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Prediction of conflict resolution strategies based on family cohesion and adaptability and women's sexual satisfaction

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Abstract

This study aimed to predict couples' conflict resolution strategies based on family cohesion and adaptability and women's sexual satisfaction. This study was of a descriptive-correlation type, the statistical population was all married women who were referred to couple therapy centers covered by Health Houses in the first district of Tehran province in 2018, and 315 samples were selected using the available sampling method. Data collection tools were Olson et al.'s Family Cohesion and Adaptability Scale (1978), Strauss et al.'s (1996) Conflict Resolution Strategies Scale, and Maston and Trapnell's Women's Sexual Satisfaction Scale (2005). The findings of this research showed that there is a relationship between family cohesion and adaptability, and sexual satisfaction with conflict resolution strategies. Balanced cohesion, intertwined cohesion, and suppression could predict the sexual coercion component of conflict resolution strategies. They also predicted sexual satisfaction and re-evaluation of the psychological aggression component of conflict resolution strategies. Suppression, sexual satisfaction, and sexual communication were able to predict the negotiation component of conflict resolution strategies, and balanced cohesion and reappraisal could predict physical attack from conflict resolution strategies. The findings of this research can be useful as prevention strategies and help resolve couples' conflicts and improve family health.

Keywords: *family cohesion and adaptability, conflict resolution strategies, sexual satisfaction.*

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Introduction

Marital conflict is the diversity of the needs and values of couples, manifested by the expression of negative emotions. It can provide a situation for clarifying and interpreting each couple's expectations about interpersonal and partner relationships (Lavaf, Shokri, and Ghanbari, 2014). Rebekah (2008) writes in the definition of marital conflict: Marital conflict usually appears as a conflict between husband and wife, which shows their different interests. Marital conflict arises when one of the parties interferes in pursuing the other's goal (Amin Nesab & Farah Bakhsh, 2015). Conflict occurs when something provides satisfaction to one person while the same thing brings deprivation to another. (Bakhshipour, 2015).

Couples have specific conflict resolution styles based on their learnings, experiences, and underlying knowledge. Marshall, Jones & Feinberg (2011) proposed four styles of adaptive conflict resolution, engagement in conflict, positive problem-solving, and withdrawal. Gottman and Olson (2000) claim that at least three styles of couple conflict lead to successful marital outcomes. These three styles are avoidant, validating, and lively called adjusted. Couples have a more stable and satisfying relationship in regulated styles than in unregulated styles. This is done by using strategies to eliminate destructive conflicts and engage in positive interactions that are significantly more than negative ones (Olson, 1998).

Olson (2011), in the latest version of the multi-coordinate model on two dimensions of marital and family functioning. It refers to cohesion (the degree of intimacy and emotional bond between family members) and adaptability (the degree of the family system's ability to change the power

structure, roles, and rules). Thus, he considers these two dimensions to determine marital and family satisfaction. Cohesion and adaptability are among the components that show the level of family health (Mirnics et al., 2010). There is considerable agreement among family therapists that family cohesion and adaptability are essential concepts for understanding family functioning. In healthy family systems, members have good emotional relationships, flexible roles, and people are related to each other, but in unhealthy systems, roles are dry and rigid (Mukolo & Walston, 2012).

One of the issues that cause conflict in couples is the lack of sexual satisfaction between them; Sexual satisfaction refers to a person's pleasant feeling about the type of sexual relations. In other words, higher levels of sexual satisfaction lead to an increase in the quality of married life, which leads to a decrease in marital instability during life. Sexual satisfaction is important for couples and is considered an individual matter. The sexual relations of spouses are a two-way process, and any disruption in it is the basis for the emergence of problems and the weakening of the family center (Masoumi, Rezaian, and Hosseinian, 2017). Therefore, in the current research, the question is raised whether cohesion, family adaptability, and sexual satisfaction predict couples' conflict resolution strategies.

Method

The present study was descriptive of the correlation type. The statistical population was women who were referred to couple therapy centers covered by Health Houses in Region 1 of Tehran province in 2018. A sample size of 315 people was selected from the available sampling method. Data analysis was done in two descriptive and inferential sections. In the descriptive statistics section,

mean and standard deviation were calculated, and in the inferential statistics section, Pearson correlation and multiple regression methods were used.

Materials

1. Family adaptability and cohesion scale (FACES). One of the most widely used tools for evaluating and measuring family functioning is the family cohesion and adaptability evaluation scale, which is based on the circular model of family and couple systems (Olson, 2011). This questionnaire comprises 62 questions and includes four sub-scales: discrete, interwoven, chaotic and inflexible. In addition, two additional scales named family satisfaction and family interactions have been added to them. In the present study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient is 0.89.

2. Scale of conflict resolution strategies. Conflict resolution strategies were developed by Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, & Sugarman (1996) and measured the physical and psychological violence of couples against each other in the past 12 months. This 78-question scale includes five scales of negotiation, psychological aggression, physical attack, sexual coercion, and injury. Various studies indicate the reliability and validity of this test in different countries and cultures; In the research of Naderi, Heidarei, and Hosseinzadeh Maleki (2009), in the validation sample and before the implementation of the main stage of the research, the split-half method and Cronbach's alpha were used to measure the validity of the scale, which were obtained as 0.94 and 0.95, respectively. In the present study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient is 0.95.

3. Women's sexual satisfaction scale. Matheson and Trapnell created this scale in 2005, and it is a self-report, reliable, valid, and multi-dimensional tool that examines

women's sexual distress and satisfaction (Fathi-Aghdam, Haqhighat, Dorri, Nazeri, and Ajarbandian, 2018). This scale has 30 questions and composites from five domains: satisfaction, communication, compatibility, relational anxiety, and personal anxiety. The scoring of this scale is on a 5-point Likert scale (from completely agree to completely disagree). A higher score means more satisfaction. The validity of this scale was calculated using Cronbach's alpha method for all dimensions (except the relationship dimension) above 0.80. In this study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient is 0.96.

Findings

The amount of R² obtained shows that 9, 15, 14, and 18 percent of changes related to sexual coercion strategy, negotiation strategy, physical attack, and psychological aggression depend on predictor variables, respectively. The findings show that balanced cohesion with a beta coefficient of 0.18, interconnectedness with a beta coefficient of 0.12, and suppression with a beta coefficient of 0.15 could predict the strategy of sexual coercion. Emotional suppression, with a beta coefficient of 0.17, sexual satisfaction, with a beta coefficient of 0.18, and sexual communication, with a beta coefficient of 0.27, could predict the negotiation strategy. Balanced cohesion with a beta coefficient of 0.15 and reappraisal with a beta coefficient of 0.18 could also predict physical assault. Also, sexual satisfaction, with a beta coefficient of 0.23, and reappraisal, with a beta coefficient of 0.15, were able to predict psychological aggression.

Discussion

The present research was conducted to predict couples' conflict resolution strategies based on family cohesion and adaptability and women's sexual satisfaction. The results

showed that there is a negative relationship between "balanced cohesion" and "psychological aggression," "physical attack" and "injury" strategies, as well as between "sexual coercion" strategy and "entwined" cohesion. Also, there is a positive relationship between "balanced cohesion" and "negotiation" strategy and between "discrete" cohesion and "psychological aggression" and "physical attack" strategies. There is also a positive relationship between "balanced adaptability" with "negotiation" and "psychological aggression" strategies and between "disturbed" flexibility with "injury," "psychological aggression," and "physical attack" strategies. There is a negative relationship between the "negotiation" strategy with "disturbed" flexibility and "balanced adaptability" with "injury" and "physical attack" strategies. Among the subscales of conflict resolution strategies and sexual satisfaction, there is a significant positive relationship between the "sexual coercion" strategy with "communication" and the "negotiation" strategy with all subscales of sexual satisfaction. There is also a significant negative relationship between the strategies of "psychological aggression" and "physical attack" with all subscales of sexual satisfaction.

In families with aggression and intent to harm each other, there are no behavioral orientations in them. In interwoven cohesion, there is little distinction between family members. People have to spend too much time with each other and are highly dependent on each other. Family members feel too connected to each other, so they consider any relationships outside the family with the outside environment unnecessary. Families with balanced adaptability take new ways when a problem occurs because the

problem solutions in previous situations are not helpful for the new problem-solving situation. This requires adaptability in proposing new solutions and requires negotiation and dialogue. In such families, people get along when problems arise and negotiate with each other instead of being aggressive (Bakhshpour, 2015). Families with chaotic flexibility never reach a common and mutually agreed result in planning. In these families, someone takes the leadership of affairs and discussions, and the absence of such a person causes things not to be completed (Yagoubi & Mohammadzadeh, 2016). Due to the lack of leadership or the non-acceptance of a person's leadership role by other family members, the duty of each person is unclear, so there is chaos and disorder in the family. Naturally, when conflicts arise, there is a fight over power instead of dialogue to solve the problem. This ultimately leads to verbal and physical aggression and harm to each other; Therefore, this research finds that a significant negative relationship between negotiation strategy and chaotic flexibility can also be explained (Shakarami et al., 2015).

Balanced adaptability refers to the healthy aspect of family functioning when each spouse has an equal share in the leadership, and fair disciplinary principles are established in the family (Shakarami et al., 2015). In this situation, family members can adapt to changes and challenges, work takes turns based on transparent and regulated roles, and deal with each other when problems arise.

Sexual intercourse satisfies human biological and social needs and thus increases the quality of life. This increase in the quality of life can make couples who have more satisfaction and intimacy in sexual relations

create deeper emotional relationships with each other. This makes them solve conflicts rationally, using strategies such as negotiation and dialogue in their common life and in dealing with challenges and conflicts calmly. As a result, the quality of life of these couples should increase (Heser et al., 2017).

People who use a lot of verbal and physical aggression do not show proper control when angry or dealing with conflicts. They constantly use physical contact and verbal aggression with other people, and they understand the other party to use these behaviors to solve conflicts. This state expands over time and appears in conflict situations. Couples who talk about sexual issues, each other's needs, and how to meet them reach an understanding and sexual satisfaction. These people talk to each other in other areas of life that cause conflict to reach a correct understanding of the problem and how to solve it.

Ethics

In this research, ethical standards including obtaining informed consent, ensuring privacy and confidentiality were observed.

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Conflict of Interest

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

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