

The Relationship between Locus of Control and Marital Satisfaction of Couples

Askari Asghari Ganji (Corresponding author) *, Drshokouh Navabinezhad **

* Department of Psychology, Sari Branch, Islamic Azad University, Sari, Iran

Tel: 0037494244521, E-mail: asghariganji@yahoo.com

** Faculty Member, Tarbiat Moallem University, Tehran, Iran

Abstract: The goal of the present research is to examine the relationship between locus of control and marital satisfaction of couples. The method of this research is descriptive one and of correlation kind. Statistical population includes the married students of Islamic Azad University of Sari. Research sample includes 62 couples who were selected by multi-step clustered sampling method. Research tools include locus of control (Rotter) and marital satisfaction (Enrich). Data was analyzed using of the methods of descriptive statistics and deductive statistics (The agreed correlation coefficient, X^2 square, and T-test). The findings showed that there is a significant relationship between internal locus of control and marital satisfaction of the couples. Also, results showed that there is no significant difference between the gender and the kind of locus of control, gender and level of marital satisfaction of the couples. Regarding the finding of the research, couples who suffer from decrease and dissatisfaction in marital relationship, have external locus of control, therefore, for improvement of marital relationship problems and having a coordinated, attractive and satisfactory marital relationship, it is suggested to replace internal control instead of external control.

[Askari Asghari Ganji, Drshokouh Navabinezhad. **The Relationship between Locus of Control and Marital Satisfaction of Couples.** *Life Sci J* 2012; 9(4):294-298]. (ISSN: 1097-8135). <http://www.lifesciencesite.com>. 43

Keywords: Locus of control, marital satisfaction of the couples

Introduction

One of the important goals of marriage is will attain the marital satisfaction .marital satisfaction is the most important issue in marital life which has the highest effect on the stability and failure of couples lives. Couples agree that they will attain their two main goals in the marriage having satisfactory marital relationship and mental agreement with the spouse. Although most individuals emphasize more on having marital relationship, satisfactory marital relationship and mental agreement are considered as two inseparable components in a successful marriage.

Therefore, a successful marital relationship is formed when satisfactory sexual relationship and mental agreement shall be created continually and interwoven to each other among the wife and husband (Ellis and Harper, 1995, page 45).

By starting the marriage and creating marital relationship, sexual satisfaction and marital satisfaction change into important variables in association with the marriage quality. Sexual satisfaction and marital satisfaction are regarded as one of the most important factors in affectionate stability of couples (Fisher & Nulty, 2008). marital relationship plays a fundamental role in intimate

relationships resulted from the marriage and shared life (Crowe & Read Lee, 2000). Glasser and Glasser (2007) believe that marital relationship is a way by which the couples can really feel intimacy, sincerity and connection.

Multiple factors can be effective in formation of sincerity between the couples. Some of them are attachment, caring and sexual problems. Results of Faro jinn's investigations showed that attachment, caring and marital relationships had exclusive portion in intimacy levels of couples.

Closeness to the spouse is also assumed as the first necessary component to establish a romantic relationship. This finding that satisfaction with marital relationships had an exclusive portion in intimacy of romantic relationship is concordant and congruent with William et al. (2007) suggestion including the relationship between satisfaction with marital relationships and intimate relationships (Oliya et al, 2011).

Some regard marital satisfaction as the result of general satisfaction with the shared life, satisfaction with marital relationships and affectionate and exciting satisfaction (Shackel Ford, 2001, page27). Satisfactory marital relationship is the mandatory component of long- term marital life. The frequency or the

length of this relationship is not important, but it is important that the parties have satisfactory courtship. In an unsuccessful and unhappy marriage, it is possible marital relationship still exists but it is not satisfactory for both of them or the other partner (Glasser & Glasser, 2007, 111).

Also, other studies in respect of sexual relationship show that sexual satisfaction is highly related to marital satisfaction (Baron, 2006).

Hunt (1974) believes there is a relationship between general marital happiness and sexual satisfaction. Happy couples are more satisfied with their sexual life compared to unhappy wives and husbands and they have more sexual relationship.

Although happy wives and husbands have not stated satisfactory marital relationship as the best reason for their happiness, however, most of them are generally satisfied with their sexual relationship. 70% of them have expressed that they often agree with their spouses about sexual problems (Oliya et al, 2011 29). Also, the results of Morokoff and Gilliland's investigations (1993) showed that there is a relationship between marital satisfaction and several aspects of sexual function. More importantly, sexual satisfaction of husband and frequency of marital relationship has a positive relationship with marital satisfaction. Generally, the more are negative exciting reaction and disasters faction with frequency of sexual intercourse, marital satisfaction will be lower. In view of Carlson and Dink Mayer (2002), sexual relationship of wife and husband is a barometer and shows ups and downs of marital relationship. Sexual relationship of wife and husband is the manifestation of their lives. However, marital relationship includes that part of marital life which misunderstanding is occurred about it very much. But the important problem is that how does a satisfactory marital relationship change into an unhappy and dissatisfied relationship which is often determined by bilateral disgust? For most couples, the reason for decrease in sexual relationship after several years is lieu of a closed secret. Public opinion of couples shows that the more time passes, sexual interactions will become lower and the most rapid decrease occurs during the first four years after marriage. This decrease in frequency of sexual interaction over time is also true about couples who live together but they have not married. Surprisingly, the investigations show that full- time working and part-time working

has no negative effect on sexual life of couples (Baron, 2006 p. 450). It is possible marital relationship has an undesired effect on their sexual satisfaction in different ways. Some of these effects are so delicate that there is an association between poor marital relationship and poor sexual relationship (Crowe and Reed lee, 2000, p. 35).

At the beginning of the shared life, the couples rarely experience sexuality problems. In continuing the relationship, it is possible external factors such as job and offspring create a disturbance in couple's relationship. In this case, wife and husband feel that they have physically less access to each other. If one of the partners has less tendency towards sexual relationship, the other may feel harm and attempts to conduct his/ her spouse towards sexual relationship. If lack of interaction continues, the couple's relationship becomes more polar and the wife and husband will experience disappointment, unsuccessful, damage and harm. In this case, if one of the partners has more tendency, it is possible, he/she blames the other because of the lack of sexual intimacy. The outcome of this behavior can be lack of the couple inclination towards starting the marital relationship.

This incorrect cycle can be continued until they reach the crisis and seek for solving the problems, some couples continue the life with these same conditions (Roughan & Jenkins, 1990, 129).

In belief of Morokoff & Gilliland (1993), decrease in marital relationship of couples is often formed because of the existence of a problem in their affectionate relationship. Problematic affectionate relationships affect affectionate states of couples and healthy sexual performance is affected by it. Life events and conditions such as death of a close person, disease of a family member, occupational stress, baby birth or anxiety and problems, all can have an effect on starting sexual problems.

Also, some feelings such as treachery, hate, hostility, disturb, lack of self- confidence and envy can have negative effect on sexual relationship. In view of Crowe and Reedley (2000), factors which are effective on decrease in sexual relationship, include politeness and courtesy, continuous coarseness, wife and husband or marital relationship within the framework of <Parent-Child> or <Patient-nurse>, illegal relations, in balance in dominance and brevity, dispute on slight issues about lack of sexual sexuality tendency and

inability to close bedrooms door. Also, the results of Honar-parvaran research (2006). Showed that totally, %30 of women had complete satisfaction with sexual relationship, %4 of them had no satisfaction with it and %14 performed sexual activity just for the spouse satisfaction. The reasons for dissatisfaction included respectively disturbed family relationship, lack of paying attention to woman needs and inclinations, lack of sexual coordination and similarity, the effect of daily problems and difficulties, lack of sexual knowledge, poor affectionate relationship with the spouse, the existence of guilt feeling during sexual intercourse, negative attitude about sexual problems, lack of pre-caress, tormenting sexual demand, man's inability to satisfy the wife, fear from sexual dissatisfaction of the spouse, undesired sexual experiences before marriage.

In addition, in view of Glasser & Glasser (1998), the secret of decrease in sexual relationship is due to application of external locus of control by one couple or both couples against his/ her spouse.

No factor destroys sexual relationship faster and more crucial than seven destructive factors of external control (Criticism, blame, complaint, grumbling, threat, punishment and bribe). In view of them, couples who have decrease in sexual relationship and sexual dissatisfaction are involved in external control. The emergence and occurrence of it in marital relationship deteriorates sexual intimacy and marital satisfaction.

The assumption of external control is that if we feel dissatisfaction in sexual relationship, we are not responsible of such a feeling by ourselves but our spouse, the others, chance and out- of- control events are guilty. Also, in view of Glasser, for having a successful and satisfactory sexual relationship in marital life, exerting internal control (support, encouragement and assurance, listening, acceptance and friendship, respecting and negotiation) is necessary.

Regarding to theoretical patterns and findings of the present research, this general question is proposed that how should wife and husband behave to each other to achieve a satisfactory and consistent marital relationship?

The present research is in order to respond the above-mentioned question.

Research Hypotheses

1-There is a significant relationship between locus of control (internal-external) and level of marital satisfaction of couples.marital

2-There is a significant difference between the gender and level of marital satisfaction.

3- There is a significant difference between the gender and kind of locus of control.

Method and Material

Participants and Research design. The method of study is descriptive and of correlation kind. Statistical population of this research includes all married students who were studying in Islamic Azad University, Sari branch, provided that they have at least three years marital life up to 2011. Sample volume was selected based on Koch ran formula as 62 participants (31 women and 31 men) by multi-step clustered sampling method.

Instruments: For assessment of locus of control, Rooter's locus of control scale was used. Different researches have reported the validity of this scale between %70 to %81.

Also, for measurement of marital satisfaction, 47questions short from of Inrich's marital satisfaction questionnaire was used. Olson et al. have reported the validity of this questionnaire as 0.22 by calculation of alpha coefficient.

Performance approach: Referring to departments and official sectors of Islamic Azad University, Sari branch, two questionnaires of locus of control and marital satisfaction were available for 31 couples.

Each respondent answered the questionnaire individually and along with his / her spouse. For data analysis, descriptive statistical method (frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation) and deductive statistical (the agreed correlation coefficient, X^2 khi-square and T-test) were used for comparison of independent means. For testing research hypotheses, significance level of at least %5 was selected.

Results

Statistical analysis of data by testing three hypotheses of research at confidence level of 95 percent was led to the following results.

First hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between level of marital satisfaction of couples with internal locus of control and external locus of control. (Table 1)

Table 1. Results obtained from the correlation between locus of control and marital satisfaction in couples.

	Locus of control		Total
	Internal control	External control	
The observed frequency less than marital satisfaction mean	40	12	52
The expected frequency	46.2	5.8	52.0
The observed frequency	70	2	72
The expected frequency	63.8	8.2	72.0
The observed frequency	110	14	124
The expected frequency	110.0	14.0	124.0

Regarding to that the value of the obtained agreed correlation coefficient ($r_s = 6.37$, $df=1$, $p<0.05$) is more than the corresponding value in the table (3.84), therefore, zero hypothesis (H_0) is rejected. That is, there is a significant relationship between internal locus of control of couples and their marital satisfaction. Second Hypothesis: There is a significant difference between gender and locus of control. (Table 2)

Table 2. Results obtained from comparison of locus of control of couples by gender separation.

	Locus of control		Total
	Internal control	External control	
The observed frequency gender = woman	60	6	66
The expected frequency	58.6	7.4	66.0
The observed frequency	50	8	58
The expected frequency	51.4	6.6	58.0
The observed frequency	110	14	124
The expected frequency	110.0	14.0	124.0

As it is observed, the value of the observed X^2 square from the above mentioned table ($p<0.05$, $df = 1$, $X^2 = 0.37$) is less than the corresponding value in the table (3.84). Therefore, zero hypothesis (H_0) is not rejected. That is, there is no significant difference between two women and men groups in terms of locus of control. Third hypothesis: There is a significant difference between gender and level of sexual satisfaction of couples. (Table 3)

Table 3. T-test results for comparison of means of respondent's scores in marital satisfaction test.

Significance level of two ranges	T	Df	Standard Deviation	Mean	Number	Gender
0.106	1.64	60	34.89	171.15	64	Female
			24.4	183.83	60	Male

Regarding to the calculated T-value in the above mentioned table ($T = 1.64$, $df = 60$,

$p<0.05$), the obtained significance level of 0.106 is more than 5%.

Therefore, zero hypothesis (H_0) is not rejected. On the other hand, there is no significant difference between gender and marital satisfaction of couples.

Discussion

In this research, the relationship between functions of locus of control and marital satisfaction of couples was examined. Research findings show that there is a significant relationship between internal locus of control and marital satisfaction of couples. In expressing this finding, it can be said that couples with internal locus of control enjoy satisfactory marital relationship and subsequently, they are satisfied with their marital life, while couples with external locus of control suffer from decrease in marital relationship and marital dissatisfaction. And there are signs of criticism, blame, insult and humiliation, threat, punishment and in their marital relationship abundantly.

This finding is consistent and concordant with the studies and researches of Glasser & Glasser (1998, 2007), Ellis & Harper (1995), Baron (2006), Hunt (1974), Fisher & Nulty (2008), Morokoff & Gilliland (1993), as well as in domestic studies and investigations, with the researches of Honar-parvaran (2006), Oliya et al. (2011).

Generally, the results related to each of the two kinds of internal control and external control in this research represents this fact that except for marriage of two internal control, other marriages are not followed by appropriate and desired marital satisfaction and sexual satisfaction. While in marriage of two external control, it can be said that because of seven factors of internal control affection (support, appreciation, listening, acceptance, confidence, respect and negotiation) which the couples have in marital relationship, their sexual satisfaction and marital satisfaction will increase and stabilize and this is the best association and confirms the similarity in internal locus of control.

The second finding of this research showed that there is no significant difference between gender and level of marital satisfaction of couples. The previous studies on marital satisfaction generally show that the status of individual's gender doesn't predict marital satisfaction of couples (Garry, 1994, cited in Oliya et al 2011).

But this feeling has a physical root in men. It should be considered that despite of what they want, women are emerged through physical manifestations as well as despite of what they claim, men stop at the level of physical relationship. Also, one of the other findings of this research is that there is no significant difference between locus of control and gender. Also, the third finding of this research represents that there is no significant difference between locus of control and gender.

It is recommended that more researches shall be performed in respect of this hypothesis.

References

1. Oliya, Narges, Fatehizadeh, Maryam, Bahrani, Fatemeh. Teaching of marital life enrichment. Tehran Danzheh publications, (2011), pp. 18-29.
2. Ellis, Albert, Harper, Robert. Ways of successful marriage. Translation by ElhamShafiee. RASA cultural services institution, (1995) page 45.
3. Baron, Robert. Social psychology. Translation by YousofKarimi. Tehran: Ravan publications, (2006).
4. Crowe, Michael, Reedly, Jean. The applied couple therapy with systemic- behavioral procedure. Translation by Ashraf al sadatMousavi. MehrKaviyan publications, (2000).
5. Carlson, John, Denik Mayer, Dan. It is time for wives and husbands to live better. Translation by MehrdadFirouzbakht, Tehran, Danzheh publications, (2002) pp. 99-104.
6. Glasser, William. Glasser, Carlin. Eight lessons for happier marital life. Translation by MehrdadFirouzbakht, Tehran, Virayesh publications, (2007), pp.111-115.
7. Glasser, William. Glasser, Carlin. Theory of selection, novel psychology of personal freedom. Translation by MehrdadFirouzbakht, Tehran, RASA cultural services institution, (1998).
8. Honar-parvaran, Nazanin, The study of relationship between psychological and family factors in sexual satisfaction of the married women. Shiraz, Second congress for family pathology in Iran, Tehran, university of ShahidBeheshti, Family research Academy, (2006).
9. Fisher, T. D. & McNulty, J.K. Neuroticism and marital satisfaction. The mediating role played by the sexual relationship. Journal of Family psychology, (2008) pp. 225, 112, 122.
10. Shackelford, T. K. Cohabitation, Marriage and murder, woman-killing by male romantic partners, Aggressive behavior, (2001). pp. 27, 284-291.
11. Hunt, M. Sexual behavior in the seventies Chicago, play body press, (1974).
12. Morokoff, P. J. & Gilliland, R. Stress, Sexual functioning, and marital satisfaction, Journal of sex research, (1993). 30 (1). pp. 43-53.
13. Roughan, P. & Jenkins, A. A. systems developmental Approach to counseling couples with sexual problems, A.N. Z. Journal of Family Therapy, (1990). P. 2, 12, 139.

9/9/2012