



Investigating the relationship between sexual intimacy, emotion regulation and attachment styles in married people

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ARTICLE INFORMATION	ABSTRACT
Article type Original research Pages: 20-26 Corresponding Author's Info Email: m_ramezani@sbu.ac.ir	Background and Aim: Marriage is an intimate relationship with authority and is undergoing transformation, therefore intimacy in marriage is different from the type of relationship experienced between mother and child. The purpose of this research is to investigate the relationship between sexual intimacy, emotion regulation and attachment dimensions in married people. Methods: The research method is cross-sectional correlation. The statistical population of the current study includes all married men and women living in Tehran province, which was selected using available sampling method. The data were obtained using the close relationship experience questionnaire (Brennen, Clark and Shaver, 1998), the cognitive regulation of emotion questionnaire (Garnefsky, Kraij and Spinhaven, 2002) and Bagarossi's intimacy needs questionnaire (2001). The data were analyzed by mean, standard deviation, correlation coefficient and multivariate regression and SPSS 21 and AMOS statistical software. Results: The results showed that there is a significant relationship between the dimensions of anxious attachment and intensity of sexual need ($r=0.167, P<0.01$) and sexual participation ($r=0.157, P<0.01$) in married people. There is. The relationship between the dimensions of avoidant attachment and sexual intimacy in the sexual need satisfaction component was significant ($p<0.01, r=0.155$). The correlation between anxiety style and negative emotional regulation strategies was significant ($r=0.132$). But there was a significant correlation between the dimension of avoidant attachment and positive emotional regulation ($r=0.237$). Sexual intimacy and positive emotional regulation were also related ($r=0.174$). Conclusion: It can be concluded that both dimensions of attachment are correlated with sexual intimacy, but there is no significant correlation between emotional regulation and attachment styles.
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Introduction

Marriage is an intimate relationship with the agency and in the transformation process. Therefore intimacy in marriage differs from the type of relationship experienced between mother and child. Intimacy is a type of relationship in which self-disclosure, understanding, trust, and deep closeness are experienced. Moreover, in a healthy marriage, two members with mature styles consciously meet each other's needs (Sahu et al., 2021). In the definition of sexual intimacy, Bagarozzi defines it as the need to share romantic experiences, to share and express thoughts and feelings and sexual fantasies, the need for physical contact, sexual intercourse, and relationships to arouse, stimulate, and sexually satisfy the spouse. Couples in an intimate and happy environment have more satisfying sexual relationships, and the attraction of these relationships remains over time. Dissatisfaction and lack of intimacy will destroy a marriage's vitality and affect its quality (Bossio et al., 2021).

One of the influencing factors in the intimacy, sexual relations, and sexual satisfaction of couples is their attachment styles. Attachment is one of human growth and development's most important developmental concepts. The attitude, desires and understanding of the sexual partner in sexual communication can manifest attachment to parents (Khatibi, 2004). Studies have shown that attachment is related to factors such as mental health (Steinberg, Davila, and Fincham, 2006), stress (Collins, Cooper, Albino, and Allard, 2002), the quality of personal relationships (Dempster, 2007), and marital satisfaction (Rahimian et al., 2007). These findings have caused researchers to pay more attention to the role of attachment in sexual intimacy. The continuation of attachment to adulthood and its effect on interpersonal relationships in the future was investigated by the inspiration of Bowlby's theory (1969) about the nature of emotional bonds and the role of mutual attachments of adults in couple relationships and secure, avoidant and ambivalent attachment styles that thoughts, affect the feelings and behaviors of couples in marital relationships, led to several studies (Kane et al., 2007). People with secure attachments have a higher level of trust and

satisfaction and a lower level of conflict. In ambivalent attachment, people are characterized by an imbalance in emotions and higher conflicts; in avoidant attachment, people are characterized by less satisfaction and intimacy and more conflicts (Collins, Cooper, Albino & Allard, 2002).

Based on the theoretical model, emotional regulation is a unique process of adjusting the emotional experience to achieve social desirability and be in a ready physical and mental state to respond to external and internal demands appropriately. Emotional regulation is "ordering and regulating" emotional processes in line with adaptive performance. Therefore, emotion dysregulation refers to regulatory processes disrupting adaptive performance (Huang, 2006). As a result, emotional regulation refers to a stage through which people influence their emotions and how they express and experience them. Difficulty in emotional regulation should result from a lack of emotional regulation abilities and capabilities (Coutinho, Ribeiro, Ferreirinha, and Dias, 2010). On the other hand, a significant component of intimacy is emotional and sexual intimacy, and the ability to regulate emotions and experience empathy requires having a secure attachment (Meonoz et al., 2021). According to the above studies and explanations, it seems that the type of attachment has a significant relationship with intimacy. Since there are different types of intimacy and there is a correlation between them, on the other hand, it seems that this relationship also exists with sexual intimacy and emotions. They are related to both attachment and sex, so it can be said that sex creates essential emotions in humans, and the role of regulation between attachment and sexual intimacy can be guessed. This research investigates the relationship between sexual intimacy, emotion regulation, and attachment dimensions in married people.

Method

The research method of the current research design was descriptive-correlation type. The statistical population of the present study includes all married men and women living in Tehran province, which was selected using the available sampling method. To determine the

sample size based on Cohen's formula, the first type error is 0.05, and the power of the study is 0.80 according to the correlation coefficient obtained from other studies ($R=0.32$). Based on the formula, about 235 people were calculated, and with a drop of 10%, the sample size was determined to be 250 people. The criteria for entering the sample included married people aged between 20 and 65 and complete satisfaction with filling out the research questionnaires.

Tools

1. Experience of Close Relationships (Attachment Styles) Scale (ECR-S): This questionnaire was created by Brennan, Clark, and Shaver (1998) and is used to determine the dimensions of attachment style. The questionnaire has 36 statements, with 7 items in front of each statement: completely disagree, almost disagree, somewhat disagree, somewhat agree, somewhat agree, almost agree, and completely agree. The individual is given a score of 1 to 7, from strongly disagree to agree strongly. Brennan, Clark, and Shaver (1998) reported the validity of the questionnaire using Cronbach's alpha and retest for the avoidance factor (0.94 and 0.81) and the anxiety factor (0.90 and 0.81), respectively. Moreover, the convergence validity of the questionnaire with Hazan and Shaver (1990) and Collins and Reed (1990) questionnaire was satisfactory. The correlation results for the two mentioned criteria were reported as (0.37 and 0.40), respectively, at the level of (≥ 0.001) p has been significant (Faraly, Waller and Brenin, 2000)

2. Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (CERQ-P): The Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire was compiled by Garnefsky, Kraaij, and Spinhoven (2002) in the Netherlands; it has two English and Dutch versions. This questionnaire is a self-report tool and has 36 items. Scale scores range from (1) almost never to 5 (almost always). Each subscale contains four items. The total score of each of the subscales is obtained by adding the scores of the items. Therefore, the range of scores for each subscale will be between 4 and 20. High scores in each subscale indicate the greater use of the mentioned strategy in dealing with stressful and negative events. Hasani has standardized the Persian version of the Cognitive Regulation of Emotion Questionnaire (CERQ-P) in Iranian culture (validity and validity of the

short form of the Cognitive Regulation of Emotion Questionnaire. Behavioral Science Research Quarterly, 4, 240-229). In this study, the validity of the scale is based on Cronbach's alpha (with a range of 0.76 to 0.92) and retest (with a correlation range of 0.51 to 0.77) and the validity of the mentioned questionnaire through principal component analysis using rotation. Correlation between the subscales (with a correlation range of 0.32 to 0.67) and good criterion validity have been reported (Samani & Sadeghi, 2010).

3. Sexual Intimacy Questionnaire (2001): The questionnaire was designed by Bagarozzi (2001) to evaluate the need for intimacy in emotional, psychological, intellectual, sexual, physical, spiritual, aesthetic, and recreational-social dimensions. It consists of 41 items to which the subject answers each question in a rated form, from 1 (not at all such a need) to 10 (very much a need). Etemadi (2005) provided 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 entire questionnaire was also obtained using Cronbach's alpha method of 0.94. In addition, Khamse and Hosseinian (2007) 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.

Results

Of the 298 evaluated samples, 78 (26%) were married men and 220 (74%) were married women. The average age of all participants was 36.1 ± 8.7 (mean + standard deviation). The youngest person was 20 years old and the oldest person who answered the questionnaire was 66 years old. There was a statistically significant difference between the two groups of men and women in terms of average age, so that the average age of men was 38.5 ± 10 and the average age of women was 35.3 ± 8 . The average age of the spouses was 38.3 ± 9.8 years. The total length of marriage was 23.7 ± 4.5 . The results of the descriptive index of mean and standard deviation in the above table showed that the highest score related to the component of refocusing on planning with a mean and standard deviation of 14.55 (3.50) and the lowest score related to the component

of blaming others with a mean and standard deviation of 65.9 (3/48) were obtained; Also, the lowest score in the variable of sexual intimacy related to the dual outcome analysis component with a mean and standard deviation of 7.50 (2.50) and the highest score related to the intensity of sexual need component with a mean and standard deviation of 8.62 (2.07) was reported . .

According to the data in Table 2, because the value of r in the relationship between anxious attachment style and sexual intimacy in the components of the intensity of sexual need (with a value of 0.167) and sexual participation (with a value of 0.157) is significant at the level of 0.01. Moreover, the relationship between avoidant attachment style and sexual intimacy under the subcomponent of sexual need satisfaction and intimacy is significant, with values of 0.155 and 0.223, respectively. Therefore, the null hypothesis (the absence of a relationship between two variables) is rejected and the research hypothesis (the existence of a relationship between the two variables) is confirmed. In other words, there is a significant direct and positive relationship between anxious and avoidant attachment styles with the mentioned components. The higher the anxious and avoidant attachment styles, the higher the level of sexual intimacy in the mentioned fields and vice versa. Because the value of r in the relationship between avoidant attachment style and sexual intimacy in the components of the intensity of sexual need (with a value of -0.358) and sexual participation (with a value of -0.385) is significant at the level of 0.01. Thus, the null hypothesis (no relationship between two variables) is rejected and the research hypothesis (the existence of a relationship between two variables) is confirmed. In other words, there is a significant inverse and negative relationship between the avoidant attachment style and the mentioned components. The higher the avoidant attachment style, the lower the level of sexual intimacy in the mentioned fields and vice versa.

According to the available R^2 , it can be concluded that the dimensions of attachment styles are included in the presented model and explain about 12% of the variance of the sexual intimacy variable. The beta value in the presented model indicates the amount of variance explanation of the predictor variables

on the criterion. Based on the same standardized beta coefficients, the most prominent role and explanation of sexual intimacy is the responsibility of the avoidant style component of the dimensions of attachment styles; So that with each unit of change in the variance of the avoidance style, the dimensions of the attachment styles amount to 289%. There is a change in the variance of the sexual intimacy score. Anxiety style also significantly explains the variance of sexual intimacy with a rate of 0.134. According to the amount of R^2 in the above table, it can be concluded that the attachment styles included in the presented model explain about 2% of the variance of the emotional regulation variable. The beta value in the presented model indicates the amount of variance explanation of the predictor variables on the criterion. Based on the same standardized beta coefficients, the greatest role and explanation of emotional regulation is attributed to anxious attachment among attachment styles. So that with each unit of change in the variance of anxiety style of attachment styles, as much as 0.145. There is a change in the variance of the negative emotional regulation score. Multivariate regression of positive emotional regulation on attachment styles was not significant.

Conclusion

This study aimed to measure the effectiveness of combining visual learning style and brain processing style in dyslexic students. The findings showed that matching superior learning style and brain processing style significantly affects the performance of students with poor writing ability. No study about the effectiveness of matching visual learning style and cerebral information processing style in students with dyslexia was found in domestic and foreign studies. However, the present study's findings align with Lipuska and his colleagues (2019) research results on phonological processing, as the mediating relationship between central auditory and visual processing is consistent with significant effects on reading and writing skill development. Moreover, these findings are in agreement with the results of the research of Kitno, Mori Shiro, and Merio Vano (2018) about investigating left-handed agronia with disorders in the left upper parietal region without lesions. Their result showed This research aims to investigate the relationship between sexual intimacy, emotion regulation,

and attachment dimensions in married people. The results showed that the relationship between avoidant attachment dimension and sexual intimacy is significant under sexual need satisfaction and intimacy. In other words, there was a significant direct relationship between the dimensions of avoidant attachment and the components, as mentioned earlier. Moreover, the relationship between the dimensions of avoidant attachment and sexual intimacy in the components of the intensity of sexual need and meaningful sexual participation was inversely significant. So the null hypothesis (no between two variables) was rejected, and the research hypothesis (existence of a relationship between two variables) was confirmed. Furthermore, in the second stage, multivariate regression analysis was investigated. The results showed a significant relationship between attachment styles and sexual intimacy in the components of sexual need intensity, sexual participation and need satisfaction in married people. Therefore, the research hypothesis was confirmed with 95% confidence. The relationship between the intensity of sexual need and sexual participation in people with anxious attachment dimensions is direct.

In explaining the result, it can be stated that the attachment theory emphasizes the importance of intimacy and believes that becoming intimate with special people is one of the human needs. The desire for intimacy has biological roots and continues in most people from birth to death. The desire for intimacy is important for attachment, and relationships that satisfy the desire for intimacy lead to more secure attachments between couples. Sex between couples increases their attachment to each other. For many couples, sexual intercourse happens when their relationship is strengthened, and they can communicate more delicately and delicately with each other and meet their attachment needs. Pearson's correlation coefficient results showed a significant relationship between attachment styles and emotional regulation in the component of refocusing on planning in married people; therefore, the research hypothesis was confirmed with 95% confidence. Also, the results showed that anxiety style directly correlates with acceptance and rumination, catastrophizing and negative emotion regulation. On the other hand, avoidance style and emotion regulation

had a significant direct relationship with the component of blaming others.

In explaining these findings, a combination of safe attachment styles, intimacy and emotional regulation is the norm that leads to stronger marital relationships. In relationships between couples, the more secure a person is in terms of attachment, the better he can control his emotions in terms of emotional regulation, and as a result, he experiences high intimacy in his relationship with his wife, which can ultimately lead to high marital satisfaction. In other words, people who are unable to recognize or control their emotions due to insecure attachment will have problems in their relationships with their spouses because their spouses will experience some dissatisfaction. As a result, over time, their intimacy will decrease, leading to satisfaction. Their marriage goes down. Since this research was done by a non-random sampling method, caution should be taken in generalizing the results to other communities. The data obtained from self-assessment tools is another limitation of the present study. According to the importance and role of attachment in emotional regulation, psychological and counseling service centers should be used in providing suitable solutions to clients. Suppose these findings are extended to couples who enter couples therapy. In that case, therapists can expect to see differences between the desires and priorities of anxious and avoidant individuals regarding physical and physical affection and sexual intercourse. Also, to witness the differences in the possible exposure to marital relations between these two groups of people outside the marital life.

Conflict of Interest

According to the authors, this article has no financial sponsor or conflict of interest.

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