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The Relationship between religious orientation and promotion of sexual satisfaction and marital satisfaction in women of reproductive age

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Abstract:

INTRODUCTION: Marital satisfaction is a situation in which the husband and wife enjoy marrying and feeling emotional; on the other hand, the existence of religious beliefs has a significant effect on family stability. The aim of this study was to determine the relationship between religious orientation, sexual satisfaction, and marital satisfaction in women of reproductive age.

METHODS: This is a correlational study performed on 150 married women aged 45–45 years who referred to Neyshabur comprehensive health services centers. The sampling method was clustered. The present study used three questionnaires: Spinner Marital Satisfaction, Larson’s Sexual Satisfaction, and Allport Religious Orientation Questionnaire. The reliability of these questionnaires was confirmed by the retest method. *T*-test, Pearson correlation, and one-way ANOVA were used for data analysis.

RESULTS: Data analysis showed that there is a significant and positive relationship between religious orientation and sexual satisfaction and marital satisfaction. Religious commitment has a predictive role in promoting sexual satisfaction and marital satisfaction, with increasing religious commitment, increasing sexual satisfaction, and marital satisfaction.

CONCLUSION: Psychologists and counselors in individual and couple counseling sessions with sexual problems and marital dissatisfaction and premarital counseling can increase marital satisfaction with regard to religious factors and religious and spiritual teachings.

Keywords:

Marital satisfaction, religious orientation, sexual satisfaction

Introduction

The family as a social unit has the highest and deepest human relationships.^[1] Family psychologists examine the quality of their marital satisfaction in examining the quality of their marital relationships.^[1]

Meeting the expectations of sex partners is called marital satisfaction.^[2] Breznsnyak and Whisman note that as marital satisfaction increases, sexual pleasure, and satisfaction increase significantly.^[2] Sexuality is very important and has a confirmed effect on

quality of life. Sexual disorders are a taboo in many countries and because of this attitude people have a negative effect on quality of life. Among these, social, economic, and emotional factors influence on marital satisfaction.^[3-6] Studies in Iran have reported very different marital satisfaction in Iranian women and have shown a range of high-to-low marital satisfaction.^[3]

Religious beliefs influence marital satisfaction.^[4,5] Researchers believe that religious attitudes can be effective in promoting marital communication. Religion includes guidelines for life and a system

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of beliefs and values. These characteristics can affect marital life.^[6] On the other hand, cultural upheavals that are unrelated to religious issues and are imposed on people because of cultural and regional issues can have a negative impact on sexual issues and marital satisfaction.^[7-9] Khodayarifard *et al.*, in a study of married students at the University of Tehran, reported a positive and significant relationship between religious attitude and marital satisfaction.^[9] The results on the relationship between religion and sexual satisfaction vary. Davidson (1995) did not report a significant difference in the sexual satisfaction of women with high frequency and low-frequency presence, and the level of religious beliefs did not affect the sexual aspects of women.^[11] In a review of Higgins (2010), the relationship between religion and level of sexual satisfaction was also reported to be low, and he concluded that religious factors influence one's sexual behavior, attitude, and expectations.^[12]

Religious cultural issues in Iran have made it shameful to educate and pursue sexual issues, especially for women, and to refuse to discuss them.^[13] On the other hand, strong religious beliefs and feelings of guilt about marital relations itself lead to sexual dissatisfaction.^[14] In some areas of Iran, sex is also considered a taboo. While religion in particular has provided guidance on religious issues, existing cultural factors make sexual issues sometimes embarrassing for women in the private environment.^[7] The lack of sexual satisfaction and marital satisfaction can lead to divorce and family breakdown.^[14]

Since sexual performance is strongly influenced by cultural, religious, social, and educational factors,^[15] it is necessary to conduct different studies in different cultures and societies. The importance of religion is to the extent that it can save a person from suspense and nonsense by providing explanatory support in certain circumstances.^[16] Religion has a prominent place in our country. There are different views on the impact of religion on sexual and marital satisfaction. This is important in maintaining family focus. Furthermore, there are insufficient studies in this area. The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between religious orientation, sexual satisfaction, and marital satisfaction in women of reproductive age.

Methods

This study is a cross-sectional descriptive study. The study population consisted of 150 married women aged 18–45 years who referred to Neyshabur comprehensive health services centers in the year 2017.

Cluster sampling was performed due to the heterogeneity of the population in terms of socioeconomic, religious, and religious factors. Initially, 10 out of Neyshabur

comprehensive health services centers were randomly selected. Participants were included in the study if they were satisfied with the research unit's characteristics. Questionnaires were completed by the researcher.

Questionnaires used in this study included: Spinner Marital Satisfaction, Larson Sexual Satisfaction Questionnaire, and Allport Religious Orientation Questionnaire.

Allport Religious Orientation Questionnaire (Religious Orientation Scale)

This is a 20-item questionnaire, 11 of which relate to extrinsic religious orientation and 9 items to intrinsic religious orientation. To assess the validity of this test in Iran, Fagin's internal and external ROS was translated into Persian. The accuracy of its translation was corrected by re-reading it by other experts and re-translating it into English. Then, with numerous rewrites, he tried to fit it into the Iranian cultural and religious context. Options were adjusted on a Likert scale. The validity of this questionnaire was reported 74% by John Bozorgi using Cronbach's alpha method and 71% by Mokhtari *et al.* (Jafari, 2010).

Spanir Marital Adjustment Questionnaire

The Spanir Marital Adjustment Scale consists of a self-report questionnaire consisting of 32 questions. This questionnaire captures people's perceptions of marital adjustment. The scores on this questionnaire range from 0 to 151. Earning scores equal to or above 100 means individuals' compatibility, and scores below 100 mean there is a problem in marital relations and incompatibility and family understanding. The questionnaire consists of 4 components: consent (10 items), solidarity (5 items), consent (13 items), and affection (4 items). People with a score of 101 or less are considered to have marital problems. In fact, Spanier reported an internal consistency coefficient of 96% and a high-reliability criterion for this scale. Satisfaction was 94%, solidarity was 81%, agreement was 90%, and affection was 73%. The validity of this scale determines the compatibility of couples with the power to clean married and divorced couples in each question. It has a concurrent validity and is correlated with the Locke-Wallace marital scale.

Larson Sexual Satisfaction Scale

This questionnaire was presented by Larson *et al.* In 1998 and consists of 25 items. In the Shams study, validity and reliability of this test were reported 9% and 86%, respectively. The questionnaire consists of 25 questions, and its answers are in 5-point Likert scale from 1 to 5. In terms of 1-2-3-10-12-13-16-17-19-21-22-23-Options never, rarely, sometimes, often, and always get scores of 1–5, respectively. In terms of 4-5-6-7-8-9-11-14-15-18-20-24-25, these options are scored the opposite way and get 5-1 grades, respectively. The results of the sexual

Table 1: Correlation coefficient matrix between dimensions of religious orientation with marital satisfaction

Variable	External religious orientation		Internal religious orientation	
	Significance level	Coefficient value	Significance level	Coefficient value
Marital satisfaction	0.001***	0.393	0.001***	0.325
Double solidarity	0.001***	0.530	0.001***	0.319
Double agreement	0.004**	0.236	0.008*	0.215
Expression of love	0.001***	0.307	0.001***	0.402
Marital satisfaction (total scale)	0.001***	0.530	0.001***	0.4260

The significance level ***>0.001 **>0.05

Table 2: Standardized coefficients a and non-standardized coefficients and test statistic and significance level for predicting religious orientation based on predictive variable

Model	Significance level	T-statistic	Standard coefficients
Marital satisfaction	0.001***	7.763	0.602
Sexual satisfaction	0.309	1.02	0.079

The significance level ***>0.001

satisfaction questionnaire were classified as follows: sexual dissatisfaction 25–50, low sexual satisfaction 75–51, moderate sexual satisfaction 100–76, and high sexual satisfaction 125–101. The reliability of these questionnaires was confirmed by the retest method.

SPSS 16 (Chicago, IL, USA, 2002, made by IBM Corporation in California, USA). and Pearson correlation test were used for data analysis. All participants were informed that at any stage of the research they did not wish to continue collaborating, they could be excluded from the study, and the results of the study were confidential and would only be published in general.

Results

The mean and standard deviation of the research variables, including religious orientation, sexual satisfaction, and marital satisfaction in the subjects under study, were 81.19 ± 74.08 , 82.14 ± 47.29 , 69.10 ± 58.81 respectively. The correlation coefficient is 0.625.

The correlation coefficient matrix between the dimensions of religious orientation with marital satisfaction [Table 1] shows that all dimensions of religious orientation have a significant relationship with marital satisfaction.

According to the results [Table 1], there is a significant and positive relationship between the dimensions of religious orientation (internal and external) with marital satisfaction and its subscales ($P < 0.05$).

As shown in Table 2, the results of multivariate regression analysis show that marital satisfaction can significantly predict religious orientation ($P < 0.05$).

Considering the significance level of Pearson correlation coefficient <0.05 and positive correlation coefficient

between the two variables in Table 3, it can be deduced that between sexual satisfaction and its components with marital satisfaction and component. There is a significant relationship between these two variables, which means that with the increase in women’s satisfaction with the variables of sexual satisfaction and its components, the rate of married women’s satisfaction with the variable of marital satisfaction and its components increases. In other words, their marital satisfaction is at a better level.

As shown in Table 4, considering the significance level of Pearson’s correlation coefficient that is less than 0.05, it can be deduced that the test hypothesis (i.e. there is a significant relationship between sexual satisfaction and its components with the dimensions of religious orientation in married women in statistical sample) is accepted.

As shown in Table 5, considering the significance of *F* test at error level <0.05 , it can be concluded that the regression model was a good model consisting of predictor and criterion variables. Predictive variables (sexual satisfaction and marital satisfaction) are able to explain changes in the criterion variable.

Discussion

The findings of this study showed that there is a significant and positive relationship between religious orientation and sexual satisfaction and marital satisfaction. Religious commitment plays a predictive role in promoting sexual and marital satisfaction. Some studies are in line with the present study. Sadiqi *et al.*’s (2016) study, which was conducted on 150 couples referring to psychiatric centers in Qom city, showed a positive correlation between religious orientation and marital satisfaction. Rezaee *et al.*’s (2013) study also found that couples’ religious commitment was correlated with their marital and sexual satisfaction, meaning that marital satisfaction increased with increasing religious commitment.^[18]

According to research evidence, religious beliefs and behaviors have a positive effect on marital satisfaction. Religion contains guidelines for life and a system of beliefs and values that can influence marital life. On the other hand, religion in the form of spiritual concepts and

Table 3: Correlation coefficient matrix between components of sexual satisfaction with marital satisfaction

Variable	The desire to have sex	Sexual attitude	Quality of sex life	Sexual adjustment	Sexual satisfaction
Marital satisfaction					
Coefficient value	0.444	0.314	0.401	0.376	0.432
Significance level	0.001***	0.001***	0.001***	0.001***	0.001***
Double solidarity					
Coefficient value	0.462	0.392	0.434	0.296	0.449
Significance level	0.001***	0.001***	0.001***	0.001***	0.001***
Double agreement					
Coefficient value	0.343	0.278	0.358	0.306	0.362
Significance level	0.001***	0.001***	0.001***	0.001***	0.001***
Expression of love					
Coefficient value	0.265	0.221	0.222	0.235	0.266
Significance level	0.001***	0.006**	0.006**	0.006**	0.001***
Marital satisfaction (total scale)					
Coefficient value	0.589	0.462	0.563	0.479	0.591
Significance level	0.001***	0.001***	0.001***	0.001***	0.001***

The significance level ***>0.001 **>0.05

Table 4: Correlation coefficient matrix between sexual satisfaction and religious orientation dimensions

Variable	External religious orientation	Internal religious orientation
The desire to have sex		
Coefficient value	0.349	0.276
Significance level	0.001***	0.001***
Sexual attitude		
Coefficient value	0.309	0.200
Significance level	0.001***	0.014**
Quality of sex life		
Coefficient value	0.350	0.288
Significance level	0.001***	0.001***
Sexual adjustment		
Coefficient value	0.285	0.193
Significance level	0.001***	0.018**
Sexual satisfaction		
Coefficient value	0.389	0.270
Significance level	0.001***	0.001***

The significance level ***>0.001 **>0.05

shared religious values can be a moderator of divisions between couples when disputes arise.^[19]

A study by Demaris *et al.* (2010) stated that religiosity is the most important factor in understanding couples and that religion has important effects on couples' relationships. In the case of men and women expressing their satisfaction, the factors of this satisfaction were adherence to religious issues, expressing their wishes and verbal communication, consulting with each other, and respecting each other's needs and understanding of the spouse's mental and physical status.^[20] Although men were not included in our study, the overall results are consistent with our study and emphasize the important role of religiosity in marital satisfaction.

Other studies have confirmed the results of our study: Kim have shown that by practicing religious beliefs,

emotions such as kindness and goodwill, happiness, peace, and self-esteem are enhanced in humans. These factors can increase marital satisfaction and a loving relationship between couples.^[21] Rezazadeh's study showed that with communication skills training, although marital satisfaction increased and there was a positive and significant relationship between the two, this skill alone could not be effective, and it is crucial for marital stability and the satisfaction of spiritual virtues and values.^[22] A study by Fiese *et al.* showed that religion positively affects couples who are bound to attend religious holidays and increases their marital satisfaction.^[23] Marsh and Dallos believe that religious beliefs decrease nervous stresses and resilient behaviors show up in family conflicts, and communicating with God fills the void of some needs that couples cannot provide for each other. In their study, individuals' reactions to anger varied. At this time, women were relaxed by diverting their minds to God, and men avoided engaging in words that exacerbated disputes. The difference between the study of Marsh and the present study is in the type of research because Marsh and Dallos examined the factors affecting marital adjustment in religious individuals, but because religion and religious teachings can have a profound and effective role in promoting marital adjustment, this study was consistent with the present study.^[24] The study of Danesh showed that to resolve family conflicts, religion through spiritual beliefs and religious values moderated the divergence between husband and wife, and resolved marital disputes.^[25]

The present study was inconsistent with the findings of Davidson *et al.* The study, which aimed to "examine the relationship between religiosity and sexual behaviors and sexual satisfaction women" in 868 professional female nurses in 15 states, found no difference in sexual satisfaction and religiosity and the extent of religious beliefs did not affect the sexual aspects of women.^[11]

Table 5: Analysis of variance of regression model of variable predictors of sexual satisfaction and marital satisfaction with the criterion variable (religious orientation)

Model	Sum of squares	Degrees of freedom	Average of squares	Fisher statistics	Significance level
Model 1					
Regression	7400.911	2	3700.456	54.280	0.001***
Left over	10,021.46	147	68.173		
Total	17,422.37	149			

The significance level ***>0.001

Perhaps the discrepancy with the study of Davis *et al.*, is due to differences in religion as well as differences in social, economic, and cultural factors in his study and the present study.

In this regard, for the sake of relaxation, one should pay attention to the heterosexuality of the spouses in the sexual field. The couple must know each other's moods so as not to be misunderstood or skeptical about sex. An unfair look at sex, ignoring religious teachings to prepare for marriage, especially in the field of men, can be a serious disadvantage.^[25]

One of the weaknesses of the study was the difficulty of accessing women's personal issues and the absence of intervention where intervention was needed. One of the strengths of the study was its ability to attract and satisfy all those with inclusion criteria. Furthermore, with respect to random sampling, this study is generalizable and could serve as a basis for future studies.

Conclusion

There is a significant relationship between religious orientation, marital satisfaction, and sexual satisfaction. The study also found that couples' religious orientation can increase their sexual satisfaction. Religious commitment plays a predictive role in promoting sexual and marital satisfaction. Family counselors can be advised that they can use couples' religious beliefs to promote marital satisfaction. It can also be used to strengthen religious beliefs in the treatment of sexual problems for couples.

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Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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