

The nexus between marital intimacy, lovemaking styles, sexual satisfaction with marital commitment

Abstract

This study examined the factors affecting marital commitment since it aims to address the nexus between marital intimacy, lovemaking styles, and sexual satisfaction with marital commitment. Sexual satisfaction, marital intimacy, and lovemaking styles are some of the abovementioned factors. Therefore, this study aimed to determine the nexus between marital intimacy, lovemaking styles, and sexual satisfaction with marital commitment. This was applied research in terms of objective and descriptive-survey study in terms of collecting data for hypotheses testing. The statistical population of the study comprised 420 students of medical school. The statistical sample size equaled 201 respondents using the Morgan table. According to the results of descriptive statistics, most respondents were women, and 100 respondents were 18-22 years old. The results of the hypotheses analysis indicated a positive and significant nexus between marital intimacy, sexual satisfaction, lovemaking styles, and marital commitment. Accordingly, the higher these three components in marital relationships between couples, the higher the commitment and adherence to marital principles will be. Three components of marital intimacy, sexual satisfaction, and lovemaking styles have a mutual relationship, so a decrease in each component results in lower or lack of commitment among couples.

Keywords: *Marital Commitment, Intimacy, Satisfaction, Lovemaking Styles*

Atoosa Asadi

*Department of Positive Psychology,
Faculty of Humanities, Khomeinishahr
Branch
Islamic Azad University, Isfahan , Iran
atoosaasadi91@gmail.com*

Introduction

Marriage is usually the most critical context where performance and influence of intimacy and developing social relationships appear. People marry to fulfill their desires. Therefore, couples may experience stress, failure, frustration, anger, and boredom when their needs are not met, and are unable to find positive solutions to their demands. One can take a beneficial step to improve the cultural level of society by identifying and examining the factors that strengthen this social institution. Various factors affect the family's strength and durability, including commitment between couples.

Marriage is the most important contract in anyone's life and people get married for many different reasons. Also sexual desires that are the basic issues, love, economic security, protection, emotional security, a sense of peace, and escape from loneliness are other factors that result in the tendency to get married. A successful marriage indeed can satisfy many physical and mental needs of an individual in a safe environment (Nouranipour et al., 2007). Every successful marriage comprises three underlying bases: commitment, attraction, and understanding. Marital commitment is the strong and most stable factor that predicts the quality and stability of the marital relationship (Sanaie, 2000). According to the divorce rate in recent years that follows the growth rate of marriage, infidelity, lack of commitment, and betrayal are the most critical reasons causing spouses' disputes and separation.

Marital commitment means a deep relationship and intimacy under the light of fidelity. Commitment makes the marital relationship purposeful and results in the mental security of

couples. Several factors affect marriage, including sexual satisfaction, marital demographics, and love style, which are the most important issues in marriage. The mentioned factors are substantial parts of character; hence, one cannot separate them from other aspects of life (Milanifar, 2007). Researchers have conducted many studies on this subject. Acker and Davis (1992) explained that high levels of commitment are obvious in romantic relationships, passion is more seen among women, and commitment is the most powerful predictor of a romantic relationship. Studies have confirmed the positive correlation between sexual satisfaction and marital commitment. Now, sexual satisfaction in marriage and marital life is a two-way variable and a suitable index of marriage stability. In general, couples with lower sexual satisfaction with their marriages may seek comfort through a divorce. However, some situations exist where a spouse is less satisfied with his/her marriage but tolerates the conditions due to their high marital commitment (Amato, 2004). Moreover, other studies indicate that low-level marital commitment in marriage leads to dissatisfaction and divorce. In a healthy family, members have a sense of commitment to each other, and members of committed families spend time providing comfort and well-being and helping each other to achieve development and excellence. In other words, is committed to the family including spending time and energy among family members to do activities related to the family. In other words, studies conducted on commitment indicate that commitment results in the relationship survival in the life of couples. Amato (2004) believes that commitment is a substantial concept that distinguishes the theory of social change from the economic

one. After the early mania of marriage and passion of the first days subsides, the spouse's prosperity and happiness become the most important forces that create relationships between wife and husband. These feelings are more and less adapted to the marital life and the children's caregiving role of spouses. Wife and husband are responsible for each other under any circumstances, such as disease and health, comfort, annoyance, wealth, and poverty. Responsibility provides a criterion for wives and husbands that can measure themselves and each other. Although some couples are committed to their marital relationship in the early days of their marriage, their commitment may not strong enough against inevitable happenings and life adversities (Sepah Mansoor & Mazaheri, 2006).

Marital intimacy is another variable considered in the extant study. It can be stated that lack of intimacy between couples and their marital relationships is one of the indicators of disturbance in marital relationships (Halford, 2005). In the opinion of many therapists, the concept of intimacy and closeness is a challenging source in marital relationships and predicts success in marital therapies. Intimacy is a valuable concept in marriage since it increases spouses' commitment to the relationship and has positive results in marital compatibility and satisfaction (Etemadi, 2006). According to Halford, intimacy points to the interaction between spouses that leads to a sense of closeness, love, and attention between them. Intimacy may have a unique meaning for spouses. To some individuals, intimacy means having a self-revealing intimate feeling about another person. Some others consider intimacy shared as a positive experience, while others see it as having sex. The common point in troubled marital relationships is that spouses do not satisfy the intimacy needs of each other. According to the results of the study conducted by Valibeygi et al. (2008), a direct and significant association exists only between life satisfaction and intimacy among love elements (intimacy, passion, and commitment); moreover, an indirect and significant relationship exists between intimacy and lack mental health (negative affection). On the other hand, this study confirmed a direct and significant nexus between the commitment element and mental health (positive affection); a direct and significant nexus between life satisfaction and positive affection; and a reverse and significant relationship between life satisfaction and negative affection. Sepah Mansoor and Mazaheri (2006) concluded that increased intimacy and passion in spouses' interactions lead to higher satisfaction with marital relationships, while commitment cannot alone result in marital satisfaction. According to the study conducted on the nexus between lovemaking styles and marital quality, a positive nexus exists between friends, romantic, and practical lovemaking styles with marital satisfaction, marital cohesion, and marital agreement. In

contrast, a negative nexus was found between passionate, game-playing, and altruistic love style with marital satisfaction marital cohesion, and marital agreement.

Schneider (1989) assumes that couples' similarity helps them feel they are perceived and understood by their spouse. Moreover, the similarity between spouses is related to the texture of intimate relationships. Intimate feelings appear when spouses have similar intimacy needs and share a specific kind of intimacy. Talmadgz and Dobbs (1990) note that the extent to which spouses share their perceptions about themselves and their relationship reflects the extent to which they can act intimately. John Lee conducted some studies in the 1970s to find out how people experience different types of love. He tended to demythologize the flow of love in the West. Lee analogized love to flow to color. This analogy includes a wide range from the main primary to secondary colors. Secondary colors are made by combining primary colors. The same case occurs in love. Love is divided into two primary and secondary spectra. The primary love styles include passionate love, game-playing love, friendship love, practical love, dependent possessive love, and altruistic love. According to a study conducted by Pella (2000), commitment, intimacy, and style of sexual relationships are important factors concerning love and marital satisfaction for both men and women. Love and its quality are the most determinants of dynamics in marital relationships (Hafezi Torghabeh, Firoozabadi, Haghshenas, 2006). Love and lovemaking styles are factors affecting the quality of marital relationships.

In the case of sexual gratification, libido is mixed with emotional needs among other biological needs, and the impact of this need becomes visible in many areas of life. This instinct has an undeniable impact on marital life, cohesion, and stability. Moreover, this instinct plays a vital and underlying role in health and mental balance. The mentioned considerable properties of sexual desire have distinguished it from other biological needs making it a mental and psychological need. Sexual satisfaction literary means a person's pleasant feeling about a sexual relationship that its absence may cause a higher divorce rate. It should be mentioned that high-level sexual satisfaction results in a higher quality of marital life and subsequent marital stability and marital commitment in life. Marital satisfaction is a substantial case for couples considering it as a personal issue (Parvzian, 2004). Sexual satisfaction is the result of the marriage contract and is felt internally and externally. Marital satisfaction is also defined as the feeling that a wife and husband feel happy and satisfied after marriage. So, sexual satisfaction affects many aspects of marital life, including marital commitment. The relevant studies have confirmed the positive correlation between sexual satisfaction and marital commitment. Now, sexual satisfaction in marriage and marital life is a two-way variable and a suitable

index of marriage stability. In general, couples with lower sexual satisfaction with their marriages may seek comfort through a divorce. Furthermore, other studies imply that low-level marital commitment results in dissatisfaction and divorce (Rafieenia & Asghari, 2007). According to the abovementioned points, this study aims to examine the nexus between marital intimacy, sexual satisfaction, and lovemaking styles with marital commitment.

Method

This was applied research in terms of the objective because this study does not lead to the creation of new work. The present paper was a descriptive-survey study in terms of collecting data for hypotheses testing. The statistical population comprised 420 students of medical school. Statistical sample size (n=201) was calculated based on the Morgan Table. The data were collected through a questionnaire with closed-ended questions. The questionnaire was formulated and designed based on the Likert scale. For this purpose, the Adams and Jones Marital Commitment questionnaire (44 items), Hudson Sexual Satisfaction Questionnaire (25 items), Waring Intimacy Questionnaire (33 items), and Hendrick Love Attitudes Scale (42 items) were used.

The questionnaires were distributed among a few professors and supervisors to determine the validity of the questionnaire. The interviews were done to correct and adjust the questionnaire based on the perception, attitude, and culture of the statistical population. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient in this study was measured based on a preliminary study by distributing 20 questionnaires related to marital commitment (0.720), marital intimacy (0.84), sexual satisfaction (0.86), and love styles (0.91). The measured alpha coefficient was greater than 0.70; hence, the questionnaires had optimal reliability. The data were analyzed through statistical SPSS software.

Findings

The results indicated that 103 respondents (51.2%) were women, and 98 respondents (48.8%) were men. In terms of age, 100 respondents are in the age range of 18-22 indicating the highest frequency of this range. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to examine data distribution normality. It was concluded with 95% confidence that no difference existed between observed and expected frequencies. In other words, society distribution is normal. Table 1 reports the descriptive statistics of research variables.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of variables

Variable	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Variance
Marital intimacy	1.94	4.00	3.67	0.472	0.224

Sexual satisfaction	2.40	4.48	3.28	0.392	0.154
Lovemaking style	1.71	4.25	3.88	0.533	0.285
Marital commitment	2.05	4.41	3.99	0.453	0.206

Table 2. Coefficient of correlation between marital intimacy and marital commitment

Dependent variable	Independent variable	Correlation coefficient	Prob .	Sample (N)
Marital commitment	Marital intimacy	0.660	0.000	201

According to Table 2, the correlation coefficient of the sample equaled 0.660 at the significance level of 0.000, which is less than the significance level of the test (0.05); therefore, the test is significant and a linear relationship exists between the two considered variables.

Table 3. Coefficient of correlation between sexual satisfaction and marital commitment

Dependent variable	Independent variable	Correlation coefficient	Prob .	Sample (N)
Marital commitment	Sexual satisfaction	0.885	0.000	201

According to Table 3, the correlation coefficient of the sample equaled 0.885 at the significance level of 0.000, which is less than the significance level of the test (0.05); therefore, the test is significant and a linear relationship exists between the two considered variables.

Table 4. Coefficient of correlation between lovemaking style and marital commitment

Dependent variable	Independent variable	Correlation coefficient	Prob .	Sample (N)
Marital commitment	Lovemaking style	0.880	0.000	201

According to Table 4, the correlation coefficient of the sample equaled 0.880 at the significance level of 0.000, which is less than the significance level of the test (0.05); therefore, the test is significant and a linear relationship exists between the two considered variables.

Conclusion

The results indicated a positive and significant relationship between marital intimacy and marital commitment. It was concluded that the test was significant and a significant linear association existed between the two mentioned variables. Accordingly, the more marital intimacy between couples, the higher the marital commitment in marriage will be. In other words, the need for love, intimacy, an intimate relationship with a spouse, and satisfying emotional-mental needs lead to higher marital commitment and satisfaction. The results of this hypothesis were consistent with the findings obtained by Etemadi (2006).

Moreover, the results confirmed a positive and significant correlation between sexual satisfaction and marital commitment. This test was significant and it was concluded that there is a significant linear relationship between these two variables. The higher the sexual satisfaction between couples in their relationship, the more they perceive themselves to be adhering to the norms of marriage. A two-way nexus exists between marital commitment and sexual satisfaction; it means a decrease in sexual satisfaction leads to a reduction or absence of commitment among couples, and a decline in marital commitment causes sexual disorders and lower sexual satisfaction among couples. The results of this hypothesis are in line with the findings obtained by Shahsiah et al. (2009).

On the other hand, a positive and significant nexus exists between lovemaking style and marital commitment. It was found that this test is significant and a significant linear relationship exists between these two variables. Accordingly, the couples' lovemaking styles affect their marital commitment and can increase this variable. The results of this hypothesis are matched with findings obtained by Mahmoodi and Hafez Al-Kotob (2011), Khoshnevisan et al. (2008), and Sepahmansoor and Mazaheri (2006).

According to the direct nexus between intimacy, lovemaking styles, and sexual satisfaction with marital commitment, increased reinforcing and caring behaviors through some practices, such as renewing romantic memories, doing joint recreational activities, and unexpected gifts can effectively create intimacy and marital commitment. In addition, psychoanalytic approaches and interpersonal relationships are effective, especially Hendrix relationship therapy, which examines and treats childhood experiences and traumas and their impact on couples' current relationships. Since we are responsible to give women sexual health consummation, it is

recommended to establish women's sexual health entities in healthcare centers to give consultation for women's sexual performance and identify and solve sexual issues and problems, including lack of sexual desire, sexual disability, and premature ejaculation. The purpose of this consultation is to solve the abovementioned problems and avoid fear and embarrassment in expressing these issues. In the case of lovemaking styles, it is suggested to examine the nexus between these styles and other variables, such as attachment styles, thinking styles, and emotional intelligence that have a relationship with marital satisfaction and commitment.

Conflict of interest

None

Financial support

None

Ethics statement

None

References

- Etemadi, O. (2006). Increase in marital intimacy, *Journal of Psychotherapy News*, Vol. 13, Issue 49-50.
- Etemadi, O. (2006). A study of the effectiveness of couple therapy based on imago relationship therapy on marital intimacy in Esfahan, *Counseling Research and Development*, Issue 16.
- Parvizian, P. (2004). The relationship between sexual satisfaction and marital satisfaction, MA Thesis, Islamic Azad University of Rudehen.
- Sanaie, B. Marriage and its motivations, abysses, and health, *Journal of Educational Research of Tarbiat Moalem University*, Issues 3 & 4.
- Hafezi Torghabeh, Firoozabadi, Haghshenas (2005). The nexus between lovemaking styles and marital satisfaction, MA Thesis, Shiraz University.
- Khoshnevisan, Z., Delavar, A., Afrooz, Gh. (2008). The marital satisfaction rate among married students of governmental universities in Mashhad, *Fourth National Proceedings of mental health of Shiraz students*.
- Rafeenia, P., Asghari, A. (2007). Family Research, *Shahid Beheshti University of Tehran*, Issue 491, 9(3).
- Sepahmansoor, M., Mazaheri, M. A. (2006). Comparing lovemaking styles' components among married individuals with and without marital satisfaction, *Proceedings of second*

national congress on family pathology in Iran, 217.

- Milanifar, B. (2007). The relationship between marital satisfaction and sexual relationship of couples, Congress of family pathology in Iran, Family Faculty of Shahid Beheshti University, Tehran.
- Nouranipour, R.A., Beshart, M.A., Yousefi, E. (2007). An investigation of the correlation between sexual knowledge and attitude with marital satisfaction among couples inhabiting married students' dormitory at Shahid Beheshti University, Journal of Counseling Research, 2007, 6(24).
- Halford, K. (2005). Short-term couple therapy, translated by Mostafa Tabrizi, Tehran.
- Valibeigi, M., Peyvaste, M. (2008). Study of the type and extent of love with life satisfaction and mental health of female married students of Al-Zahra University, Proceedings of Third Congress on Family Pathology in Tehran, 396.
- Amato, PR. (2004). Studying marital interaction and commitment with survey data, [cited Dec 1]