

Original research

Comparison of narcissism, alienation and attachment in women applying for divorce and normalOmmolbanin Sileimani^{*1}**Abstract**

Introduction: The family is the most important unit of society. For this reason, marriage provides the primary structure for creating family relationships and nurturing the future generation, it is described as the most important and fundamental human relationship. The aim of the current research was to compare narcissism, alienation and attachment in women seeking divorce and normal women.

Research method: The research method was descriptive and comparative in terms of practical objectives and in terms of data collection method. The statistical population of the research was made up of all women applying for divorce and ordinary women of Qom city, from which 100 people were selected using the purposeful sampling method. Information was collected using narcissism questionnaires and thematic relationships. Data were analyzed using multivariate analysis of variance test.

Findings: The results of multivariate analysis of variance showed that there is a significant difference between narcissism, alienation and attachment in women seeking divorce and normal women.

Conclusion: According to the identification of predicting factors of divorce and marital incompatibility, teaching the issues presented in this research to couples applying for divorce can be an effective step in preventing the formation of unsuccessful marriages and, as a result, dysfunctional families and social damage. Also, teaching communication skills to young people in order to prevent them from falling into the trap of emotional and sexual dependencies during dating before marriage is considered as one of the essential factors.

Keywords: alienation, attachment, divorce applicant, family, incompatibility, narcissism

Citation: Soleimani O. Comparison of narcissism, alienation and attachment in women applying for divorce and normal, Family and health, 1403; 14(3): 107-117

¹ (**Corresponding author**), (Corresponding author), Master of Positive Psychology, Qom Branch, Islamic Azad University, Qom, Iran, soleymani54.81@gmail.com tell: 09190251682



Introduction:

Family is the most important institution of society and shaper of talents and personality of a person (1). In the family system, factors such as desirability, satisfaction, quality and optimal functioning of the family are very effective factors that cause the prosperity, growth and progress of family members (2). The way couples agree on their differences and adapt themselves to each other's needs to create complementary roles can predict the stability of married life and its flexibility against life conditions (3).

One of the topics that has occupied the minds of most thinkers and even the public in recent years is the issue of divorce. Currently, this phenomenon in Iran is a social problem and has caused many problems for individuals and families facing divorce. About 20% of divorces are due to couples not knowing each other properly. Rapid cultural, social, and technological and communication developments, despite many benefits, have created many problems for contemporary humans. The growing wave of emotional divorce, interpersonal conflicts, neuroses and psycho-social conflicts are undeniable realities of current human societies (4).

Women are one of the vulnerable groups of society that are often more affected by emotional divorce and environmental and social pressures caused by it (5). Meanwhile, divorce and parental conflicts are more important. Divorce and conflicts in the family environment cause many problems in its members. Disruption of emotional relationships and feelings of insecurity resulting from emotional divorce and marital conflicts can endanger personal security as well as couples' relationships and lead to divorce (6).

It seems that women applying for divorce and normal women are different in narcissism (7). Narcissistic personality disorder is in category B in DSM-5 and has a special diagnostic and therapeutic importance and has a high prevalence rate of 17% in the clinical population and between 0 and 6.2% in the general population (8). NPD is a pervasive pattern of hyperbole (in the world of fantasy or behavior), the need for admiration and lack of empathy that begins in early adulthood and appears in various fields (9). The DSM-5 conceptualization of this disorder in the alternative model includes dimensional traits that provide composite assessments of levels of functioning such as sense of identity, self-fluctuations, self-esteem regulation, and empathic capacity. The accompanying symptoms of this disorder, such as the feeling of great personal importance, mental preoccupation with fantasies of success, power, belief in being special, needing extreme praise, feeling entitled, exploitation in interpersonal relationships, lack of empathy, feelings of jealousy and selfish behaviors, undergo changes and with Decreasing satisfaction and quality of life increases the possibility of self-harm and suicide attempts (10).

Another variable that can be different between women applying for divorce and normal women is alienation (11). Alienation is a kind of mental illness that causes a person to place other qualities and states instead of his own reality (12). Alienated people shrug off responsibility and don't want to be in control of their own will. They try to escape from the freedom of thinking or not thinking, taking action or escaping from it, and they consider them as imposed matters (13). Alienation

causes unfavorable psychological responses to specific or various adversities, and people with this disorder are unable to try and quickly integrate their mental and emotional information when facing events and situations. These people also feel very weak in their interpersonal relationships (14).

In contemporary society, couples experience severe and widespread problems when establishing and maintaining a romantic relationship. In fact, the problem of marital satisfaction and lack of stability in marriage cause referrals for mental health care more than any other psychological category. Marital compatibility and stability in marriage reduces many psychological, emotional and social problems of families as well as in the whole society, and also improving the level of satisfaction and compatibility in marriage, followed by stability in marriage, brings peace of mind to the people of the society focus more on growth and excellence and social, cultural and economic services, and families will also benefit from this progress. The current research seeks to find an answer to the question of whether there is a difference between narcissism, alienation and attachment in women seeking divorce and normal women.

Research Method:

This research is a post-event research in terms of controlling the variables, because the relationships between the variables are not manipulated, in the sense that the researcher does not manipulate the studied variables personally, but examines them as they happened in the past. All the women who applied for divorce were normal in Qom city. 50 women applying for divorce were selected using the targeted sampling method; in explaining why purposive sampling was used, it can be said: instead of obtaining information from those who are easily available, sometimes it may be necessary to obtain information from certain individuals or groups. Avrim, that is, certain types of people who are able to provide the information we want, because they are the only people who can provide such information or they match some of the criteria developed by the researcher (15). Therefore, considering that in the present study, the researcher was looking for women seeking divorce and normal; therefore, purposive sampling was used. Also, the number of 50 normal women is also according to the law of minimum sample size in comparative causal research, which is mentioned as 15 people for each group; to increase the validity of the research, 50 people were selected. In this research, three standard questionnaires were used:

Narcissism: This questionnaire is a shortened version of the 40-item narcissistic personality questionnaire, which was created by Ames et al. This questionnaire has no subscale and evaluates narcissism based on a one-dimensional approach. NPI-16 consists of pairs of items that the respondent must choose one of. The test-retest reliability coefficients reported by the original creators of the test is 0.85 over 5 weeks. Convergent validity was performed by calculating the correlation coefficient between NPI-16 scores and the scores obtained from the indices of extraversion and openness to new experiences of the Big 5 personality scale (BFI). These coefficients were calculated for 0.32 and 0.41 for openness to new experiences. Mohammadzadeh (1388) tested this questionnaire in a cross-sectional field study, 342 students in 1387. The

correlation coefficient between NPI-16 narcissistic personality questionnaire scores and MCMI-II narcissism scale was 0.77 and significant. The retest reliability coefficient, the correlation coefficient in determining semi-reliability, and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient in measuring internal consistency were calculated as 0.84, 0.74, and 0.79, respectively (16).

Thematic relations questionnaire: In order to measure the scale of attachment and self-alienation in the present study, Bell's Thematic Relations Questionnaire was used. Bell et al.'s Thematic Relations Questionnaire (1985) is a part of Bell's 90-choice Thematic Relations and Realism Questionnaire. This questionnaire is standardized for both clinical and non-clinical population and has been used in many researches in the field of interpersonal relationships and in the diagnosis and prediction of psychological injuries. This questionnaire has 45 items that can be answered correctly and incorrectly, and provides an accurate and reliable assessment of subject relationships through four subscales, which are: alienation (13, 32, 33, 38, 39 and 44), insecure attachment (18, 19, 20, 22, 24, 27, 29, 31, 36, 41, 42 and 45), inter nasal itself (3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10) , 11, 12, 13, 20, 23, 26, 27, 28, 30, 32, 34, 36, 38, 39, 41, 43 and 44), social incompetence (21, 26, 27, 28, 30, 32 , 34, 36, 38, 39, 41, 43, 44, 1, 5, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 20). The way to answer the questionnaire is in this way, based on the provided guide, the subject chooses the right or wrong answer (1 and 0) for each of the questions, according to the key of the questionnaire, the correct option gets a score of one and for some other options, A wrong score is one, the sum of the scores of the questions related to each subscale determines the rejection score in each of them. Bell et al. (1985) reported about the reliability and validity of this questionnaire that this tool has a high degree of discriminant validity because it is capable of separating the clinical population, and also in terms of its high correlation with other tools for measuring psychological vulnerability, concurrent validity is possible. They have estimated acceptance for it. In another research, using this tool, borderline personality disorder was distinguished from other groups that included patients with mood disorders and schizophrenia in terms of destructive patterns of thematic relationships. A preliminary study of the validity and reliability of this questionnaire was done by Hadinejad et al. (35). They reported Cronbach's alpha coefficient for social incompetence, self-centeredness, insecure attachment, and alienation as 0.68, 0.74, 0.74, and 0.85, respectively. Also, the correlation between the revised 90-question list of symptoms (SCL-90-R) and the subscales of this questionnaire was between 0.31 and 0.68 (17).

Findings:

The mean and standard deviation of narcissism, alienation and attachment variables can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive indicators of subjects in narcissism

Variable	Normal		Divorce applicant	
	Average	Standard deviation	Average	Standard deviation
Narcissism	117/	1/68	14/7	2/25
alienation	2/36	0/721	5/12	0/71
interest	6/32	0/432	10/1	0/841

As can be seen, the variables of narcissism, alienation and attachment in the group of normal women are lower than the group of women seeking divorce.

Table 2. Smirnov-Kalmograph test to check the normality of the variables

Time and variable	group	Kolmogorov-Smirnov	Sig
Narcissism	Normal women	0/094	0/2
	Divorce seeking women	0/126	0/112
alienation	Normal women	0/178	0/097
	Divorce seeking women	0/135	0/064
interest	Normal women	0/14	0/2
	Divorce seeking women	0/096	0/2

The result of Table 2 shows that the significance level in all the research variables is greater than 0.05 that is, the variables have a normal distribution. Considering the nature of the research, the research hypothesis was tested using multivariate analysis of variance (Manova). But first, the assumptions underlying the use of this test are examined:

1. Homogeneity of covariance matrix:

The homogeneity of the covariance matrix was checked using M-box. This test showed that the assumption of homogeneity of covariance matrix is established (Box s M=126.45, F=2.53, df1=45, df2=31550, P=0.000).

2. Homogeneity of variance of groups

The homogeneity of variances was also checked using Levine's test, the results of which are shown in the following table:

Table 3. Summary of Levine's test to check the homogeneity of the variance of the groups in the components of the research variables

Variable	F	DF1	DF2	Significant level
Narcissism	1/94	1	98	0/167
alienation	2/33	1	98	0/129
interest	6/64	1	98	0/011

According to Table 3, the significance level of the F test in the "attachment" variable is less than 0.05; That is, the homogeneity of the variance of the groups is not established in this component, but due to the equality of the number of groups, this assumption can be ignored.

Table 4. Summary of Manova test to check the difference between two groups in research variables

Effects	Landai Wilkes	F	DF1	DF2	Significant level	Effect size
group	0/100	86/9	90	90	0/000	0/900

As the information in the above table shows, the Landay-Wilks index is significant at the level of 0.01. (Wilks Lambda = 0.100, F= 86.9, P= 0.000, 0.900). In other words, it can be claimed that there is a significant difference in at least one of the components of the "research variables" between the two groups (divorce applicant and normal women). Considering the significance of the group effect, in order to determine which of the components of the "research variables" the differences are related to, the Bonferroni one-variable test was used.

Table 5. One-way variance test after Manova to compare research components

Source change	Variable	Sum of squares	DF	Mean square	F	Significant level	Effect size
group	Narcissism	298/8	1	295/8	91/05	0/000	0/482
	Alienation	38/4	1	38/4	4/12	0/045	0/40
	Interest	630/01	1	630/01	33/3	0/000	0/254
error	Narcissism	318/4	98	3/24			
	Alienation	913/5	98	9/32			
	Interest	1850/9	98	18/8			
Total	Narcissism	25452	100				
	Alienation	23392	100				
	Interest	33141	100				

According to Table 5, there is a significant difference between the "narcissism, alienation and attachment" variables between the groups. As the information in Table 1 also shows, the average

of all the variables in the two groups are significantly different from each other; therefore, it can be claimed that the women of the two groups differ from each other in the variables (confirmation of the research hypothesis). The size of the effect also indicates that about 48.2% of the changes of "narcissism", 4% of "alienation", and 25.4% of the changes of research variables are influenced by "group".

Discussion and conclusion:

The result of the first sub-hypothesis test showed that narcissism has a direct effect on marital conflicts. The result is consistent with the results of researchers such as Shafiei et al. (18), Ebrahimifar et al. (19), Huang et al. (20), Escherin et al. In the current explanation, it can be said: narcissistic people feel ashamed because of their hidden expectations of being right, and they are less likely to express themselves and less want their needs to be revealed. They are less equipped to use overt self-enhancement strategies to support their fragile self-esteem; therefore, when their needs are not met, they tend to deny their legitimate expectations. Withdrawal from these expectations leads to a mixture of anger and outbursts of hostility depending on the situation (24).

Narcissists are described as emotionally unstable; because they oscillate between shame, depression and anger in response to disappointments and threats to their dignity. Since they are unable to use self-enhancement strategies, they rely on others to manage their dignity (25).

Emotional instability leads such people to use self-enhancement strategies to adjust their self-esteem in order to directly fill the grand secretary's imagination. Vulnerable narcissists, for example, often socially select those who are less talented and capable than them in order to fantasize about being their hero. Also, these people often turn to self-sacrifice and use self-harming behaviors or martyrdom to increase their dignity. In fact, Cooper (1988) emphasizes the self-harming aspects of narcissism and even suggests that using the term narcissist-self-harming is more appropriate (20).

It can also be said: these people usually avoid intimate relationships, and if they enter into a relationship with someone, they do not say anything about their needs and feelings to the other party, and they feel disappointed when they are not fulfilled, they never behave in such a way that their spouse supports them and guidance, they feel deprived but they don't say anything while they feel uncomfortable, they become indebted and angry, but they are unavailable people and distance themselves from others, especially emotional distance and avoid establishing intimate relationships, all these characteristics lead them to divorce gives (25). Narcissism is one of the most important predictors of dissatisfaction with life. The presence of unhealthy narcissism may differentiate between people who are satisfied with their lives and those who have little life satisfaction. Having pessimistic views of life, such as others will not empathize with us and understand us, or they will not meet our needs in time, our loved ones will not provide us emotional support, or the belief that others hurt us and hurt us. They tell lies or feel that I am a failed person and will fail in any field, all of them cause negative emotions to be called and lead to a decrease

in power against the person with life problems. Occurrence of such a situation will ultimately lead to a decrease in life satisfaction and, in turn, a person's dissatisfaction with life.

This personality trait causes bias in changing events, this bias in psychopathology appears in the form of distorted attitudes, false assumptions, unrealistic goals and expectations in spouses, and these misconceptions affect subsequent perceptions and evaluations. Since narcissism is unhealthy, inefficient, causes dissatisfaction in relationships and provides the basis for marital conflicts (23). It can also be said: a person with high narcissism believes that he is a head and neck higher than others, he has special rights for himself, and he has no obligation to observe the principles of mutual relations that guide normal social interactions. Of course, such people have the right and legitimacy that in case of indifference of the spouse or reaching the belief that the marriage is wrong, the person will be led towards divorce; and this is one of the logical reasons for them. The results of the present study showed that there is a traditional difference between alienation in divorce seeking women and normal women. In the present explanation, it can be said: the concept of self-alienation means a state in which a person does not flourish in his work, but negates himself and instead of feeling happiness and freely expanding his intellectual and physical abilities. ; He decays physically and wanders intellectually (26).

Limitation of research: Undoubtedly, every research faces limitations that are almost impossible to avoid. Among the limitations of the current research, it can be pointed out that the statistical population of the research is limited to a specific group of society, that is, couples applying for divorce, collecting information only through questionnaires, and some social, economic factors and variables, which were not available to the researcher.

Application of the research: In line with the limitations of the research, it is suggested that in the next researches, this topic should be investigated in other statistical communities and other data collection tools, such as interviews, should also be used. Also, teaching communication skills to young people in order to prevent them from falling into the trap of emotional and sexual dependencies during dating before marriage is one of the essential factors.

Ethical Considerations: In this research, ethical standards including obtaining informed consent, guaranteeing privacy and confidentiality were observed. Considering the conditions and time of completing the questionnaires while emphasizing on completing all the questions, the participants were free to withdraw from the research.

Conflict of interest: The authors hereby declare that this work is the result of an independent research and does not have any conflict of interest with other organizations and persons.

Acknowledgment: The authors of the article express their appreciation and thanks to all the participants in the research.

References:

1. Parker G., Durante K.M., Hill S.E., Haselton M.G. Why women choose divorce: An evolutionary perspective. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 2022; 43: 300-306.
2. Nurmawati N., Hasan F. The Relationship of Parents' Divorce and Self-Acceptance of Students of High School, Tegalwaru District, Karawang Regency Class 12, Force of 2022. *Budapest International Research and Critics Institute (BIRCI-Journal): Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2022; 5(2): 10434-10443.
3. Ramos A., Moors A.C., Dours N.O., Jonathan N. Surface and complex representation of diverse intimate relationships: insights from a content analysis of marriage and family therapy resources. *Sexuality & Culture*, 2022: 1-21.
4. Anghel T.C. Emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction. *Journal of Experiential Psychotherapy*, 2016; 19(3): 14-19.
5. Domar A.D., Clapp D., Slawsby E., Kessel B., Orav J., Freizinger M. The impact of group psychological interventions on distress in infertile women. *Health Psychology*, 2000; 19(6): 568.
6. He Q., Zhong M., Tong W., Lan J., Li X., Ju X., Fang X. Forgiveness, marital quality, and marital stability in the early years of Chinese marriage: An actor-partner interdependence mediation model. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 2018: 1520.
7. Lavner J.A., Lamkin J., Miller J.D., Campbell W.K., Karney, B.R. Narcissism and Newlywed Marriage: Partner Characteristics and Marital Trajectories. *Personal Disord*, 2017; 7(2): 169- 179.
8. Ronningstam E. Pathological narcissism and narcissistic personality disorder: Recent research and clinical implications. *Current Behavioral Neuroscience Reports*, 2016; 3(1): 34-42.
9. Caligor E., Clarkin J.F., Yeomans F.E. Chapter 10: Transference-focused psychotherapy for borderline and narcissistic personality disorders. *Contemporary Psychodynamic Psychotherapy*, 2019; 12(5):149-161.
10. Miller J.D., Widiger T.A., Campbell, W.K. Narcissistic personality disorder and the DSM-V. *J Abnorm Psychol*, 2020; 119(4): 640-649.
11. Mendes J.A., Maluschke J.S. Destructive Divorce in the Family Life Cycle and its Implications: Criticisms of Parental Alienation. *Psicologia: Teoria e Pesquisa*, 2018; 33: 1-8.
12. Vess M., Brooker R.J., Schlegel R.J., Hicks J.A. Daily mental lapses and the subjective experience of true self-alienation. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 2019; 78: 148-152.
13. Frouten Jahormi, Sohba. Investigating the relationship between life expectancy and feelings of alienation from the addicts' marital adjustment upon entering the camp. Master's thesis. Advisory group. Faculty of Education and Psychology. Islamic Azad University Marodasht branch, 2016
14. Tome G., Matos M., Camacho I., Simoes C. Alienation and Well-Being in Adolescents. *Social Isolation Is a Risk? Human Journals*, 2013; 5(1): 1-15.
15. Ranjbar H, Haghdoost AA, Salsali M, KHoshdel A, Soleimani MA, Bahrami N. sampling

- in qualitative research: A guide for beginning. *Annals of military and health sciences research* [Internet]. 2012; 10(3) (Serial number39):238-250.
16. Mohammadzade Nodehi Z. Comparison between love, forgiveness and differentiation in women with marital conflict and women without marital conflict. Payam Noor University, Mazandaran Province, Payam Noor Center, Ramsar , 2018.
 17. Einy S, narimani M, atadokht A, basharpoor S, Sadeghi Movahhed F. Effectiveness of cognitive –analytical therapy on ego-strength and object relations of persons with borderline personality disorder. *Studies in Medical Sciences* 2018; 29 (1): 1-11. <http://umj.umsu.ac.ir/article-1-4286-fa.html>.
 18. Ebrahimi Far, Mozhgan; Nameni, Ibrahim. Investigating the role of primary thematic relationships and emotional dyslexia in predicting marital intimacy. The second international conference on new researches in management, economics and humanities, 2014.
 19. Huang C.Y., Sirikantraporn S., Abaock N., Cobb J.M.T. Parental Attachment, Adult-Child Romantic Attachment, and Marital Satisfaction: An Examination of Cultural Context in Taiwanese and Thai Heterosexual Couples. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 2020; 17: 1-13.
 20. Scheeren P., De Apellaniz I, Wagner A. Marital Infidelity: The Experience of Men and Women. *Trends in Psychology*, 2018; 26(1): 371- 385
 21. Fincham F.D., May R.W. Infidelity in romantic relationships. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 2017; 13: 70–74
 22. Gabbard G.O. Two subtypes of narcissistic personality disorder. *Bulletin of the Menninger Clinic*, 2018; 53: 527-532
 23. Klein V., Reininger K.M., Briken P., Turner D. Sexual narcissism and its association with sexual and well-being outcomes. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 2020; 15(21): 557- 567.
 24. Levi E., Bachar E. The moderating role of narcissism on the relationship between posttraumatic growth and PTSD symptoms. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 2019; 13(8): 292- 297.
 25. SHafiee Z., Ghamarani A. The Role of Dark Personality and Flourishing in Couples Burn Out. *Quarterly Journal of Woman and Society*, 2017; 8(29): 77-94.
 26. Diehl A.B.R.P., Euzebio L.D.C., Mosmann C.P. Perfectionist personality and marital relationship: A systematic review. *Contextos Clínicos*, 2021; 14(1): 186-203.