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## Predicting marital satisfaction based on attachment styles in married women: the mediating role of sensation seeking

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### Abstract

The research aimed to determine the prediction of marital satisfaction based on the attachment styles of married women: the mediating role of sensation seeking. The research method was correlational and the statistical population was all married women referring to health centers in the north of Tehran in 2018, which was estimated 1854 people. Using multi-stage random sampling, first, Tehran was divided into four regions: north, west, east and south, and the northern region was selected by lottery. Among the 23 neighborhoods of the 1st and 2nd districts, 4 neighborhoods of Ozgol, Araj, Niavaran, and Bagh Ferdous, and 88 women from each health center and a total of 350 women were selected based on the Sample Power software. Then Enrich's 1989 Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire, Collins and Reed's 1990 Adult Attachment, and Zuckerman's 1978 Sensation Seeking Questionnaire were completed, and the data were analyzed using Smart Plus structural equations. The results showed at the 99% confidence level that the structural model could predict marital satisfaction based on attachment style ( $\beta=0.624$ ) with the mediating role of sensation seeking and has a good fit. The direct path of attachment style ( $\beta=0.653$ ) and sensation seeking ( $\beta=0.594$ ) on marital satisfaction was significant. The indirect path showed that attachment style ( $\beta=0.532$ ) with the mediating role of sensation seeking positively affected marital satisfaction. For the cohesion and creation of a desirable marital relationship, it is possible to improve the relationships of couples by knowing the emotions of each couple, the type of attachment style, and the contrast of their inner psychological elements.

**Keywords:** *Marital satisfaction, attachment, sensation seeking.*

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## Introduction

Many psychological constructs have been investigated by psychologists and family counselors in the field of marital relations, one of which is marital satisfaction. It indicates the level of intimacy of people in marital relationships (Ebrahimi, 2019), satisfactory relationships between couples can be measured through the level of care and understanding (Masarik and Kanger, 2017). The arrival of any stressor affects the functioning of the family (Marshall, Maris, Stem, Tratzenberg and Grotenhuis, 2017). Therefore, paying attention to each other's needs and understanding each other's qualitative world leads to an improvement in the quality of the relationship, and on the other hand, couples find a more positive and pleasant perception of themselves, each other, and their marital relationship (Roby, Wobolding, and Carlson, 2017).

Recognizing the dimensions of sensation seeking plays an important role in marital relationships (Mohammadi Mehr, Ayatalhi Karimi, 2017) in such a way that not expressing emotions leads to problems in couples' relationships (Abassi, Tabatabai and Aghamohamedian, 2016; Jensen, Chasin and Gonzalez, 2017). Young, Clasko, and Vishar 2003 state that schemas are fragile emotional and cognitive patterns that begin during development and repeat throughout life (Khorasanizadeh et al., 2019). A review of research shows that people with fearful attachment levels have more schemas. People with ambivalent attachment express their schemas in marital relationships with passion, excitement and concern about relationships combined with low satisfaction (Hadi, Eskandari, Sohrabi, Motamedi and Farrokhi, 2014).

Another psychological component that researchers believe plays a fundamental role in the compatibility and marital satisfaction of people; Attachment style. Johnson and Whitburn (2012) stated that attachment style plays an essential role in creating marital satisfaction and that insecure attachment style is a good predictor of marital satisfaction (Kamara

and Callot, 2012). Therefore, the type of attachment can to some extent predict the quality of married life, the way of interaction, the way a person views the interpersonal relationship, social and emotional development (Kalil, Ryan and Chor, 2014).

Attachment theory theorists believe that people's expectations when entering romantic relationships, which are based on previous intimate relationships with primary caregivers, often affect their attachment style and the way they communicate with their spouses and their married life (Hashmi, Dortaj, Saadipour, and Asadzadeh, 2017). . Secure, avoidant and ambivalent people use completely different strategies to regulate emotions and process emotional information; This emotional state can be recognized in people's personalities (Orlaith, 2019). Women are the most important group whose identity, position, role, and quality of life have undergone transformation, change, and turbulence during the course of development (Belali, Bakhtiari Safar, Mohammadi, and Mohagheghi, 2016). Therefore, they often turn to conflict and psychological distancing from their spouses, tension, stress and pressure (Heidari & Dehghani, 2016).

The present study was conducted to determine the relationship of marital satisfaction based on the components of attachment style and sensation seeking of married women and the aim of providing a suitable structural model.

## Method

The research method was correlational and the statistical population was all married women referring to health centers in the north of Tehran in 2018, which was estimated 1854 people. Using multi-stage random sampling, first, Tehran was divided into four regions: north, west, east and south, and the northern region was selected by lottery. Among the 23 neighborhoods of the 1st and 2nd districts, 4 neighborhoods of

Ozgol, Araj, Niavaran, and Bagh Ferdous, and 88 women from each health center and a total of 350 women were selected based on the Sample Power software. Then Enrich's 1989 Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire, Collins and Reed's 1990 Adult Attachment, and Zuckerman's 1978 Sensation Seeking Questionnaire were completed, and the data were analyzed using Smart Plus structural equations.

## Materials

**1- Enrich Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire (2000).** This questionnaire has been used as a valid tool in various studies to measure marital satisfaction (Olson, 1997). This questionnaire consists of 12 scales. In order to calculate the reliability of the alpha coefficient, it was calculated to be 85%, which indicates the high reliability of this questionnaire.

**2. Adult attachment questionnaire.** This 18-item questionnaire was prepared by Collins and Reid in 1990 and evaluates the subject's communication skills and intimate relationship style on a Likert scale. Each question is scored on the basis of strongly disagree = 1 and strongly agree = 5. This questionnaire has three styles. Secure attachment style, anxiety-avoidance that the subject is placed in one of the types of attachment styles based on the obtained scores (Hashmi et al., 2017).

**3. Zuckerman's sensation seeking questionnaire.** This questionnaire has 40 two-part items that were created by Zuckerman 1978 to determine the level of sensation seeking of people and were standardized by Mahvi Shirazi (2007) based on Iranian culture. This questionnaire deals with the general description of sensation seeking by measuring four sub-factors of excitement, experience seeking, avoidance of inhibition and boredom and is scored as

zero and one. The range of scores is from 0 to 40 and higher scores mean more sensation seeking.

## Findings

The homogeneity test was performed in the form of confirmatory factor analysis on the model in the mode of estimation of standard coefficients with the presence of a mediator, and the results showed that the factor loading of each question was at least above 0.7.

Also, the test of homogeneity with the presence of a mediator showed that according to the value of the significance level that is less than 0.01 or the value of the statistic that is outside the range of -1.96 and 1.96, the null hypothesis is rejected and the hypotheses of the research are confirmed.

The findings show that the reliability of the model based on Cronbach's alpha coefficient and composite reliability in each of the variables is above 0.7. On the other hand, the shared reliability of the investigated variables is higher than 0.5; Therefore, based on four reliability tests, the model was approved. In order to check the construct validity of the reflexive model, the convergent and divergent validity of two mean variance extracted tests and the comparison of the composite reliability test with the mean variance extracted were measured. The results showed that all variables have greater composite reliability than shared reliability, so the model has convergence and also all shared reliability indices are higher than 0.5. Considering that the alternative quality of fit in structural equations is based on covariance, the commonality index of cross-validity was used. The values of the measurement quality index pattern were obtained higher than 0.15, which shows that the measurement pattern is of high quality.

The findings confirm the assumption of the research that there is a significant effect of attachment styles and dimensions of life orientation with the mediating role of sensation seeking on marital satisfaction. Also, the results of the obtained significant coefficients show that the indirect path between attachment styles and dimensions of life orientation with the mediating role of sensation seeking on marital satisfaction is significant according to the value of the significant coefficients of the t-statistics at the confidence level of 0.99. The results of inclusion of variance (0.275) have shown that sensation seeking has a partial mediating role for attachment styles, life orientation and marital satisfaction (0.264). The findings showed that R<sup>2</sup> of the first equation and the second equation are strong.

The cross-validity quality of structural model redundancy is moderate for sensation seeking, but it has strong quality for marital satisfaction. On the other hand, based on the results obtained from the measurement model in the CVCOM department, it also had a strong quality, and the results of the measurement model and the structural model are both of relatively good and high quality. Based on this, it is necessary to use general model tests to determine the state of prediction of the results, because the main research model is a combination of two models. The reliable SRMR fit test regarding the presentation of the model has shown that the SRMR is equal to 0.064; Also, in this research, the value of gof is much larger than the previous value of 0.48.

### **Discussion**

The results of the present study indicated the relationship between attachment styles and the mediating role of sensation seeking on the marital satisfaction of married women.

In explaining these findings, it can be said that satisfactory relationships between couples can be measured through mutual interest, the amount of care and understanding of each other. Various factors, including marital satisfaction, couples' attachment styles, and the level of resilience and tolerance of failure and emotional regulation of couples can affect family health (Hadi et al., 2016). In the explanation of these findings, in line with McDermott (2017), it can be stated that most of the interpersonal problems experienced by couples are influenced by the way they imagine their relationships with others. When schemas are distorted; They can create family conflicts. Therefore, schemas of rejection, dependence and obedience can also predict marital dissatisfaction and emotional deprivation can also predict dissatisfaction in Iranian couples.

It is suggested that trainings in the field of couple therapy and family therapy be provided by holding educational workshops to increase the awareness of spouses about the role of emotions and attachment styles and their schemas in the level of marital satisfaction and improving couples' relationships by experts in the field of family therapy in clinical and counseling centers.

### **Ethics**

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

### **Acknowledgement**

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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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