



Original Article

The mediating role of trust and security in the relationship between differentiation and marital intimacy in non-clinical married women

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Abstract

Introduction: The purpose of the present study was to investigate the mediating role of trust and security in the relationship of differentiation with marital intimacy in women.

Materials and Methods: The statistical population of this descriptive-correlational study consisted of all non-clinical married women living in Mashhad in 2018 who were selected by the convenient sampling method and according to Morgan table, 400 persons were selected. Data were collected using Bagarozzi Intimacy Questionnaire (2001), the Self-Differentiation Questionnaire of Scorone and Dundee (1998), the Gutman Trust Questionnaire (2012), and the Maslow Psychological Security Questionnaire (2004). After data collection, descriptive statistics, structural equation method along with regression and Pearson test and AMOS 24 and SPSS software were used to analyze the data.

Results: The results of structural equation analysis showed that the proposed model fits the data (GFI= 0.83, RMSEA= 0.04). Also the results of regression analysis showed that trust and security had mediating role in the relationship between differentiation and marital intimacy ($P= 0.001$).

Conclusion: Based on the findings, differentiation affects marital trust, sense of security and intimacy. Therefore, by increasing the differentiation of people in marital trust, their intimacy and sense of security can be increased.

Keywords: Differentiation, Marital intimacy, Security, Trust

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Introduction

Family is one of the most important subjects of psychology, and it is an evitable subject for everyone; without family in any form, life and human life do not have any clear meaning. So, the family is one of the first institutions in the society that should be changed, and it can change only through scientific knowledge of its functions and

dysfunctions. Marriage is the most important stage of human life, and family health will change during human life (1). Social and emotional supports resulting from marriage affect couples' physical, social, and spiritual health (2).

One of the factors that can have an active role in reducing marital conflicts is couples' differentiation. The most basic concept of

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Bowen's theory is self-differentiation (3). Bowen (1978) defines self-differentiation according to the theory of family systems to balance between his/her rational and emotional function with autonomy and intimacy in his/her relationship. According to this theory, at least four factors, including emotional reactivity, emotional cutoff, fusion with others, and the ability to achieve "I position" are predictors of a person's self-differentiation (4). Miller, Anderson, and Keala, Skowron, Valadkhani, and Kwon concluded in their study that couples with a high level of differentiation show more intimacy in their marital life. Also, those with self-differentiation trust more and have more security (5).

In recent studies, the concept of intimacy is considered an essential element in the dynamisms of marital relationships (6-8). Intimacy is regarded as one of the humans' most valuable existential aspects and an important matter in their healthy performance (9). Marital intimacy is conceptualized as a very important behavioral pattern with powerful social and emotional-affective aspects and is formed based on satisfaction, acceptance, and love (10).

The researches showed that a high level of intimacy in a relationship is one of the most potent predictors of psychological well-being, physical health, and marital satisfaction. Generally, achieving intimacy can be regarded as a necessity, by using which we can make a significant and satisfactory relationship between couples that can result in a combination of positive results. In this regard, the research of Eckert (2013) showed that intimacy has a significant and positive relationship with the level of marital satisfaction (9).

A very influential factor in marital intimacy is trust (11). The basis of living together and its persistence is trust and loyalty. However, as time goes by, such a condition can move towards an adverse condition. Reduction and disruption of trust relationships and especially in the family, in addition to the insecurity of continuing marital relationship, decrease their intimacy, make anxiety and tension, and damage their sense of security (12). According to Gutman's suggestion, mental security is an important element in marital intimacy. This concept refers to the feeling of acceptance by others. Sense of security is necessary for humans' mental and physical

health, and a continuous sense of insecurity drives the person towards physical and mental illness (13).

Mental security is defined as the state of mind in which a person wants to accept the consequences of his behavior. A person with a high level of psychological security can respect himself, consider his abilities as real as they are, and have high self-confidence. In addition, mental security regulates emotions and positively affects how others and themselves are evaluated, and increases mental health and adaptive behaviors (14). In addition, we can say that mental security provides the basis for the mental health of couples and has a decisive role in their judgment about each other's performance, such that a person with low mental security has lower flexibility and adjustment and shows more anxiety and aggression which may be accompanied by withdrawal and seclusion (15). Furthermore, researches show that marital trust results in a good relationship, favorable adjustment, and a high level of marital satisfaction (16).

In general, research shows that having intimacy among married couples is an important factor in creating lasting marriages, and avoiding intimate relationships is one of the causes of failure in family life. Also, more intimate couples can face problems and changes related to the relationship and ultimately experience higher satisfaction (17). Generally, family formation and marriage have existed in all areas and periods. Because by getting married, a person can achieve a natural and mental peace, because, like every person, there is a continuation of the generation, so when he approaches his nature, he feels calm, and on the other hand, the most important family relationships. , Is a marital relationship, so that more than 80% of divorced people remarry, and in today's world, with the change in people's lifestyles, there are many environmental, psychological, and social factors that can affect marital intimacy, and marital satisfaction. These factors can have devastating effects on the relationship between couples, so it is necessary to identify the factors affecting the increase of marital intimacy to reduce the many consequences of marital dissatisfaction by increasing the level of marital intimacy. As a result, it is important to examine the variables that

can affect marital intimacy. According above, the present study seeks to answer whether trust and security play a mediating role between differentiation and intimacy in non-clinical married women in Mashhad?

Materials and Methods

The present study was developmental research in purpose and descriptive-correlational research method. The design of this research is correlation modeling of structural equations. Structural equation modeling is one of the multivariate analysis techniques. In this study, measurement models (indicators of each of the hidden structures (hidden variables) are defined, and each hypothesis introduces a theoretical model of causal relationships between structures. Non-clinical married women lived in Mashhad in the winter of 1397, whose number is approximately equal to 2 million people. The sample was selected as a sample by voluntary and available sampling methods. To sample sampled married women were selected from different places. Then the Bagarozzi Intimacy Questionnaire, Rampel Trust And Holmes were given Bowen differentiation and Maslow's mental security, and after explanations, they were asked to answer the questions. The research gave them the need for honest cooperation and how to answer the questions, and they were also told that there was no need to mention names and details. Generosity remains confidential, and there is no time limit for responding. Inclusion criteria included being married, not having psychological or medical problems, experiencing a severely stressful event in the past nine months, and not using alcohol or drugs. The most important exclusion criteria, including divorce or the death of a spouse, were unwillingness to continue cooperating in the study.

Research instrument

A) Bagarozzi Questionnaire of Marital Intimacy: This questionnaire was developed by Bagarozzi (2001). It includes 41 questions that assess intimacy needs in 8 aspects of emotional, physiological, sexual, aesthetic, psychological, intellectual, spiritual, social, and fun marital. The subjects answer the questions in a ranked way from 1, meaning "there is not such a need at all" to 10, meaning "there is a very high need". The

highest score in each aspect is 50, and the score in spiritual intimacy is 60. Bagarozzi reported the questionnaire's validity of his research as 0.95. This questionnaire was first translated by Etemadi (2006). In order to verify the translation and its conformity with English text, English and Persian questionnaires were distributed among five counselor professors skilled in English. In order to determine content validity and face validity, the questionnaires were distributed among 15 professors of the counseling field of study and 15 couples. They presented their corrective justice about the validity of the questionnaire and verified its content validity. After the final correction, the questionnaire was presented to 30 men and women. The total validity coefficient of the questionnaire was calculated by Cronbach's alpha method as 0.94 in Iran. Also, the content validity of this questionnaire was 0.57 (18). The scoring method is such that the scores of questions in each aspect of intimacy are summed, which is achieved. The intensity of intimacy needs is calculated by summing the eight scores of intimacy aspects.

B) Gottman Trust Questionnaire: This questionnaire was developed by John Guttman (2012) to assess trust between couples and implemented in his love laboratory clinic. This questionnaire consists of 42 questions and is based on a 5-point Likert method (strongly agree, agree, theoretical). No, I disagree, I strongly disagree) will be graded. In questions 4, 15, 25, 26, 31, 35, and 39, the "I completely agree" option will be given a score of 1 and the "I strongly disagree" option will be given a score of 5. The rest of the scoring questions are reversed. The validity of this questionnaire has not been evaluated in Guttman Love Lab because this questionnaire was performed by Guttman and only in his laboratory. Shirdel, Hosseinian, Kimiaei, and Saffarian (2018) examined the reliability and validity of this questionnaire. In the first study (272 people), 50.7% were women, and 49.3% were men. These ratios in the second study (308 people) were 50.6% and 49.4%, respectively (19).

C) Maslow Psychological Security Scale: The psychological security questionnaire is a 62-question self-report scale constructed by Maslow in 2004. It includes scales like environmental maladjustment, paranoia, self-belief, passion in

life, depression, sense of bliss, social security, self-awareness, self-confidence, nervousness, disappointment, interest in life, adjustment with others, feeling of healthiness, and feeling of inferiority. One score is assigned to each correct answer according to the test key in this test. The highest score that a person can achieve in this test is 62. Maslow reported the value of Cronbach's alpha of this questionnaire as 0.66. Zare and Aminpoor, in 2012, examined the validity of this questionnaire in Iran. The results indicate a 0.91 correlation and a high validity of this test. The reliability of this test using Cronbach's alpha method is 0.64 (20).

After confirming the questionnaires and the purpose of the research from Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, to participate in this research, the satisfaction and cooperation of the subjects have been fully considered. In order to gain more trust in the subjects, their names and surnames were not mentioned.

Also, in this research, an attempt was made to maintain the confidentiality of information in all stages of the research. Data analysis of this study was performed in two parts. The first part was dedicated to descriptive findings, in which statistical indicators such as frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation were used.

The second part focused on testing the research hypotheses, path analysis with Amos software, and Pearson correlation and regression with SPSS22 software.

Results

Table 1. Correlation matrix of research variables

variable	trust	Mental security	differentiation	Intimacy
Trust	1	-	-	-
Mental security	0.49**	1	-	-
Differentiation	0.46**	0.53**	1	-
Intimacy	0.55**	0.47**	0.48**	1

Regarding the information gathered, correlation coefficients between studied variables in the correlation matrix (Table 1) indicate that in the correlation matrix at the 0.05 significance level, there is a positive and significant correlation among all the variables ($P < 0.05$). Structural analysis requires some presumptions; first, we study these assumptions. In this model, the assumptions of variables co-linearity and

The demographic findings indicate that 96.5 percent of respondents are married, 2.8% are divorced, and 0.8 % are widows and widowers. 5.5% of respondents have self-employment businesses, 6% have governmental positions, and 88.5 % are housekeepers. 9.8% have a consanguineous marriage, and 3.90% have not consanguineous marriage. Also, 13.8% of respondents have a middle school degree, 26.1% have a diploma, 14.8% have an associate's degree, 41.3% have a bachelor's degree, 3.3% have a master's degree, and 1% have a Ph.D. degree. 18.3% of respondents are first-born, 25.5% are second-born, 17% are third-born, 24.5% are fourth-born and 14.8% are fifth-born children. 14.8% have a high income, 63.8% have medium income, and 21.5% have low income. Finally, the average age of participants in the study is 39.82, and the average of their age difference is 11.74 years. The average age of a couples' marital life is 15.56, and their average difference is 11.40 years; the average espousal period is 18.45 months, and the average of their difference is 7.65% years. The average number of couples' children participating in the study is two children. Also, the results of the descriptive statistics indicate that the average of trust components, psychological security, differentiation, and intimacy are 33.128, 44.41, 92.167, and 72.203, respectively. Therefore, the findings of this hypothesis that sense of security and trust play a mediating role in the relationship between differentiation and marital intimacy indicated that:

independence of errors are studied. The results showed that the tolerance index for all the predictor variables smaller than 0.41 was variance inflation factor smaller than 3.13. Also, the value of the Durbin-Watson index, which was implemented to examine the assumption of independence of error, was 1.45. If the tolerance index is smaller than 1 (co-linearity < 1), the inflation factor is smaller than 10 ($vif < 10$), and

the value of the Durbin-Watson test is smaller than 4 (Durbin-Watson <4), then it can be said that the assumptions of regression are not violated. So regarding these indices, we can

conclude that the conditions of performing the test are observed. So in order to rest the desired structural equations model, we can use the method of the structural equation.

Table2. Goodness of fit indices of the leading and reformed model

Row	Test name	Indices of fitted model	Indices in the current research	Result
1	X ²	Be significant	0.001	Fitted model
2	X ² /DF	Be between 1-5	1.88	Fitted model
3	RMR	More closer to 0	0.086	Fitted model
4	GFI	Between 0 and 1 equal or larger than 0.9	0.83	Fitted model
5	AGFI	Between 0 and , equal or larger than 0.9	0.93	Fitted model
6	RMSEA	Smaller than 0.1	0.04	Fitted model
7	NFI	It should be larger than 0.9	0.92	Fitted model
8	CFI	It should be larger than 0.9	0.91	Fitted model

After testing structural equations, the results indicated that fit indices of structural equations analysis confirmed the overall fitness of the model. In order to examine the fitness of factor model, indices including the ratio of chi-square to the degree of freedom (x²/df), Bentler-Bonnet index (NFI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and other measures like CFI, AGFI, GFI, and RMR were used.

Three important indices are of higher importance in modeling structural equations, including absolute fit index, comparative fit index, and parsimonious fit index. Values of these three indices are reported to confirm the model regarding Table 2. The goodness of Fit Index (GFI) and Root Mean Square Residual (RMR) are absolute indices, values of which are acceptable regarding the acceptance range in the table. The direct and indirect relationship of variables and the level of their relationship according to standard data are indicated in Figure 1. Production indices of structural equations'

pattern are not limited only to overall fitness indices of the pattern, rather β standard parameters and Y and the t values correspondent to it exist for each causal path of differentiation variables (independent variable) towards trust and security (mediating variables) and marital intimacy (final dependent variable). These coefficients and indices also show the relative power of each path. β coefficients and regressions and Y are standardized, and their value should be 0 and 1. The path coefficients are indicated for each of these variables, which are high enough and acceptable. Gamma and Beta path coefficients and the correspondent t values exist for each differentiation and intimacy variable with the mediating role of trust and sense of security. As you can see, the value of t is more than 1.95 in all the relations, which indicates the significance of the relations path. Available direct effects, path coefficients, and their significance in the proposed differentiation pattern on marital intimacy are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Direct, indirect, and overall standard coefficients of the model

Predictor variable	Criterion variable	Direct effect	Indirect effect	Total effect
Sense of security	Intimacy	**0.39	-----	**0.39
differentiation	Intimacy	**0.41	-----	**0.42
Trust	Intimacy	**0.45	-----	**0.34
Differentiation	Trust	**0.43	**0.19	**0.47
Differentiation	Security	**0.48	**0.18	**37

Discussion

In explaining the results of the present study on the mediating role of trust and security in the relationship between differentiation and marital intimacy, it can be said that differentiation is

significant at two levels; One as a process that takes place within the individual, which includes the components of my position and emotional responsiveness, and the other as a process that occurs in interpersonal relationships that includes

the components of integration with others and emotional cutting. My position means a clear sense of "self" and independence in thoughts and beliefs (21). They are mixed up, rarely use emotional cutting, and have a greater ability to take my place (22). Empirical evidence widely mentions the effect of their level of differentiation on the quality of married life, and in research, they consider their differentiation an important factor in promoting mental health and happiness, and satisfaction with married life (23). Lampis et al. state in their research that couples who are less differentiated have less ability to make correct decisions in dealing with life issues and problems and act more on their emotions, which ultimately includes an increase in conflict and a decrease in intimacy in the couple's relationship (24). Research has shown that people with high marital intimacy scored higher on empathy, self-reflection, and self-control in social situations. They have shown themselves and feel more marital trust in their married life. They are also very skilled in creating and maintaining high-quality relationships. Research by Damasio et al. showed that lack of insight and information about their emotions and Others and low marital intimacy could be detrimental and cause depression. Depression, in turn, can reduce marital trust (25). The more intimate relationships people have, the more successful they will be in life and marital relationships, and the more satisfied they will be in life. The results also confirm that people can regulate their emotions, intimacy in relationships, always monitor how they feel about their spouse, and in difficult and stressful situations, interact with their spouse and establish a better relationship. They feel more marital trust in their life together (26). Wright Esman showed that intimacy in a couple's relationship is affected by their sense of security. Explaining this finding, we can say that intimacy is a state with positive expectations of the motivation and behavior of others and self-esteem in relationships, which is usually formed by a sense of foresight, reliance, and belief in the other party, and through this many relationships. It makes human beings possible and is the key to establishing interpersonal relationships and interactions between people in different situations and situations contributes to inner well-being and makes married life desirable and

pleasant for the individual, so a positive relationship between intimacy and a sense of security is possible (27,28).

People who feel mentally secure usually see the world as emotionally secure or harmless. As a result, they tend to be more confident and self-reliant, less anxious, and more social and active in their relationships with others, behave more sincerely (29). In this way, they try to cope with hard work and do everything to achieve higher goals in life. In addition, a sense of psychological security makes intimate interpersonal relationships more enjoyable. In a study in Sao Paulo, a sense of security was identified as a significant factor in intimacy, and values, problem-solving skills, differentiation, good communication, trust, economic and social status, and spirituality were identified as the following influential factors. Undifferentiated individuals rely less on their spouses as sources of trust and support in stressful situations than discriminated individuals in stressful situations, use avoidance as a countermeasure, and seek less supportive resources, resulting in lower marital intimacy. People with low differentiation have more emotions than negatives that predict that they are not good for marital intimacy and a sense of security and trust. In times of crisis, the family system is strongly influenced, and intimacy can play a role. On the other hand, the relationship between differentiation and intimacy has been confirmed by some studies. Stress will lead to higher marital intimacy in the family (30).

Each research has its limitations depending on the nature, subject matter, and method of work. The present study was no exception. One of the limitations of this study is that it is performed only on married women, limiting generalizing the results to other population groups. Impossibility of random selection of participants leads to limited generalizing the findings. In this study, sampling has been done in a convenient method and using a questionnaire are other limitations. Due to the high cost and time-consuming nature of the implementation, the researcher limited the study to the city of Mashhad. Many questions in the questionnaire led to the prolongation of its execution time, which did not affect the accuracy of the participants' answers. Finally, it is recommended that workshops be held for couples at the neighborhood level to increase their marital

intimacy. In addition, it is suggested that booklets and brochures be published on ways to increase couples' intimacy. This field is formed, distributed.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, differentiation affects marital trust, sense of security and intimacy.

Therefore, by increasing the differentiation of people in marital trust, their intimacy and sense of security can be increased.

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