



Investigating the Role of Virtual Addiction, Emotion and Self-Control in Predicting Attitudes Toward Marital Infidelity in Women with Extramarital Relationships

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Abstract

Aim: Extramarital affairs is one of the most important harms that threaten the cohesion of families in recent years. Identifying factors related to extramarital affairs is important because it can reduce the risk of family breakdown. The aim of this study was to Investigating the Role of Virtual Addiction, Emotion and Self-Control in Predicting Attitudes Toward Marital Infidelity in Women with Extramarital Relationships. **Method:** The statistical population of the research included women with extramarital relationships who visited 7 counseling centers in Tehran in 2020-21 and their number was 273. 216 people who met the inclusion criteria answered the research questionnaires using the accessible sampling method. Research tools included Young Internet Addiction Questionnaire (1999), Jeffrey Arendt Excitement Questionnaire (1992), Tangier Self-Control (2004), and Mark Whatley (2006) Attitudes Toward Marital Infidelity. Data were analyzed using Pearson correlation and multiple regression. **Results:** The findings showed that there is a significant negative relationship between self-control and attitudes toward marital infidelity ($P < 0.01$) and addiction to cyberspace, excitement and attitudes toward marital infidelity ($P < 0.01$). The results of multiple regression also showed that addiction to cyberspace, excitement and self-control played a role in predicting attitudes toward marital infidelity and the share of self-control was larger than other predictor variables. **Conclusion:** Based on the research results, it can be concluded that intervention in cyber addiction, arousal and self-control can reduce attitudes toward marital infidelity. **Keywords:** Virtual Addiction, arousal, self-control, extramarital affairs.

Introduction

The family is the first social institution and the smallest unit of society, and since it is also the first source of learning, it plays a decisive role in the success rate of people; Therefore, damages that lead to the failure of this social institution can lead to many problems in society (Zhu & Xing, 2021). One of the damages that exposes families to collapse is the phenomenon of extramarital relationships (Yuan & Visser, 2019). Muller and Wessler (2015) consider extramarital relations to be sexual or emotional acts outside the family framework that violate trust and legal agreements between couples. Considering the many damages that extramarital relationships bring to families and society, researchers have always sought to identify factors that are effective in the tendency of some people to such relationships (Navabinejad et al., 2023).

Factors that can facilitate the attitude towards extramarital relationships will also increase related behaviors. One of the factors that is mentioned as facilitating the attitude towards extramarital relationships is the level of tendency and use of virtual networks. The American Psychiatric Association has defined Internet addiction as a pattern of Internet use that causes functional impairment and is accompanied by unpleasant internal states over a two-month period (American Psychiatric Association, 2020). Many experts believe that the increase in the prevalence of extramarital relationships should not be ignored due to the expansion of the use of virtual networks.

Another factor that can facilitate the attitude towards extramarital relationships is excitement. According to Zuckerman (2015), sensation-seeking behavior is a need for new, diverse and complex emotions and experiences, and a person who has such behavior is willing to perform risky social or physical actions to obtain such experiences.

There are some factors that can prevent the attitude towards marital infidelity; Self-control is one of the variables that can reduce the attitude towards marital infidelity. Self-control is an intrapersonal conflict between reason and desire, between cognition and motivation, and between internal planning and internal acting (Rachlin, 1995).

The review of the background of the research shows that most of the researches conducted in relation to the variables of the present research were not related to women having extramarital relationships or were conducted sporadically, and no studies were found that examined the relationships between these variables in relation to each other. Based on this, the present study was conducted with the aim of investigating the role of addiction to virtual networks, sensation seeking and self-control in predicting the attitude towards marital infidelity in women with extramarital relationships.

Method

The statistical population of the research included women with extramarital relationships who visited 7 counseling centers in Tehran in 1400-1399 and their number was 273. 216 people who met the inclusion criteria answered the research questionnaires using the accessible sampling method. Research tools included Young Internet Addiction Questionnaire (1999), Jeffrey Arendt Excitement Questionnaire (1992), Tangier Self-Control (2004), and Mark Whatley (2006)

Attitudes Toward Marital Infidelity. Data were analyzed using Pearson correlation and multiple regression.

Results

There is a significant positive relationship between the variables of addiction to virtual networks and sensation seeking with attitude towards marital infidelity ($P < 0.01$) and there is a significant negative relationship between self-control and attitude towards marital infidelity ($P < 0.01$). Considering that there is an acceptable correlation between the studied variables and the correlation between predictor variables is less than 0.7, therefore, the assumption of correlation and collinearity has been correctly observed. In order to investigate multiple collinearity, we focused on collinearity statistics. Durbin-Watson's test ($W = 1.76$) showed that the residuals are not correlated with each other. Therefore, the assumption of independent errors is also maintained (Table 2). The linear statistics showed (Table 3) that none of the tolerance data is close to zero and the VIF values are less than 10, so the assumption of multicollinearity is also valid. In order to investigate the role of predictor variables (virtual networks, sensation seeking and self-control) in predicting the criterion variable (attitude towards marital infidelity), multiple regression test was used simultaneously.

The regression model is able to explain about 49% of the criterion variable (adjusted $R^2 = 0.485$) and significantly predicts the criterion variable ($F = 68.62$, $P = 0.001$).

The regression coefficients of sensation seeking, self-control, and virtual reality addiction are significant ($P < 0.001$) and these variables contribute significantly to the model. Multiple correlation (0.702) shows that approximately 49% of the variance of the attitude towards marital infidelity is explained by the linear combination of predictor variables (excitement, self-control and addiction to virtual sex). ($R = 0.702$, $R^2 = 0.493$ and adjusted $R^2 = 0.485$). Self-control had a greater contribution in predicting and explaining the attitude towards marital infidelity.

Conclusion

The present study was conducted with the aim of investigating the role of addiction to virtual networks, sensation seeking and self-control in predicting the attitude towards marital infidelity in women with extramarital relationships. The results showed that 49% of the variance of the attitude towards marital infidelity is explained by the linear combination of the variables of sensation seeking, self-control and addiction to virtual charms. Self-control had a greater contribution in predicting and explaining the attitude towards marital infidelity. Thus, self-control was a stronger predictor for explaining the attitude towards marital infidelity in women with extramarital relationships.

In sum, the findings of the research showed that addiction to virtual networks, sensation seeking and self-control can predict the attitude towards marital infidelity in women with extramarital relationships. This research has provided a deep insight into the relationship between addiction to virtual networks, sensation seeking and self-control in women with extramarital relationships. This issue can create a clear perspective for psychologists, counselors and in general for people who are working in the field of reducing harm related to the family. The current research, like other researches, was accompanied by limitations, which can be mentioned as the use of questionnaire as the only research tool, the lack of control of intervening

variables, and the limitation of the research community to Tehran, which shows the need for caution in generalizing the results. Using other methods of measuring research variables and checking the generalizability of the model fitted in this research to other sample groups can increase the external validity of the findings. Therefore, it is suggested to conduct research on other samples of society.

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