The Study of Compatibility, Individuation and Marital Satisfaction of Spouses in Incompatible and Normal Families

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- Compatibility
- Individuation
- Marital Satisfaction
- Incompatible Family

ABSTRACT
The aim of this study was to examine the compatibility and individuation of spouses in discordant and normal families in Arak city. The statistical universe of this research includes all the spouses living in Arak city in 2011. The sample consists of 120 families from among 60 families were voluntarily chosen as incompatible spouses. In the meantime, using cluster method 60 families were selected from among families who have not been referred to the Justice Department and now haven't got serious differences. The research devices consisted of three questionnaires (Self-Differentiation Questionnaire, ENRICH marital satisfaction questionnaires, Family Assessment Device FAD). Test and Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) were used to analyze the data. The results indicated a significant difference among compatibility, individuation, and marital satisfaction of spouses in incompatible and normal families.

Introduction
Basically, psychological adjustment, and life satisfaction have complex dimensions. One of the most important aspects of human life consistency is marriage and marital satisfaction, to the extent that satisfying and successful marriage requires couples to be part of the sustainability of adjustment (Aslani 2004). Holman and Larson (1994) have described the marital relationship as the most important and most fundamental human relationship, since it provides a basic structure to build a familial relationship and to train the next generation. Sternberg and Hojjat (1997) believe that marital satisfaction is a very important and complex aspect of a marital relationship (Yousefi et al, 2010). In other words, the spouse's consent in relation to their own feelings and experiences is one of the most crucial aspects of a marital system (Taniguchi ST et al, 2006). However, divorce statistic which is the most reliable indicator of marital distress (Halford, quotes from Tabrizi, 2005), shows that marital satisfaction is not easy to achieve (Rosen - Grandon et al, 2004). From the early days of the marital relationship, serious and frequent disagreements arise, which if not resolved, could seriously endanger marital stability and satisfaction (Talim I, Hsiao, 2004). In addition, regardless of all the relationships that are ending in divorce, there are many marriages and unsuccessful marital relationships that the spouses do not divorce for different reasons) Greiff, Malherbe , 2001). Therefore, it is inevitable to attend marital satisfaction for its role in couples and their children mental health (Byrne et al., 2004). Marital satisfaction and marital relationship feeling plays an important role in family normal functions. Despite the challenges that exist on the meaning and measurement of marital satisfaction, the term marital satisfaction has been used with other terms such as marital adjustment, happiness and as an indicator to assess the quality of marital life alternatively (Fincham and Beach, 2006). Although the definitions and descriptions of marital satisfaction appears to be a simple question, but given the importance and consequences of presence or absence of marital satisfaction, the perceived simplicity goes away and the complexity occupies its position. Marital satisfaction is an emotional-cognitive and mental assessment, which a person has got from his marital relationship (Sprecher et al., 2008). Marriage satisfaction and marital adjustment plays an essential part in sustaining the family, because the incompatibility of spouses leads to difficulties of parenthood, loss of physical and mental health in spouses, falling life satisfaction rate, more loneliness feelings and appearing problems in social relations (Khodabaksh, 2006). There are many factors affecting a person's marital adjustment and compatibility. The atmosphere of a family is one of the factors affecting marital adjustment. In a society that family has experienced dysfunction public health is in danger, because the disturbances in family functioning cause problems in the family system, and if the problems augmented it would be led to disintegration. Increasing divorce rates in different countries in recent decades somewhat indicates a disturbed functioning of
the families in indoor dimension. Divorce rates have increased 12 percent in Iran and in 50% in America (Bahari and Myrouri, 1998).

Khodabakhsh (2006) in a research has concluded that in two-parent families (who men and women are together) marital interactions could be the foundation for other matters. If the marital relationship is weak, the necessary foundations for a desirable and successful family functioning will be trembling, or at least weak. For couples not compatible with each other, it is difficult to pave the ground for their own personality growth along with their children’s. Hence, the most important part of the family assessment is the evaluation of the quality of marital relationship. Marital relationship should be based on respect and trust, and this matter involves several factors such as acceptance, love, devotion, intimacy and so forth. Valizzi and colleagues (2008) showed research that there is a significant relationship between love and marital satisfaction. In addition, Shahi and colleagues (2011) suggest that there is a negative significant relationship between depression and anxiety of people and marital satisfaction. Moreover, each of the couples needs a knowledgeable and competent partner to tackle timely with conflicts and problems. Therefore, due to the continuous interaction the family has with its members as well as the community, it seems that the main causes of desirable or undesirable functions of the family include the characteristics and shortcomings of its members.

From among the family system approaches, there have been many investigations about the growth and sustainability of marital bonds in the theory of Bowen (1978). The fundamental core of Bowen theory is "self-differentiation" concept, which in this theory the ability to balance both at intrapsychic and metapsychic levels. On the other hand, regarding the intrapsychic functionality, the differentiation shows the ability to separate rational processes from emotional processes and with respect to metapsychic functionality indicates the capability to experience intimacy together with independency in interpersonal relationships and appropriate balance among them (Tuason and Fredlander, 2000). From a theoretical perspective, there are at least four influential factors in self-differentiation level: Emotional Reactivity, emotional cutoff, fusion with others, and I-position. In other words, differentiated and undifferentiated people are identified with some characteristics including:

a) Undifferentiated people show emotional reactions to the behavior of other people, they spend the bulk of their energy to experience, express and intensifying their emotions. In contrast, differentiated individuals may experience intense emotions, but they never dispirited by these emotions and the reactions of this group are controlled.

b) When the internal experiences or interpersonal interactions are very stressful, undifferentiated people distance themselves emotionally from others; while differentiated people do not feel the necessity of this measure. These people have a strong identity.

c) Undifferentiated individuals in total are changed or mixed in intimate relationships with others; while those who are well-differentiated have the ability to keep their defined "--self".

d) Differentiation is represented in the ability to express "I-position". Undifferentiated individuals emotionally are dependent on others, hardly could think, feel and act for them, but differentiated ones individuals are inherently self-leader, have their own thoughts and feelings, and do not force themselves to reconcile with others' expectations (Tuason and Fredlander, 2000). According to this theory, "self-differentiation" investigates the foundations of sincerity and mutual acceptance in marriage. Woman and man having low differentiated level, when getting married are expected to have low emotional maturity and hereby a lower capacity for intimacy and uniqueness. This requires that both people (woman and man) sacrifice their progress and self-leadership for the sake of the stability of their marriages. In contrast, in differentiated marital systems the spouses allow each other to have a more flexible role along with a more intense relationship. They tolerate their idea difference and experience less emotional reaction. In other words, responding to the emotions of others keep their own peace to have fewer problems (Bowen1987, Kerr, and Bowen, 1988; Schnharch, 1997). One of the fundamental views of Bowen is that with the purpose of marriage people often attract and choose those whom their differentiation level is much like themselves. Based on Bowen view, people marry styles or different ways of life and levels of self-differentiation emerged from their original family, during "The Family Projection Process" (Skowron, 2000).

On the other hand, he believes that self-differentiation is like a family property transferrable and family problems and anxieties of main family is transmitted from generation to generation during an "intergenerational Multigenerational Transmission Process " (Hurst et al., 1996). If two undifferentiated people marry each other, a nuclear family is formed with a low-level distinction level. In stressful situations, undifferentiated couples are afflicted with anxiety and disorders in their marital functions. Mo'in and colleagues (2011) showed in a research that there is a relationship between commitment, control, challenge and marital relations. In Eskuvern study (2000), self-differentiation has a relationship with marital life quality, and from among self-differentiation components, emotional cutoff and emotional reaction were predictors of marital discord and conflict. Najaf Loei (2007), Aleki and Nazari (2008), Waring and Patton (1998) also found similar results (quoting from Beyrami et al, 2012). Self-differentiation has been considered a major factor to long-term intimacy in marriage (Kerr and Baon, 1988). According to the Eskuvern (2000), studying the marital conflict on could find out the differentiation of a marriage.

Marital conflict in couples' family are associated with anxiety adsorption and is characterized by affective or emotional cutoff. In other words, chronic marital conflict is a cyclical pattern of a couple efforts in which the spouses try to unify their boundaries or to secure and strengthen the borders. Hence, the main question of this research is that in terms of compatibility and individuation of spouses, whether there is a significant difference between normal and incompatible families or not?
Materials and Methods

The statistical universe is the set of individuals with common characteristics, in other words those whom the research findings could be generalized. The statistical universe of this survey consists of all pairs of Arak city in 2011. The sample of this study include 120 families from among 60 families were voluntarily selected (couples that have been disputed in court for divorce) as incompatible couples. 60 families were selected using cluster method from among families who haven't been referred to the Justice Department yet and now have serious discrepancies.

Instruments

In this study, the questionnaires of "Self-Differentiation Questionnaire, ENRICH Marital Satisfaction questionnaire, and Family Assessment Device FAD” were used to collect data.

a) Self-Differentiation Questionnaire (Eskuvern, 2000): In this questionnaire 45 questions are used to assess the differentiation level of couples, and answering the questions is done using six-item Likert scale (from 1 for "not at all true about me" to 6 for "quite right about me"). A high score shows differentiatedness and a low score refers to undifferentiatedness. This questionnaire includes four sub-tests of "Emotional Reactivity, Emotional Cutoff, Fusion with Others, And I-Position”. Eskuvern and Friedlander (1998) defined internal consistency of the questions with Cronbach's alpha for the questionnaire and its subtests as following: the total questionnaires: 0.88; emotional reactivity: 0.83; emotional cutoff 0.80; and fusion with others 0.82, and I-position 0.80. This instrument first has been used in the study on Iranian samples. Hence, the reliability of this instrument in the studied samples was assessed by Cronbach's alpha. The questionnaire and its sub-tests reliability were specified as following: "the total questionnaire 0.72; emotional reaction 0.81; emotional cutoff 0.76; fusion with others 0.79, and I-position 0.64".

b) ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire: This questionnaire was prepared by Olson and colleagues (1989), including a tool with 115 questions, involving 12 sub-scales. There are 5 questions at the first scale and 10 questions each other scales. In several different studies, the alpha coefficients of scales have been reported from 0.68 to 0.86. The Questionnaire validity coefficients with the life satisfaction scales were from 0.32 to 0.41 percent which showed the test construct validity (Sanay, 1990).

c) Family Assessment Device (FAD): The questionnaire has been prepared based on McMaster model with the aim of describing organizational and structural characteristics of the family. Najjarian (1995) has standardized it. It is three-dimensional. Problem solving, roles, and emotional reactions of the above-mentioned tool consists of a total of 45 items, from among 20 items are associated with the roles, 17 items with problem solving, and 8 items with emotional tools (Najjarian, 1995). For FAD grading, using a variety of four-degree scoring including the score of "1" (totally agree) to "4" (completely disagree), the test after providing was conducted on a sample of 500 people by McMaster. Alpha coefficient ranges of its subsets were among 0.73 to 0.92, which indicated its relatively good internal consistency (Najjarian, 1995).

Data Collection and Analysis Method: After preparing the list of names of sample individuals and selecting them, firstly the aim of the study was explained to them. Then, they were given the tools and were asked to express their opinion carefully. The information was collected individually in a hospital or private office of psychiatrists. Subsequently, the obtained data was analyzed using Spss software. Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was used to study the research question.

Results

According to The data in Table (1), there is a significant difference in the level ($p \leq 0.001$) between the subscales of incompatible and normal families in terms of marital compatibility of the couples.
Considering the Wilks Lambda values (0.36) and its significance at the level (P ≤ 0.01), we can deduce that there is a significant difference between the two groups in terms of marital adjustment.

Table 3. Analysis of Multivariate Variance in Two Groups of normal and Incompatible Families in sub-scales of self-individuation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Scales (Marital Satisfaction)</th>
<th>Total Square</th>
<th>Freedom Degree</th>
<th>Average Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Significance Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MODEL</td>
<td>Marital Satisfaction</td>
<td>329/43</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>329/43</td>
<td>5/35</td>
<td>0/02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tow-people Unity</td>
<td>646/95</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>646/95</td>
<td>12/72</td>
<td>0/000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tow-people Agreement</td>
<td>972/51</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>972/51</td>
<td>8/84</td>
<td>0/003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groups</td>
<td>Expression of love</td>
<td>168/33</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>168/33</td>
<td>2/27</td>
<td>0/13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marital Satisfaction</td>
<td>329/43</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

According to the results of Table 3, we conclude there is a significant difference between normal and incompatible families in terms of the spouses' individuation and subscales of I-position and emotional cutoff at the level of (P ≤ 0.01).

Table 4. Table of Information Related to Credit Index of Multivariate Variance Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Trace</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Freedom Degree</th>
<th>Error Freedom Degree</th>
<th>Significance Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pillai Trace</td>
<td>0/10</td>
<td>4/85</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>0/00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wilks's lambda</td>
<td>0/89</td>
<td>4/85</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>0/00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hoteling Trace</td>
<td>0/12</td>
<td>4/85</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>0/00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Roy's largest Root</td>
<td>0/12</td>
<td>4/85</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>0/00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Wilks' Lambda value in the above table equals to (0.89) which is significant at the level of (P ≤ 0.01), as Wilks' Lambda value is smaller; there is a significant difference between the two groups in terms of self-individuation.

Discussion

The existence of disagreement and incompatibility in couples' relationships leads to parents' tasks hardening, reduction of partners' physical and mental health, lowering life satisfaction, more feelings of loneliness and problems in social relations. Various factors can affect marital adjustment. One of the factors affecting marital adjustment is marital satisfaction. Usually, families in which marital satisfaction is higher have more correlation and solidarity between the spouses; the couple's love for each other and other family members is greater. In decisions relating to living, such couples usually focus on mutual agreement and decisions are based on mutual respect and agreement. This study also suggests that the marital satisfaction obtained from communication criteria in all relationship areas (marital satisfaction, mutual correlation, mutual agreement and showing affection) are most correlated with marital adjustment. Bilateral relations whom the couples undertake haven't got a special form; on the contrary, people have different appropriate ways to set up mutual relationships. Positive and approving relationships with other family members and in general family correct functioning, is one of the important indicators ensuring quality of life and psychological health of the family and its members. Consequently, their negative relationship is considered as one of the most important factors creating and maintaining mental and emotional disorders. In this regard, Shahi and colleagues (2011) suggests that there is a negative relationship between depression, anxiety and their satisfaction rate. Based on the current findings, the assumption that "there is a significant difference between normal and incompatible families in terms of individuation, compatibility, and marital satisfaction" was approved. Emotional reactions of the spouses, will impact their marriage and family. Vaezi study (2008) showed that there was a significant relationship between the couple love towards each other and marital satisfaction. Because of the emotional bond among normal families, the members are extraordinarily interdependent and are very reactive to each other. The couple's emotional support for each other help psychological hardness between them and this leads the couple to be more compatible. In line with this view, Mo'in (2011) showed that there is a relationship between the components of psychological hardness (control, commitment and challenge) and the marital adjustment. Moreover, other findings indicate that individuation and differentiatedness of couples has a remarkable impact on marital adjustment. Based on Aleiki and Nazari findings (2008), couples get the higher levels of marital satisfaction through differentiation and self-individuation. In addition, this study is consistent with findings of Beyrami and colleagues (2011)
arguing that from among the differentiation components, I-position is the best predictor of marital satisfaction. This research is also in line with the findings of Eskuevni (2000), Najafluei (2007), Waring and Patton (1998) suggesting that the differentiation level of couples is related to the quality of marital relationship. Considering the findings of the present study and the researches approving it, we could conclude that the more differentiated the couples act, the more flexible and intimate their role relationship is, the more positive their marital satisfaction, compatibility and adjustment will be.

Limitations
- The sample was devoted to Arak city, so generalizing the findings to other cities, is posed with a limitation.
- Marriage duration was not controlled.
- Conformance of the participants was not controlled. Some people reported that their spouse had psychological problems.
- To identify mental health problems in the group with mental disorders, no tools were used and it was merely confined to a psychiatric diagnosis.
- Social-demographic variables such as education, income, and the number of children were uncontrolled.

Suggestions
- The dimensions of self-differentiation, intimacy and marital life quality should be investigated in more detail and more examples.
- Research on self-differentiation could guarantee homogeneity of participants with controlling their economic, social status, income, and marriage duration.
- The relationship between self-differentiation and gender needs to be investigated further.
- A longitudinal study could be performed about marital satisfaction and self-differentiation so that the changes over time in these variables could be examined.
- The age range of participants could be more limited so that the studied group has more homogeneity.

References