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Predicting marital satisfaction based on elements of differentiation and inefficient negative reactions in mothers of mentally retarded children

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Abstract

Introduction: The birth and presence of mentally retarded children per family can be a challenging and undesirable event. Probably it will pursue stress, frustration, feelings of sadness and desperation. Thus it will affect different aspects of parental marital satisfaction. The aim of this study is predicting marital satisfaction based on elements of differentiation and inefficient negative reactions in mothers of mentally retarded children.

Methods: The study considering objective is fundamental and descriptive in terms of data collection and that it was done within the framework of a predicting correlation. The population of this study, is all mothers with mentally retarded children studying in special schools of Abadan in the academic year of 95-96. 90 people were randomly selected from the population. After the elimination of inadequate cases, sample size was reduced to 75 people. Enrich marital satisfaction questionnaire, inefficient reactions and differentiation was used to gather data.

Results: Based on the research findings, inefficeint reactions and among the elements of differentiation, I Position were the best predictors of marital satisfaction.

Conclusion: The results of the study, believes that early relationships in the family environment leads to high or low levels of differentiation and this early experience can directly affect on couples interpersonal relationships in adulthood.

Keywords: Marital Satisfaction, Differentiation, Inefficient Reactions

Introduction

Marriage and marital relationship is the source of protection, intimacy and pleasure, and leads to cooperation, sympathy, unity, interest and responsiblity to family. (Batt, Nic Gabhainn, Falvey, 2005). Realization of marriage goals after establishing marriage relationship, causes satisfaction and happiness feeling and contrary to this, it leads to marriage conflict and finally disatisfaction from marriage. Marriage can be one of the most important factors in mental health at community, that if it faces trouble, mental health will not be achieved and its negative and persistent effects like depression, anxiety and other mental disorders will be the results of this dimarital satisfaction, respectively (Olson & Defrain, 2006). Mostly, married people are at high level of marital satisfaction at the beginning of marriage, but in addition to gradual reduction that happens to satisfaction of marriage by time, also serious conflicts occure at same early weeks and months of marriage that if they isnot solved they can threaten satisfaction and stability of marital relationship (Markman & Floyd, 2005).

One of the most important factors that affects on family survival and growth, is healthy relation and understanding among parts specially husband and wife. Marriage satisfaction is the infrastructure of good family performance, facilitation of parental role that causes economic growth and more satisfaction from life. On the other hand marriage disatisfaction at wife and husband relations in addition to trouble at above items, causes trouble at social relations, orientation to social and moral deviations and wane of cultural values among couples (Mohammadi, 1385). According to Winch & Robert marriage satisfaction and compatibility exists when their situation at family relations concords with what they expect, and discontent takes place when their situation at family relations does not match their expectation (Michaeili et al., 1391).

Many factors can cause marriage incompatibility, which one of this factors is hurt child. In child upbringing, parents have the same understanding and accept their child, while the case is more complex in family of exceptional child. Birth and presence of exceptional child with its influence on quantity and quality of marriage relations and causing conversion of usual family conditions and family members dealing can cause mess marriage relations among parents (Dyson, 1997). Existence of exceptional child may have bad effects on family mental health. In fact parents may strongly suffer from having hurt child and have states like depression, anxiety, aggression, fear and shame or even wish death (Michaeili et al., 1391).

Generally, family of hurt child due to a different childhood from other children, have lots of problems in keeping, education and training of them.This problems all import pressures on parents that cause omission of family peace and integration and as a result affect on conformity and compatibility (Alizadeh, 1381). Different researches showed the impact of hurt child on parents satisfaction from life. Results of Wolfenzirger (2001) Tanyla et al. (2005), Alizadeh (1381) and Motamedin et al. (1387) show meaningful difference between marital satisfaction of hurt and ordinary children parents, and that hurt child affects on marital satisfaction of parents. Hosseinnejad (1375) shows that among three selected groups (normal parents, parents of mentally hurt children and parents of physical-motor hurt children) there is a significant difference considering mental pressure. On the other hand, parents of exceptional children suffer more mental pressure. Floyd et al. (1998) studying the impact of hurt children on parents marriage relation, in 79 hurt children at school age (6 to18 years old) found the presence of this children have negative and meaningful impact on marriage quality and behavior and perception of parents (Banijamal and Mohammadzade, 1384). Marital satisfaction is effective on amount of mental and physical health, life satisfaction, success at job and social communications. It is one of important indices for life satisfaction in parents of mentally retarded children.

One of factors that affects marital satisfaction are inefficient thoughts and behavior (inefficient reactions). Nowadays psychiatrists attention to impact of beliefs and thinking on creation of types of psychological issues. For example Ellis believes that people are stonishingly rational and irrational, and their problems more arises from distorted perception and illogical thinking and that they think victory solution on problems indeed is their thinking and perception. Ellis believes that behavior can change recognition and emotion of man and that recognition also can impact behavior and emotion (Kaviani, 1994). Inefficient mental overview and negative cognitive structures take place when one negative event makes active the inefficient schema. Negative schemas thereto cause continuity when people use false logic. For example, they extend small items or pay more attention to negative points (Beck, 1976). According to Ellis when an activating accident occures to a person, he may have two different views from it on basis of his own inherent trends: one is logical thoughts and beliefs and the other one is irrational and illogical thoughts and beliefs. In fact, when an unpleasant accident takes place and a person feels anxiety, at his beliefs system, convinces himself to two totally different things and takes one of them that is surely same schema of cognitive and mental error of his intellectual thoughts (Shafiabadi & Naseri 1989). They have root at unfavorable experience of childhood era and formation of this schema at childhood era take place by time. This schema is hidden until a stress position causes it to become active (Beck, 1976).

One of other important factors that is paid more attention to at recent years and affects marital satisfaction, is primary experiences with parents and or kind of emotional relationship with own parents at childhood. Some of researches try to answer this question that how primary experiences at childhood era can affect adulthood (Eidi&Khanjani 2006). Theories of attachment and differentiation style, emphasize on primary relations in family environment and it is effective on next relations. They consider attachment and differentiation style as the sustainability factors 4 and suggest that how source family can affect on marital relations (Yang et al., 2003).

Differentiated people feel free for deep emotional experience and they have ability to discipline to their emotions they have access to; they are able to identify their personal thoughts and express them. People that have the most complete level of differentiation arrive to have own definition, while undifferentiated people have psychological difficulties (Khodayarifard, Abedini, 1390). Bohlender (1995) points the fewer the amount of differentiation orientation is, the more it is likely for person to mix fusion emotion with others to form his own undetected differentiation, respectively. Bowen believes that level of differentiation grows in source family and it is intensely under impact of dynamics and interactions of own members. Most of conflicts among wife and husband is the result of impact of mutual familial systems (Street, 1382). Wives and husbands that are at high levels of differentiation, are able to create and protect individuality and independence. Those who are at low levels of differentiation have difficulty at establishing intimacy. Winch (1974) argues that marital satisfaction comes out from conformity among expected condition and available condition. Marital satisfaction depends on intellectual, emotional and social growth of couples. Emotional growth means the ability to control emotions, intellectual growth the ability to make rational decision (Bichari&Mahabadi, 1372). Many researches incuding Korr (1999) show that people with similar levels of differentiation marriage together and those with more differentiation have more marital satisfaction. People show their positive and negative emotional reactions according to commands of family members or other power reference (Bhatt, 2001). Shakibaei (1385) studied the impact of self-differentiation education on psychological health after divorce. Results showed that differentiation education for divorced women has increased their psychological health. Sehat (1386) studied effectiveness of Bowen self-differentiation learning at decreasing conflicts of married couples of Qom and it was proved to be effective. Richard (1989) at a research observed a

significant relationship among differentiation and marital compatibility with family performance Eskanian (1384) and N. J. (1992) concluded on the basis of decomposition and analysis of data that effect of differentiation on marital satisfaction for women is more stronger than men. Sekoron (2000) in a study on about 39 couples, used differentiation as a marital compatibility factor. Bhatt (2001) studid the global differentiation of Bowen theory. He studied the relationship between own differentiation and its sub scales at one sample population formed from hindi – asian Americans. Results showed a positive relationship between variables. The purpose of this research is to predict marital relations on the basis of inefficient thoughts and level of differentiation of mothers of mentally retarded children.

Method:

The research is correlational regression. The population consisted of all mothers of mentally retarded children in primary school exceptional education in Abadan. The sample was randomly selected from the population of 75 mothers and questionnaires have been completed by them.

Research Tools: In this study, three following questionnaires are used:

1. Enrich Couple Scale 1: Enrich Couple Scale questionnaire was selected to study amount of marital satisfaction. This questionnaire is used as a valid research tool at researches and clinical affairs. Forez and Olson (1989) have used this questionnaire to study marital satisfaction and they believe that this scale is sensitive to changes at family. Forez and Olson (1989) using examples random sampling at national research by 5039 couples showed that using this questionnaire by 95% significance we can differentiate between happy and unhappy couples. Assessment of this background inside a marital relation, can describe the potential problems of a couple or can specify their power and reinforce them. This tool can also be used to as a diagnostic tool for couples that seek marital consultation and follow reinforcement of their marital relation. This scale includes 4 sub scales and each 35 items that can be used as a research tool including satisfaction, communication, and conflict solution. The scales of this questionnaire included marital satisfaction, idealistic distortion, communication, conflict resolution. This questionnaire was translated by researcher et al. with written permission of Professor David Olson. Then translation was sent to three translation experts who were familiar with Farsi and English culture. Their CV also was sent to Doctor David Olson. Final translation achieved after two reformations, correction and then to english translation and comparison with original prescription. Enrich Couple Scale was performed by David Olson and Amy Olson on 25501 married couples in 2000. Alpha factor for sub scales of marital satisfaction, relationship, conflict solution , and idealistic distortion are respectively 0.86, 0.80, 0.84, 0.83 and retest reliablity for each sub test are 0.86, 0.81, 0.90, 0.92 and alpha at Asoudeh (1389) with 365 couples of "730 persons" are obtained 0.68, 0.78, 0.62, 0.77.
2. Differentiation of Self Inventory (DSI)

41-item DSI includes 4 sub scales: 1. emotional reactivity, 2. I Position, 3. emotional getaway, 4. fusion with others. 11 items of emotional reaction sub scale are graded reflective that a person responds to an environmental stimulus with great sensetiveness or with emotional changeability. I position sub scale includes 11 items that next to the obvious definition self feeling spcifies the amount of loyalty to personal beliefs when a person is forced to perform contrary of his own beliefs. 12-item sub scale of emotional getaway is the sign of fear from sincerity and vulnerability at relationship with others. Items related to these sub scales show fear from friendly relations, defensive behavior such as over perfomance, getting away, or denial. Finally, 9-item version of fusion with others, shows involving over

emotional relations with others. Skorn and Friedlander (1998) reported accepted inner consistency for DSI and each four sub scales of it:

questionnaire	Overall score of DSI	Emotional reactivity	I position	Emotional getaway	Fusion with others
Cronbach's alpha	**0.88**	**0.84**	**0.83**	**0.82**	**0.74**

3. Difective Attitude Assessment Scale (DAS): Pathology according to Beck Cognitive model (1967-1976) emphasizes on test of structures dependent on recognition (Beck et al., 1988). One of scales at this field scale is the evaluation of "inefficient attitudes" that was developed by Beck and Wisman that is the most important cognitive style test at researches in various centers of united states on treatment under cognitive "views", "assumptions". This scale is an assessment that specifies cognitive content based on Beck theory. This scale is as two parallel form of a and b are called 'depression' that each one has 40 questions. This scale has high reliability (0.90) (Javaheri, 1383). For validity assessment a research was done on 60 students Of Esfahan University with average age of 23 years that its Cronbach's alpha was 0.87.

Findings

The study is based on descriptive findings, the highest for married participants was 11-20 (50.7%). Most participants were housewives (50.7%). Most participants were 41-50 (45.3%). Most of them were under diploma (45.3%), and most participants had two children (30.7%).

Table 1. The mean score for participants in terms of the components of marital satisfaction, differentiation and response are ineffcient. It shows that the average score of subjects in terms of sexual satisfaction is (113.78) and average overall indicator of differentiation (153.60) directly and inefficient reaction (42.93) is an inverse relationship.

Table 1- mean & SD of participants scores according to elements of marital satisfaction, differentiation and inefficient reactions

Factors	average	SD
1. couples overall index	113.78	22.16
2. marital satisfaction	34.89	6.36
3. communication	31.69	7.21
4. conflict resolution	29.25	6.57
5. idealistic distortion	17.93	4.65
6. general index of differentiation	153.60	15.41
7. emotional reactivity	35.48	7.40
8. I position	42.69	8.15
9. emotional getaway	46.84	7.58
10. fusion with others	28.59	6.89
11. inefficient reactions	42.93	19.71

N = 75

To study relation of components of research pearson correlation matrix coefficients were calculated. This results are summarized at table 2. the correlation coefficient between the components of differentiation (I position) and idealistic distortion component of marital satisfaction is 0.25, which is significant at the 0.05 level. Fusion with others and marital satisfaction correlation coefficient is 0.29, and the negative correlation is 0.05.

Table 2- correlation coefficients matrix between the components of marital satisfaction, differentiation and inefficient reactions.

Factor	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. couples overall index	1										
2. marital satisfaction	0.85 **	1									
3. Communication	0.93 **	0.72**	1								
4. conflict resolution	0.89**	0.59**	0.82**	1							
5. idealistic distortion	0.89**	0.76**	0.75**	0.74**	1						
6. differentiation index	-0.09	-0.12	-0.13	-0.23	-0.08	1					
7. emotional reactivity	0.00	-0.10	0.00	0.11	0.02	0.77**	1				
8. I position	0.20	0.19	0.15	0.16	0.25*	-0.21	-0.64**	1			
9. emotional getaway	0.07	-0.10	0.14	0.18	0.02	0.75**	0.60**	-0.50**	1		
10. fusion with others	-0.12	-0.29	-0.03	0.00	-0.15	0.84**	0.74**	-0.43**	0.54**	1	
11. inefficient reactions	-0.32**	-0.23**	-0.32**	-0.26**	-0.33**	-0.41**	-0.35**	0.08**	-0.28*	-0.33	

P <0/05 * P <0/01 ** N = 75

The correlation coefficient between inefficient reactions and overall index of couples is 0.32, which is a significant negative correlation at 0.01 level, thus reducing the inefficient reaction marital satisfaction rise stretches correlation coefficient between the inefficient reactions differentiation index 0.41 is negative and significant at 0.01 level, thus by increasing inefficient reaction of differentiation reduced. The correlation coefficient between the components of the inefficient reaction and marital satisfaction, conflict resolution and fusion with others, are respectively 0.23, 0.26 and 0.28, which is a negative correlation and is significant at 0.05 level. Thus by increasing inefficient reaction, marital satisfaction, conflict solution and fusion with others increase. As well as the correlation coefficient between the inefficient reactions and communications components, idealistic distortion and emotional reactivity, respectively, 0.32, 0.33 and 0.35, which is associated with an increase in negative and inefficient reactions, component of communications, idealistic distortion and inefficient reaction reduced emotional inefficient reactions stretches correlation coefficient 0.08, which had significant positive correlation at 0.01 level. To answer the question of which of elements of differentiation and inefficient response to the changes in their marital satisfaction variance, linear regression method was used. To predict the general marital index and marital satisfaction component of index differentiation orientation from test regression simple enter linear model was used that results showed that the variance of I position with 0.42 beta has the most impact at criterion variable that means general marital index. Emotional getaway variable with attention to level meaningfulness is not a good criterion to variable.

Table 3 regression of overall index and marital satisfaction on the index component of differentiation

criterion variable	predictor variables	R	R^2	B	β	t	F	SE	Sig.
couples overall index test	emotional reactivity	0.39	0.152	1.24	0.42	2.10	3.13	0.59	0.040
	I position			1.53	0.42	2.89		0.40	0.005
	emotional getaway			0.69	0.24	1.67		0.42	0.100
	fusion with others			-1.21	-0.38	-2.24		0.54	0.028

To predict reaction of inefficient on component of index marital from regression linear simple model enter was used that results show that any one from component and with attention to level meaningful predict of are you well to variable criterion. overall indicator for the criterion variable is predictive test. they are negative and significant relationship.

Table 4- Regression of inefficient reactions on the components of the index

criterion variable	predictor variables	R	R^2	B	□	t	F	SE	Sig.
inefficient reactions	marital satisfaction	0.36	0.128	0.41	0.13	0.71	2.56	0.58	0.480
	communication			-0.81	-0.30	-1.28		0.63	0.202
	conflict resolution			0.39	0.13	0.61		0.64	0.543
	idealistic distortion			-1.28	-0.30	-1.45		0.89	0.152
	couples general index	0.49	0.24	-0.25	-0.28	-2.73	11.65	0.09	0.008

According to the results obtained with 95% changing I position on overall index changes (marital satisfaction) to predict. That is I position with increased marital satisfaction increases. As well as inefficient response to changes in the overall index predicts couples. This relationship is significant for negativeand dysfunctional thoughts marital satisfaction increased.

Discussion and conclusion

The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between differentiation and marital satisfaction in inefficient reactions. The results show that the elements of differentiation (I position, emotional reaction, emotional separation and fusion with others) and inefficient reactions associated with marital satisfaction. I position, inefficient thoughts status of these variables is the best predictor of marital satisfaction. These findings show role and importance of primary relations of adults following the planning and how relationship at adulthood is. On the other hand, amount of differentiation at adulthood children forms the communications (Khanjani, 2005). According to results of the research, component of I position is the best predictor of marital satisfaction, respectively. These people have more ability to express emotions. At differentiation factors level, analyze regression several variable step to step to predict marital satisfaction show that I position highest correlation is 42 percent change variance marital satisfaction and explained that results with research performance in this theme favorable. So that they receive marital satisfaction to be components of differentiation (2000). People who have high I position have ideas and beliefs clear at life and identitying personal strong and strength, anxiety lower experience and under stressful situations with behavior unhealthy (such as consumption alcohol and materials narcotic and so on) (Korr and Bowen, 1988). These characteristics people differentiated cause strength relations couples and increasing marital satisfaction. Results of

this research is also consistent with results of Fridlander. Skoron and Fridlander with review a sample of 609 patients. They found that top scores at I position have less anxiety, better psychological compatibility and more marital satisfaction (Waring&Paton, 1984). People at current individuation have understanding self identity . This differentiation from the original family are able to make up the responsibility of thinking, sensitive, perceptions and actions of own (Koori, 1385). Differentiation found at dealing with issues and difficulties life ability to deallogical and rational and have and can from dealing with issues to face emotional. So this is the ability to solve problems and for non-violentare. People that have low differentiation level have more reason, emotion and relations with others.

Also in the analysis of regression several variables of step to step to marital satisfaction show that inefficient reactions are negative and significant (27%). In this way, the inefficient reaction reduction will increase marital satisfaction. To have a hurt child will affect on beliefs, thoughts and feelings of parents of this children that parent of such children with have mixed feelings from sentence confusion, bitterness, desire for death, denial, depression, and negative different emotions and experience and lead to interference of unfavorable internal and outside of despair, hopelessness, fatigue, factors emotional negative other factors annoying peripheral dealing with a question unable to control the situation and to fall properly with collision on solving skills question and behavior of negative parental exceptional impact. With attention to straight relationship and ongoing problems with behavioral, physical problems of these children on negative self-esteem maternal effect it puts them at reception of the truth and use. Exceptional children since birth or at next levels of growth can cause increase amount of stress and mental hurt and updated difficulties at members of the family, especially mothers that these conditions are under the impact of family marital relations. Incompatibility and dissatisfaction with marriage happen when in relations between individual present couples do not match the expectation and desired thing. It has an impact on system of parents, sister and brothers and even system of outside the family, such as friends, neighbors and school (Motamedin et al., 1387).

Generally, the findings of research show the importance of the experiences of development of the people at family in forming intimate relationships and how to deal with marital issues play a fundamental results from Bowen theory. Therapists and consultants according to the findings of such studies, make effective measures on resolving conflicts between couples now at middle of marital life. Especially parents who have mentally retarded children. With a range of behavioral problems, learning and face and marital satisfaction of parents and family life is affected. In this regard, the implementation of training classes for parents in dealing with problems and marital conflict resolution is essential to this study, like other research has limitations such as small sample size of the study group the study can not generalize the results to other groups. This case is good for future researchers, characteristics of parents from different types of personalities, styles of attachment, attitude and the methods of parenting and also about research itself.

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