Predicting Marital Satisfaction Based on Sexual Satisfaction and Psychological Well-being in Married Women

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A r t i c l e I n f o

A B S T R A C T

Objective: The present study aimed to predict marital satisfaction based on sexual satisfaction and psychological well-being in married women.

Materials and Methods: The study was a descriptive and correlation type. The population of this research included all students of the Islamic Azad University, Qods City branch, in the academic year 2021-2022, from which 200 individuals were selected as the sample using a convenience sampling method. The main data for this research were obtained using the Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire by Natan et al. (1973), the Sexual Satisfaction Questionnaire by Yavari Kermani (2007), and the Psychological Well-being Questionnaire by Ryff and Keyes (1995). In the data analysis, descriptive statistics (central indicators, dispersion) and inferential statistics (multiple regression) were used.

Findings: This study, by examining the relationship between variables, revealed that there is a positive and significant relationship between sexual satisfaction and marital satisfaction; and between psychological well-being and marital satisfaction. Furthermore, the results indicated that sexual satisfaction and psychological well-being have the predictive power for marital satisfaction in married women.

Conclusion: Based on the findings, it can be concluded that sexual satisfaction and psychological well-being can predict marital satisfaction in women.

Keywords: Marital satisfaction, Sexual satisfaction, Psychological well-being.

1. Introduction

Marriage is one of the most significant decisions in life. Prior to marriage, there is great power and choice in decision-making, allowing individuals to avoid forming problematic structures. However, after marriage, once structures have formed, it becomes rare to change these structures. Marriage is usually one of the primary and most important fields where the performance and effect of marital commitment and developed social relationships are manifested. For most adults, happiness in life is more closely associated with a successful marriage and satisfying marital relationships than with other aspects of life. Marriage has always been recognized as the most important factor in fulfilling emotional and security needs. Marriage is a human relationship that is complex, delicate, and dynamic, characterized by unique features (Parsakia & Darbani, 2022).

One of the factors that can be related to marital commitment and body image is sexual satisfaction. Sexual satisfaction means the alignment between what an individual expects from marital life and what they experience in their life. According to Winch, sexual satisfaction is the alignment between the current state and the expected state. Some experts define sexual satisfaction as dependent on the stages of the life cycle (Mostova et al., 2022). There are various ways to define sexual satisfaction, and the best definition is provided by Hawkins. He defines sexual satisfaction as the feeling of contentment, satisfaction, and pleasure experienced by both spouses when considering all aspects of their marriage (Batmaz & Çelik, 2022; Pirzadeh et al., 2019). Satisfaction is an attitudinal variable; thus, it is considered an individual characteristic for both spouses. According to the mentioned definition, sexual satisfaction is essentially a positive and enjoyable attitude that spouses have towards various aspects of their sexual relationships (Shadanloo et al., 2023).

In today's world, the sanctity of the family nucleus is under threat, while marriage plays a fundamental role in the elevation and mental health of humans to the extent that many studies have shown that married individuals are healthier and happier (Mozas-Alonso et al., 2022; Wang & Zhao, 2023). The quality of the marital relationship forms a foundation that future family functioning and the physical and mental health of its members are built upon. Accordingly, marital satisfaction is an important criterion for determining a healthy family. Marital satisfaction, along with high levels of general health for both spouses and other family members, is associated (Finzi-Dottan, 2023; Ghasemi et al., 2022).

Marital satisfaction consists of objective feelings of happiness, satisfaction, and pleasure experienced by both spouses when considering all aspects of their marriage; recent studies on sanctity and the role of God in marriage show that for many people, belief in God affects their marital relationships in three areas: individual, relational, and spiritual. In the individual domain, people seek personal happiness and satisfaction, and marriage is a pathway through which individuals can achieve this (Mozas-Alonso et al., 2022; Nelson, 2022). It is important to note that the factors influencing satisfaction in marital relationships vary across cultures, with cultural effects being among the most significant factors affecting marital processes and outcomes, and receiving special attention from researchers. Cultural values, beliefs, and norms not only shape individuals' perceptions of themselves but also guide their views on love,

intimacy, and the formation of close relationships (Fathi Ashtiani & Jafari Kandovan, 2022; Gottman & Notarius, 2002).

Psychological well-being is a fundamental right and need for all humans. Currently, the development of any society is judged based on the quality of health and well-being of its people, the equitable distribution of health across different social strata, and the level of protection provided to disadvantaged individuals against health-damaging factors in that society (Prasetyo et al., 2023). The increase in national wealth does not, by itself, lead to development; rather, there is a dire need for health and well-being, although the health situation has improved worldwide, there is still injustice within and among countries (O'Sullivan & Lindsay, 2022).

Marital satisfaction is derived from feelings associated with happiness, satisfaction, and pleasure experienced by the wife or husband in relation. Also, from an individual perspective, thought plays an important role in marital satisfaction, and indifference of the parties to each other's interests and thoughts causes a decrease in marital satisfaction and creates disillusionment. Marital satisfaction is considered one of the most important components of emotional stability for couples. Marital satisfaction can be affected by various factors. Some of the most important include personality traits, communication styles, experiential, feedback, and motivational individual that have been assumed constant over time. In this context, lifestyle also serves as an indicator of physical health based on the universally accepted notion, i.e., the bidirectional relationship between mental and physical health, and can predict marital satisfaction (Meltzer, 2022). Psychological well-being is also a multifaceted concept including self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth, which has received special attention in the last decade (Abedin et al., 2022).

Therefore, given the aforementioned, the aim of the present research is to predict marital satisfaction based on sexual satisfaction and psychological well-being in married women. Accordingly, the present study seeks to answer the question of whether marital satisfaction can be predicted based on sexual satisfaction and psychological well-being in married women.

2. Methods and Materials

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2.1. Study design and Participant

The research method is discussed from two perspectives: in terms of purpose, the present research method is applied, and in terms of data collection, it is descriptive-correlational. Correlation analysis is of the predictive and multiple regression type. Multiple regression, a multivariate analysis method, is used when the goal is to predict a criterion variable from one or more predictor variables. Generally, the present research method is applied in purpose, field in situation, descriptive in nature, and correlational in type. The population of the present study consisted of all married students of the Islamic Azad University, Qods City branch (approximately 1100 individuals), in the academic year 2022-2023. In this research, the number (scales and subscales of predictor variables) is 17, therefore, the minimum required sample size is 186, and to ensure the reliability of the results, 200 samples were considered. The sampling method in this research is convenience sampling.

2.2. Measures

2.2.1. Marital Satisfaction

The Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire, developed by Nathan H., B.J. Naster, and Robert Jones in 1973, consists of 10 questions. This questionnaire ranges from completely dissatisfied (1) to completely satisfied (10), with the total score ranging from a minimum of 10 to a maximum of 100. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to determine the reliability of the questionnaire, indicating very high reliability, making it suitable for use in counseling work. The validity of the Marital Satisfaction Scale in Iran was confirmed by Navidi (2005) (Navidi, 2005). The internal consistency reliability of the Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire was confirmed with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.981.

2.2.2. Sexual Satisfaction

The Sexual Satisfaction Questionnaire, comprising 17 questions, was designed by Yavari Kermani in 2007 to assess personal feelings and concerns about affection and sexual relationships with a spouse. This questionnaire is a Likert-type attitude scale, with each item scored from 1 to 5, where the total possible scores range from 17 to 85, and the average score is 42.50. High scores on this questionnaire indicate higher sexual satisfaction. After developing the questionnaire, it was presented to eight professors with Ph.D.s in psychology and counseling, who were asked to rate

it. Yavari Kermani (2007) reported a test-retest reliability of 0.82 and used the split-half method for validity assessment, resulting in a correlation coefficient and reliability coefficient of 0.75. Azarkish (2011) determined its reliability using Cronbach's alpha, resulting in a coefficient of 0.90, indicating the satisfactory reliability of this questionnaire (Zamanifar et al., 2022).

2.2.3. Psychological Well-Being

This scale, originally designed by Ryff with 120 items, includes six subscales: Autonomy, Environmental Mastery, Personal Growth, Positive Relations with Others, Purpose in Life, and Self-Acceptance. Responses to each question are determined on a scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (6), with higher scores indicating higher levels of psychological well-being. Subsequent research introduced shorter versions of the scale, including 84, 54, and 18-item forms. This research utilized the short 18-item form summarized by Ryff and Keyes. They reported that the subscale correlations of the 18-item form with the 120-item form range from 70% to 89% (Iranians Pehrabad, Mashhadi, Tabibi, and Modarres Gharavi, 2015). The study by Bayani, Koocheki, and Bayani (2008) indicated acceptable validity and reliability for the 84-item Farsi version, with internal reliability using Cronbach's alpha at 82% and subscales ranging from 70% to 78%. Positive correlations with the Life Satisfaction Scale, the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire, and Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale indicate its convergent validity. Other studies reported Cronbach's alpha coefficients for each of the subscales of this form ranging from 60% to 78% (cited from Iranians Pehrabad et al., 2015). Additionally, Safidi and Farzad (2012) in standardizing the 18-item form of Ryff's Psychological Well-being Scale on students of Qazvin University of Medical Sciences reported internal consistency for the total test and subscales between 65.8% to 75% (Taziki et al., 2021).

2.3. Data Analysis

To assess the validity of the questionnaires used, content validity was employed, wherein the questionnaires for this research were reviewed by experts in the field for accurate concept conveyance, spelling, and content errors. Reliability was calculated using Cronbach's alpha, resulting in coefficients of 0.77 for the Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire, 0.79 for the Psychological Well-being Questionnaire, and 0.81 for the Sexual Satisfaction Questionnaire. Since Cronbach's alpha for all three

questionnaires was calculated to be above 0.7, this indicates their reliability.

For hypothesis testing in this study, multiple regression analysis was conducted using SPSS software version 23.

Table 1

Statistical Characteristics of Research Variables

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Sexual Satisfaction	58.52	1.89	-0.93	1.12
Psychological Well-Being	99.76	3.10	1.26	0.86
Marital Happiness	69.22	2.12	1.20	-1.66

The data in Table 1 show the statistical characteristics of the research variables. Considering the skewness and kurtosis values, which fall within a reasonable range (-2 to +2) for assuming normality of the data, we can propose and accept the assumption of data normality.

The normality of the data related to the research variables was examined using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. The significance level of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test statistic indicates that for the research variables, since the significance level is greater than 0.05, the hypothesis of normality of the variables is confirmed. The research hypothesis is tested using Pearson correlation and multiple regression.

The correlation matrix between sexual satisfaction and marital satisfaction is presented in Table 2.

3. Findings and Results

In this section, the research variables are described using central tendency, and dispersion indicators.

Table 2

Correlation between Sexual Satisfaction and Psychological Well-Being with Marital Satisfaction (n=200)

Variables	Correlation ®	Significance (p)
Marital Satisfaction and Sexual Satisfaction	0.457	< 0.001
Marital Satisfaction and Psychological Well-Being	0.602	< 0.001

As the Table 2 indicates, the relationship between the two variables is significant at the 0.001 level (0.001, r= 0.457). Therefore, the null hypothesis can be rejected at the 0.01 level, and it can be concluded with 99% confidence that there is a positive and significant relationship between "sexual satisfaction" and "marital satisfaction." In other words, an increase in sexual satisfaction leads to an increase in marital satisfaction among married women.

Moreover, the relationship between the two variables is significant at the 0.001 level (0.001, r= 0.602). Therefore, the null hypothesis can be rejected at the 0.01 level, and it can be concluded with 99% confidence that there is a positive and significant relationship between "psychological well-being" and "marital satisfaction." In other words, greater psychological well-being increases marital satisfaction among married women.

The independence of errors was examined using the Durbin-Watson statistic, which was calculated to be 1.83. As a general rule, if the observed value of Durbin-Watson is between 1.5 and 2.5, it indicates the independence of observations; therefore, the assumptions were confirmed. In examining multicollinearity among the research variables, attention is paid to the Tolerance and VIF parameters. If the Tolerance value is closer to zero and the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) is greater than 2, we face a multicollinearity problem among the predictor variables, or in other words, an independent variable is nearly a linear combination of other independent variables. In this hypothesis, Tolerance values close to 1 (Social Capital 0.890; Sexual Satisfaction 0.786; Psychological Well-being 0.831; Marital Satisfaction 0.911) and VIF values less than 2 (Social Capital 1.239; Sexual Satisfaction 1.311; Psychological Well-being 1.202; Marital Satisfaction 1.176) indicate that the variable in question is not a linear function of the other variables. That is, there is no multicollinearity problem.

Table 3

A Summary of Regression Model

Model	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Squares	R	R2	F	sig
Regression	53.722	4	15.332	0.617	15.351	15.35	0.001
Residual	9.3426	196	0.311				
Total	145.737	198					

According to the information in Table 3, the relationship between sexual satisfaction, psychological well-being, and marital satisfaction is estimated to be 0.617. In other words, these two variables together explain about 38% of the variance related to "marital satisfaction" among married women (R^2=0.283). The calculations related to the F-statistic showed that the regression model is a suitable model and that at least one of the predictor variables has the capability to predict marital satisfaction (p=0.001; df=4; F=15.35). Sexual satisfaction and psychological well-being in predicting marital satisfaction are presented in the Table 4:

Table 4

Standard and Unstandardized Coefficients and T-statistics of Variables Entered in the Regression Equation (n=200)

Predictor Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Standard Error	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	T-statistic	Significance Level (sig)
Constant	4.400	1.80	-	12.1	0.000
Sexual Satisfaction	0.452	0.28	0.396	4.10	0.001
Psychological Well-Being	0.509	0.34	0.415	3.83	0.001

As seen in Table 4, the coefficients for social capital, sexual satisfaction, and psychological well-being are significant at less than the 0.01 level. In other words, social capital, sexual satisfaction, and psychological well-being predict marital satisfaction; therefore, based on the data available in the table, the regression equation can be written as follows:

Marital Satisfaction (Y) = 0.452 (Sexual Satisfaction) + 0.509 (Psychological Well-being)

Based on the above regression model, it can be said: with an increase of one unit in sexual satisfaction and psychological well-being, marital satisfaction increases by 0.452 and 0.509 units, respectively.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The objective of this research was to predict marital satisfaction based on the social capital of families among married female students of the Islamic Azad University, Qods City (approximately 1100 individuals) in the academic year 2022-2023. The findings indicate that marital satisfaction can be predicted based on the family's social capital. From an inferential analysis perspective, evidence in the data from Tables 6 to 7 shows that family social capital has a correlation coefficient of 0.574 with marital satisfaction (r = 0.574) and explains 43.2% of the variance in marital satisfaction. The observed variance analysis (f = 17.6, df = 163 and 1) indicates a significant relationship between family social capital and marital satisfaction (p < 0.05). Thus, there is a positive and significant correlation between family social capital and marital satisfaction (p < 0.05). The results of the univariate regression in Table 7, based on the prediction of marital satisfaction from family social capital, show that family social capital (p < 0.01, t = 5.4) has predictive power for marital satisfaction.

Comparatively, in terms of the hypothesis, i.e., predicting marital satisfaction based on family social capital, the findings of this study are consistent with the results of research by domestic and international researchers such as (Ebrahimpour & Elmi, 2015). In conclusion, it can be asserted that family social capital has effectively contributed to enhancing marital satisfaction, making this sense of satisfaction more enduring and encompassing the entirety of individuals' lives.

The results of this study, predicting marital satisfaction from family social capital, are grounded in the intricate dynamics of marriage and the essential role of social networks and support systems (Movahedrad et al., 2023; Rezaei & Noghani Dokht Bahmani, 2018). This research corroborates previous findings, emphasizing the impact of sexual satisfaction and psychological well-being on marital happiness (Mosadegh et al., 2023; Zamanifar et al., 2022;

Zarenezhad et al., 2019). Furthermore, the significance of social capital mirrors insights by Maston et al. (2004) on the importance of spiritual, relational, and individual fulfillment in marriage (Meston et al., 2004). These findings underscore the multifaceted nature of marital satisfaction, where family social capital serves as a vital component, enhancing not only the emotional and psychological well-being (Goudarzi et al., 2022) but also contributing to the stability and quality of marital relationships. The results emphasize the synergy between social capital and other marital satisfaction determinants, advocating for a holistic approach to understanding and fostering marital happiness.

5.   Limitations and Suggestions

Research Limitations
1. Lack of direct access to participants.
2. Inability to control confounding variables, including family issues.
3. The population was limited to married students of the Islamic Azad University, Qods City.

Recommendations The following suggestions are presented to achieve the research objectives:
1. It is recommended that future studies investigate marital satisfaction with other variables to gain a more comprehensive understanding.
2. Conducting this research qualitatively using interviews with participants is suggested to enhance the validity and reliability of the findings and allow for more precise discussion on various aspects of this matter.
3. It is recommended that research be conducted with a larger sample size and a broader geographical scope to develop a dense and coherent literature regarding the application of research variables.

4. It is suggested that this research be conducted in other communities and that the results be compared with one another.

Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

Ethics Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants.

Authors' Contributions

All authors reviewed and approved the final manuscript for publication.

Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

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