

## Comparative Study of Marital Conflicts and Compatibility of Working and Non-Working Women

### Abstract

This research aimed to investigate the comparative study of marital conflicts and the compatibility of working and non-working women in Khorramshahr. The current research is applied in terms of purpose and comparative research method. The statistical population of this research was working and non-working women of Khorramshahr, who were investigated in 2017. Convenience sampling was used in this research. Because there was no reliable data on working and non-working women, 100 individuals, including 50 working women and 50 non-working women, were chosen as a convenience and nonrandom. Data were collected using the Revised Marital Conflicts Questionnaire (R-MCQ) (2008) and the Spinner Marital Compatibility Questionnaire (1976) DAS. The multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) method at the alpha level of 0.05 was used to analyze the data. According to the data, the significance level for marital compatibility is 0.029, whereas conflicts exceed 0.05. There was a difference in marital compatibility between working and non-working women, but there was no difference in marital conflicts between working and non-working women.

**Keywords:** *Marital Conflicts , Compatibility, Working women, Non-working women*

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### Introduction

The rapid development of Iranian society towards civilization has resulted in a rise in the number of working women and their entry into the public arena, increasing the proportion of working women. Between 1986 and 2006, the number of working women nearly tripled, from 998,000 to 278,200. Additionally, the proportion of women in the labor force has climbed from 8.9% to 13.6%. (Statistical Center of Iran, 2009). The most significant problem with women's employment in the course of growth is the existence of several roles that women are required to adopt as wives and mothers and perform in a traditional manner, which may conflict with their newer responsibilities as individuals who work outside the home (Office of Women's Affairs in the Presidential Institution, 2007).

Healthy relationships based on compatibility and understanding between family members, particularly the husband and wife, are one of the most crucial determinants of the family's survival, durability, and expansion. One of the most crucial aspects of family functioning is marital compatibility, which also impacts loneliness, life satisfaction, lifespan, health, rearing of children, social relationships, and the tendency for social deviations (Brill et al 2006). The need for love and intimacy, the desire to create an intimate relationship with the wife, and the desire to satisfy emotional and psychological needs are among the primary reasons why contemporary couples have a difficult time forming and sustaining intimate relationships in the era of sexual duality, before and following sex reassignment surgery.

Individual compatibility between couples and their ability to remain married constitutes marital compatibility. Compatibility in marriage is the process through which

partners adjust and modify their behavior patterns individually or in concert to attain optimal marital satisfaction.. Brown, Wendy Peterson. (2011). defined compatible couples as husbands and wives who frequently agree with one another, are content with the nature and depth of their relationship and how they use their spare time, and practice good time and financial management.

Background-individual elements, such as a person's family, parent's marital status, parent's mental health status, paternal family functioning status, socio-cultural factors, the degree of parental support, the age of marriage, education and training, income and occupation, class and social group, and type of society, have been found as being influential on marital compatibility (quoted from Abbott & Barber (2010)

On the other hand, marital disputes are frequent issues in families and can have significant consequences on a couple's lives together. Marriage is no exception because conflict in close relationships is natural since the frequent and varied interactions between partners offer endless opportunities for conflict (Gillen 2015;). From a systemic perspective, the basis for most couples' conflict is that each partner attempts to alter the other. Nonetheless, this transformation is typically accompanied by resentment expressed publicly or covertly (Silver Stine, cited in Lindsey et al 2006). A couple's ability to manage and resolve disagreements amicably may provide a solid foundation for their relationship and aid in developing an intimate and close one The constructive approach to resolving marital disagreements fosters closeness, whereas destructive approaches may exacerbate discord and anxiety in the couple's relationship. The materials stated that this study's purpose is to compare the marriage issues and marital compatibility between working and non-working women.

**Research Methods**

This research is applied in terms of purpose and comparative research method. Convenience sampling was used in this research. Because there was no reliable data on working and non-working women, 100 individuals, including 50 working women and 50 non-working women, were chosen as a convenience and nonrandom. Employed and non-employed subjects each accounted for 0.50% of the sample proportionally.

**Measuring Tool**

**Revised Marital Conflicts Questionnaire (R-MCQ)**

Based on the clinical experiences of the research guide, a 54-item questionnaire was developed to assess conflicts between husband and wife. This questionnaire measures eight dimensions of marital conflict: decreased cooperation, decreased sexual relations, increased emotional reactions, increased children's support, increased personal relations with relatives, decreased family relations with relatives, spouses, and friends, and decreased effective communication. Counselors and other clinical specialists can use this questionnaire to assess the kind and extent of marital conflicts. Each question has five alternatives ranging from 1 to 5 scores. The maximum score on the questionnaire is 270, and the possible minor score is 54. A higher score on this measure indicates high conflict, whereas a lower score indicates a healthier relationship and less conflict.

Cronbach's alpha for the entire questionnaire among 270 individuals was 0.96, and its eight subscales were as follows: Decrease in cooperation, 0.81; decrease in a sexual relationship, 0.61; increase in emotional reactions, 0.70; increase in child support, 0.33; increase in a personal relationship with relatives 0.86; decrease in a family relationship with relatives, spouse, and friends, 0.89; separation of financial affairs, 0.71; Decrease in effective communication, 0.69. The Marital Conflicts Questionnaire's reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha technique, and the overall reliability score of 0.86 indicates that the questionnaire meets the criteria for desirable reliability coefficients.

**Spinner Marital Compatibility Questionnaire (DAS)**

Spinner Marital Compatibility Questionnaire is a 32-item tool to assess the quality of the marital relationship of couples who live together, and it is used to measure overall satisfaction in an intimate relationship. Factor analysis shows that this scale measures four dimensions: couple satisfaction (satisfaction with different aspects of the relationship); Two-person correlation of participation in joint activities (two-person agreement); The degree of agreement between the parties on issues related to the marital relationship, such as financial affairs and raising children (expression of affection) Nathawat, & Mathur, (2010). used the retest procedure with a one-week

interval and a sample size of 15 couples to evaluate the reliability coefficient of the questionnaire. The correlation coefficient between men's and women's scores during two executions was 0.81; the marital happiness scale was 0.68; marital solidarity was 0.81; the marital agreement was 0.77, and the display of affection was 0.78. This study assessed the marital compatibility questionnaire's reliability using Cronbach's alpha technique. The reliability score for the entire questionnaire was 0.92, representing the desired reliability coefficients for the questionnaire.

The analysis of the research data was performed using SPSS version 24. In addition, the significance threshold for this study was established at 0.05.

**Findings**

Table 1 presents the descriptive findings of this study, including statistical indicators such as mean and standard deviation for all variables evaluated.

Table 1 - Mean and standard deviation of the scores of variables of marital conflicts and marital compatibility of working women and non-working women

Variable	Statistical indicators	Mean	Standard deviation	Number
Marital conflicts	Working women	08.116	09.22	50
	Non-working women	50.119	25.21	50
	All women	79.117	63.21	100
Marital compatibility	Working women	46.171	85.25	50
	Non-working women	70.169	60.24	50
	All women	58.170	12.25	100

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Table 2 - Results of the significance test on the scores of the marital conflict components for working and non-working women

Test	Value	DF in hypothesis	DF in error	F	P
Pillai's Trace	0.288	8	91	4.59	0.0001
Wilks Lambda	0.712	8	91	4.59	0.0001
Hotelling's Trace	0.404	8	91	4.59	0.0001

Roy's Largest Root	0.404	8	91	4.59	0.0001
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non-working women, at least in terms of one of the dependent variables (components of marital conflicts) ( $p = 0.0001$  and  $F = 4.59$ ). The differences in the analysis of the variance of one variable in MANOVA are in Table 3.

According to Table 2, the significance level of all tests indicates a significant difference between working women and

Table 3 - The results of variance analysis of one variable in the text of MANOVA on the components of marital conflicts between working and non-working women.

Variables	Sum of squares	Degrees of freedom	Mean square	F	Significance level
Conflicts in the context of reducing cooperation	53.29	1	53.29	5.65	0.019
Conflicts in the context of reducing sexual relations	23.04	1	23.04	1.74	0.189
Conflicts in the context of increasing emotional response	1.96	1	1.96	0.070	0.791
Conflicts in the context of increasing support	43.56	1	43.56	2.86	0.094
Conflicts in the context of increasing personal relationship	7.84	1	7.84	0.546	0.462
Conflicts in the context of reducing family relationship	114.49	1	114.49	8.15	0.005
Conflicts in the context of separation of financial affairs	36.19	1	36.19	1.33	0.251
Conflicts in the context of reducing effective communication	552.25	1	552.25	19.08	0.0001

Table 3 shows a significant difference between working and non-working women regarding marital conflicts regarding reduced cooperation, family relationship, and effective communication ( $p < 0.05$ ). According to the averages of the two groups, working women have higher marital conflicts than

non-working women in terms of reducing cooperation and family relationships and lower marital conflicts in terms of reducing effective communication. There is no significant difference between working and non-working women in terms of marital conflicts about reducing

sex, increasing emotional reaction, increasing support, increasing personal relationships, and separating financial matters ( $p < 0.05$ ). Working and non-working women have roughly the same marital conflicts regarding reducing sex, increasing emotional reaction, increasing support, increasing personal relationships, and separating financial affairs, according to the averages of the two groups.

The significance of variance analysis does not determine which groups have differences, so a post-hoc Scheffé test was performed, and the results are presented in Tables 4 and 5.

Table 4 - The results of the post-hoc Scheffé test to compare the average scores of marital compatibility of women of different age groups.

Groups		Mean	1	2	3
1	21 to 30	106.36	-	-	$p=0.0001$
2	31 to 40	114.45	-	-	$p=0.002$
3	41 to 50	131.64	-	-	-

Table 4 illustrates a significant difference between women in the age group of 41 to 50 years and women in the age group of 21 to 30 years and 31 to 40 years regarding marital compatibility. According to the averages, women aged 41 to 50 have higher marital compatibility than women aged 21 to 30 and 31 to 40. There is no significant difference between the other cases.

Table 5 - The results of the post-hoc LSD test to compare the average scores of marital compatibility of women with different duration of the marriage

Groups		Mean	1	2	3	4	5
1	1 to 5	108.25	-	-	-	$p=0.005$	$p=0.017$
2	6 to 10	111.71	-	-	-	$p=0.006$	$p=0.024$
3	11 to 15	116.25	-	-	-	-	-
4	16 to 20	129.00	-	-	-	-	-

Table 7 - Results of one-variable variance analysis in MANOVA on marital conflicts and marital compatibility of non-working women with different duration of marriage.

Variables	Sum of squares	Degrees of freedom	Mean square	F	Significance level
Marital conflicts	3151.43	4	787.85	1.86	0.133
Marital compatibility	1652.46	4	413.11	1.78	0.148

Table 7 illustrates no significant difference between non-working women with different duration of marriage in terms of marital conflicts and marital compatibility. The marital conflicts and compatibility of non-working women of different

5	21 and above	126.83	-	-	-	-	-
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Table 5 illustrates a significant difference in marital compatibility between women with a marriage duration of 16 to 20 years and women with a marriage duration of 1 to 5 years and 6 to 10 years. According to the averages, the marital compatibility of women whose marriages have lasted between 16 and 20 years is greater than that of women whose marriages have lasted between 1 and 5 years and 6 to 10 years. Regarding marital compatibility, there is a significant difference between women who have been married for 21 years or more and those who have been married for 1-5 years and 6-10 years. On average, women with a marriage length of 21 years or more had higher marital compatibility than women with a marriage length of 1-5 years and 6-10 years. There is no significant distinction between the other situations.

Table 6- Results of one-variable variance analysis in MANOVA on marital intimacy, body image, marital conflicts, and marital compatibility of working women of different age groups

Variables	Sum of squares	Degrees of freedom	Mean square	F	Significance level
Marital conflicts	3532.61	2	1766.30	6.07	0.023
Marital compatibility	2535.34	2	1267.67	6.00	0.005

Table 6 shows a significant difference between working women of different age groups regarding marital conflicts and marital compatibility. The analysis of variance does not indicate whether groups vary; therefore, a post-hoc Scheffé test was done, and the results are displayed in Tables 11 and 12.

marriage lengths are nearly identical. The significance of the variance analysis does not indicate which groups are different.

### Conclusion

Regarding marital conflicts, the data indicated no significant difference between working and non-working women ( $p =$

0.43 and  $F = 0.622$ ). According to the averages of the two groups, the marital conflicts of working and non-working women are nearly identical. In terms of marital conflicts, there is a significant difference between working and non-working women in terms of reducing cooperation, family relationships, and effective communication. Working women have greater marital conflicts than non-working women in reducing cooperation and family relationships, although lower marital conflicts are successful in reducing communication.

There is no significant difference between working and non-working women in terms of marital conflicts about reducing sex, increasing emotional response, increasing support, increasing personal relationships, and separating financial matters ( $p > 0.05$ ). In terms of reducing sex, increasing emotional response, increasing support, increasing personal ties, and separating financial issues, working women and non-working women have nearly identical marital conflicts.

In order to explain the variables of loss of cooperation, reduction of family bonds, and reduction of communication, it is possible to say that during the conflict, individuals are presented with two options: doing something or not doing something. Because conflict emerges when, on the one hand, some issues motivate us to achieve something; on the other hand, other issues prompt us to abandon that task. Almost all of us have experienced this condition, which may vary in intensity and frequency. These derive from qualities such as the amount of decision-making capability, intellectual development, situational assessment, tolerance threshold, prioritizing, and formation of life objectives. In general, a conflict arises when two factors exert equal and opposite pressure on a person. The conflict's primary source is the strain between these two parties. Because if one prevails over the other, man will inevitably proceed in the same direction, settling the conflict.

Additionally, the average marital conflict is greater for non-working people. Despite the improvement in the family's financial status, women's work leads to changes in the management and role of family members because of the fewer hours spent at home by women (decrease in effective communication). In households where women work (less cooperation at home), men participate more in housekeeping, husband and wife comprehend many difficulties, and the positive impacts of this behavior are also evident in other family members. Unfortuitously, some men continue to believe that housekeeping and childrearing are the primary responsibilities of a woman. While being aware of the impact of their spouse's employment and money in resolving their material problems, they expect them to perform all the housework by themselves. Working women can experience physical and emotional discomfort, depression, and despair due to the increasing strain they are under to handle two duties,

which may be one of the reasons why they are dissatisfied in their marriages. In the majority of today's marriages, couples are employed. The significance of this finding cannot be overstated. In such a circumstance, the husband and wife may be pulled in separate ways and be required to pursue distinct objectives. As a result, they spend less time together (reduction of family relationships), and their intellectual focus and external sources of psychological stress rise. With time, husband and wife become increasingly separated, and marital conflict emerges when couples have varying levels of independence and solidarity in cooperation and shared decision-making.

Contrary to the researcher's expectations, there is a distinction between the relationship hypothesis between marital conflicts and the rise in the emotional response of working women and non-working women, and its subscales have been rejected. It was rejected due to several questions and components, which likely contributed to the participants' lack of concentration and exhaustion when answering the questions. Age, IQ, cultural and social elements, Dezfoul's traditional culture, and the living environment likely played a role in the denial of this idea. The interaction or mediation of factors such as personality and demographic features provides a further explanation. In addition, self-assessment tests lack superior accuracy and validity, contain flaws, and may provide divergent answers. Therefore, it is possible to justify not confirming these hypotheses by considering the aspects of caution (different tools and research objectives).

The results revealed a significant difference in marital compatibility between working and non-working women ( $p = 0.029$  and  $F = 4.90$ ). According to the averages of the two groups, the marital compatibility of non-working women is greater than that of working women. This study's results are consistent with those of Dehghani (2012) but not Taghavi et al. (2010). Marital compatibility depends on personality qualities and the capacity of spouses to address life's permanent issues. One of the elements affecting the compatibility of men and women in the household is whether or not the woman is employed. In the modern era, increasing women's social and economic involvement is a crucial priority, resulting in numerous changes to the family and society's traditional cultural and value structures. The inclination of women to work has the most significant impact on the family and alters the interaction between husband, wife, and children. Morton and Shelski's perspective is consistent with the results of this study. Because Morton views women's jobs outside the house as the source of discontent and incompatibility among family members, as well as disorder and disarray in the home, he argues that women's employment outside the home is detrimental to families. Moreover, according to Shelski, the woman's contact with the outside world threatens the stability

and existence of the family and generates chaos and incompatibility in family connections, particularly between men and women.

Moral, physical, and psychological compatibility between couples provide the best possibility for a partnership built on intimacy and durability. It is regarded as one of the most significant determinants of the stability and longevity of a marriage. Dehghani's research (2012) confirms these results, revealing a significant difference in the mean marital compatibility score of working and non-working women. Women go to work for various reasons; in addition to their responsibilities at home and in raising their children, they have undertaken social responsibilities. With changing economic and social conditions and a more complicated division of labor, women are now taking increasingly essential obligations such as working outside the house and being part of the family.

Although Iranian women are attempting to express their creativity and demonstrate their abilities in various economic and social fields, the necessary platforms for their participation are lacking, and society is less receptive to their activities, particularly in the economic field. Although a woman's outside-the-home work increases the family's income and access to additional welfare amenities, it may bring less harmony and peace and result in irreversible harm. As the erroneous view of employment can lead to the disintegration of family life, many such families confront a formidable obstacle. In addition to undermining her emotional status in the home, Parsons believes that the career competition between the wife and the husband causes discord and chaos within the family, so he rejects women's employment.

This research was done in Khorramshahr with a small sample of working and non-working women; thus, the findings should be generalized with caution to other populations and localities. The findings indicated that non-working women's marital compatibility connections are not developing as anticipated. In order to increase the knowledge and information of non-working women about compatibility and factors related to it, as well as the change in their relationships and communication skills, it is suggested that organizations related to the family hold periodic educational workshops to familiarize couples with techniques and skills related to marital compatibility.

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