

Original research

Causality model for predicting marital conflicts based on emotional maturity with the mediation of marital expectations in married women

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Abstract

Introduction: Emotional maturity and marital expectations are important factors that play a central role in married life. The present study aimed to determine the causality model for predicting marital conflicts based on emotional maturity with the mediation of marital expectations in married women.

Research method: The current research method was a descriptive correlation. The statistical population of the present study consisted of all the married women who referred to the neighborhood centers of Tehran in 2022, and 550 of them were selected by available sampling. The research tools included the Emotional Maturity Scale, Expectations of Marital Relation Questionnaires, and Marital Conflict Questionnaire. The structural equation modeling method was used to analyze the data.

Results: The results showed that marital conflicts are predicted based on emotional maturity in married women ($P=0.001$, $\beta=-0.258$). Marital conflicts are predicted based on marital expectations in married women ($P=0.009$, $\beta=0.118$). Marital conflicts are predicted based on emotional maturity with the mediation of marital expectations in married women ($P=0.042$, $\beta=-0.022$).

Conclusion: According to these results, it can be said that if the expectations of couples under the influence of emotional immaturity are unrealistic, they will face many problems in their married life. Therefore, in order to reduce marital conflicts, it is suggested to family counselors and therapists to focus on the level of emotional maturity and marital expectations of both couples.

Keywords: emotional maturity, marital conflicts, marital expectations, married women

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Introduction:

For a long time, marriage has been a turning point in the life of every human being; So that a successful marriage is an important foundation for the strength of the family and brings happiness to the couple. In the meantime, marriage provides a suitable platform for meeting psychological needs in the family. If it is not, it creates destructive and harmful effects such as depression, suicide, and nervous disorders in people. Happiness and satisfaction from marriage is one of the factors that can predict its stability and this component is at the heart of the quality of marital relations and how it is achieved (1). Realizing a healthy family requires that its members have mental health and good relationships with each other. Therefore, making family members and their relationships healthy will undoubtedly positively affect society. What can be seen is that most of the clients go to family counseling centers to receive services in the field of family and especially to resolve marital conflicts. The increasing number of divorces, which leads to the separation of spouses due to conflicts within the family and the inability to resolve these conflicts (2). During life together, sometimes different factors may combine, join hands, and lead to conflict by creating many problems in marital interactions. Conflict has a special place in psychology, related approaches, and theories and is defined as conflicting views, interests, and beliefs between couples (3). Conflict is inevitable and natural, and the conflict resolution process includes various paths that can lead to constructive or destructive results. Conflict occurs when one of the couples is satisfied with the marital relationship in intimate relationships and at the same time, the other party is dissatisfied. Diversity in the values and needs of couples, which is manifested by the expression of negative feelings, is called marital conflict, which can provide a situation for each couple to interpret and clarify expectations in interpersonal relationships in their lives together (4).

Emotional maturity is an important factor that plays a pivotal role in married life (5). Emotional maturity means the ability to respond to the environment in an appropriate way. Emotional maturity also includes awareness of the correct time and place for behavior and awareness of the time of action, according to the conditions and culture of the society in which a person lives (6). Emotional maturity is the ability to share constructively with reality and includes a process where people continuously strive to understand more emotional health both interpersonally and intraphysically (7). Couples therapy experts believe that one of the important factors for treating marital problems is the growth of emotional maturity of couples, which helps couples overcome marital conflicts (8). In this regard, Mirzaei Kandari et al. (9) showed that between family orientation and emotional maturity; between family orientation and marital conflict; between intimacy and marital conflict; and there is a significant relationship between emotional maturity and marital conflict. Gholami Qara Shiran et al (10). The results showed that emotional immaturity, emotional stability and social adjustment in men and women have an effect on the degree of marriage instability. Rani et al (11) showed that emotional instability, social incompatibility and dissociation and generally immature personality have the greatest contribution in predicting marital compatibility.

Emotional maturity means giving strength to married life and creating a deep, respectful and stable relationship. Emotional maturity in marital relationships can shape marital expectations of couples. Researches have shown that one of the predicting factors of "quality of life of couples" is "marital expectations" of couples (12). People often have expectations about their ideal marital relationship

in the future, which may be vague, unrealistic, incomplete, unexpressed or misperceived, and it negatively affects the relationship between spouses and includes family values and customs, past relationships, and past experiences. . The extent to which the expectations and desires of each couple are fulfilled can be the basis of satisfaction from married life, and the gap between reality and expectations from married life can provide a justification for spouses' satisfaction from marital relationship (13).

The degree of fulfillment of the expectations and desires of each couple can be the basis of satisfaction from married life, the gap between reality and expectations from married life can provide a justification for spouses' satisfaction from marital relationship. Many communication problems or spouses' dissatisfaction also originate from unrealistic and vague expectations or the gap between the expectations before the relationship and the existing reality (14). Marital expectations are the conscious and unconscious feelings, concepts, aspirations or ideals, illusions, desires, hopes and dreams that a person has about marriage. People who start their marriage with an overly idealistic image of their partner and relationship are more prone to experience acute disappointment than people who start their marriage with less idealism and idealism. When these ideal marital expectations are not met, marital dissatisfaction increases. People who have high and idealistic marital expectations experience high marital conflicts (15).

In this regard, the results of Khan Mohammadi et al.'s research (16) showed that there is a negative correlation between basic psychological needs and marital expectations with emotional divorce and a positive correlation between family functioning and emotional divorce. Marital expectations had an impact on emotional divorce both directly and indirectly through family functioning. Hosseini et al (17) showed that communication beliefs play a mediating role in the relationship between marital expectations and the quality of marital life in military families.

The most important foundations of family consolidation as well as the happiness of couples in the framework of joint life is the satisfaction of marital relations, and if we pay attention to the factors affecting the satisfaction of marital relations and conduct new researches in this field, it can be expected that with the increase of satisfaction Marriage can reduce many psychological, emotional and social problems of the family and the society as a whole, so understanding the factors that may increase the probability of satisfaction in marital relationships is of great importance for the social and emotional well-being of an individual (18). Considering the research gap and the importance of examining the effect of the mentioned variables in the form of structural equation modeling, the aim of the present study was to determine the best model for predicting marital conflicts based on emotional maturity with the mediation of marital expectations in married women.

Research Method:

The present research method was descriptive-correlational. The statistical population of the present study consisted of all the married women who referred to the neighborhood centers of Tehran in 1401, and 550 of them were selected by available sampling. The criterion for entering the study was at least two years of cohabitation and the criterion for exiting the study was incomplete answers to the questionnaires.

Emotional Maturity Scale: The emotional maturity scale was created by Singh and Bhargava in 1990 and includes 48 items that measure 5 components of emotional instability, emotional withdrawal, social incompatibility, personality collapse, and lack of independence in a 5-point Likert scale from very high to very high. = 5; Very much = 4, uncertain = 3, probably = 2 to never = 1. The minimum score in this tool is 48 and the maximum is 240. The validity of this scale against the external criteria, that is, the compatibility questionnaire for students, has been obtained at 0.64. Also, test-retest reliability was measured on students and the time interval between these two tests was 6 months, and the torque correlation between these two performances was reported as 0.75. Its validity is also mentioned as 0.77 (19). The internal consistency of this scale was determined by calculating the correlation coefficient between the total scores and the scores of each of the 5 subscales and for emotional instability 0.75, emotional return 0.63, social incompatibility 0.58, personality collapse 0.86 and lack of independence 0.42. 0 is obtained (19). In the research of Saadati Shamir et al. (20), Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.79 and validity of 0.73 were reported for this tool.

Marital Life Expectations Questionnaire: The Marital Life Expectations Questionnaire was created by Miller and Tedder in 2011 to measure the expectations of people in a marital relationship and it contains 40 items that include 9 components of self-disclosure, equal rights, love, confidence and security, commitment, quality of communication. , maintenance behaviors, conflict resolution and role playing are evaluated on a 5-point Likert scale from completely disagree to completely agree. The range of internal consistency coefficients for the nine subscales of the expectations questionnaire has been reported between 0.77 and 0.83 (21). In Mousavi and Deshiri's research (14), the similarity coefficients of self-expression subscales were 0.76, equality 0.68, affection 0.57, safe relationship 0.56, commitment 0.71, communication quality 0.80, maintenance behaviors 0.62, solution Conflict was calculated as 0.65 and role playing as 0.82. In the sample of the present study, the reliability coefficient using Cronbach's alpha method for the scale of expectations from married life was 0.88.

Marital Conflicts Questionnaire: The Marital Conflicts Questionnaire was created by Sanai Zakir in 2017, which includes 42 items that have 7 components in a 5-point Likert scale from never = 1, rarely = 2, sometimes = 3, mostly = 4 to always = 5 is evaluated. The maximum and minimum total scores of the questionnaire are 21 and 42, respectively. The reliability of this questionnaire was obtained using Cronbach's alpha method of 0.82. Cronbach's alpha for the whole questionnaire on a group of 32 people equals 0.76 and for its seven subscales, respectively: decrease in cooperation 0.80, decrease in sexual relations 0.78, increase in emotional reactions 0.73, increase in getting support from children 0.85, increasing personal relationship with one's relatives 0.84, decreasing relationship with spouse's relatives 0.79, separating financial affairs from each other has been reported 0.90 and Cronbach's alpha coefficient of this questionnaire has been calculated as 0.90 (22). In the sample of the present study, the reliability coefficient was calculated using Cronbach's alpha method for the scale of marital conflicts of 0.79.

The sampling method was such that 10 sera were selected from among the sera of the two and 4 districts of Tehran, and the questionnaires were completed online by the married women of the selected sera. SPSS and Amos software were used for data analysis and structural equation modeling.

Findings:

In the present study, 123 people (22.36%) were in the range of 20 to 30 years, 281 people (51.09%) were in the range of 31 to 40 years, 142 people (25.82%) were in the range of 41 to 50 years and 4 people (0.73%) did not mention their age. In terms of education, 259 people (47/09) had diploma and associate degrees, 191 people (34/73) had bachelor's degrees, and 97 people (17/64) had master's and doctorate degrees. 3 people (0.55%) did not mention their education.

Table 1. Mean, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis and tolerance coefficient and variance inflation of research variables

Research variables	Research variables	Standard deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis	Tolerance factor	Variance inflation
1. Emotional instability	20.75	3.68	-0.286	0.125	0.858	1.19
2. Emotional return	17.98	3.81	-0.390	1.19	0.780	1.39
3. Social incompatibility	20.03	4.28	1.78	1.75	0.790	1.32
4. Collapse of personality	16.27	5.08	1.03	1.67	0.789	1.43
5. Lack of independence	16.32	4.86	1.87	1.34	0.561	1.56
6. Marital expectations	49.78	19.78	1.82	1.54	0.652	1.49
7. Marital conflict	89.56	26.22	-0.341	-0.896	-	-

Table 1 shows that the distribution of single-variable data in the present study is normal, because the skewness and skewness indices of none of the research variables are outside the limit of ± 2 . Also, the evaluation of tolerance and variance inflation values shows that the assumption of co-linearity among predictor variables is maintained. Because the coefficient of tolerance and variance inflation of predictor variables were greater than 0.1 and smaller than 10 respectively.

Table 2. Correlation matrix of research variables

Research variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Emotional instability	-						
2. Emotional return	0.229**	--					
3. Social incompatibility	0.215**	0.405**	-				
4. Collapse of personality	0.243**	0.345**	0.227**	-			
5. Lack of independence	0.286**	0.468**	0.277**	0.469**	-		

6. Marital expectations	-	-	-	-	-	-
	0.354**	0.322**	0.389**	0.349**	0.238**	
7. Marital conflict	0.264**	0.243**	0.277**	0.280**	0.341**	-
						0.272**

Table 2 shows that there is a positive and significant correlation between the components of emotional instability, emotional return, social incompatibility, personality collapse and lack of independence with marital conflict, and between marital expectations and marital conflict at the level of 0.01.

Table 3. Appropriateness indices of the structural model of the research

Fitness indices	χ^2	χ^2/df	RMSEA	GFI	CFI	AGFI
Basic model	87.431	2.06	0.067	0.988	0.931	0.889
Acceptable values	P>0.05	3>	0.080>	0.090<	0.090<	0.080<

Table 3 shows that the obtained fit indices support the acceptable fit of the structural model of the research with the collected data.

Table 4. Total, direct and indirect path coefficients

Path	predictor variable-mediating variable/criterion	Unstandardized	Standard error	Standard regression coefficient	Probability value
Total	Emotional maturity - marital conflict	-0.396	0.060	-0.280	0.001
Direct	Emotional maturity - marital conflict	-0.396	0.060	-0.258	0.001
	Marital expectations - Marital conflict	0.138	0.041	0.118	0.009
	Emotional Maturity - Marital Expectations	-0.277	0.062	-0.189	0.001
Indirect	Emotional maturity - marital conflict	-.116	0.049	-0.022	0.042

Table 4 shows that marital conflicts are predicted based on emotional maturity in married women ($P=0.001$, $\beta=0.258$). Marital conflicts are predicted based on marital expectations in married women ($P=0.009$, $\beta=0.118$). Marital conflicts are predicted based on emotional maturity with the mediation of marital expectations in married women ($P=0.042$, $\beta=0.022$).

Discussion and conclusion:

The present study aimed to determine the best model for predicting marital conflicts based on emotional maturity with the mediation of marital expectations in married women. The results showed

that marital conflicts are predicted based on emotional maturity and marital expectations in married women. Marital conflicts are predicted based on emotional maturity with the mediation of marital expectations in married women. These results are with the results of the research of Mirzaei Kandari and colleagues (9); Gholami Qara Shiran and colleagues (10); Rani et al (11). Mohammadi et al (16); Hosseini et al. (17) were consistent.

In explaining these findings, it can be said that emotional maturity is a growth or a leap through which people are expected to be able to control their emotions, perceive and recognize them, and act accordingly. A person who has reached full emotional development can communicate correctly with others in social life and also finds the ability to accept responsibility for himself and others and is successful in interacting with others (23). Various protective mechanisms have been proposed for how to increase marital satisfaction of individuals through emotional maturity. Most of these mechanisms are summarized in five categories, which are: increasing healthy communication behaviors, increasing awareness of one's own and spouse's feelings, increasing the ability to understand the other party, increasing social support, and improving sexual relations (24). Today, it is believed that all human beings have a basic need for intimate relationships and emotional maturity is one of the necessary and important characteristics of marital relationships and one of the indicators of a successful marriage (25).

Emotionally mature couples are in control of their emotions. Emotions do not provoke them and they express their emotions at the right time and in the right way (9). On the other hand, couples who have low emotional maturity do not have realistic expectations from each other and cannot react appropriately to disturbed situations and put themselves in the place of the other party and are unable to understand their spouse's feelings and emotions and develop empathy with He is incapable. Therefore, the differences in their joint life have increased over time and the quality of their marriage has decreased (26).

Real and consistent expectations of a couple's marriage are an important factor in the success of their marriage, and on the contrary, unrealistic and ideal expectations can cause serious problems and injuries (27). Azupadi (28) believes that marital expectations are conscious and unconscious feelings, concepts, aspirations or ideals, illusions, desires, hopes, and dreams that a person has about marriage. People who begin their marriage with an extreme ideal image of their partner and relationship are more prone to experience acute disillusionment. Realistic expectations and flexibility are traits that make compromise and getting along with each other possible (15). On the other hand, unrealistic expectations from marriage cause a person's emotional expression to drop and emotional withdrawal from his life partner (29). Expectations can serve two different functions to help people evaluate their marriage. First, for marriage to be compared, expectations can be helpful as an ideal or counter-reality. How people evaluate the outcome is determined by comparing what is now with what could have been. Second, expectations can serve as goal constructs, helping or as an end state that people actively strive to achieve. Expectation fulfillment occurs in one of these two ways: behavioral and perceptual. In the behavioral method, people's expectations lead to action (reaction) in a way that fulfills expectations (30); therefore, when people have high marital expectations, using this method, they take actions to fulfill these expectations. Also, in the perceptual method, a person's expectations make him interpret events according to his expectations. When the performance of expectations for

a person is considered as the goal structure, people with high expectations will experience a positive marriage, which makes them show more effort to fulfill their expectations. When each couple considers the marital expectations of the other party and fulfills them, it makes the existing situation of the person in the marital relationship follow his expectations, which leads to more marital satisfaction (13).

In general, it can be said that marital expectations include expectations such as the expectation of mutual understanding between the spouses, the expectation of help in solving the problems of married life, the expectation of reasonable behavior from the spouse, etc. If the couple's expectations are unrealistic under the influence of emotional immaturity, for example, they expect that the other party will fill all their gaps, they will face many problems in their married life, and on the other hand, if the couple's expectations are realistic, for example, they expect that in life with face problems and help each other to solve them, they face fewer problems in married life, in fact, one of the factors of success in marriage is having effective marital expectations, and these expectations are formed over time and under the influence of society's accepted values and expectations, but They may vary from person to person.

Research limitations: Every research has its limitations, and this research is no exception. Although the use of the structural equation modeling approach provides the ability to obtain causal inferences; in this regard, caution should be observed. Another thing is that the sampling method was available and therefore caution should be taken in generalizing the results. It is suggested that this research be repeated in other societies using the random sampling method in men and women. Comparing the findings of this research with other groups and social classes leads to a better understanding of the studied phenomena and leads to better conclusions in the field of marital satisfaction.

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Ethical Considerations: The ethical considerations of this research were issues such as obtaining moral consent from the participants and providing assurance to the participants regarding the observance of the principle of secrecy and confidentiality of their information and using them solely for research.

Contribution of the authors: Sara Kaklian wrote and collected the data, and Maryam Mashaikh, Mehdi Dawai and Ali Akbar Khosravi Babadi were responsible for reviewing the data and revising and correcting the work.

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