Predicting Marital Stability and Marital Compatibility Based on Self-Differentiation in Couples

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Abstract

Aim: The purpose of the present study was to predict marital stability and marital compatibility based on self-differentiation. **Methods:** This research was correlational in terms of research method. The statistical population of the present study was all the couples who referred to the counseling centers of the 5th district of Tehran during the winter of 2021, which was approximately 320 people. The number of samples from the two centers was estimated to be 175 people according to the table for determining the sample size of Krajcie and Morgan, and this number was selected from the entire population by simple random sampling method. The data collection tool included Edwards, Johnson and Booth's Marital Stability Questionnaire (1987), Spanier's Marital Compatibility (1976) and Scouron and Friedlander's (1998) self-differentiation. The data obtained from the questionnaire were used in two description sections, including mean and standard deviation, and Pearson correlation and regression were used for data analysis. **Results:** The results showed that the differentiation variable is able to predict marital stability ($\beta=0.31$, $P=0.003$) and marital compatibility ($\beta=0.22$, $P=0.006$). According to the Beta value, self-differentiation has a greater contribution in predicting the marital stability of couples. **Conclusion:** It can be concluded that self-differentiation can predict marital stability and marital compatibility.

Keywords: *marital stability, marital compatibility, self-differentiation.*

Introduction

Among the issues that have always been noticed throughout history, and the basis of human life depends on it, is the issue of marriage, through which couples are in a mutual relationship with their spouses. Interaction and compatibility is an essential part of couple communication as well as other types of human communication (Baramb & Boiskar, 2013). The communication of family members, as the most important social institution based on marriage, plays a very important role in the formation of social attitudes and feedback, preparation and development of social skills of family members (Zarei, Mirzaei, and Sadeghi Fard, 2018). In the relationship between people, one of the important components is adaptability, which is defined as the desire of any living being to communicate with the existing situation or the existing environment (Baramb & Boiskar, 2013). In particular, one of the areas of compatibility in human life is marital compatibility. Marital compatibility is a state in which the dominant feeling that couples perceive in their relationship is happiness and satisfaction with each other (Wishman & Bokam, 2012). Also, marital compatibility includes the process of adapting to external changes, establishing a balance between the expectations and needs of the other party, and adapting to the changing conditions in marriage and family life. Of course, in most healthy marriages, there are differences, but they are solved in a difficult way, but sometimes the occurrence of many problems in the way of married and family life can potentially threaten the warm heart of the family and the physical and mental health of people. Mandal (2014) has stated in several researches focused on the investigation of couples' relationships in various dimensions that marital stability and compatibility in the life of couples is one of the criteria for the success of couples' interaction (Sotodeh & Behari, 2007; quoted in part by Zanjirani, 2017).

In recent years, the increasing number of conflicts and their consequences on the structure of individuals and society, and the lack of commitment and compatibility in couples, have made the importance of examining couples' relationships more prominent. Stability and compatibility are important structures of life and have profound effects on the quality and durability of the family system, and the lack of this variable affects the functioning of the family system in an unfavorable way, and creating any problems in families can also be an obstacle to the growth and excellence of society. Therefore, in order to achieve a healthier society, attention should also be paid to their families. Although the concepts of Bowen's theory have been investigated in correlational research and this model has been supported, there is little intervention research in couples. Therefore, the main goal of this research is to answer the question whether self-differentiation can predict marital stability and marital compatibility in couples?

Method

This research was correlational in terms of research method. The statistical population of the present study was all the couples who referred to the counseling centers of the 5th district of Tehran during the winter of 2021, which was approximately 320 people. The number of samples from the two centers was estimated to be 175 people according to the table for determining the sample size of Krajcie and Morgan, and this number was selected from the entire population by simple random sampling method. The data collection tool included Edwards, Johnson and Booth's Marital Stability Questionnaire (1987), Spanier's Marital Compatibility (1976) and Scouron and Friedlander's (1998) self-differentiation. The

data obtained from the questionnaire were used in two description sections, including mean and standard deviation, and Pearson correlation and regression were used for data analysis.

Results

The results showed that the differentiation variable is able to predict marital stability ($\beta=0.31$, $P=0.003$) and marital compatibility ($\beta=0.22$, $P=0.006$). According to the Beta value, self-differentiation has a greater contribution in predicting the marital stability of couples.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that self-differentiation can predict marital stability and marital compatibility.

The current research also faced limitations. The current research is limited to a certain part of Iran in terms of location, and Tehran province cannot be a complete representative of couples in the whole country. The responses of the subjects were in the conditions of Corona and part of the questionnaires were collected online.

According to the results, it is suggested that spouses should refer to couples therapists for trainings such as relationship enrichment training, stable relationship training using differentiation skills, and their effect on increasing marital stability should be checked in order to increase the level of stability in joint life. Since the participation and effort of the couple in the marital relationship is considered an important aspect of a person's identity and self-concept, which causes adaptation in married life due to the passage of time. Therefore, couples should have mutual self-disclosure in their relationship in order to reduce their conflicts and reach greater compatibility. In this research, 175 couples were selected by simple random sampling method. It is suggested to other researchers to investigate this issue with a larger number of samples. Future researchers are suggested to conduct this research in other cities and more widely. In order to further and better confirm the results of this research, it is suggested to repeat the research variables in other statistical communities with different living conditions from the current research community.

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