. The autonomy of the European woman may be disturbing for Turkish families or her husband. There can be a difference of opinion in the decisions regarding the names of children, religious education and their future. Therefore, interracial marriages are consistently required explanation and bargain and they generally involve high tension.

### **2. Marital Satisfaction and Spouse Support**

Marital satisfaction is defined as psychological satisfaction and degree of pleasure obtained by spouses from specific aspects of the marital relationship involving environmental and personal aspects. While environmental aspect involves equality in decision making, dominance, income, working status and sharing problems; personal aspect involves exhibiting love to each other, attitudes, sexual satisfaction, communication styles and the way of expressing themselves (Sokolski and Hendrick, 1999). One of the most important factors that influence marital satisfaction is the degree of support from the spouse. The support of a spouse affects marital satisfaction and therefore it plays an important role in marital quality (Çağ, 2011). The spouse support is accepted as a part of social support and includes giving advice and information, emotional support, financial support, appreciation, helping to cope with the problems, comforting and being a model (Yıldırım, 2004). Spousal support means that the spouse is valued, loved, respected and valued as a human being (Çağ and Yıldırım, 2013). Perception of the adequacy of the support provided by the spouse is important (Dehle, Larsen and Landers, 2001). At this point, it is not important how supportive the spouse is, but how much a wife/husband perceives support from his/her spouse. Perception of the support from the spouse may also have an impact on marital relationships. Especially after a stressful event in the couple's life, the perceived level of support is more effective than the amount of support provided by the spouses (Helgeson, 1993). In the previous literature on the relationships between spousal support and marital relations, although number of studies have investigated the relationship between marital satisfaction and social support in marriage (Acitelli and Antonucci, 1991; Belsky and Pensky, 1988; Cowan and Cowan, 1992; Çağ and Yıldırım, 2013; , 2001; Newman, 2000; Rini, Dunkel-Schetter, Hobel, Glynn and Sandman, 2006; Stinson et al., 2017; Vural-Batik and Kalkan, 2016) no research has been found that examined the relationship between spousal support and marital satisfaction in immigrants of Turkish origin living in Belgium. Turkish males and females who were born or raised in Belgium and who came to Belgium at an early age choose one of the three types of marriages which the basic characteristics were mentioned above. The distinctive dynamics of each type of marriage has been explained above. It is important to investigate the relationship between marriage type, spousal support and marriage satisfaction in Turkish immigrants living in Belgium. The aim of this study was to investigate the marital satisfaction and perception of spousal support of married Turkish women who were born in or came to Belgium at an early age. Accordingly, the following questions were examined: 1. What is the level of marital satisfaction and perception of spousal support of married Turkish women who were born in or came to Belgium at an early age? 2. Does the level of marital satisfaction and perception of spousal support of married Turkish women who were born in or came to Belgium at an early age differ significantly in terms of mate selection, education level, perceived income level and working status?

### **3. Method**

#### **3.1. Research Model**

The present study was conducted according to the general screening model. The general screening model is a screening approach conducted on a universe composing of a large number of elements in order to draw a general conclusion regarding the universe. This model is employed by screening the universe as a whole or a certain group or sample within the universe (Karasar, 2009)

#### **3.2. Study Group**

The study group consisted of 406 married women of Turkish origin who were born in or came to Belgium at an early age. A simple random sampling technique was used to select study group. A simple random sampling technique is that each member of the population has an equal chance of being selected as sample for the study. In this sampling method, all the elements in the universe have an equal and independent chance to be selected for the sample and the

selection of an element does not affect the others (Büyüköztürk, Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz and Demirel, 2015). Detailed information about the characteristics of the study group is described in Table 1

**Table 1. Characteristics of the study group**

Variables	n	%	
Level of education	Primary school	22	5,4
	Secondary school	52	12,8
	High school	208	51,2
	University	124	30,5
Working status	Working	251	61,8
	Not working	155	38,2
Income level	Low	14	3,4
	Moderate	150	36,9
	High	204	50,2
	Very high	38	9,4
Duration of marriage	0- 5 years	95	23,4
	6-10 years	74	18,2
	11-15 years	58	14,3
	16-20 years	69	17
	21-25 years	48	11,8
	26 years and more	62	15,3
Number of marriages	1	389	95,8
	2	14	3,4
	3	3	,7
Number of children	0	48	11,8
	1	68	16,7
	2	139	34,2
	3 and more	151	37,2
Mate selection	From Turkey	207	51,0
	From Belgium (of Turkish origin)	199	49,0
<b>Total</b>	<b>406</b>	<b>100</b>	

As it can be seen in Table 1, 5.4% of the participants were graduated from primary school, 12.8% were graduated from middle school, 51.2% were graduated high school and 30.5% were graduated from university and 61.8% of them work. While 3, 4% of the participants perceive their income as low, 36, 9% of them perceive as moderate level, 50, 2% of them perceive high and 9,4% of them perceive very high. The marriage duration of the participants is between 0 and 45 years and it is the first marriage of 95.8% of them. While 11.8% of the married women participating in the study has no children, 16.7% of them have one child, 34.2% of them have two children and 37.2% of them three or more children. In addition, 51% of the participants select mate from Turkey, 49% of them select a mate of Turkish origin living in Belgium. The mean age married women who participated in the study was 36.21 years (Sd=8.48)

### 3. Data Collection Tools

In this study Information Gathering Form, the Marital Life Scale and the Spouse Support Scale were used to collect the data. The Information Gathering Form: An information gathering form which was prepared by the researchers was used to collect data on demographic variables of participants such as marriage type, married duration, and the number of children. The Marital Life Scale (MLS): The Marital Life Scale (MLS) has been developed by Tezer (1996) in order to determine overall satisfaction level experienced by the married individuals in their marital relationships. The MLS which is a 5-point Likert-type scale consists of 10 items. The higher scores from the scale showed that the spouses had more marriage satisfaction. In order to determine the validity the MLS was administered to divorced and married individuals and significant differences were found between the mean scores of the two groups ( $t=6.23$ ,  $p<.01$ ). This result indicated that the MLS distinguishes two groups in terms of marital satisfaction. The Cronbach alpha coefficient of the scale was calculated as .88 for the male group and .91 for the female group and test-retest reliability coefficient was found as .85. The Cronbach Alfa coefficient was determined as .88 in the present study. In this regard, it can be said that the MLS is a reliable instrument to determine the marriage satisfaction levels of married women of Turkish origin living in Belgium. The Spouse Support Scale (SSS): The Spouse Support Scale (SSS) was developed by Yıldırım (2004) in Turkish culture to measure perceived spousal support. The SSS is a 3-point Likert-type scale and consists of 27 items. Higher scores indicate greater perceived spousal support. The SSS has four subscales which are emotional support, instrumental and information support, appraisal support, and social companionship. The Beck Depression Inventory was administered to examine criterion-referenced validity and a significant negative association was found between the Beck Depression Inventory and SSS. While the Cronbach Alpha coefficient of SSS was found to be .95, test-retest reliability coefficient calculated as .89. In the current study, the Cronbach Alfa coefficient was determined as .95. In this regard, it can be said that the SSS is a reliable instrument to determine the perceived spousal support levels of married women of Turkish origin living in Belgium.

### 3.4. Analysis of Data

First of all, homogeneity of variance, kurtosis, and skewness values were used and one-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test was applied to determine whether the data distributed normally. The results of homogeneity of variance test showed that data were homogeneous ( $p=.259$  and  $.674$ ,  $p>.05$ ). The results of One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test showed that the data has a normal distribution. The kurtosis value of marital satisfaction was -.330

(Standard error=.242), and the skewness value of marital satisfaction was -.552 (Standard error=.121). The kurtosis value of perceived spousal support was -.175 (Standard error=.242), and the skewness value of it was -.826 (Standard error=.121). If the value of kurtosis and skewness are close to 0 within the limits of  $\pm 1$ , then distribution is called as normally distributed (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2013). According to the findings obtained from normality tests, it was determined that the data has a normal distribution and therefore parametric analyses were used to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics were used to characterize participants' marital satisfaction and perception of spousal support. Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was conducted to determine whether or not marital satisfaction and perceived spousal support mean scores of participants differ according to the mate selection, education level, perceived income level and working status. The data were analyzed using SPSS version 22.0 software. The significance was tested at .05 level

## Findings

The mean marital satisfaction and perceived spousal support scores of the married women of Turkish origin living in Belgium and standard deviations are presented in Table 2

	n	Mean	SD
Marital Satisfaction (Total)	406	37.33	8.16
Spousal Support (Total)	406	65.55	12.25
Emotional Support	406	22.26	4.42
Instrumental and Information Support	406	17.04	3.38
Appraisal Support	406	19.11	3.66
Social Companionship	406	7.12	1.62

As it can be seen in Table 2, the mean marital satisfaction score of the married women of Turkish origin living in Belgium was 37.33 (Sd=8.16). The middle range can be calculated by subtracting a standard deviation value from the midpoint of the score that can be taken from the scale and adding a standard deviation value to the midpoint. Accordingly, for the Marital Life Scale, scores between 10 and 21 are may be considered as low, scores between 23 and 38 may be considered as medium, and scores above 39 may be considered as high. Therefore, mean marital satisfaction scores demonstrated that participants tended to exhibit a moderate level of marital satisfaction. While the mean total perceived spousal support score of the married women of Turkish origin living in Belgium was 67.46 (Sd=13.01), the mean scores for emotional support, instrumental and information support, appraisal support, and social companionship were 22.26 (Sd=4.42), 17.04 (Sd=3.38), 19.11 (Sd=3.38), and 7.12 (Sd=1.62) respectively. For the Spouse Support Scale, scores between 27 and 41 may be considered as low, scores between 42 and 67 may be considered as medium, and scores above 68 are considered as high. Therefore, mean perceived spousal support scores demonstrated that participants tended to exhibit a moderate level of perceived spousal support. The results of the MANOVA conducted to determine whether participants' marriage satisfaction and perceived spousal support scores were significantly different in terms of mate selection are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3. MANOVA results of study variables by mate selection**

Effect	Wilk's Lambda	F	Hypothesis Degree of Freedom	Error Degree of Freedom	Level of Significance
Mate selection	.976	1.929	5	400	.08

As shown in Table 3, MANOVA analysis indicated that there is no significant difference between marital satisfaction and perceived spousal support level of participants who were married with a partner from Turkey and participants who were married with a partner of Turkish origin living in Belgium ( $\lambda=.976$ ,  $F(5,400)=1.929$ ,  $p>.05$ ). According to the results of MANOVA which was performed to determine whether participants' marriage satisfaction and perceived spousal support scores were significantly different in terms of education level, it was found that marital satisfaction and perceived spousal support level of participants differ significantly in terms of education level ( $\lambda=.819$ ,  $F(15,1099)=5.49$ ,  $p<.001$ ). The results of ANOVA, which is a part of multivariate analysis of variance, are given in Table 4

**Table 4. ANOVA results of study variables by education level**

Source	Dependent Variable	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	p
Education Level	Marital Satisfaction	1739.163	3	579.721	9.232	.000
	Perceived Spousal Support	6833.395	3	2277.798	16.969	.000
Error	Marital Satisfaction	25243.608	402	62.795		
	Perceived Spousal Support	53960.912	402	134.231		
Total	Marital Satisfaction	592981.00	406			
	Perceived Spousal Support	805519.00	406			

When Table 4 is examined, it is seen that the mean marital satisfaction ( $F(3,402)=9.232, p<.001$ ) and perceived social support scores ( $F(3,402)=16.969, p<.001$ ) of participants differed significantly in terms of education level. The Bonferroni test as a post hoc was used to determine where the significant differences existed among the groups. The results of the homogeneity of variance test indicated that the mean marital satisfaction and perceived spousal support scores of groups did not differ significantly according to education level ( $p>.05$ ) which means that the groups were homogeneous. Bonferroni test was performed due to the number of samples is not equal according to education level and the groups are homogeneous. The Bonferroni test results demonstrated that married women's who were graduated from primary school ( $M=30.04$ ), and secondary school ( $M=34.86$ ) level of marital satisfaction is significantly lower than those who were graduated from high school ( $M=38.19$ ) and university ( $M=38.22$ ). Similarly, it was found that married women who were graduated from primary school ( $M=52.09$ ), and secondary school ( $M=9.98$ ) have a significantly lower perceived spousal support level than those who were graduated from high school ( $M=66.72$ ) and university ( $M=68.31$ ). According to the results of MANOVA which was performed to determine whether participants' marriage satisfaction and perceived spousal support scores were significantly different in terms of perceived income level, it was found that marital satisfaction and perceived spousal support level of participants differ significantly in terms of perceived income level ( $\lambda=.896, F(15, 1099)=2.98, p<.001$ ). The results of ANOVA, which is a part of the multivariate analysis of variance, are given in Table 5.

**Table 5. ANOVA results of study variables by perceived income level**

Source	Dependent Variable	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	p
Perceived Income Level	Marital Satisfaction	2511.449	3	837.150	13.752	.000
	Perceived Spousal Support	4445.278	3	1481.759	10.571	.000
Error	Marital Satisfaction	24471.321	402	60.874		
	Perceived Spousal Support	56349.028	402	140.171		
Total	Marital Satisfaction	592981.00	406			
	Perceived Spousal Support	1805519.00	406			

As it can be seen in Table 5, both mean marital satisfaction ( $F(3,402)=13.752, p<.001$ ) and perceived social support scores ( $F(3,402)=10.571, p<.001$ ) of participants differed significantly in terms of perceived income level. The Bonferroni test performed to determine where the significant differences existed among the groups and the results indicated that married women who perceive their income level as low ( $M=31.92$ ), and moderate ( $M=34.95$ ) have a significantly lower level of marital satisfaction than those who perceive their income level as high ( $M=38.52$ ) and very high ( $M=42.36$ ). In addition it was found that married women who perceive income level as low ( $M=57.00$ ), and moderate ( $M=62.38$ ) have a significantly lower perceived spousal support level than those who perceive their income level as high ( $M=67.42$ ) and very high ( $M=71.18$ ) according to the results of MANOVA which was performed to determine whether participants' marriage satisfaction and perceived spousal support scores were significantly different in terms of working status, it was found that marital satisfaction and perceived spousal support level of participants differ significantly in terms of working status ( $\lambda=.956, F(5, 400)=3.71, p<.01$ ). The results of ANOVA, which is a part of multivariate analysis of variance, are given in Table 6.

**Table 6. ANOVA results of study variables by working status**

Source	Dependent Variable	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	p
Working status	Marital Satisfaction	427.096	1	427.096	6.498	.011
	Perceived Spousal Support	2535.341	1	2535.341	17.581	.000
Error	Marital Satisfaction	26555.675	404	65.732		
	Perceived Spousal Support	58258.966	404	144.205		
Total	Marital Satisfaction	592981.00	406			
	Perceived Spousal Support	1805519.00	406			

As it can be seen in Table 6, both mean marital satisfaction ( $F(1,404)=6.498, p<.05$ ), and perceived social support scores ( $F(1,404)=17.581, p<.001$ ) of participants differed significantly in terms of working status. The mean marital satisfaction scores of married women who are working ( $M=38.14$ ) is significantly higher than those who are not working ( $M=36.03$ ). In addition the mean perceived spousal support scores of married women who are working ( $M=67.51$ ) is significantly higher than those who are not working ( $M=62.37$ ).

## Discussion and Conclusion

In this study which conducted with married women of Turkish origin living in Belgium, it was determined that participants tended to exhibit a moderate level of marital satisfaction and perceived spousal support. In some studies administered with married women in Turkey, it was found that participants have a high level of marital satisfaction (Vural-Batık and Kalkan, 2017; Yedirir and Hamarta, 2015) and perceived spousal support (Kabasakal and Soylu, 2016; Uluç, 2018; Vural-Batık and Kalkan, 2016). However, there are also some studies proved that married women living in Turkey have a similar level of marital satisfaction as married women of Turkish origin living in Belgium (Tezer, 1996; Yıldız, 2018; Yıldız and Baytemir, 2016).

Married women were included in this study. Marriage satisfaction level of married couples is different than those who are cohabiters in western societies. Married couples reported higher marital satisfaction (Giguère, Fortin and Saburin, 1999:121). Marriage provides a stable couple life and an environment that has a high level of trust, less conflict, ease of communication and less worry about the future (Stanley, Whitton and Markman, 2004:496).

Given the fact that all of the participants were married, marriage has influenced marital satisfaction women who selected a mate from Turkey and who selected a partner of Turkish origin living in Belgium in a positive way. The marriage provides a life without questioning of future. Cohabitation or un-married relationships includes more individuality and less trust in relationships and financial issues (Carlson, 2009, cited in Gilbert, 2016:22). Gilbert (2016) stated that married couples experience more positive experiences in the period of transition to parenthood than the unmarried couples. 88.2% of the women participating in this study have children and have overcome the difficulties related to the transition to parenthood. Therefore, their marital satisfaction level does not affect by the stress caused by the transition to parenthood.

The findings of this study also indicated marital satisfaction and perceived spousal support level of participants who were married to a partner from Turkey and participants who were married to a partner of Turkish origin living in Belgium did not differ significantly. This study which has a large sample with diverse demographic backgrounds supports that selecting a mate from Turkey or Belgium is not the single factor that has an effect on marital satisfaction. Having more positive subjective evaluations and perceptions about marriage life increase marital satisfaction. Women who choose a partner from Turkey have more responsibility than their husbands in their marriage life. Moreover, such advantages like having more saying in family life and decisions, living in the same city with own family and social group, becoming familiar with the norms and rules of the country and being out of control and influence of the spouse's family increase the marital satisfaction.

It is found that women who have higher education and income level and who are working reported a significantly higher level of marital satisfaction and perceived spousal support. Consistent with this finding, several studies demonstrated that married people who are not working have significantly lower marital satisfaction (Vural-Batık and Kalkan, 2016) and perceived spousal support (Çağ, 2011). In addition, it is noteworthy that the married people with higher education and income level have higher mean marital satisfaction and perceived spousal support scores (Çağ, 2011). It is expected that the meanings attributed to marriage and expectations from the marriage may differ according to the education level. Taking into consideration that the most participants of the current study have high education level, high employment (80%), and thus high income (69.8%), it can be said that these variables (income, education level, and working status) are related to each other and indirectly affect marital satisfaction and spousal support. Nowadays, it is known that size of the income or income level is an important predictor of the healthy marital relationship (Çağ, 2011) and have an impact on marital satisfaction (Vural-Batık and Kalkan, 2017). In low-income families, married couples may experience conflict over financial issues and may be under stress because of financial problems and thus spousal support and marriage satisfaction may reduce. Individuals with sufficient income may give more financial support to their spouses in their marriage. Financial comfort, money, and career give the spouses more freedom and increase their marital satisfaction (Twenge, Campbell and Foster, 2003:574-583). The high level of education and income allow women of Turkish origin in Belgium to be more autonomous towards their families, spouses and spouses' family and increase their dignity. They become more creative in both their social life and marriage life; have better communication and problem-solving skills. Culturally, women with high education level find support easier than others. Women with low education level and unemployed women may have difficulties to go out and they are supposed to do housework.

Another important issue for these women is their relationship with the spouses' family. Especially women who are married to a partner of Turkish origin living Belgium are more likely to see their spouses' family and have a conflict with them. Women who are married to a partner from Turkey see their families' spouses less frequently and family dynamics are less affected. In a previous study, it was found that women who are married to a partner from Turkey think that the absence of spouses' family in Belgium is an advantage for their marriages (Taş, 2008:114).

The results of this study are important for social workers, mental health professionals and policymakers working with Turkish community and immigrants living in Belgium. The viewpoint that individuals who are married to a partner from Turkey most probably have problems in their marriage should be changed. It was found that marriage with a partner from Turkey or Belgium is not the only factor that has an impact on marital satisfaction. Researchers

and social workers should consider variables such as education, income level, and number of children in addition to the country of spouse in examining the marriages of Turkish people living in Belgium. This study indicated that participants tended to exhibit a moderate level of marital satisfaction and perceived spousal support. Therefore family and couple education programs may be designed and family counseling services may be provided to increase the level of marital satisfaction and perceived spousal support.

The scales used in this study were found to be reliable to measure spousal support and marriage satisfaction levels of women born and raised in Belgium. Therefore, it can be said that these scales can be used on this sample. This reliability study is important in order to allow the researchers to use these scales in their studies

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