



EVALUATING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SEXUAL SATISFACTION AND MARITAL SATISFACTION WITH COUPLES' SELF-ESTEEM

بررسی رابطه ی رضایت جنسی و رضایت زناشویی با عزت نفس زوجین

AVALIANDO A RELAÇÃO ENTRE SATISFAÇÃO SEXUAL E SATISFAÇÃO CONJUGAL COM A AUTOESTIMA DOS CASAIS

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Abstract. Introduction: Satisfaction with married life depends on many factors, one of the most important of which can be having healthy and pleasant sexual relations, which plays an important role in people's self-esteem. Aim: The present study was conducted with the aim of investigating the relationship between marital satisfaction and sexual satisfaction with couples' self-esteem. Methods: For this purpose, during a correlational descriptive research, 160 people (80 couples) were selected and evaluated in terms of marital satisfaction, sexual satisfaction and self-esteem. The results of the correlation coefficient analysis showed that the highest correlation between sexual satisfaction and self-esteem (0.67) was observed in 20-30-year-old couples, and the highest correlation between marital satisfaction and self-esteem (0.64) was observed in 31-40-year-old couples. Results: The results of regression analysis showed that marital satisfaction and sexual satisfaction have a positive and significant relationship with couples' self-esteem in the age periods of 20 to 30 years and 31 to 40 years. According to the results, marital satisfaction and sexual satisfaction in the age group of 20 to 30 years can explain 0.62 and 0.51 percent of self-esteem, respectively, and in the age group of 31 to 40 years, these coefficients were equal to 0.46 and 0.27 percent, respectively. Conclusion: According to these results, it can be stated that there is a positive and significant relationship between marital satisfaction and sexual satisfaction with couples' self-esteem.

Keywords: Sexual satisfaction, Marital satisfaction, Self-esteem, Couples

رضایت از زندگی زناشویی به عوامل متعددی وابسته است که یکی از مهمترین این عوامل، می تواند داشتن روابط جنسی سالم و خوشایند باشد که نقش مهمی در عزت نفس افراد دارد. پژوهش حاضر با هدف بررسی رابطه ی رضایت زناشویی و رضایت جنسی با عزت نفس زوجین انجام شد. بدین منظور، طی یک پژوهش توصیفی از نوع همبستگی، 160 نفر (80 زوج) به شیوه ی نمونه گیری در دسترس انتخاب و از نظر رضایت زناشویی، رضایت جنسی و عزت نفس مورد ارزیابی قرار گرفتند. نتایج بررسی ضرایب همبستگی نشان داد که در زوجین 20 تا 30 بیشترین همبستگی مابین رضایت جنسی و عزت نفس (0.67) مشاهده شد و در زوجین 31 تا 40 سال بیشترین همبستگی مابین رضایت زناشویی و عزت نفس (0.64) مشاهده گردید. نتایج تحلیل رگرسیون نشان داد که رضایت زناشویی و رضایت جنسی با عزت نفس زوج ها در دوره های سنی 20 تا 30 سال و 31 تا 40 سال ارتباط مثبت و معنادار دارد. طبق نتایج، رضایت زناشویی و رضایت جنسی در گروه سنی 20 تا 30 سال می توانند به ترتیب 0.62 و 0.51 درصد از عزت نفس را تبیین نمایند و در گروه سنی 31 تا 40 سال این ضرایب به ترتیب برابر 0.46 و 0.27 درصد بود. طبق این نتایج میتوان بیان نمود که ارتباط مثبت و معنادار بین رضایت مندی زناشویی و رضایت مندی جنسی با عزت نفس زوجها وجود دارد.

رضایت جنسی، رضایت زناشویی، عزت نفس، زوجین

Resumo. A satisfação com a vida conjugal depende de muitos fatores, sendo um dos mais importantes ter relações sexuais saudáveis e prazerosas, o que desempenha um papel importante na autoestima das pessoas. O presente estudo foi realizado com o objetivo de investigar a relação entre a satisfação conjugal e a satisfação sexual com a autoestima dos casais. Para esse fim, durante uma pesquisa descritiva correlacional, foram selecionadas e avaliadas 160 pessoas (80 casais), em termos de satisfação conjugal, satisfação sexual e autoestima. Os resultados da análise do coeficiente de correlação mostraram que a maior correlação entre satisfação sexual e autoestima (0,67) foi observada em casais com idades entre 20 e 30 anos, e a maior correlação entre satisfação conjugal e autoestima (0,64) foi observada em casais com idades entre 31 e 40 anos. Os resultados da análise de regressão mostraram que a satisfação conjugal e a satisfação sexual têm uma relação positiva e significativa com a autoestima dos casais nos períodos de 20 a 30 anos e de 31 a 40 anos. De acordo com os resultados, a satisfação conjugal e a satisfação sexual no grupo etário de 20 a 30 anos podem explicar, respectivamente, 0,62 e 0,51 por cento da autoestima, e no grupo etário de 31 a 40 anos, esses coeficientes foram iguais a 0,46 e 0,27 por cento, respectivamente. De acordo com esses resultados, pode-se afirmar que há uma relação positiva e significativa entre a satisfação conjugal e a satisfação sexual com a autoestima dos casais.

Palavras-chave: Satisfação sexual, Satisfação conjugal, Autoestima, Casais

INTRODUCTION

Marriage is a complicated phenomenon in today's society. People get married for different reasons. In addition to sexual desires, which are among the primary issues, love, economic security, protection, emotional security, a sense of peace and escape from loneliness are also some of the factors that cause the tendency to get married. In fact, a successful marriage and the beginning of a marital relationship can satisfy many psychological and physical needs in a safe environment and have a significant effect on people's self-confidence. Eilis considers marital satisfaction to be the result of the exchange of rewarding behaviors. This theoretician considers marital satisfaction as the pleasure experienced by a husband or wife when all aspects of their marriage are considered. In this view, satisfaction is an attitudinal variable that is considered one of the individual characteristics of husband and wife (Salehi Fard, 1996). The results of the research by Olson & Larenson (1989) showed that the relationship between marital satisfaction and family satisfaction is significant.

On the other hand, one of the personal characteristics that, according to the emphasis of most psychologists and researchers, can be effective against anxiety and pressure is self-confidence. Cooper Smith (1997) in his research concluded that high self-esteem will make a person resistant to all kinds of life problems and psychological pressures. Self-esteem is a factor that can influence a person's understanding and interpretation and emotional reactions, and it can also be a determining factor in the amount of stressful events. Self-esteem is the sum of the feedbacks and opinions that a person expresses in her relations with the outside world, that is, the statement of disapproval or approval of a person regarding the expectation of success, acceptance and response to personal determinants. In a research, Cobb et al. (2001) showed how positive perceptions about the interest in a spouse lead to emotional security, supportive behaviors, and marital satisfaction. They measured marital satisfaction in the first 6 months of marriage and one year later. The results showed that when there is a sense of emotional security and self-confidence in the relationship of spouses, their communication performance is strengthened and their marital satisfaction increases.

One of the important indicators of couples' satisfaction with each other is sexual satisfaction (Brenznyak & Whisman, 2004). Sexual satisfaction refers to a person's pleasant feeling about their sexual relationships (Young et al., 2000). Satisfaction with sexual intercourse is one of the important factors of satisfaction with married life, one of the important factors affecting the health and quality of life of couples and one of the most important indicators of life satisfaction. Sexual satisfaction is of particular importance in the fields of family and marital issues, and several studies have pointed out the effect of sexual satisfaction on marital satisfaction. These studies have shown that the existence of a desirable sexual relationship in a way that can ensure the satisfaction of the parties has a very important and essential role in the stability of the family center (Ali Akbari Dehkordi, 2010). The purpose of the present study was to investigate the relationship between marital satisfaction and sexual satisfaction with couples' self-confidence in clients of two psychological centers in regions 5 and 6 of Alborz province.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The current research was a descriptive research of the correlation type. The statistical population of this research included couples in the age groups of 20 to 30 years and 31 to 40 years in regions 5 and 6 of Alborz province in 2022, from this population, 160 people (80 couples) were selected as an available sample and they were evaluated using Enrich marital satisfaction questionnaires, Hudson's sexual satisfaction and Cooper Smith's self-esteem.

Enrich's Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire

The Enrich Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire, whose 47-question form was prepared by Olson (1989), includes 12 scales, which are: contract response, marital satisfaction, personality

issues, marital relationship, conflict resolution, financial supervision, activities related to leisure time, sexual relations, marriage and children, relatives and friends, egalitarian roles and ideological orientation have been made. This tool has five options (which is basically a Likert-type attitude scale) and is scored from 1-5. In this research, Cronbach's alpha method was used to determine the reliability of the marital satisfaction questionnaire, which was equal to 0.87 for the entire questionnaire.

Hudson's sexual satisfaction questionnaire:

The sexual satisfaction questionnaire was created in 1981 by Hudson-Harrison and Kruscup to evaluate the satisfaction levels of couples. This scale has 25 questions and is considered part of self-report questionnaires. The subject's answer to each test item is determined on a 7-point scale between 0 and 6, and the total score of the subjects in the whole test fluctuates between 0 and 150. A high score on this scale reflects sexual satisfaction. The internal consistency of this scale was obtained by the calculation designers and its Cronbach's alpha was 0.91. In this research, Cronbach's alpha method was used to determine the reliability of the sexual satisfaction questionnaire, which was equal to 0.89 for the entire questionnaire.

Cooper Smith's self-esteem questionnaire:

Cooper Smith's Self-Esteem Questionnaire consists of five subjects, which are doing educational tasks, social relations, family, self and future, and has four subscales, general self-esteem, social self-esteem (peers), family self-esteem (parents), and Academic self-esteem. This questionnaire has 58 two-choice questions with "yes" and "no" options that each person chooses one of the options according to their situation. This list refers to two mental aspects and obvious behaviors of self-respect. The reliability of Cooper Smith's self-esteem questionnaire has acceptable validity and Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.88 was reported by the designers for the overall score of the test. In this research, Cronbach's alpha method was used to determine the reliability of the sexual satisfaction questionnaire, which was equal to 0.84 for the entire questionnaire.

Descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the data, Cronbach's alpha method and Pearson's correlation coefficient were used to calculate the reliability and validity of the tools, and variance analysis inferential statistics were used to investigate the research questions. Data analysis was done in SPSS-24 statistical software program.

Since regression analysis is a statistical process to estimate the relationships between variables and helps us understand how the value of the dependent variable changes with the change of each of the independent variables and with the other independent variables being constant. To analyze the data, Pearson's correlation coefficient (to examine the relationship between predictor and criterion variables) and regression analysis (to predict the criterion variable based on predictor variables) were used. In regression analysis, it is important to determine the dispersion of the dependent variable around the regression function, which can be explained by a probability distribution and is used to know the relationship between the independent and dependent variables and the form of these relationships. The data was analyzed using SPSS version 24 software.

RESULTS

In the present research, 160 people (80 couples) participated, and these people were in the age group between 20-30 years and 31- 40 years. Table 1 shows the descriptive components of the variables.

Table 1. Mean and standard deviation of research variables

Variable	Age group	Mean	SD	Number
Marital Satisfaction	20-30 years old	135/8	23	86 (%53.75)

Sexual satisfaction		62	14	
Self-esteem		41	7.61	
Marital Satisfaction	31-40 years old	147/4	25.6	74(%46.25)
Sexual satisfaction		59/2	17.5	
Self-esteem		48	8.27	
Marital Satisfaction	Total	141.6	24.3	160
Sexual satisfaction		60.6	15.75	
Self-esteem		44.5	7.94	

Source: Authors (2023)

The result of Pearson's correlation coefficient is presented in Table 2. As shown in Table 2, there was a correlation between marital satisfaction and sexual satisfaction with self-esteem ($r=0.59$, $p=0.0001$) and ($r=0.67$, $p=0.0001$) in the age group of 20 to 30 years. Also, it was observed between marital satisfaction and sexual satisfaction with self-esteem ($r=0.64$, $p=0.0001$) and ($r=0.41$, $p=0.0001$) in the age group of 31 to 40 years.

Table 2. Correlation coefficients between marital satisfaction and sexual satisfaction with couples' self-esteem

Variable	Age group	Statistical index of predictor variable	Correlation coefficient (R)	P
Self-esteem	20-30 years old	Marital Satisfaction	0.59	0.0001
		Sexual satisfaction	0.67	0.0001
	31-40 years old	Marital Satisfaction	0.64	0.0001
		Sexual satisfaction	0.41	0.0001

As can be seen, with the increase in marital satisfaction and sexual satisfaction in couples of different age groups, their self-esteem has also increased significantly. . Also, according to the results of the table, it can be seen that the correlation coefficient of sexual satisfaction and self-esteem in the age group of 20 to 30 years was more than the other age group, but the correlation coefficient of marital satisfaction and self-esteem was almost equal in both age groups. In the following, in order to predict self-esteem based on predictor variables, regression analysis has been used, and the results can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Prediction of self-esteem based on marital satisfaction and sexual satisfaction

Age group	Statistical index of predictor variable	R	R ²	F	Sig.	β	t
20-30 years old couple	Marital Satisfaction	0.81	0.62	54.14	0.001	0.53	4.81
	Sexual satisfaction	0.74	0.51	48.19	0.001	0.58	7.33
31-40 years old couple	Marital Satisfaction	0.78	0.46	37.48	0.001	0.64	6.40
	Sexual satisfaction	0.51	0.27	24.75	0.001	0.13	0.195

According to the results obtained in Table 3, it can be said that the marital satisfaction variable with a beta coefficient of 0.53 and the sexual satisfaction variable with a beta coefficient of 0.58 can positively and significantly predict self-esteem in couples aged 20 to 30 years. Also, according to the amount of R² in the mentioned variables, it can be said that they can explain 0.62 and 0.51 of self-esteem, respectively.

According to the results of Table 3, it can be said that the variable of marital satisfaction with a beta coefficient of 0.64 and sexual satisfaction with 0.13 can positively and significantly predict self-esteem in couples aged 31 to 40 years. Also, according to the value of R² in the variable of

marital satisfaction and sexual satisfaction, it can be said that 0.46 and 0.27 of the variance of self-esteem can be explained by the variable of marital satisfaction and sexual satisfaction in couples aged 31 to 40.

CONCLUSION

Marital satisfaction is a psychological state and reflects the perceived benefits and costs of marriage. The more the marital life partner imposes on the person, the less satisfied the person will be with the marriage and the marriage partner. Likewise, the greater the perceived benefits, the greater the individual's satisfaction with marriage and his marriage partner. In other words, marital satisfaction is a situation in which the husband and wife feel happy and satisfied about marrying each other and being together. Some psychologists believe that marital satisfaction is an adaptation between the existing situation and the expected situation. According to this definition, marital satisfaction is achieved when the existing situation in marital relations matches the expected status of the individual. Also, sexual satisfaction, especially at the beginning of married life, creates a framework for couples in which they can experience love, intimacy, pleasure and affection in the best possible way. Research has also shown that sexual satisfaction increases the intimacy between couples, increases their satisfaction with each other, and as a result increases their mental health (Yoo et al., 2014; Heiman et al., 2011).

The purpose of this research was to investigate the relationship between marital satisfaction and sexual satisfaction with self-esteem of couples at different age levels. Since there was no difference in marital satisfaction between men and women in different studies (Brenznyak & Whisman, 2004; Renuad et al., 1997); therefore, the questionnaires were examined regardless of the gender of the participants in the form of young and middle-aged age groups. The results of examining the correlation coefficients between marital satisfaction and sexual satisfaction with couples' self-esteem showed that in couples aged 20 to 30, the highest correlation between sexual satisfaction and self-esteem (0.67) was observed, and in couples aged 31 to 40, the highest correlation was observed between marital satisfaction and self-esteem by 0.64.

The results of the present research also showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between marital satisfaction and sexual satisfaction with self-esteem of couples in the age period of 20 to 30 years, and marital satisfaction and sexual satisfaction can positively and significantly predict the variable variance of couples' self-esteem with 0.62 and 0.51 percent, respectively.

The results of the present study were considered in line with the findings of other researchers who have shown that if couples have a higher quality of married life, especially at the beginning of their married life, as a result, they report more self-esteem and fewer problems and disorders. (Ghafaryan Shirazi et al., 2022). In explanation, it can be argued that young couples are satisfied with their married life, that there is a positive interpersonal relationship between them, they have a lot of unity, they support each other in various aspects of life, and they understand each other in doing many family and recreational activities. They have and are compatible, they have the ability to manage differences constructively, they have mutual and positive relationships with their original families, and they have understanding in different aspects of life such as financial issues. As a result, these couples who consider their spouses as a caring and available source of support, feel secure and self-confident and report a higher level of health and well-being (Dush et al., 2008).

The present study showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between marital satisfaction and mental health in the age period of 31 to 40 years, and marital satisfaction can positively and significantly predict 46% of the variance of the self-esteem variable. This finding is also consistent with other studies conducted (Yoo et al., 2014; Heiman et al., 2011). In explanation, it can be said that marital and sexual satisfaction is not only limited to the beginning of married life and can be seen in later years as well. Marital satisfaction has an effect on the quality and level of life satisfaction and the level of self-esteem of people (Yoo et al., 2014). In general, the findings of the present research indicate the importance of marital satisfaction and sexual satisfaction as

two important dimensions of the quality of married life and stability of marriage in increasing the self-esteem of married people in different age periods. In fact, marital satisfaction and sexual satisfaction are not only limited to a certain period of married life of couples. Couples in the youth and middle age periods, if they experience more marital and sexual satisfaction, they also report more self-esteem.

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