

## **The Relationship between Family Function and Marital Satisfaction with Marital Disaffection of Married Teachers in Behshahr**

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### *Abstract*

The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between family function and marital satisfaction with marital disaffection of married couples (teachers) in Behshahr. The research method is descriptive and co-relational. The study sample group consisted of 250 married teachers in 2016, of which 150 of them were selected according to Morgan random sampling. The research instruments were the scale of marital boredom (CBM), couple satisfaction's Enricho questionnaire and McMaster Family Assessment Method (FAD). For data analysis, two independent and multivariate regression tests were calculated with SPSS 20 software in both descriptive and inferential levels using Pearson correlation coefficient. The results showed that there was a positive and direct relation between family functions and marital boredom parameters. There was a negative and reverse relation between couple's satisfaction and marital disaffection. There were significant differences in the marital disaffection in male and female married teachers. Family functions and marital satisfaction of the couple have not been able to predict marital disaffection. So it can be concluded as family function and marital satisfactions of couples have an important role in the development of boredom, so effective treatment (family and couple therapy) can be effective in reducing this problem of marriage.

**Keywords:** Marriage, Family functions, Marital satisfaction, Marital disaffection.

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## 1. Introduction

Marriage is considered as the most exciting and stressful event for the life of every human being. Having a satisfied life is one of the prerequisites for achieving peace and human evolution (Amanelahi *et al.*, 2013, p 68). The rising divorce rate, conflicts and disturbance of spousal relationship have increased the researcher's motivation for identifying the factors and solutions that deal with the collapse of the relationship. One of the disturbance and psychological abnormalities which are fading out the love between couples over the period, and sometimes this completely fades out, causing mental health problems, long term cold and indifferent relationships (emotional divorce) and in the last provides official divorce, is marital disaffection (Pines, 2007). The concept of marital disaffection is not a static concept and most couples in their marriage, experience minor changes on the level of satisfaction and as a result they always have to adjust themselves with different and physically variant, social and psychological aspects of their environments (Cumming, & Oreilly, 1997, quoted from Kamali and Sedaghatifard, 2016: 50). Disaffection consists of physical, psychological and emotional weakness which results from a lack of balance between realities and expectations. Disaffection with symptoms like physical weakness follows conditions including tiredness, boredom, fatigue, chronic headaches, abdominal pain, anorexia and bulimia. Emotional weakness is followed by signs of feeling resentment, lack of willing to solve problems, despair, sadness, feelings of emptiness, meaninglessness, depression, feelings of loneliness, feeling unmotivated, failure, futility of emotional disturbance and even suicide motivation (Adibrad, 2007). Mental weakness is displayed in the form of reduced self-esteem, negative feelings, feelings of despair frustration toward his spouse, frustration about himself and lack of self-interest (Pines, 2004). Each of these signs and symptoms to some extent, have an important role in reducing family function and in other words they impairs family functions (Goodarzi, 2014, p.148). Family expert studies show that nowadays the prevalence of marital disaffection has increased. So that 0.50 percent of couples in their marriage is faced with disaffection (Ebadatpour *et al.*, 2014). When couples discover that despite their efforts, their relationship doesn't give sense of meaning to their life, isn't going to, disaffection occurs. When couples are away from love and infatuation, every despondent event is enough to justify negative labeling to his partner. If a woman, even once, does not meet her husband's expected love would be unkind. One of the risk factors for female sexual disaffection is dissatisfaction about their sex life in marital relationships (Komaei & Sdaghati, 2016, p. 50).

Marital disaffection is of traumatic phenomena which have close relation with marital satisfaction, lack or loss of their marital satisfaction feeling could create incentives for their decision to get divorced, which everybody knows about its deadly adverse effects (Klein & David, 2008).

Marital satisfaction in couples who have a higher level of satisfaction and intimacy show that may be they are more capable in dealing with problems and changes, so they will experience a higher marital satisfaction (Patrick *et al.*, 2007). Ellis (2000) suggests that the newly married couples have less to think about terminating their legendary love, and it happens exactly at the time of disaffection. The disaffection of love is a gradual process and rarely occurs suddenly. In fact, intimacy and love gradually fade, a feeling of general fatigue will come along it which the most severe form of it is performance reduction and in other words dysfunction and ultimately the collapse of family relationships (Pines, 2007; Goodarzi 2014:147). His study of divorcing couples showed that failure to reach a solution for married life has a significant relation with anarchist family functioning and remiss couples and also many studies have raised family's functions in the physical and mental health of family members (Miller *et al.*, 2000).

In the field of family functioning, according to the fact that family is the emotional and social unit is the focus of growth and healing, transformation, pathology members and the relationships among them, and also is the binding factor, social balance requisite and the main foundation which has a special function in each generation and this function is particularly important in the interaction models and effectiveness criteria of family members is not about lack of stress, conflict and problem, but the criteria is about the extent of ability in meeting the duties and functions. So inefficiency and damage to family tasks and functions can lead to damage in couples (Ebadatpour *et al.*, 2014).

Family's health and well-being depends on the continuation of the relationship between the couple and the marital relationship. Every time due to marital problems, many families are in danger of disorganization and disintegration and as the house is where life begins, lack of having favorable relations will have devastating effects on children. If the family structure factors are impaired, they will cause problems in family functioning and adversely affect the child's personality. So satisfaction of partners of marital relations is considered as family satisfaction and overall satisfaction with life (Pantea, 2011). Everyone knows that family is the heaven of peace and a place to flourish talents. Individuals within the family are affected as well as affecting others. Of course, the prosperity of the family is affected by the inner performance of family.

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Following various explanations in order to identify the causes of mental disorders, family therapists have examined the dynamics of interaction within the family and they believe that the occurred mental problems due to any reason should be investigated in a person's network of relationships and compromises he does (Franklin & Haferbray, 2000).

Several studies show that the prevalence of marital disaffection has increased. An important factor in the development of marital disaffection is family functions and the consent of the spouses. Inefficiency and stress in the family can cause many behavioral and psychological problems in couples. Mazidi (2015) about the relationship between family functions and self-control with marital disaffection, showed that family functions with marital disaffection has a negative and significant relationship but there was no significant relation between family function and self-control. Marital disaffection, fatigue, emotional and psychological weakness have negative and significant relationship with family functions and vice versa. There is a significant negative relationship between self-control and marital disaffection with marriage and its components and vice versa. Also self-control and family function's components (roles) are able to predict marital disaffection. Ebadatpour (2014) results the mediating role of family functions for individual tolerance and spiritual beliefs and marital disaffection showed that family function, individual tolerance and spiritual beliefs which have significant negative impact on the reduction of marital disaffection. The result of path analysis showed that family function, individual tolerance and spiritual beliefs will predict marital disaffection and the model fits well. Goudarzi (2014), in his study the effectiveness of marital therapy with improving family function and reducing marital disaffection approach, showed that marital therapy with the Satir Communicative Approach in comparison with control group has led to an improvement in marital function. Also marital therapy with The Satir Communicative Approach has decreased marital disaffection. Naderi and Azadmanesh (2013) in their study about comparison of marital disaffection, family function and intimacy of male and female employees, showed that there are significant differences in marital intimacy and disaffection between male and female employees, but there wasn't a significant difference between male and female employees in family function. Sudani, Dehghani and Dehghanzadeh (2013), in effectiveness of teaching transactional analysis (TA) on marital disaffection and quality of marital life, showed that there is a significant difference between experimental and control groups in terms of marital disaffection and quality of marital life; these results continued to be sustainably significant in follow-up period. Oladi (2012), in a study about effectiveness of group

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therapy based on reality therapy in order to reduce disaffection and increase marital satisfaction of married women, shows that there is a significant negative relationship between the overall marital satisfaction with marital disaffection, physical distraction, mental distraction, emotional distraction, need for freedom and entertainment. Sudani, Shahriyari and Shfiabadi (2010) in a study about effectiveness of family therapy teaching as a group for reducing marital conflict, showed that these trainings significantly reduced marital conflicts in post-test and follow up. Abbasian (2009) in a study entitled effectiveness of Milan family therapy system, in group on female marital conflict, showed that these trainings reduced marital conflicts. Navidi (2006) in another research, about investigation of marital disaffection in male and female employees and its relationship with organizational atmosphere in workplace, showed that there was a significant difference between men and female according to marital disaffection. In Bahari and Saberi's study (2005) there are significant differences between functions of normal couples and those who are getting divorced; this means that family performance of couples who are divorcing couples is lower than normal. Tsapelas, Aron. &Orbuch (2016) investigated the relation between current marital disaffection and future marital disaffection. 123 couples participated in this study; the results showed that the current marital disaffection is a predicting factor of future marital satisfaction and current disaffection leads to the loss of intimacy and emotional separation of couples. Niles (2015) suggested that additional responsibilities, conflicting demands and family obligations are as factors contributing to the escalation of marital disaffection. The studies of Naderi *et al.*, (2013) noted that transactional analysis training will have a positive effect on family relationships, emotional and social adjustment. Parcover *et al.*, (2012) in a study conducted to assess the effectiveness of structural family therapy concluded that educating families according to this approach increased their marital satisfaction and reduced the conflicts. Gameiro *et al.*, (2011) showed that there is a significant relationship between positive and marital satisfaction and quality of life and an increase in marital satisfaction has increased quality of life in all its dimensions. Mc Lendon *et al.*, (2009) in a study about family-centered structure therapy showed that the average in the experimental group compared with the control group was significantly higher. In other words training with Structural Family Therapy has increased marital satisfaction. Heejeong *et al.*, (2008) showed that marital discord is a risky factor for physical and mental health in marriage which would result in dysfunctional family. Goldenberg (2008) stated that structural family therapy has a significant effect on reducing marital satisfaction. Hansson & Bland (2006) communication and conflict resolution skills were taught to

couples who were having a difficult time in interactions and were dissatisfied with their marital lives. The results showed these trainings could improve relations between couples and the ability to cope with problems and mental health.

With the disintegration of the couple or family foundations, community foundations will collapse gradually as well, because the family as an institution is very important in child rearing practice and if the children are not properly trained, as a result the society will be deteriorated and will decline. As a result, it is necessary to investigate carefully the increase of the quality of communication and marital satisfaction and family. Because prevention is better treatment or, in other words, prevention is easier than remedy. So in this research, among the factors having an important role in conflict and marital disaffection, we can refer to the role of family function and marital satisfaction. Present study is going to answer the following hypothesis:

1. There is a relation between family function and physical marital disaffection of married teachers.
2. There is a relation between family function and emotional marital disaffection of married teachers.
3. There is a relation between family function and psychological marital disaffection of married teachers.
4. There is a relation between marital satisfaction and physical marital disaffection of married teachers couples.
5. There is a relation between marital satisfaction and emotional marital disaffection of married teachers.
6. There is a relation between marital satisfaction and psychological marital disaffection
7. There is a significant difference between male and female married teachers marital disaffection.
8. Family function and marital satisfaction of spouses can predict marital disaffection.

## **2. Methodology**

The aim of the present study is categorized in applied research and in terms of type, is located in (co-relational) descriptive research study (correlation).

The study group consisted of 250 married teachers in the year 2016, of which 150 of them were selected by simple random sampling according to Morgan Table. Data collection tools include:

1. Marital disaffection measure (CBM): This questionnaire was compiled by Pines in 1996. It has 21 questions and is measured according to the Likert 7 point from never to ever. The questionnaire consists of three main components of physical fatigue (e.g. tiredness, lethargy and sleep disorders) emotional weakness (feelings of depression, hopelessness, in entrapment) and psychological weakness (e.g., feelings of worthlessness, frustration and anger to his wife). All of them are answered on a seven-point scale. Level 1 indicates a lack of experience about the mentioned phrase and the target phrase is 7 which represent much experience. Pines (2003) tested the reliability value in three periods of one, two and four months, 89/0, 76/0 and 66/0 respectively. Also the internal consistency was calculated between 91/0 to 93/0. Navidi (2006) quotes Adib Rad (2007) calculated Cronbach's alpha test to 86/0 as well.

2. McMaster's family measurement methods of (FAD): This tool was developed by Epstein and Baldwin and Bishop (1950). It has 60 questions and measures six dimensions of family functions that include: 1. problem-solving, 2. communications, 3. roles, 4. emotional reactions, 5. emotional involvement, 6. behavior's controls and a general scale. Using these keys, questions will be given 1 to 4 scores. 1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = disagree, 4= strongly disagree. The question (or words) that describes unhealthy functions, questions 1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 13, 14, 15, 17, 19, 21, 22, 23, 25, 28, 31, 33, 34, 35, 37, 39, 41, 42, 44, 45, 47, 48, 51, 52, 53, 54, 58 scores is reversed. For scale (FAD) the cut point is 24. It makes possible to distinguish between clinical and non-clinical population. This means that a higher score above that score needs to be intervened. The validity of the questionnaire obtained from 72.0 to 92.0 and its concurrent validity and forecast (with divorce components) is obtained higher (86.0 and 87.0 (Sanaee, 2002). Gholamzadeh 's (2010) questionnaire, the reliability coefficients of family performance measurement was calculated using Cronbach's alpha and split-half, for total scale was 94.0 and 94.0, for problem solving was 84.0 and 81.0, for communicating was 75.0 and 75.0, 53.0 and 62.0 for roles, 71.0 and 71.0 for emotional support, 79.0 and 78.0 for affective involvement and behavior control 0.82 and 0.85 respectively.

3. Enrich Couples Satisfaction Questionnaire: Fowers and Olson (1989) used the questionnaire to assess marital satisfaction and they believe that the scale of the changes that occur in families is critical. Fowers and Olson (1989) using random sampling in a 5039 national survey showed that couples using this questionnaire can be carefully between 85-95 .0 happy and unhappy couples. This scale consists of four 35 subscales which can be used as a research for marital satisfaction, communication, conflict resolution and ideal distortion. Enrich measuring scale is a general measuring

of marital relations, idealistic distortion, marital satisfaction, personality issues, communication, conflict resolution, financial management, leisure activities, sex, parenting, family and friends, egalitarian roles of women and man, religious points of view, association couples and marital solidarity and marital changes. The questionnaire for each question has five options; "fully agree", "agree", "neither agree nor disagree" and "disagree", scoring 1 to 5 respectively. Questions 3 5-6-7-10-13-14-18-19-21-22-23-26-27-28-29-33 and 34 are reversely rated. In other words, rating 1 and 5 score from totally agree to totally disagree. This questionnaire was conducted on 25,501 married couple by David Olson and Amy Olson Enrich in 2000. Alpha coefficients for subscales of marital satisfaction questionnaire, communication, conflict resolution and ideal distortion are 0.86, 0.80, 0.84, 0.83, and test-retest reliability for each subscale test questionnaire are 0.86, 0.81, 0.90 and 0.91. In Asoode alpha questionnaire (2011) with 365 couples (730 individuals) was 0.68 (by eliminating question 24 alpha is 0.78), 0.78, 0.62 and 0.77 respectively. To analyze the data in descriptive statistics of mean, frequency, standard deviation, and charts and tables in inferential statistics to test the hypotheses using the software SPSS 20, the Pearson correlation coefficient and T test (independent) and stepwise multiple regression will be used.

### 3. Findings

**Table1. Descriptive indicators related to research variables**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
family function	150	2.00	3.00	2.3133	.46540
marital satisfaction	150	2.00	5.00	3.1933	.50096
physical marital disaffection	150	2.00	6.00	3.7067	1.00700
emotional marital disaffection	150	2.00	6.00	3.8867	1.13242
Psychological marital disaffection	150	1.00	6.00	3.4333	1.41619

In Table 1, the mean and standard deviations for the variables of family function are 2.3 and 0.46 respectively and for marital satisfaction are 3.19, 0.50 and physical subscales of marital boredom are 1, 3.70, and emotional are 3.88, 1.13 and mental are 3.43, 1.41.

To test the hypothesis of this study based on the existence of a relation between family function and marital satisfaction and couples with marital disaffection components (physical, emotional and mental) in married teachers, we used the Pearson correlation coefficient, and the results are shown in the table below.



**Table 2. Correlation matrix of variable**

		family function	marital satisfaction	physical marital disaffection	emotional marital disaffection	Psychological marital disaffection
family function	Pearson Correlation	1	-.319**	.255**	.246**	.261**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.002	.002	.001
	N	150	150	150	150	150
marital satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	-.319**	1	-.299**	-.387**	-.403**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	150	150	150	150	150
physical marital disaffection	Pearson Correlation	.255**	-.299**	1	.706**	.678**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.000		.000	.000
	N	150	150	150	150	150
emotional marital disaffection	Pearson Correlation	.246**	-.387**	.706**	1	.755**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.000	.000		.000
	N	150	150	150	150	150
Psychological marital disaffection	Pearson Correlation	.261**	-.403**	.678**	.755**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.000	.000	.000	
	N	150	150	150	150	150

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01

According to above table, correlation matrix between family function and Physical marital disaffection equals .255, emotional .246 and mental .261. And there is a significant level (sig) that is less than 0.01. So with 0.99 reliability, there is a direct relationship between family function and marital disaffection components. Also correlation between marital satisfaction and physical marital disaffection is -.299, for emotional and mental are -.387 and -.403 respectively and a significant level (sig) of 0.000 less than 0.01 is seen, then with .99 reliability, there is a negative and reverse relation between marital satisfaction and marital disaffection components.

By using t Student test, male and female married teachers marital disaffection were compared which results are in the table below.

**Table 3: Test (t) for comparing male and female married teachers' marital disaffection**

gender				Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality		
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
male	69	3.46	1.051	.019	.890	-2.127	148	.035
female	81	3.83	1.10					
marital disaffection	Equal variances assumed							
	Equal variances not assumed					-2.135	146.042	.034

According to the table above, the  $t$  (2.127) is calculated with 148 degrees of freedom and significance of (0.035) is obtained. Thus, we conclude that there was a significant difference ( $p < 0.05$ ) between male and female married teachers according to marital disaffection.

**Table 4. Multiple correlation coefficient of predictor variables and marital disaffection in married teachers**

Model	R	R Square	F	Sig	$\beta$	t	Sig
1	.446a	.199	36.787	.000 <sup>a</sup>	446.	6.065	000
2	.481 <sup>b</sup>	.231	22.131		190	2.487	000

a. Predictors: (Constant), marital satisfaction

b. Predictors: (Constant), marital satisfaction, family function

As you can see in the above table, a marital disaffection prediction regression according to marital satisfaction of spouses and family function were significant variables ( $0.000 p <$  and  $F=36.78$  and  $F = 22.13$ ). So it can be concluded that there was a significant relationship between the family functions and marital satisfaction with marital disaffection.

#### 4. Discussion and conclusion

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between family function and marital satisfaction with marital disaffection of married teachers in Behshahr, leading to eight hypotheses. The results showed there is a direct and positive relationship between family function and marital disaffection components (physical, emotional and mental); which has no direct relation with Mazidi (2014), Ebadatpour *et al.*, (2014), Goudarzi (2014), Sudani, Shahriari and Shafiabadi (2010) Abbasian (2009), Bahari and Saberi (2005), Parcover, Mettrick., Parcover & Griffin-Smith (2011), Mac Landon, Landon Mac and Peter (2009), Hee Jung *et al.*, (2008), and Goldenberg (2008) that suggest that structural family therapy has a significant effect on reducing marital dissatisfaction and also has positive and significant changes in family functioning and has long-term effects. Family function is not a place without stress, conflict and problem. But the function is the ability to meet the tasks and functions of family. So inefficiency and family suffering in doing their duties can lead to damages in couples (Ebadatpour *et al.*, 2014). Family therapists often suggest that poor communication within the family causes severe family problems, failure to solve

the problems and the lack of intimacy (Patterson and Finn, 2009). To explain these findings we can say that according to the importance of family function in helping members to cope with various difficulties including the stressful triggers and lowering the quality of marital life, dysfunctional family; Adjustment and marital satisfaction will be impaired and gradually stressful tension will lead to weakness, erosion and frustration relations between spouses. The reasons for this disruption can be cultural differences in couple, working wives) that could provide marital disaffection with marriage.

The results also showed that there was a negative relationship between marital satisfaction of couples with marital disaffection components (physical, emotional and mental) which are correlated with Oladi (2012), Gamerio *et al.*, (2011) and Hanson and Lenbelnd (2006). Low marital satisfaction can lead to frustration and disgust and degrade the quality of married life. To explain these findings, we can say that couples who have a higher marital satisfaction maybe they are more capable in dealing with problems and changes related to their relationship and thus will not suffer from boredom and marital conflict and in situations that have problems in their intimate relationships and are having difficulty, they will be able to find the best solution for their problem. According to the results, there was a difference between male and female married teachers in terms of marital disaffection which was correlated with the results of Naderi and Azadmanesh (2013) and Navidi (2006). To explain these findings, we can say that today we have increasing employment of women than in the past which these change in marital relationship roles can also affect various aspects of life and children and it can be regarded as an effective element in some marital disaffection. In the present study, marital disaffection in women is higher. Nowadays women have more responsibilities; including job responsibilities, husband, children, household chores and sometimes taking care of parents. If women do not have the power and ability to handle these responsibilities, their physical and mental health will also deteriorated. In this case, if the husband does not have a supporting, these large responsibilities will have a deep psychological damage for the woman as well. One of the consequences will be marital disaffection.

According to the results, family function and marital satisfaction can predict marital disaffection which has correlation with Ebadatpour (2014) Nezhadnaderi, Darekordia and Divsalar (2013) and Tesaplas, Aaron and Orbach (2016) and Niels (2015). To explain these findings, we can say, family function and marital satisfaction of married teachers have a very important role in the incidence of marital disaffection. Family is a social and emotional unit is the focus of growth and healing,

transformation, pathology of members and interrelationships. If its members especially the couple could not have a close and healthy relationship with each other in the family environment, all these factors can cause marital discord during a short period of time, and little by little will cause marital disaffection. So the two factors of family function and marital satisfaction will predict marital disaffection. Of the limitations of this study we can point to: lack of self-report questionnaires appropriate to the Iranian life and researcher had to use international self-report related to any of the three variables. And obviously different people in different cultures have different sexual education and sexual beliefs; According to this fact, controlling the cultural factors and religious upbringing of the sample people are considered as a confounding variable in this study. According to The results of this study, we suggest that through organizing training workshops for married teachers by the people involved in the educational system, while they clarify family function's role in marital disaffection, they will be able to take some steps in solving the marital problems. Also we can hold educational and therapeutic programs in counseling center for couples and families to improve family function and while strengthening family function, many marital conflicts leading to marital disaffection, dissatisfaction with marriage, divorce, infidelity and marital relations will be avoided and thereby we can strengthen marriage and family solidarity action. Also, marriage and family therapist by holding meetings of specialized consultants are able to provide solutions to strengthen family function and apply them for clients with a weak function.

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