

## An investigation of the mediator role of dyadic coping in relation between parenting stress and marital quality<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** The aim of this study is to investigate of the mediator role of dyadic coping (DC) in relations between parenting stress and marital quality. The data were collected from 803 people (%59 women, %41 men) by Dyadic Coping Inventory, Marital Quality Scale and Parent Stress Scale. Three models were formed in direction in line with the study, (the perception of the individuals towards self-perception towards DC, the perception towards the partner, the perception of common DC) and these models were tested. As mediator variables, emotion-problem focused supportive coping, negative coping, emotion-problem focused common coping which are subscales of DC with stress were used. Results showed that in the perception of self and partner models, there were partial mediations of emotion focused support; in the common model there were partial mediation by emotion and problem-focused common DC in the relation between parenting stress and marital quality.

**Key Words:** Parenting stress, dyadic coping, marital quality, stress, structural equation modeling

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### INTRODUCTION

Couple relationships form the basis of family development; therefore, the continuity and quality of family life largely determines the dynamics of these relationships. Investigating stress factors which have an effect on the quality of the marital relationship is of great interest to researchers due to the fact that two-thirds of marriages result in unhappiness and divorce (Bodenmann, 2005; Karney and Bradbury, 1995; Karney, Story and Bradbury, 2005). Although research focuses mainly on marital satisfaction, marital adjustment, marital integrity and marital quality (Binici-Azizoğlu, 2000; Proulx, Ermer and Kanter, 2017), Spanier (1979) states that marital quality serves as a framework covering other concepts.

Although the initial studies on marriage were based on models that focused on the internal processes of the individual (Karney and Bradbury, 1997), the current dominant perspective focuses on the role of interpersonal variables (Gottman, 1994). Interpersonal models in marriage state that the most important variable of relationships is the interaction between spouses (Bradbury and Karney, 1993). Bradbury, Fincham and Beach (2000) underline the interpersonal processes related to marriage satisfaction, such as cognition, impact, physiology, social support and violence, and the context in which marriages such as the presence of children or sources of stress.

According to system theorists, couples form a two-person system and spouses have an influence on each other. The emotions, actions and relationships of the members (spouses) in the system are related to each other and cannot be fully understood without considering the other. Therefore, the individual perceived stress is reflected on the spouse and / or other family members. In the systemic interactive model, coping with stress as a couple refers to a process that both partners try to solve together (Bodenmann, 1997; 2005).

Stress, which is an important concept examined by researchers working on marriage, plays an important role in understanding the quality and stability of close relationships. When the literature is examined, it is seen that there are extensive experimental studies showing the effect of stress on relationship problems between couples (Bodenmann, 1995; 2005; Karney, Story and Bradbury, 2005). Since the quality of marriage is the main predictor of life satisfaction (Ruvolo, 1998), it is very important to investigate how couples cope with stressful situations and to determine which strategies and coping styles are effective in stress management or which have negative effects on close relationships (Bodenmann, Pihet and Kayser, 2006). In addition,

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physical health (Schmaling and Sher, 2000), emotional well-being and resistance to depression (Tesser and Beach, 1998) are also associated with marital quality. The couple stress described by Bodenmann (2005) is a stressful event or interaction affecting both partners; either spouses experience the same stressful event or one spouse's stress affects the other.

In earlier studies related to relationship stress, internal stress had a stronger effect on relationship functions (Andrews, Abbey and Halman, 1991). However, recent research highlights this issue and suggests that external stressors (i.e, resulting from outside relationships) have a stronger and more damaging effect on the relationship (Neff and Karney, 2017; Randall and Bodenmann, 2009; Randall and Bodenmann, 2017). Close relationships are highly influenced by the context of the couple. When difficulties are encountered, there is a tendency to decrease in relationship satisfaction and increase in unsolvability. Moreover, the couple's experience with stress situations determines the quality of future relationships (Bodenmann, 1997).

Stressful situations emerging outside the spouse (economic crisis, work problems, parenting stress, relationships with relatives and friends) create new problems to the marital relationship (Neff & Karney, 2017). Reducing opportunities for activities which regulate and nurture marriage can increase conflicts and tensions simultaneously. Spouses who have less time to share with each other tackle relational problems such as lack of intimacy in marriage, feeling neglected by the spouse, and differentiation of attitudes towards the spouse (Campos, Graesch, Repetti, Bradbury, & Ochs, 2009; Milek, Butler, & Bodenmann, 2005). ). In addition, the consumption of energy and resources required by the spouses for the constructive course of any difficulties which may arise in marriage weakens the quality of marriage (Neff & Karney, 2017).

Stress also hinders effective problem-solving skills. For example, couples experiencing major economic difficulties are less constructive than economically safe couples when discussing marital problems (Conger and Conger, 2008). Several longitudinal studies examining fluctuations in spouses' stress over time have demonstrated the detrimental effects of increased stress on relationship functioning. For example, in periods of increasing stress, individuals tend to forgive their spouses' negative behaviors, and when they experience less stress, the same individuals tend to forgive their spouses' negative behaviors. Similarly, stress exacerbates the response of spouses to daily conflicts in the relationship. In larger periods of stress, negative relationship experiences are seen as more of a relationship state and are therefore strongly associated with overall marital satisfaction. However, in lower stress periods, this connection between small daily conflicts and general marital happiness is reduced. In short, as the stress experienced by individuals increases, the levels of associating stress with the marriage relationship increase (Neff & Karney, 2004).

According to Bodenmann, sources of stress originating from the outside of the relationship (external stress) can influence the relationship by causing stress (internal stress) (Falconier, Jackson, Hilpert and Bodenmann, 2015; Randall and Bodenmann, 2009; Story and Bradbury, 2004). The problems with the child and therefore the parenting stress are external stresses (Bodenmann, Ledermann, Blattner and Gazluzzo, 2006) and their reflections on the marital relationship may cause problems. Parenting stress is the physical and psychological responses to adaptation to the tasks required by parents to interact with the child. Parenting stress experienced by married couples affects both parent-child relationships and spousal relationships (Berryhill, Soloski, Durtschi and Adams, 2015).

Since the 1950s, the hypothesis 'being a parent causes significant reductions in marital satisfaction' have been investigated. Early researches showed that parenting was a real crisis in marriage. For married couples, the first child is usually born in the first five years of the marriage, this is also the period with the highest risk for divorce (Bramlett and Mosher, 2001). Both cross-sectional and longitudinal studies in this area have examined the effect of parenting on marital quality. A meta-analytical study by Twenge, Campbell and Foster (2003) reveals that parents have lower marital quality than non-parent couples. A longitudinal study by Doss, Rhoades, Stanley, and Markman (2009) revealed that parents experienced a sudden deterioration in relationships after birth. In the other group of couples who did not have children, there was a slower deterioration in the relationship functions in the first 8 years of

marriage without sudden changes in the new relationship. Lavee, Sharlin and Katz (1996)'s study also revealed that parenting stress has a negative effect on marital quality and well-being.

In conclusion, when the research findings are taken into consideration, it is seen that marital quality is an important concept in human life, parenting stress has a negative effect on marital quality and it is important for couples to use coping skills together in coping with parenting stress. In this context, when domestic and foreign literature are examined, there are studies showing that coping with stress as a couple and social support received from the spouse are highly related to marital quality (Bodenmann and Shantinath, 2004; Bodenmann, Pihet and Kayser 2006a; Bodenmann, Meuwly and Kayser, 2011; Dehle, Larsen and Landers, 2001; Kardatzke, 2009; Walen and Lachman, 2000). Although some studies on parenting stress found in the literature (Aydoğan and Özbay, 2017; Laave, Sharlin and Katz, 1996) state that the stress is mostly experienced by parents of children with special needs (Hall & Graff, 2011; İlhan, 2017; Jones and Passey, 2005; Lopez, Clifford, Minnes and Ouellette-Kuntz, 2008).

Although there are few studies on parenting stress in the current literature, there are studies on the effect of external stress sources on marital quality. Howe, Levy and Caplan (2004) found the relationship quality of job loss, and Schulz, Cowan, Pape Cowan and Brennan (2004) found that daily work stress had an adverse effect on marital quality. Ledermann, Bodenmann, Rudaz and Bradbury (2010)'s study shows that relationship stress is related to the external stress of the individual. In addition, Leidy, Parke, Cladis, Coltrane and Duffy (2009) compared the relationship of the relationship quality of parents with their children's adaptation levels, and stated that the quality of marriage was inversely related to the internalized behavior of children. According to Neff and Karney (2004; 2017), stressful life events affect marital quality. In this study, it is stated that external stress has a negative effect on the perceptions of the spouses and their ways of interpreting these perceptions.

In addition, when the studies were examined, parenting stress and relational resilience of coping with stress as a couple (Aydoğan & Özbay, 2015); attachment styles and relationship satisfaction (Levey, 2003); attachment and marriage satisfaction (Kardatzke, 2009); marriage sacredness and marriage satisfaction (Rusu, Hilpert, Beach, Turliuc and Bodenmann, 2015); social support and post-traumatic stress (Yu, Peng, Chen, Long, He and Wang, 2014), it is seen that there are other variables affecting coping stress. In the studies conducted on close relationships, it is seen that the stress experienced by the couples due to their parenting roles is not examined. In this study, the importance of being a parent in the relationship of stress is discussed. From this point of view, the problem of this study is to evaluate the relationships between parenting stress and marital quality in a structural model and to examine the direct and indirect relationships between variables within the context of causality.

## METHODS

### Research Model

In this research, a procedure-based correlation model that examines the mediating role of coping with stress as a couple in the relationship between parenting stress and marital quality is utilized. The external variable of the study is parenting stress; mediator variables are emotion-problem-focused support, negative coping, and emotion-problem-focused common coping, which are the sub-scales of dyadic coping with stress. The internal variable is the quality of marriage. The coping scores were obtained from the Coping with Stress Inventory as an individual 'self', the coping perceived by the individual 'spouse' and the coping scores perceived by the individual as a 'partner' about himself /herself and his/her spouse were used separately; therefore, three hypothesis models were studied.

### Study Group

In order to test the model formed in this research, the data set were obtained from 510 married individuals with children working in municipalities and public institutions affiliated with Adana central districts, 232 teachers working in schools affiliated to the Directorate of National Education in Adana central districts and 100 individuals whose data were collected online. In this study, one of the purposeful sampling methods, which is the criterion sampling method, was

used and the participants were selected from married with children. The participants included 480 (59%) women and 337 (41%) men.

## **Data Collection Tools**

### ***Dyadic Coping Inventory (Inventory of Coping with Stress as Couple) (ICSC)***

The inventory was developed by Bodenmann (2008) for coping with stress and measuring stress communication in romantic relationships. The English version of the inventory consists of 37 items and the items are graded between 1 (never), 5 (always). It consists of twelve sub-scales measuring various coping behaviors as couple. These are stress communication of the individual, stress communication of the spouse, supportive coping of the individual, supportive coping of the spouse, delegated coping of the individual, delegated coping of the spouse, negative coping of the individual, negative coping of the spouse, common coping. Supportive coping can be divided into two as emotion-focused and problem- focused. Similarly, common coping can be divided into two as emotion-focused and problem-focused. The internal consistency coefficient (Croanbach's alpha) of the inventory was .92 for women and .93 for men. The external validity scores of the individual's perception of coping with their stress behaviors were between .82 and .84, and the external validity scores of the partner's perception of coping with stress were between .86 and .88. Validity studies show that the scale is effective in predicting marital quality and conflict communication and distinguishing between social and clinical findings.

Kurt and Akbaş (2019) conducted translation and validity-reliability studies in order to adapt the inventory into Turkish. In the translation process, the scale was translated from English into Turkish and then back-translation was conducted again by the researchers and experts compared the final draft, the items were tested on 20 individuals and the inventory was finalized. The name of the scale adapted as Inventory of Coping with Stress as Couple. A validity-related factor analysis was conducted, 5/2 factors (Stress Communication, Emotion-Focused Supportive Coping, Problem-Focused Supporting Coping, Delegated Coping and Negative Coping/ Emotion-Focused Common Coping, Problem-Focused Common Coping), which are among the factor recommendations in the literature, were examined in order to examine whether they worked in the Turkish sample and to determine which factor structure would be more compatible. It was found that they had adequate level of adaptation ( $\chi^2/sd$  (individual model: 3.76; dyadic model: 4.50; common model: 1.10; RMSEA (individual model: .05; dyadic model: .06; common model: .01), CFI (individual model: .93; dyadic model: .95 ; common model: 1), GFI (individual model: .95; dyadic model: .94; common model: .99) and SRMR (individual model: .04, dyadic model: .04, common model: .01). The correlation between the inventory and Parenting Stress Scale was examined and a significant negative correlation was found. Internal Consistency Cronbach Alpha Coefficient were .89 and Spearman Brown Semi-Test Reliability Coefficient were .85. As a result, the 5/2 factor structure of the inventory was also confirmed in the sample tested; it is determined that it is a valid and reliable measurement tool that can be used in studies aimed at coping with stress as a couple.

### ***Partnership Questionnaire (Marital Quality Scale- MQS)***

The measuring tool developed by Hahlweg (1996) to measure marital quality has 30 items and is graded between 1 and 4. It consist of three sub-scales: Quarreling, Tenderness and Togetherness / Communication. The lowest score that can be obtained from MQS, which can be obtained from the total score, is 30 and the highest score is 120. A score of 54 and below is expressed as the cut-off point for low marital quality. The scale showed a high correlation ( $r = .85$ ) with the Double Adjustment Scale (DAS, Spanier, 1976)

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three-dimensional structure consisting of 27 items ( $\chi^2/\text{sd} = 3.52$ , RMSEA = .05, CFI = .93, GFI = .90, SRMR = .05) were obtained. Internal consistency Cronbach alpha coefficient was examined within the scope of reliability study. For the subscales, Discussion .87, Compassion .91, Association / Communication .88 values were obtained. The half-test reliability coefficients were .77 for the total score; for subscales, the discussion was .85, Compassion .90, Association / Communication .83. The findings of the study confirm the three-factor structure of the original scale in the targeted sample. The result is a reliable and valid measurement tool that can be used in research the scale in Turkey.

### ***Parenting Stress Scale***

The scale developed by Özmen and Özmen (2012) is aimed to measure the stress experienced by parents in their relationships with their children in daily life. On a scale of 16 items and one-dimensional, items are graded between 1 and 4. The lowest score that can be obtained from the scale is 16 and the highest score is 64. As a result of Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), a single factor of 16 items was reached and factor loadings varied between .41 and .66. When the common variance values of the items were examined, it was seen that they ranged between .17 and .43. The scale explains 32.20% of the total variance. Coherence coefficients obtained according to Confirmatory Factor Analysis ( $\chi^2/\text{sd} = 2.43$ , RMSEA = .05, GFI = .93, AGFI = .91 CFI = .91) (Also Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient .85, Spearman Brown half test reliability coefficient (.82).

Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated as .88 and Spearman Brown's half-test reliability coefficient was calculated as .84. In addition, the item-based confirmatory factor analysis results did not produce acceptable results in terms of coefficients of fit ( $\chi^2/\text{sd} = 9.62$ , RMSEA = .10, CFI = .83, GFI = .83, SRMR = .07). After the modification suggestions and item factor loads were examined, the items with factor loads around .60 were omitted one by one. It has been observed that during the omission, some of the items' factor loadings decrease after omitting the other items and they affect the adaptation coefficients of the model significantly negatively. After the omission of seven items (1,2,3,4,5,6,10), the results of the confirmatory factor analysis were examined and the results showed that  $\chi^2/\text{sd}$  (4.52) and RMSEA (.06) values were acceptable. CFI (.97), GFI (.97) and SRMR (.03) values were found to be in good agreement. These values indicate that the general fit coefficients of the measurement model are sufficient.

### ***Personal information form***

The personal information form was formed by the researchers and aimed to describe the demographic information of the individuals in the study group. In the form, it was aimed to obtain such information as gender, age, number of children, year of marriage, marriage type, educational status, spouse education status, spouse working status, total monthly income.

### ***Statistical Analysis of Data***

Before analyzing the data, it was checked whether there are missing, inaccurate and sloppy fills, systematically marking certain options and not matching the target context, then the extreme values were examined. Before the structural relations were analyzed, the measurement models in the research were tested and the extent to which the variables in the data set met the structural model assumptions were examined. Then, the structural equation model and the proposed model and alternative models were tested, and finally, the parameter estimation related to direct, indirect and total effects was given in the adopted model. The analysis of the structural equation model was tested by means of the Maximum Likelihood estimation method in the AMOS 23 package program. In addition, other descriptive statistics such as percentage, standard deviation and correlation were used in the description of the variables and analysis of the data. It was found that the statistical methods used for the analysis of the findings met the basic assumptions (skewness, kurtosis, normality, etc.) and there were no multiple connection problems.

## RESULTS

### Analysis of Measurement Models

In this section, it was examined whether the general match/mismatch indexes of the measurement models were statistically sufficient. In the self-perception model,  $\chi^2/\text{sd}$  (4.62), RMSEA (.07) and SRMR (.07) values were acceptable. The values of CFI (.80) and GFI (.71) were below the acceptable level of compliance. When spouse perception model was examined,  $\chi^2/\text{sd}$  (4.75), RMSEA (.07) and SRMR (.07) values were acceptable. The values of CFI (.82) and GFI (.71) were below the acceptable level of compliance. When the common model was examined, it was seen that RMSEA (.07) and SRMR (.08) values were acceptable.  $\chi^2/\text{sd}$  (5.38), CFI (.80) and GFI (.70) values were below the acceptable level of compliance. Findings indicate that general adjustment coefficients do not show acceptable compliance values (Bayram, 2013; Byrne, 2010; Çelik and Yılmaz, 2013; Kline, 2005; Ullman, 2007).

According to Şimşek (2007), modification indexes may be needed if the measurement models do not show adequate match values. In this study, modification indexes were examined to obtain better match values; it was seen that MQS suggested changes to the Discussion subscale. In line with the suggestions, error variances were added to the error terms of some items in the Discussion sub-scale, but the changes were insufficient. When the literature was examined, it was deducted that the items of the Discussion subscale of MQS were reversed in some studies, although they were not in the original description of the scale, and that this was conducted to obtain a positive score on the quality of marriage (Bodenmann, Pihet & Kayser, 2006; Bodenmann, 2006; Pihet, Shantinath, Cina and Widmer, 2006). When the modification suggestions and the examples in the literature were evaluated together, it was decided to repeat the analysis by subtracting the sub-scale of Perception, Dyadic Perception Model and Common Model from the Discussion sub-scale to obtain better match values. The adaptation coefficients obtained by subtracting the discussion subscale from the models were found to have an acceptable level of adaptation and the coefficients are given in Table 1.

**Table 1.** General adaptation coefficients after the modification of measurement models created in the research

Measurement Models	$\chi^2/\text{sd}$	RMSEA	CFI	GFI	SRMR
Self-perception Model	2.60	.04	.93	.91	.04
Dyadic Perception Model	2.74	.05	.93	.90	.05
Common Model	2.92	.05	.94	.90	.05

According to Table 1, general coefficients of the self-perception model ( $\chi^2/\text{sd} = 2.60$ , RMSEA = .04, CFI = .93, GFI = .91, SRMR = .04), the dyadic perception model ( $\chi^2/\text{sd} = 2.74$ , RMSEA = .05, CFI = .93, GFI = .90, SRMR = .05) and the common model ( $\chi^2/\text{sd} = 2.92$ , RMSEA = .05, CFI = .94, GFI = .90, SRMR = .05) are acceptable.

### Analysis of Structural Model

In this study, which is on the investigation of the relationship between coping with stress as couple and marriage quality, the ways of indicating causal relationships between implicit variables were structured according to research hypotheses.

#### Structural related to self-perception model

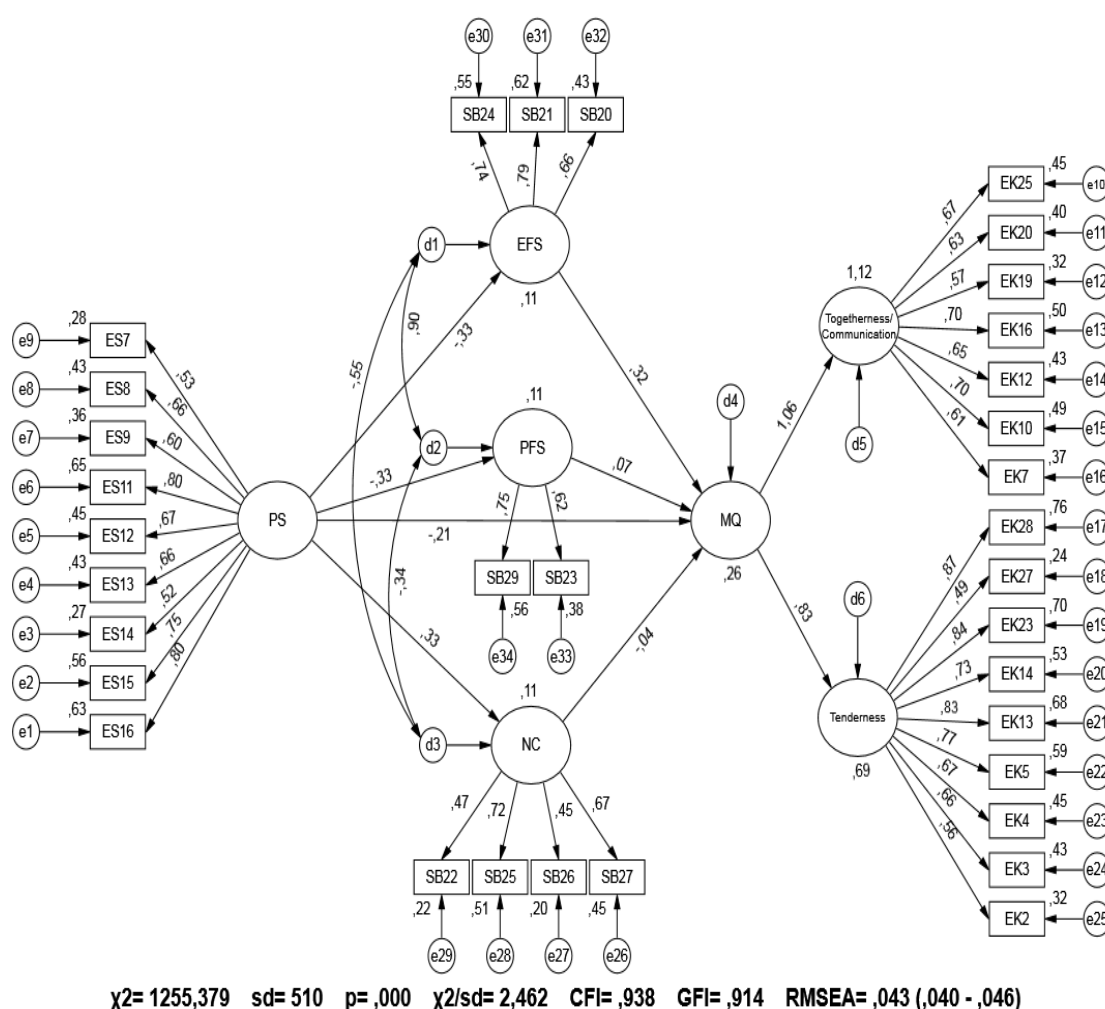
Findings related to the direct and indirect effects of self-perception model are given below.

#### Findings related to parenting stress, emotion and problem-focused support, direct effects between negative coping and marital quality

The hypothesis about the self-perception model in the study is that the internal variable is marital quality, but external variables are parenting stress, emotion- focused support, problem-focused support and negative coping. The structural relationships in the hypothesis model are given in Figure 1.

When the standardized regression coefficients in the hypothesis model in Figure 1 are examined, it is seen that emotion-focused support with parenting stress ( $\beta = -.33$ ,  $tsd = .05$ ,  $t = -7.69$ ,  $p < .001$ ), problem- focused support ( $\beta = -.33$ ,  $tsd = .05$ ,  $t = -7.17$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and negative coping ( $\beta = .33$ ,  $tsd = .05$ ,  $t = -7.22$ ,  $p < .001$ ), which is significant. In addition, emotion- focused support ( $\beta = .32$ ,  $tsd = .32$ ,  $t = 1.15$ ,  $p > .001$ ), problem- focused support ( $\beta = .07$ ,  $tsd = .30$ ,  $t = .28$ ,  $p > .001$ ) and negative coping ( $\beta = -.04$ ,  $tsd = .10$ ,  $t = -.41$ ,  $p > .001$ ) and marital quality, which is not significant.

One way to examine the relationships between variables is to create hierarchical models and test the hypotheses about them. One of the analysis methods used in hierarchical structural equation models is Model Trimming. In Model Trimming, the researcher begins by creating the model described, and then simplifies the model by drawing paths from the model. This is conducted by fixing a previously calculated path to zero (Kline, 2005).



**FIGURE 1.** Standardized coefficients of the hypothesis model

In this study, it is decided that non-meaningful pathways may not contribute significantly to the model and it is decided to create new models by fixing them to zero one by one. After each non-significant path is fixed to zero, the analysis is repeated and the newly developed models are called Model B and Model C; and the hypothesis model is called Model A. Comparisons of the fit coefficients of models A, B and C are given in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Comparison of fit coefficients of Models A, B, C

	$\chi^2$	Sd	$\chi^2/\text{sd}$	RMSEA	CFI	GFI	SRMR	$\Delta\chi^2$
<b>Model A</b>	1255.379	510	2.46	.04	.94	.92	.04	
<b>Model B</b>	1255.541	511	2.46	.04	.94	.92	.04	-.16
<b>Model C</b>	1255.546	512	2.45	.04	.94	.92	.04	-.01

Model A: Model with all mediator relations

Model B: A model where the path between negative coping and marital quality equals zero

Model C: The model where the path between problem- focused support and marital quality equals zero

In Model A, the path between negative coping and marital quality, which is one of the ways determined to have no significant effect, was set to zero in Model B. Then, when the standardized regression coefficients of the obtained model were examined, the path between problem- focused support and marital quality ( $\beta = -.01$ ,  $\text{tsd} = .20$ ,  $t = -.07$ ,  $p > .001$ ) was still not significant, and emotion- focused support and marriage were not significant. ( $\beta = .41$ ,  $\text{tsd} = .18$ ,  $t = 2.60$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The path between problem- focused support and marital quality, which was determined to have no significant effect on the model, was removed from the model and the new model was named Model C.

When the standardized regression coefficients of Model C were examined, it was found that the path between emotion- focused support and marital quality remained significant ( $\beta = .40$ ,  $\text{tsd} = .05$ ,  $t = -9.23$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and that the fit of the model according to the hypothesis model was not impaired ( $\chi^2/\text{sd} = 2.45$ ,  $\text{RMSEA} = .04$ ,  $\text{CFI} = .94$ ,  $\text{GFI} = .92$ ,  $\text{SRMR} = .04$ ).

The regression coefficients of the direct relationships in Model C are given in Table 3.

**Table 3.** The regression coefficients of Model C (Final Model)

			b	$\beta$	SH	$\chi^2$
EFS	<---	PS	-.35	-.33	.05	-7.69
PFS	<---	PS	-.34	-.33	.05	-7.17
NC	<---	PS	.35	.33	.05	7.23
MQ	<---	PS	-.27	-.22	.05	-5.61
MQ	<---	EFS	.47	.40	.05	9.23
MQ	<---	PFS	.00	.00		
MQ	<---	NC	.00	.00		

EFS: Emotion-focused support

NC: Negative coping

MQ: Marital quality

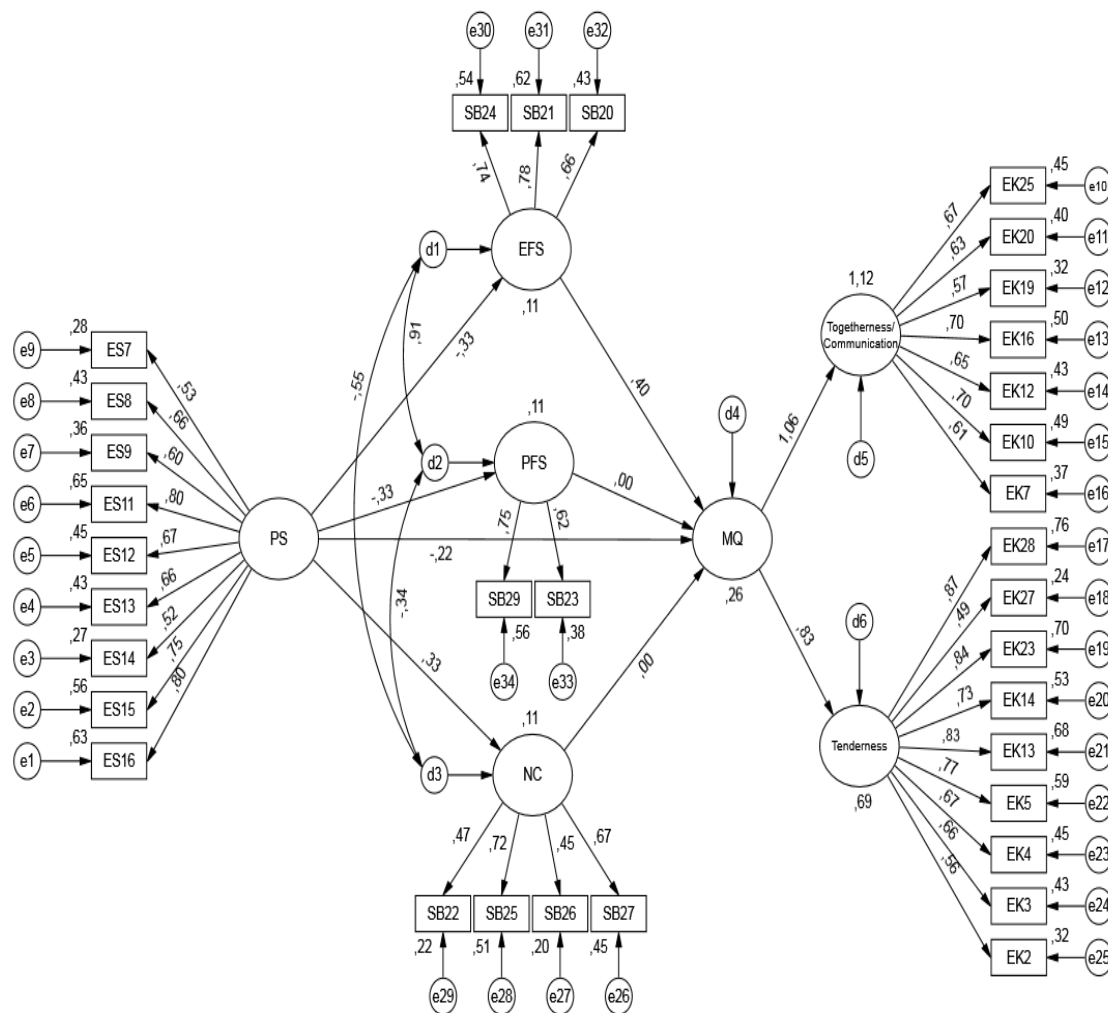
PFS: Problem- focused support

PS: Parenting stress

The structural relationships in Model C are given in Figure 2.

When Figure 2 and Table 3 are examined, one unit increase in parenting stress is -.33 points ( $b = -.35$ ,  $p < .001$ ) in emotion-focused support and -.33 points ( $b = -.34$ ,  $p < .001$ ) in problem- focused support and -22 points ( $b = -.27$ ,  $p < .001$ ) decrease in marital quality; negative coping leads to an increase of .33 points ( $b = .35$ ,  $p < .001$ ). In addition, a one-unit increase in emotion-focused support leads to an increase of .40 points ( $b = .47$ ,  $p < .001$ ) in marital quality. Problem- focused support and negative coping as cited in Table 3, the final Model C is equaled to zero, its effects are not significant and are ignored.





$\chi^2=1255,546$   $sd=512$   $p=,000$   $\chi^2/sd=2,452$   $CFI=,938$   $GFI=,914$   $RMSEA=,043$  ( $,040 - ,046$ )

FIGURE 2. Standardized coefficients for the Final Model (Model C)

### Findings about the mediating effects of negative coping and emotion-focused support in the relationship between parenting stress and marital quality

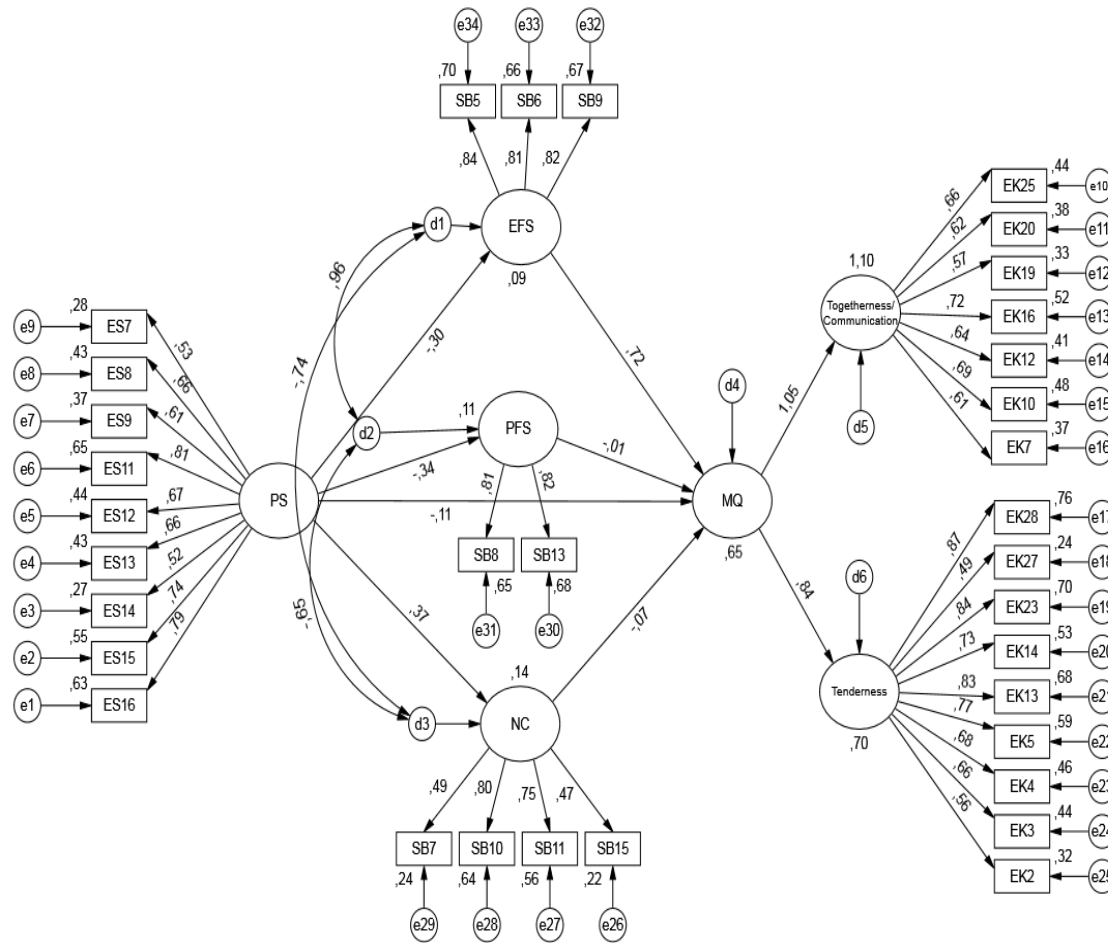
As can be seen in Table 3, since the relationship between problem- focused support and negative coping and marital quality is equal to 0, it is seen that there is only one indirect effect (emotion-focused support) in the model. The standardized partial indirect effect of parenting stress on marital quality  $PS \rightarrow EFS \rightarrow MQ$ ,  $-.33 \times .40 = -.13$  (Bootstrap 95% CI  $-.16$  to  $-.10$ ), which is statistically significant.

### Structural model related to dyadic perception model

Findings about the direct and indirect effects of the dyadic perception model are given below.

### Findings related to parenting stress, emotion and problem- focused support, direct effects between negative coping and marital quality

In the hypothesis model created for the dyadic perception, the internal variable is marital quality and the external variables are parenting stress, emotion-focused support, problem-focused support and negative coping. The structural relationships in the hypothesis model are given in Figure 3.



$\chi^2=1228,917$   $sd=510$   $p=.000$   $\chi^2/sd=2,410$   $CFI=.949$   $RMSEA=.042 (.039 - .045)$

**FIGURE 3.** Standardized coefficients of the hypothesis model (Model D)

When the standardized regression coefficients in the hypothesis model were examined, it was seen that emotion-focused support with parenting stress ( $\beta = -.30$ ,  $tsd = .09$ ,  $t = -7.03$ ,  $p < .001$ ), problem-focused support ( $\beta = -.34$ ,  $tsd = .09$ ,  $t = -7.46$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and negative coping ( $\beta = .37$ ,  $tsd = .07$ ,  $t = -7.01$ ,  $p < .001$ ), which is significant. Besides, emotion-focused support ( $\beta = .72$ ,  $tsd = .28$ ,  $t = 1.95$ ,  $p > .001$ ), problem-focused support ( $\beta = -.01$ ,  $tsd = .26$ ,  $t = .02$ ,  $p > .001$ ) and negative coping ( $\beta = -.07$ ,  $tsd = .10$ ,  $t = -.82$ ,  $p > .001$ ) and marital quality which is not significant. Considering that non-meaningful paths may not contribute to the model significantly, it was decided to fix new models by fixing them to zero (Model Trimming). After each non-significant path was fixed to zero, the analysis was repeated and the newly developed models were Model E and Model D; and the hypothesis model was called Model D. Comparisons of the fit coefficients of Models D, E and F are given in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Comparison of fit coefficients of D, E, F models

	$\chi^2$	sd	$\chi^2/sd$	RMSEA	CFI	GFI	SRMR	$\Delta\chi^2$
<b>Model D</b>	1228.917	510	2.410	.04	.95	.92	.04	
<b>Model E</b>	1228.918	511	2.405	.04	.95	.92	.04	-.00
<b>Model F</b>	1230.501	512	2.403	.04	.95	.92	.04	-1.58

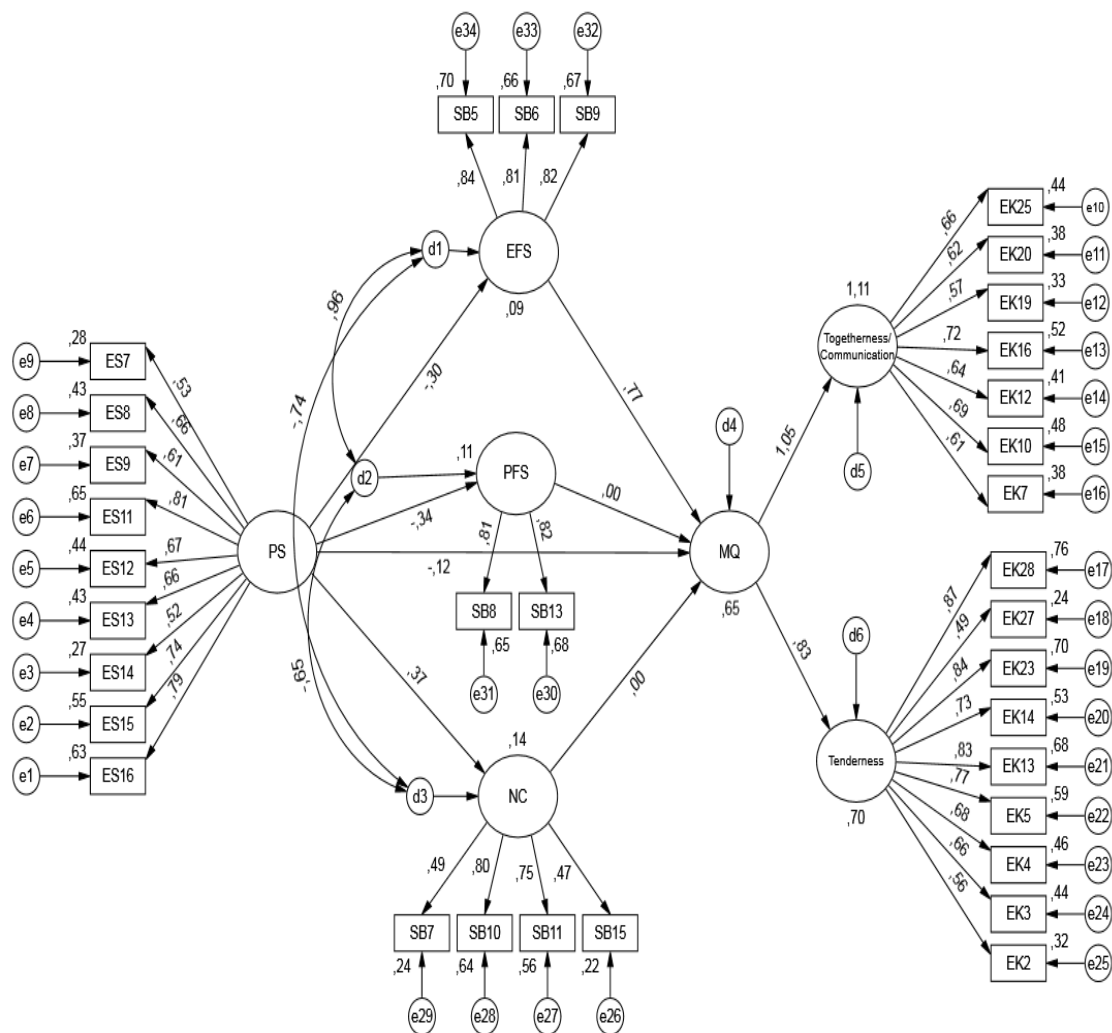
Model D: Model with all intermediary relations

Model E: The model where the path between problem-focused coping and marital quality equals zero

Model F: The model where the path between negative coping and marital quality equals zero

In Model E, the path between problem-focused support and marital quality, one of the ways in which Model D was found to have no significant effect, was equaled to zero. Then, when the standardized regression coefficients of the model were examined, the path between negative coping and marital quality ( $\beta = -.07$ ,  $tsd = -.07$ ,  $t = -1.26$ ,  $p > .001$ ) was still not significant; ( $\beta = -.71$ ,  $tsd = -.05$ ,  $t = 12.16$ ,  $p < .001$ ). In Model E, the path between negative coping and marital quality, which was found to have no significant effect on the model, was removed from the model and the new model was named Model F.

When the standardized regression coefficients of Model F were examined, it was found that the path between emotion- focused support and marital quality remained significant ( $\beta = .77$ ,  $tsd = .03$ ,  $t = 17.482$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and that the model did not deteriorate according to the hypothesis model ( $\chi^2/sd = 2.41$ ,  $RMSEA = .04$ ,  $CFI = .95$ ,  $GFI = .92$ ,  $SRMR = .04$ ) The regression coefficients of the direct relationships in Model F are given in Figure 4.



$\chi^2 = 1230.501$   $sd = 512$   $p = .000$   $\chi^2/sd = 2.403$   $CFI = .949$   $RMSEA = .042 (.039 - .045)$

**FIGURE 4.** Standardized coefficients of Model F (Final Model)

The structural relationships in Model F (Final Model) are also given in Table 5.

**Table 5. Regression coefficients of Model F**

			<b>b</b>	<b>β</b>	<b>SH</b>	<b>χ<sup>2</sup></b>
EFS	<---	PS	-.49	-.30	.06	-7.55
PFS	<---	PS	-.52	-.34	.06	-8.10
NC	<---	PS	.36	.37	.05	7.49
MQ	<---	PS	-.14	-.12	.04	-4.02
MQ	<---	EFS	.58	.77	.03	17.48
MQ	<---	PFS	.00	.00		
MQ	<---	NC	.00	.00		

EFS: Emotion-focused support

NC: Negative coping

MQ: Marital quality

PFS: Problem- focused support

PS: Parenting stress

When Figure 4 and Table 5 were examined, one-unit increase in parenting stress was -.30 points in emotion-focused support ( $b = -.49$ ,  $p < .001$ ), -.34 points in problem- focused support ( $b = -.52$ ,  $p < .001$  and -.12 points ( $b = -.14$ ,  $p < .001$ ) decrease in marital quality; negative coping led to an increase of .37 points ( $b = .36$ ,  $p < .001$ ). In addition, a one-unit increase in emotion- focused support led to an increase of .77 points ( $b = .58$ ,  $p < .001$ ) in marital quality. Problem- focused support and negative coping, as stated in Table 5, the final Model F was equal to zero since its effects were not significant and therefore, they were ignored.

#### ***Findings about the mediating effects of negative coping and emotion- focused support in the relationship between parenting stress and marital quality***

As can be seen in Table 5, since the relationship between problem- focused support and negative coping and marital quality was equal to 0, it was seen that there was only one indirect effect (emotion- focused support) in the model. The partial indirect effect of parenting stress on marital quality  $PS \rightarrow EFS \rightarrow MQ$ ,  $-.30 \times .77 = -.23$  (Bootstrap 95% GA -28 to -18) was statistically significant.

#### ***Structural model of the common model***

Findings related to the direct and indirect effects of the common model are given below.

#### ***Findings on the direct effects of parenting stress, emotion and problem-focused coping with marital quality***

In the model, the internal variable is marital quality, whereas external variables are parenting stress, emotion and problem-focused common coping. Table 6 shows the regression coefficients of the direct relationships in the Common Model.

**Table 6. Regression coefficient of Common Model**

			<b>b</b>	<b>β</b>	<b>SH</b>	<b>χ<sup>2</sup></b>
EFCC	<---	PS	-.55	-.25	.10	-5.70
PFCC	<---	PS	-.67	-.31	.09	-7.33
MQ	<---	PS	-.20	-.13	.05	-4.14
MQ	<---	PFCC	.30	.42	.03	9.01
MQ	<---	EFCC	.25	.37	.03	7.70

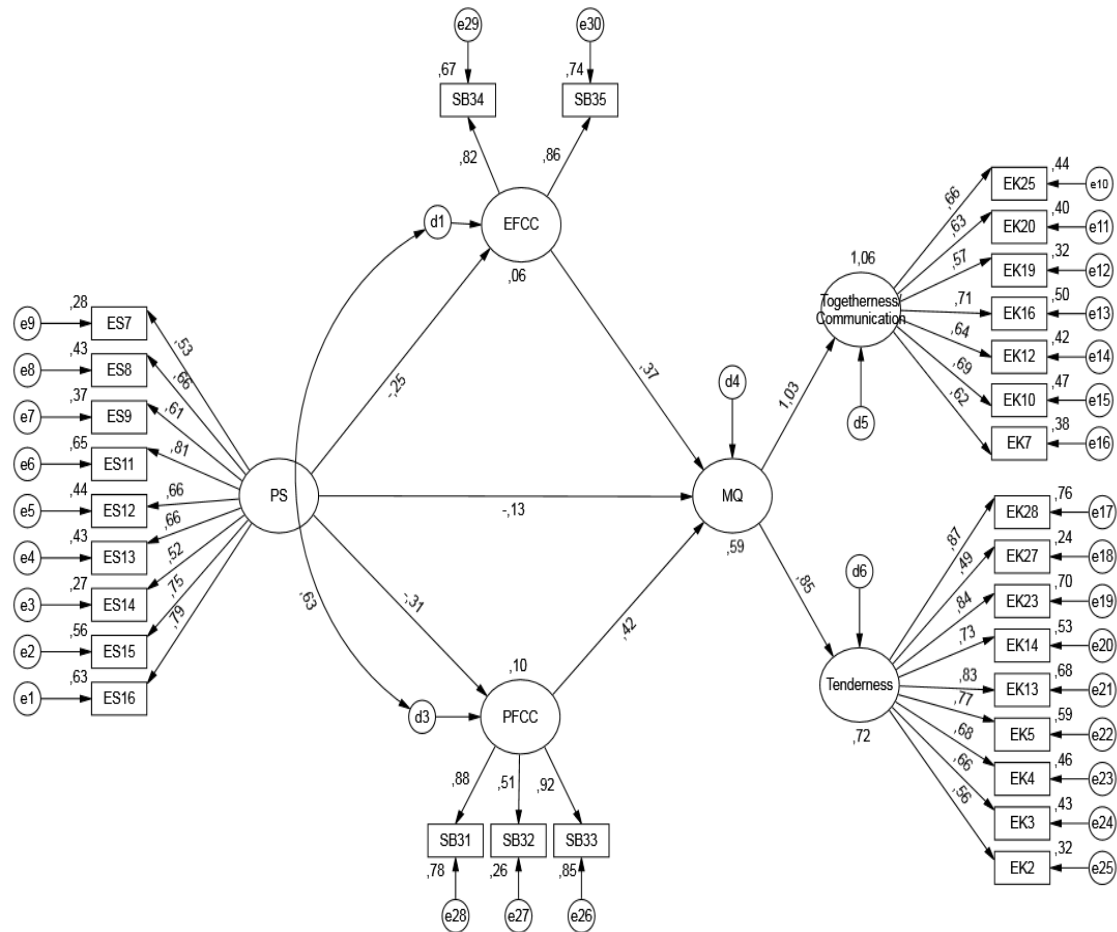
EFCC: Emotion focused common coping,

PS: Parenting stress,

PFCC: Problem focused common coping,

MQ: Marital quality

The structural relationships in the model are given in Figure 5.



$\chi^2=1032,307$   $sd=392$   $p=.000$   $\chi^2/sd=2,633$   $CFI=.948$   $RMSEA=.045 (.042-.048)$

**FIGURE 5.** Standardized coefficients of the Common Mode

When Figure 5 and Table 6 were examined, one-unit increase in parenting stress was -.25 points in emotion-focused common coping ( $b = -.55$ ,  $p < .001$ ), -.31 points in problem-focused common coping ( $b = -.67$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and -.13 points ( $b = -.20$ ,  $p < .001$ ) decrease in marital quality. In addition, a one-unit increase in emotion-focused common coping led to an increase of .37 points ( $b = .25$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and a one-unit increase in problem-focused common coping led to an increase of .42 points ( $b = .30$ ,  $p < .001$ ) in marital quality.

#### **Findings related to the mediating effects of emotion and problem-focused common coping in the relationship between parenting stress and marital quality**

As seen in Table 6, there are two indirect effects in the model since the ways of coping with emotion-focused common coping and problem-focused common coping between parenting stress and marital quality are significant. Since  $PS \rightarrow EFCC \rightarrow MQ$   $-.25 \times .35 = -.09$  and  $PS \rightarrow PFCC \rightarrow MQ$   $-.31 \times .42 = -.13$ , standardized partial indirect effect of parenting stress on marital quality -.22 (Bootstrap 95% CI -.27 to -.18) is statistically significant.

As a result, external and mediating variables explain 26% of marital quality in self-perception model, 65% in dyadic perception model and 59% in the common model. The remaining parts are explained by other variables.

### **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

According to the findings of the study, for both the self-perception model and the dyadic-perception model, parenting stress, emotion-focused support, problem-focused support and



negative coping have a direct effect on the quality of marriage. In addition, emotion-focused support, problem-focused support and negative coping directly affect the quality of marriage. For the common model, the stress experienced in parenting directly affects emotion-focused common coping, problem-focused common coping and marital quality. Similarly, emotion-focused common coping and problem-focused common coping directly affect the quality of marriage. When the indirect effects were examined, it was seen that parenting stress indirectly affected the quality of marriage in all three models. The indirect effect for self-perception and dyadic-perception models results from emotion-focused support, and for the common model, emotion and problem focused common coping. The findings obtained from the research were firstly discussed in terms of the direct relationships and then the indirect effects of these models were discussed.

### **Discussing and Interpreting Findings on the Direct Effects of Parenting Stress and Dyadic Coping with Stress**

When the results obtained in the study were examined, it was seen that there was a direct negative relationship between parenting stress and dyadic coping with stress. Although there are studies in the literature involving the effect of parenting stress on coping (Hall and Graff, 2011; Jones and Passey, 2005; Lopez et al., 2008; Tak and Mc Cubbin, 2002), these have always been done with families with developmental disabilities. As one of the limitations of this study, it cannot be said that there is an overlapping finding in the literature since it is not checked whether the child has developmental problems.

According to Bodenmann et al (2007), external perceived stress negatively affects close relationships and external stress sources increase relationship stress (Donato, Parise, Iafrate, Bertoni, Finkenauer and Bodenmann, 2015; Hilpert, Kuhn, Anderreg and Bodenmann, 2015; Ledermann, Bodenmann, Rudaz and Bradbury, 2010). In their study Randall and Bodenmann (2017) examined the effect of external stressors (external stress) and internal sources (internal stress) on relationship satisfaction, and mentioned the negative effects of many external stress sources on coping with stress. In addition, Story and Bradbury (2004) stated that stressful life events may lead to deterioration of the relationship. According to Bodenmann's (2000) stress divorce model, one of the ways that daily stress affects the relationship is the negative effect of the couple's communication. Individuals under stress tend to speak with their spouses more critically, humiliating, belligerent and oppressive. This effect of communication influences the dyadic coping mechanisms of the spouses negatively (Bodenmann, 2005). All of these data support the finding that parenting stress has a negative effect on positive sub-scales of coping with stress as a double and has a positive effect on negative sub-scale.

The negative effects of stress on the couple relationship can be reduced by adequate individual and couple coping skills (Bodenmann and Shantinath, 2004). The Couples Coping Enhancement Training program developed by Bodenmann (1997) aims to improve the coping skills of both couples, both individually and in pairs. The program aims to increase the coping skills of the spouses by reducing the negative impact of stress on their coping resources. Increasing these and such programs can reduce the impact of couples' stress on their ability to cope together.

### **Discussion and Interpretation of Findings on Direct Effects between Parenting Stress and Marital Quality**

Another finding of the study is that there is a direct negative relationship between parenting stress and marital quality. In the literature, many studies on marital relationship indicate a negative relationship between stress and marital quality (Bodenmann, 2005; Bodenmann et al., 2007; Falconier et al., 2015b; Randall and Bodenmann, 2009; 2017; Story and Bradbury, 2004). There are several stressful factors in human life, all of which have different effects on the marital relationship. Randall and Bodenmann (2017) examined the effect of stress sources on relationship satisfaction in order to understand the effect of stress on the satisfaction of relationships, instead of 'stress' (external vs. internal), 'intensity' (major vs minor) and 'duration' (acute vs chronic stress) should be focused on.

On the other hand, internal sources of stress are those that emerge in the relationship, such as difficult or disturbing habits in the partner, or different relational goals. Major sources of stress are critical life events such as a serious illness experience, death of a family member, or adaptation to changes in life (eg the birth of a child or retirement), while minor sources of stress are stresses of daily life (eg, late waking, stuck in traffic). Finally, in terms of duration, it is also important to know that the stress experience can be only a few days (acute) or longer (chronic). Randall and Bodenmann (2009; 2017) state that external, minor and chronic stress are the most important sources of stress on relationship quality.

Bodenmann (2005) states that the effect of stress on marriages is firstly related to the reduction of time spent together, shared emotional shares, compassion and sexual pleasure. Having children can also be an important source of stress in the life of parents. The duties and responsibilities of having a child, the time allocated for these duties and responsibilities, the quality of the relationship with the child, the child's psychosocial adjustment are the causes of stress in parenting.

According to Lazarus (1966), if an individual decides that the source of stress cannot be coped, he or she perceives it as stress. This is a self-assessment, which is also related to whether or not it is sufficient. Care of the child, meeting the physical and emotional needs, increasing the financial resources, the parents take a lot of time in daily life. Especially after the time spent by working parents with their children, their time for quality communication with each other decreases considerably. Bodenmann (1995) states that stress reduces the quality of communication in marriage. Increasingly active role of women in business life has enabled fathers to take more responsibility for spending time with children (Kuzucu, 2011).

Although studies on fathers' child care and spending time with the child, it is evident the father is expressed as 'participating in the process' (Erkal, Çopur, Doğan and Şafak, 2006; Ünlü, 2010; Yılmazçetin, 2003) it is obvious that something has changed about fatherhood. Although the increase in the responsibilities of fathers in raising children has positive effects on the marital relationship, the dominance of traditional gender roles still continues (Kuzucu, 2011). This may affect household chores, care of the child, meeting their needs, spending time with the child and having couples spending quality time with each other. In addition, the intimacy and sexual life of couples are important predictors of satisfaction from marriage (Çağ and Yıldırım, 2013). The lack of quality time of spouses may cause intimacy and lack of sexuality, which may have a negative impact on the quality of marriage.

### **Discussing and Interpreting the Direct Effects of Dyadic Coping with Stress and Marital Quality**

According to another finding in this study, there is no direct relationship between problem-focused support and negative coping and marital quality, one of the sub-scales of coping with stress as a couple, whereas there is a direct relationship between emotion-focused support and problem and emotion-focused common coping and marital quality. When the researches are examined, it is seen that the coping with stress and the support received from the spouse are highly related to the quality of marriage (Bodenmann, Pihet and Kayser 2006; Dehle, Larsen and Landers, 2001; Kardatzke, 2009; Walen and Lachman, 2000). This relationship occurs in two ways. First, coping as a couple removes the negative effect of stress over marriage, and secondly enhances the feeling of being 'us', strengthening mutual trust and closeness; the relationship is defined by the person as 'helpful and supportive' ((Bodenmann, 2005).

An important theme in the literature on providing support is related to the support given to and from the spouse (Hobfoll, 2009). Some studies say that the support given to the spouse is related to well-being (Feeney and Collins, 2001; 2003), while other studies say that perceived support is more significant as a predictor of coping with stress (Sarason, Pierce & Sarason, 1990; Schwarzer & Knoll, 2007). Researches suggest that support can be beneficial if the spouse is sensitive and empathetic to their needs (Cramer and Jowett, 2010; Maisel and Gable, 2009). Although the perception of support is not always a direct reflection of each interaction between

spouses, it is a cumulative reflection of spouses' support histories towards each other (Hobfoll, 2009).

Support from the spouse, one of the sub-concepts of dyadic coping with stress, is different from the support from the others. Because the spouse is the most basic and important source of support in stressful situations. Furthermore, unlike social support, coping with stress as a couple includes a commitment in which both spouses provide the other's satisfaction and well-being. This is also to ensure that one's own satisfaction and well-being and to maintain the functionality of the spouse as a whole (Bodenmann, 2005). Spousal support provides benefits for coping goals, and thus a sense of intimacy in the relationship plays an important role in improving the quality of marriage (Coyne and Racioppo, 2000).

The supportive scale of coping with stress is divided into emotion-focused support and problem-focused support. Problem-focused support includes approaches to eliminate the stressful situation such as helping to find the main source of stress, providing advice and giving ideas (Bodenmann, 1997; 2005). Emotion-focused support includes approaches to eliminate the emotion created by the stressful situation such as entering solidarity with the spouse and expressing his / her belief (Bodenmann, 1997; 2005).

Bodenmann and Langenick (1996) investigated the effects of stress on relationship quality in a longitudinal study. Findings show that stress coping is not a positive coping, but negative coping is the greatest predictor of separation and subsequent divorce. In another study, it was stated that as couples positive coping with stress more and as couples negative coping with stress less were highly significant in terms of marital quality. The findings of the research show that especially supportive coping is closely related to marital quality (Kardatzke, 2009). In other words, the longitudinal study of Bodenmann and Langenick supports the finding of the direct effect of emotion-focused support obtained in this study on marital quality. In addition, the fact that the support received from the spouse and the support provided with the spouse are also related to the quality of marriage, which is an important finding since there are different perspectives on this issue.

Bodenmann *et al.*, (2006a), individuals with dyadic coping with stress perceive the quality of their marriages higher. According to the findings of Austin and Falcoiner (2012), the common efforts of the spouses in coping with common sources of stress are positively related to marital quality. These efforts have a closer impact on their wives in emotional terms and have a positive effect on their relationship.

In contrast to the literature, in the current study, it was found that problem-focused support did not directly affect marital quality regarding both self-perception and spouses' perception. According to Folkman and Lazarus (1980), emotion-focused support is directed towards eliminating the emotional effect caused by the stressful situation and problem-focused support is directed to the main source of the problem. Emotion-focused support received from and given to the spouse is important in terms of the quality of marriage in coping with feelings such as guilt, helplessness and burnout caused by stress caused by parenting. Duties and responsibilities related to parenting, parents' behavior, parent-child relationship, child's psychosocial adaptation can be obtained from other social support sources (grandmother, grandfather, carer, teacher, friend, psychological counselor). This may be due to the fact that the study did not predict marital quality.

According to Bodenmann (1997; 2005), the negative coping is that the other spouse supports the stressed spouse but he or she does so in a negative manner. This scale includes not taking the stress of the spouse seriously, humiliation, ridicule, lack of interest and insincerity. Bodenmann *et al.*, (2010) stated that individuals who perceived high levels of negative coping in marital relationships experienced high levels of stress, anger and verbal aggression, which was reflected in their relationships. Bodenmann, Pihet and Kayser (2006) found that low negative coping was associated with high marital quality. Although negative coping was found to be highly correlated with marital quality in the literature, no significant relationship was found between the two variables in this study.

Bodenmann (2005) states that the studies on coping with stress as a couple should be increased and there are many different variables that have not been studied on this issue yet. In this study, the relationship between parenting stress, coping with stress as a couple and marital quality was examined, which has not been studied in the literature before. Although parents' level of parenting stress and other variables that affect parenting stress are not checked, the negative coping is not related to marital quality may be due to parenting stress and other variables predicting marital quality.

### **Discussion and Interpretation of Findings on Indirect Effects on Perception of Self and Dyadic Perception Models**

According to the mediation analysis of self-perception and spouse perception model, there is an indirect relationship between parenting stress and marital quality. Looking at the source of the indirect relationship, the direct effects of problem-focused support and negative coping were not significant, nor did they show mediation. However, the indirect effects of emotion-focused support are statistically significant. In other words, according to the perception of individuals both about themselves and their spouses, emotion-focused support is negatively affected as the parenting stress increases and the quality of marriage decreases. However, it should not be underestimated that the mediation relationship obtained is partial and there may be other variables mediating this relationship.

According to Bodenmann (2000; 2005), daily stress decreases coping as a couple and causes low marital satisfaction and risk of divorce. The spread of stress outside the couple relationship leads to a superficial and bilateral interaction that ignores the emotional needs of the partner. The sense of alienation becomes the source of marital difficulties and the problems in marriage increase with time. However, if each partner copes more effectively with their own stress, it can reduce the likelihood of stress spreading and thus protect the relationship from the negative effects of stress (Bodenmann, 2005). The findings of the study support Bodenmann's

Although there is no direct study in the literature on the relationship between emotion-focused support and the relationship between parenting stress and marital quality, there are some related studies. According to Karney and Bradbury (1995), the ability of spouses to adapt to stressful situations (supporting each other) plays a mediating role between stress and marital quality. Rusu *et al.*, (2015) found that coping with stress as a supportive factor in the relationship between marital sacredness and marital quality was mediating. In addition, another research was conducted with married couples having children; between daily stress and dyadic verbal aggression was found to be mediated by means of coping with stress (Bodenmann, Meuwly, Bradbury, Gmelch and Ledermann, 2010). Bodenmann *et al.*, (2006a) states that social support received from the spouse is significantly associated with marital quality in stress situations. In addition, Gabriel and Bodenmann (2006a) stressed the importance of coping with stress as a couple for people experiencing parent-related stress.

According to Ledermann *et al.*, (2010), couples need to reduce or cope with external stresses that tend to have a negative impact on the relationship in order to improve the quality of their marriage. When dealing with an external source of stress, it is possible that the internal coping (coping sub-system) mechanisms are affected. According to several studies in the literature, the support received from the spouse is the most important source of support in one's life (Çağ and Yıldırım, 2013; Evans *et al.*, 2014; Kabasakal and Soylu, 2016; Kurdek, 2005; Lawrence *et al.*, 2008). Bodenmann and Shantinath (2004) applied a curative training program based on coping with stress to couples with children, and their results showed that coping with stress as a couple reduces parenting stress and increases marital quality.

Parenting stress decreases emotion-focused support and the negative effect of marital quality, which reveals the importance of emotional support in coping with parenting stress. Considering the findings related to both self-perception and spouse perception model, the negative effect of perceived parenting stress on marital quality has an effect on the decrease in emotion-focused support they receive.

## Discussing and Interpreting the Results of Indirect Effects in a Common Model

According to the results of the Common Model mediation analysis, there is a partial mediation role of emotion and problem-focused coping in the relationship between parenting stress and marital quality. While only one spouse suffers stress and the other spouse helps him in supporting coping, both spouses experience stress (usually from the same source of stress) in common coping and try to manage the situation together. In other words, while stress in support is indirect for one spouse, stress in common coping is perceived directly by both spouses. In this process, spouses may be in excess symmetry, less symmetry or complementary to each other (Bodenmann, 1995; 2005), they need to mobilize their emotional and problem-focused coping resources together. However, the findings show that as the parenting stress increases, coping with each other is prevented and this negatively affects the quality of marriage.

According to Abidin (1992), parenting stress is affected by the personality traits of the parents, the personality traits of the children, and the interaction of parents with each other in their social environment. Stress adversely affects the relationship of the couple by decreasing the time spent together, negatively affecting the couple's communication and causing a high level of fragility in the face of psychological and physiological problems. The negative effect of coping with stress as a couple is the reduction of time spent together (2000; 2005). Thus, the duties and responsibilities required to have children and the time spent on them, as well as the restriction of the personal liberty of the parents resulting from the parenting role, cause spouses to spend less time with each other. The common coping attitudes of the couple, which devote less time to each other, are also adversely affected, which in turn contributes to adversely affecting the quality of marriage.

Although the results of the research on common coping in the literature are limited, this study shows that when spouses are affected together with parenting stress, this reduces the emotion and problem-focused common coping mechanisms and through this, marriage quality is adversely affected. This finding supports Bodenmann's (2000) theory as in the previous finding on mediation relationship.

Within the framework of the findings, some suggestions can be made for applications and future researches. For practitioners studying in the field of marriage and couple counseling, improvement programs can be prepared to improve marriage quality and / or coping with stress as a couple. The program will include individual coping, coping as a couple, couple communication, problem solving skills. Researchers studying in the field of family and couple counseling can be informed as to which coping and support resources individuals use in case of stress. In addition, the proposed model for future research can be tested in different samples. Furthermore, similar study can be conducted with unmarried couples.

This study has some limitations. This study was conducted with individuals through self-perception of the spouse and the spouses were not included in the study. The effect of demographic, occupational and personal characteristics of the individuals in the sample on the designed model was not examined. Furthermore, the developmental characteristics of the child and the presence of those responsible for the care of the child were not checked. The duration of the marriage was not controlled.

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