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Comparison of martial satisfaction, marital adjustment and martial intimacy among employed and unemployed married woman students of Islamic Azad University of Ahvaz*

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Abstract

Introduction: The aim of this study was to compare martial satisfaction, marital adjustment and martial intimacy among employed and unemployed married woman students of Islamic Azad University of Ahvaz.

Materials and Methods: The statistical sample of this causal-comparative study concluded 246 married women (124 employed and 122 unemployed) of Islamic Azad University of Ahvaz, who were selected by convenient sampling. Research instruments were Enrich martial satisfaction questionnaire, Harmon Sink marital adjustment questionnaire and Bagarozzi martial intimacy questionnaire. Data analyzed by two way ANOVAs.

Results: The results showed that employed married students have more marital satisfaction than unemployed ones ($P=0.012$; $F=6.36$). Also, they have more adjustment than unemployed married female students ($P=0.005$; $F=7.85$).

Conclusion: Employed married female students have more marital satisfaction and marital adjustment than unemployed ones but they have less emotional, intellectual, spiritual and aesthetical intimacy than unemployed married female students.

Keywords: Adjustment, Employed, Martial intimacy, Martial satisfaction, Women

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Introduction

The healthiest human society is a society whose smallest unit, the family, is healthy. Husband and wife should love each other so that based on love and the warm heart of the family, they can absorb divine blessings and deliver a pure and healthy generation to society. The first step in forming a family is marriage (1).

Marital satisfaction is an overall assessment of the state of a person's current marital or romantic relationship. Marital satisfaction can be a reflection of people's level of happiness from marital relationships or a combination of satisfaction due to many factors specific to marital relationships. A person's satisfaction with married life is considered his satisfaction with his

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family, and satisfaction with his family means satisfaction with life. As a result, it will facilitate the growth and excellence and the material and spiritual progress of society (2). Marital satisfaction can be considered a psychological situation that does not arise by itself but requires the efforts of both partners. Especially in the early years, marital satisfaction is very unstable, and relationships are at the highest risk (3).

Kaplan and Maddox (4) state that marital satisfaction is a personal experience in a marriage that the individual can only evaluate in response to the enjoyment of the marital relationship. They believe that marital satisfaction depends on people's expectations. Married life can be successful when the parties have cultural and class homogeneity and similar values because, with the emergence of machine civilization, the relationship between men and women has become complicated. Therefore, marriage has techniques that couples should be aware they will unintentionally face problems that lead to separation (5).

Marital intimacy as an important aspect of married life has a long history. The attempt to classify it goes back to the time of Aristotle, and today part of the knowledge in this field confirms his observations, but scientific study about it since the 1990s has started. With the introduction of a topic such as interpersonal relationships in family psychology and considering intimate relationships between husband and wife as one of its important types, this relationship has found a special place and meaning in married life in such a way that in Theorizing the family emphasizes the importance of the intimate bond between spouses and considers it necessary to create a secure family identity. Intimacy, by creating a particular and positive dimension in married life and ensuring the mental health of family members, is a protective and decisive factor against personal and social problems. In this sense, it emphasizes the intimacy between husband and wife in the family (6). Moreover, recognizing intimacy means recognizing diversity in family structures. For this reason, family therapists try not to consider individual problems as the result of individual growth and development by considering the person in intimate relationships in the family and creating a situation in therapy to increase their intimacy

with each other and understand different styles of intimacy (7).

Marital compatibility is a way married people are individually compatible with each other to stay married. On the other hand, marital adjustment is a process during which couples, individually or in cooperation with each other, change and modify their behavior patterns to achieve maximum marital satisfaction (8). Spanier and Cooley (9), by reviewing marital compatibility studies from the 1920s to the 1970s, found that this phenomenon is a dynamic process that may be evaluated at any time on a continuum from fully compatible to incompatible. In this way, marital compatibility is a multi-dimensional concept with more objective characteristics than marital satisfaction (10).

Nosrati (11) investigated the marital satisfaction of the families of employed women and housewives and showed that the marital satisfaction of housewives is higher than that of employed women. He also showed that men's marital satisfaction with a housewife is more than men with employed wives. Research has shown that religiosity is significantly related to marital compatibility and spouses' happiness. They found that the effect of religiosity on marriage was more significant in the older group. Ahmadi Nodeh, Fathi Ashtiani, and Arabnia (12) also studied 1320 people (660 couples) and showed that the marital compatibility level among people with many religious beliefs is significantly more than those who have little religious beliefs.

Considering the presented materials and the importance of marital satisfaction and compatibility in establishing marital relationships and families, the purpose of this research is to compare the marital satisfaction and marital compatibility of employed and unemployed female students of the Islamic Azad University of Ahvaz branch.

Materials and Methods

The statistical population of this research includes all employed married female students and unemployed married female students of Ahvaz Islamic Azad University who were studied in the academic year 2013-2014. Therefore, the size of the statistical population is 3500 people, and according to Morgan's table, the sample of this research consists of 246 people from the

mentioned population, and the convenient sampling method was used to select them.

Research instruments

A) Enrich Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire: This scale was created in (1989) by Olson, Fourniero, and Drunkman in America to evaluate potentially problematic areas or identify areas of strength and fruitfulness in the marital relationship (13). The Enrich questionnaire in Iran was made by Soleimaniyan (14) in the form of a short form of 47 questions. Soleimaniyan calculated the validity and reliability of this questionnaire. The criterion validity of this questionnaire with the family compatibility questionnaire was obtained as 0.86 and 0.92, respectively (all were significant at the 0.05 level), which indicates its acceptable validity, and its reliability is also 0.95 with Cronbach's alpha method calculated. In this research, Cronbach's alpha method was used to determine the reliability of the marital satisfaction questionnaire, which is equal to 0.70 for the entire questionnaire, which indicates the acceptable reliability coefficients of the mentioned questionnaire.

B) Bagaroozi Marital Intimacy Questionnaire: Bagaroozi's needs assessment questionnaire (15) Bagaroozi designed this questionnaire to evaluate the needs for intimacy in emotional, psychological, intellectual, sexual, physical, and spiritual, aesthetic, and recreational-social dimensions. It consists of 41 questions the subject answers in a ranked form, from 1 meaning "there is no such need at all" to 10 meaning "there is a great need there is". The highest score is 50 in each dimension and 60 in the dimension of spiritual intimacy. Emetadi et al. (16) obtained

the reliability of this questionnaire with Cronbach's alpha test of 0.94. In Iran, Etemadi et al. (16) administered the questionnaire to 15 counseling professors and 15 married couples to determine its content validity, and its content validity was confirmed. The reliability coefficient of the whole questionnaire was obtained by Cronbach's alpha method of 0.94. In addition, Khamse and Hosseinian (6), in a study, calculated the reliability of each dimension of intimacy with the test-retest method, which for emotional, psychological, intellectual, sexual, physical, spiritual, aesthetic, and social-recreational intimacy, respectively: 0.89, 0.82, 0.81, 0.91, 0.80, 0.65, 0.76, 0.51 were obtained, and it indicates the acceptable reliability of this scale.

C) Dr. Harmon Sink's Marriage Compatibility Questionnaire: This scale consists of ten questions for men in form (a) and ten for women in form (b) that people must answer yes or no. The range of the grading scale changes from +10 (maximum compatibility) to +1 (minimum compatibility), and we have used ten questions of form (b) for women. The reliability coefficient of this test was reported as 0.95 and 0.93 by halving and retesting, respectively. In his research, Stafford Cheng reported the retest coefficient and Kuder Richardson's coefficient for this questionnaire as 0.89 and 0.82, respectively. A group of psychologists confirmed the validity of this test (17).

Results

The descriptive findings of this research, including statistical indicators such as mean and standard deviation for all variables studied, are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. The mean, standard deviation of the marital satisfaction and marital compatibility variables

Variable	Employment	Mean	S.D	N
Marital satisfaction	Employed	147.52	9.84	124
	Unemployed	143.84	12.80	122
	Total	145.70	11.53	246
Marital adjustment	Employed	7.77	1.84	124
	Unemployed	7.25	0.903	122
	Total	7.51	1.47	246

Table 2. The results of variance analysis of one variable in the text of MANOVA on marital satisfaction and marital compatibility

Variables	Sum of Squares	df	Mean of Squares	F	P
Marital satisfaction	829.12	1	829.12	6.36	0.012
Marital adjustment	16.64	1	16.64	7.58	0.005

As presented in Table 2, there is a significant difference between employed married female students and unemployed married female students in terms of marital satisfaction ($P= 0.012$ and $F=6.36$) and employed married female students compared to students Unemployed married women have higher marital satisfaction.

Also, there is a significant difference between employed married female students and unemployed married female students in terms of compatibility ($P= 0.005$ and $F=7.85$), and employed married female students compared to married and unemployed female students have higher compatibility.

Table 3. Mean and standard deviation of marital satisfaction variables and types of intimacy

Variable	Employment	Mean	SD	N
Marital satisfaction	Employed	147.52	9.84	124
	Unemployed	143.84	12.80	122
	Total	145.70	11.53	246
Emotional intimacy	Employed	41.22	6.60	124
	Unemployed	42.72	4.52	122
	Total	41.96	5.70	246
Psychological intimacy	Employed	40.54	6.81	124
	Unemployed	40.69	5.58	122
	Total	40.61	6.22	246
Intellectual intimacy	Employed	40.02	9.58	124
	Unemployed	43.94	5.47	122
	Total	41.97	8.04	246
Sexual intimacy	Employed	40.35	11.01	124
	Unemployed	41.98	8.11	122
	Total	41.16	9.70	246
Physical intimacy	Employed	42.05	9.29	124
	Unemployed	42.34	7.31	123
	Total	42.20	8.35	246
Spiritual intimacy	Employed	45.26	8.85	123
	Unemployed	47.95	5.97	123
	Total	46.59	7.66	246
Aesthetic intimacy	Employed	41.10	6.51	123
	Unemployed	42.75	4.40	123
	Total	41.92	5.61	246
Recreational-social intimacy	Employed	39.89	7.40	123
	Unemployed	40.92	4.75	123
	Total	40.40	6.24	246

Table 4. The results of variance analysis of one variable in the text of MANOVA on marital satisfaction and types of intimacy

Variable	Sum of Squares	df	Mean of Squares	F	P
Marital satisfaction	829.12	1	829.12	6.36	0.012
Emotional intimacy	139.02	1	139.02	4.32	0.039
Psychological intimacy	1.35	1	1.35	0.035	0.852
Intellectual intimacy	944.21	1	944.21	15.43	0.0001
Sexual intimacy	163.14	1	163.14	1.73	0.189
Physical intimacy	5.38	1	5.38	0.077	0.782
Spiritual intimacy	445.90	1	445.90	7.79	0.006
Aesthetic intimacy	168.91	1	168.91	5.44	0.020
Recreational-social intimacy	65.36	1	65.36	1.68	0.196

Tables 3 and 4 show a significant difference between employed married female students and unemployed married female students in terms of emotional intimacy ($P= 0.039$ and $F=4.32$). In other words, employed married female students have lower emotional intimacy than unemployed married female students. A significant difference can be observed between employed married female students and unemployed married female students in terms of psychological intimacy ($P= 0.852$ and $F=0.035$), and it can be said that employed married female students and unemployed married female students have more intimacy. Nevertheless, they have almost the same psychology.

There is a significant difference between employed married female students and unemployed married female students in terms of intellectual intimacy ($P= 0.0001$ and $F=15.43$), and employed married female students have low intellectual intimacy compared to unemployed married female students. There is no significant difference between employed married female students and unemployed married female students in terms of sexual intimacy ($P= 0.189$ and $F=1.73$). Employed married female students and unemployed married female students have almost the same level of sexual intimacy.

There is no significant difference between employed married female students and unemployed married female students in terms of physical intimacy ($P= 0.782$ and $F=0.077$), and employed married female students and unemployed married female students have almost the same physical intimacy. There is a significant difference between employed married female students and unemployed married female students in terms of spiritual intimacy ($P= 0.006$ and $F=7.79$) and employed married female students and unemployed married female students have lower spiritual intimacy.

There is a significant difference between employed married female students and unemployed married female students in terms of aesthetic intimacy ($P= 0.020$ and $F=5.44$), and employed married female students have low aesthetic intimacy compared to unemployed married female students. Also, there is no significant difference between employed married female students and unemployed married female students in terms of social-recreational intimacy ($P= 0.196$ and $F=1.68$). Employed married female students and unemployed married female students have almost the same social-recreational intimacy.

Discussion

The research results showed a significant difference between employed married female students and unemployed married female students in terms of marital satisfaction. In other words, employed married female students have higher marital satisfaction than unemployed married female students. The findings of this research are consistent with the research of Nosrati (11), Shahrashvani (8), Simonelli et al. (18), Mirgain, and Cordova (19). In explaining this result, it can be said that the satisfaction experienced by men and women is correlated in different dimensions.

Also, the quality of life of these couples is favorable for the husband and wife due to their relatively good financial situation due to two incomes. For a woman, employment provides many of her needs, including busyness, variety and challenge, and strength, which may not fulfill the role of a housewife with all its importance. In men's view, women's employment means performing non-traditional roles and obligations.

In these marriages, the man feels less psychological pressure because he is not responsible for providing for the family's finances alone. This way of life also positively affects the quality of marital relations because, in these marriages, there is more interaction between men and women in power and decision-making. Joint decisions make husband and wife respect each other more and bring them closer together. They feel valuable and worthy because they experience an honest relationship (20).

On the other hand, in the current research, it was observed that employed married female students have higher individual compatibility than unemployed married female students. This finding is consistent with the research of Alikhani (21), Ebrahim Nemati, et al. (22), Fatemeh Alipour (23), Hamida Jafar Yazdi, and Mahmoud Golzari (24). In explaining this result, it can be said that employed women have strengthened their adaptation due to more interpersonal communication with different people, both men, and women.

Furthermore, based on the research findings, the existence of multiple roles for employed women affects their marital performance and compatibility. In other words, women who can recognize and express their own emotions and the

emotions of others and also have characteristics such as optimism, happiness, problem-solving ability, impulse control, self-actualization, independence, and empathy, are more compatible in their married life.

On the other hand, in the present research, it was observed that employed women have lower intimacy than unemployed women in emotional, intellectual, spiritual, and aesthetic areas of intimacy, and a significant difference was observed.

This finding is consistent with the research of Mehdizadegan (25), Rasti et al. (26), Daghighleh et al. (27), and Hiyoten and Berat (28). In explaining this hypothesis, it can be said that due to the lower stress level and less fatigue of unemployed women compared to employed women, a safe and calm environment has been created at home, which has resulted in better mental and psychological conditions for unemployed women, which causes It has provided more marital intimacy. The standard definition of intimacy is closeness to a spouse, sharing values and opinions, joint activities, knowing each other, sexual relations, and emotional behaviors such as caressing.

A person who experiences more intimacy can express himself better in relationships and express his needs more effectively to his partner (29). There should be a few barriers and restrictions to create emotional intimacy so that feelings can be easily expressed in a relationship. In order to create rational intimacy and respect for the other person's point of view, the ability to role-play, understanding, and empathy are necessary.

As a result, it can be said that if the conditions for expressing all kinds of intimacy are not provided for the couple, they will not be successful in expressing any of them. People who experience a higher level of intimacy are able to present themselves more favorably in relationships and express their needs more effectively to their partner and spouse.

Therefore, according to the existing studies and the results of this research, providing information and developing sufficient skills regarding marital relations and counseling before marriage will have a special place in improving and stabilizing married life.

Conclusion

Employed married female students have higher marital satisfaction and marital compatibility than unemployed married female students,

although employed women had lower intimacy than unemployed women in the areas of intimacy in emotional, intellectual, spiritual, and aesthetic fields.

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