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Investigating the relationship between lifestyle and commitment with marital satisfaction in married women*

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Abstract

Introduction: The purpose of present study is to determine the relationship between the lifestyle and the commitment of married couples with the marital satisfaction in married women.

Materials and Methods: The research statistic society of this descriptive study included all women referred to several consultancy institutes in Mashhad, who had called on for receiving consulting services. Then 200 women among them were selected via convenient method. Research instrument included the Enrich questionnaire of marital satisfaction (Enrich 1986), the marital commitment of Adams and Jones, and the questionnaire of health-improving lifestyle by Walkser (1990). Data analyzed through descriptive statistics and Pearson coefficient.

Results: The results showed that there is a significant positive relationship between lifestyle and the commitment of married couples with marital satisfaction among the married women ($P < 0.05$).

Conclusion: The married couples can increase their marital satisfaction through shifting their life style to the correct style.

Keywords: Commitment, Couples, Lifestyle, Marital satisfaction

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Introduction

The family is the most primitive social institution in terms of age and the most comprehensive in scope. This shows that forming a family is one of the most basic and natural

human needs. The first step to satisfy this basic and natural need is marriage. However, despite the pleasantness of marriage, statistical data indicates that the satisfaction of couples is not easily obtained. Marital satisfaction means the

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compatibility between a person's expectations from married life and what he experiences in his life (1). Marital satisfaction can be a reflection of people's level of happiness from marital relationships or a combination of satisfaction due to many mixed factors of the marital relationship (2). One of these factors can be the couple's choice of lifestyle to avoid risks and unfortunate consequences such as divorce. Lifestyle is what people have chosen during their life, and its foundation is laid in the family. This method is influenced by culture, race, religion, economics, social status, and beliefs. In other words, lifestyle is a person's general character to achieve goals and overcome problems. Each person's lifestyle is his life model manifested in his activities, attachments, and personal thoughts. The lifestyle is more than the personality, the person's social class. In general, lifestyle includes the complete pattern of a person's character and reaction to the world (3). In the texts on family tensions and the theory of flexibility against stressful factors, it is stated that commitment may be a means to effectively resist abnormal demands (4).

Two types of orientation are necessary to enjoy a desirable lifestyle, which include the acceptable dos and don'ts in life and ways of implementing and realizing it (5). People who lead an unhealthy lifestyle feel helpless. They have a more external control source, less social support, and physical tolerance, and are more irritable, but people with a healthy lifestyle have more positive coping methods (6). Adler and his followers first proposed the concept of lifestyle. Unlike many psychologists, Adler had a value and prescriptive view of psychology in addition to a descriptive view. According to Adler, all people have signs of the elements of inherited culture that are biological-essential characteristics of how these people communicate with the world. This communication style with their environment explains their relationship with themselves, others, and the world, and this framework builds an individual's lifestyle (7). Another factor that seems to influence marital satisfaction is the commitment of couples. Marital commitment means staying loyal to the family and its members during times of sadness and joy, pleasant and unpleasant events in life, based on feelings and emotions and the basis of intentions. Women who have not reached the necessary intellectual

maturity regarding their commitment to their husbands and others and follow an ambivalent behavior will have problems in marriage and working with others, which will often result in unfaithfulness (8). In other words, is committed to the family is the basis of spending time and energy of family members on activities that are related to the family in some way. In other words, studies on commitment show that commitment helps maintain and survive communication in couples (9). Also, marriage commitment increases life satisfaction, marital satisfaction, and quality (10).

The results of researchers such as Mahnaz Ali Akbari Dehkordi showed a significant relationship between women's emotional intelligence and their marital satisfaction and that of their husbands. Sullivan's research (11) showed that people with a higher level of religiosity have more marital stability than people with a lower level of religiosity. Aidi et al. (12) showed a significant difference in examining marital satisfaction in different attachment styles (13). In an article entitled the effect of job position on the lifestyle of working women, the results showed that the lifestyle of women could not be known only from their job position and other factors are also effective in the lifestyle (14). In the relationship between the lifestyle in terms of nutrition and general health, the results show a statistically significant relationship between general health and nutrition (15). The effect of a healthy lifestyle on the symptoms of depression and anxiety shows that these symptoms are reduced by living a healthy and active life. In the research of Salehi et al. (16), it was shown that there is a strong and positive correlation between the religious attitude and the lifestyle of students so that a high level of attitude is associated with a high level of lifestyle and a low level of lifestyle is associated with a low level of attitude. This study investigated the relationship between lifestyle, couple commitment, and marital satisfaction in married women.

Materials and Methods

The research conducted is a descriptive correlational study. The statistical population of the research was all women referring to several counseling centers in Mashhad city. Since, in correlation studies, a minimum sample size of 50 people is necessary for the relationship (17), 200

people were selected as available, and the questionnaires were given to them. The data was used to analyze descriptive statistics, including mean, standard deviation, and inferential statistics such as Pearson's correlation coefficient test.

Research instruments

A) Lifestyle Questionnaire: The health-promoting lifestyle questionnaire includes 52 questions that, on a four-point Likert scale (never, sometimes, often, and always), present health-promoting behaviors based on the health promotion pattern in 6 subscales of spiritual excellence. Measures health responsibility, nutrition, physical activity, stress management, and interpersonal relationships. This questionnaire was created in 1990 by Walker. Walker et al. have confirmed the reliability of the questionnaire using Cronbach's alpha for six scales, respectively 0.86, 0.86, 0.80, 0.85, 0.79 and 0.87, and 0.94 for the entire questionnaire. Also, this questionnaire has been standardized, and its alpha coefficient has been calculated as 0.96 (16). Therefore, the reliability obtained in this research is 0.83.

B) Enrich Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire: In this study, the Enrich Marital Satisfaction Scale was used to check the marital satisfaction level, including 47 questions and 11 subscales. In Mahdavian's research, the Pearson correlation coefficient in the retest method (with an interval of one week) was 0.93 for the male group, 0.944 for the female group, and 0.94 for the male and female groups. The alpha coefficient of the 48-question form of the questionnaire in Mirakhshti's research was 0.92, and in the 47-question form of Soleimaniyan's research (18), it was 0.90.

The correlation coefficient of the Enrich questionnaire with family satisfaction scales is from 0.41 to 0.60 and with life satisfaction scales from 0.32 to 0.41, which indicates its validity (18).

C) Marital Commitment Questionnaire: The Marital Commitment Questionnaire was developed by Adams and Jones in 1997. This questionnaire has 44 questions and three subscales of commitment to spouse, commitment to marriage, and compulsory commitment. Scores range from 45 to 225, with higher scores indicating more outstanding marital commitment. Adams and Jones evaluated the validity of the marital commitment questionnaire based on the validity based on the correlation of the subscales with each other and with a favorable total score. They obtained its reliability based on Cronbach's alpha for 0.91, 0.89, and 0.86.

Furthermore, the subscales of commitment to spouse, commitment to marriage, and compulsory commitment were translated into Farsi by Shah Siah and colleagues and validated, and the consulting professors of Isfahan University confirmed their content validity. Also, the reliability of the test based on Cronbach's alpha method and retest for the whole test was 0.85 and 0.86 (8).

Results

Descriptive findings, including the mean and standard deviation, are presented in Table 1. As can be seen in the table, the mean lifestyle is 110.15, and marital satisfaction is 149.12. Among the lifestyle variables, relationships are the highest, and nutrition is the lowest. However, they have the highest average.

Table 1. Descriptive findings related to lifestyle variables and marital satisfaction

Variable	Mean	SD
Life style	20.19	3.38
Spiritual promotion	20.11	4.01
Responsibility	17.15	3.3
Nutrition	18.24	3.21
Physical activity	14.14	2.7
Stress management	20.28	4.2
Relationships	110.15	20.8
Marital satisfaction	149.21	22.23

The results obtained from lifestyle and marital satisfaction, the score obtained from marital satisfaction with an average of 149.21 and a standard deviation of 22.23 and lifestyles with an average of 110.15 and a standard deviation of 20.8, show the high scores of the subjects in the

two variables. Also, among the components of the lifestyle, the component of relations with has an average of 20.28 and a standard deviation of 4.2, and stress management. With 2.7, they had the highest and lowest average, respectively.

Table 2. Mean and standard deviation of marital commitment scores in women

Variable	Mean	SD
Marital commitment	107.35	6.15
Commitment to spouse	37.44	4.24
Commitment to marriage	49.61	4.92
Forced commitment	81.51	5.34

The results of this research showed that, in general, according to the obtained score of the marital commitment variable (with an average of 107.35 and a standard deviation of 6.15), it can be acknowledged that the commitment to married life in women is medium to high. Among the

components of marital commitment, the highest type of commitment is forced commitment with an average of 81.51 and a standard deviation of 4.92, and the lowest type of commitment to the spouse with an average of 37.44 and a standard deviation of 4.24.

Table 3. Correlation coefficients between marital satisfaction and lifestyle subscales

Criterion	Predictive	r	P
Marital satisfaction	Life style	0.45	0.001
	Spiritual promotion	0.40	0.011
	Responsibility	0.35	0.004
	Nutrition	0.19	0.054
	Physical activity	0.20	0.016
	Stress management	0.40	0.003
	Relationships	0.48	0.001
	Marital commitment	0.39	0.012
	Commitment to spouse	0.44	0.007
	Commitment to marriage	0.36	0.028
	Forced commitment	0.38	0.041

Since the measurement levels of both independent and dependent variables are distance, Pearson's correlation coefficient test is used. According to this test, there is a significant relationship between the two variables at 0.05. The value of the correlation coefficient between lifestyle and commitment of couples with marital satisfaction among married women of Mashhad city is significant at the significance level of 0.05 ($P < 0.05$). Table 4 shows the results of multiple

regression analysis related to the interaction of lifestyle and commitment of couples with marital satisfaction using the hierarchical method (Enter). The order of entering the variables into the prediction equation is based on the highest bivariate correlation coefficient with the criterion variable. Based on this, the variables of lifestyle and couple's commitment were entered into the analysis to predict marital satisfaction. The results are shown in the table below.

Table 4. The results of multiple regression analysis using the hierarchical method to predict marital satisfaction based on the lifestyle and commitment of couples

Index	Multi-coefficient MR	RS	F P	Regression coefficient B and Beta		Fixed a
				1	2	
Predictive variables						
Couples commitment	0.560	0.313	F= 67.45 P<0.0001	B= -1.65 β = -0.56 t= - 8.21 P= 0.001		78.04
Couples commitment and life style	0.588	0.346	F= 38.81 P< 0.001	B= -1.45 β = -0.49 t= -6.9 P= 0.001	B= 0.83 β = 0.19 t= 2.7 P= 0.008	52.48

As seen in Table 4, based on multiple regression analysis and hierarchical method results, the multiple correlation coefficient for the linear combination of the interaction variables of lifestyle and commitment of couples with marital satisfaction is MR=0.588, and the coefficient of determination is equal to 346. RS= 0, which is significant. According to the coefficient of determination obtained, it has been determined that about 35% of the variance of marital satisfaction variable can be explained by the predictor variables of lifestyle and couple's commitment.

Discussion

Commitment to spouse and marriage makes marital trust possible. Life without commitment and loyalty can lead to failure. As long as the commitment to the spouse and marriage is not taken seriously, it cannot reach the structure of a healthy married life. Commitment is a mixture of values and beliefs that may be self-made or prescribed by others (19). Research results show that lack of commitment is the most important factor in divorce (20). Based on this, the marital relationship without commitment will be superficial, superficial, and without direction, and in this case, the couple will not be able to experience the depth of love and intimacy that arises in the shadow of the loyalty and commitment of the spouse and marriage. The couple's lack of commitment has a lot of adverse effects on the family, affects the couple's soul and spirit, and actually overshadows the whole life (21). This research aimed to determine the

relationship between lifestyle and commitment of couples with marital satisfaction. The correlation coefficient showed a significant relationship between lifestyle and commitment of couples with marital satisfaction.

The results of this research showed that there is a positive and meaningful relationship between the component of spiritual excellence and marital satisfaction. This means that high levels of spiritual excellence are related to increasing marital satisfaction, and low levels of spiritual excellence are related to decreasing marital satisfaction. This result is consistent with the results of other studies (22). In addition, this research showed that there is a significant positive relationship between physical activity and marital satisfaction. This means that exercise and physical activity can have an effect on increasing marital satisfaction, as based on the research findings, exercise and physical activity can be effective in having a lifestyle and preventing blood pressure (23). There is also a significant positive relationship between stress management and marital satisfaction. This result indicates that an active lifestyle reduces symptoms of depression and anxiety and increases people's ability to deal with stress and tensions in life (24).

There is also a significant positive relationship between responsibility and marital satisfaction. If the couple has a high level of responsibility, they will achieve reasonable marital satisfaction, which is done by dividing tasks. Shorkat (25) stated that those with high spiritual excellence would be more successful in empathy,

understanding, responsibility, and flexibility. Much evidence shows that couples in today's society have faced many pervasive problems in establishing and maintaining intimate relationships and understanding feelings. Evidently, the deficiencies in the emotional and emotional sufficiency of spouses, along with many other factors, have adverse effects on their life together (26). To explain the above findings, it can be said that for most couples, having a good and successful life depends on having the proper lifestyle, which significantly impacts marital relations.

Marital satisfaction can ultimately affect the quality of life, and researchers have confirmed the importance of its effect on various clinical outcomes such as mental health, physical health, and even longevity (27).

Conclusion

Based on the results, marital satisfaction in couples will be a function of the couple's commitment in the first place and having a suitable lifestyle in the next place. This means that commitment, loyalty, and lifestyle play an important role in marital satisfaction.

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