

Original Article

The Role of Attachment Style, Sexual Satisfaction and Narcissism on Marital Infidelity of Social Network Users

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Abstract

Background and Aim:The present study was conducted with the objective of investigating the role of attachment style, sexual satisfaction and narcissism in marital infidelity of social network.

Materials and Methods:The research method was descriptive-correlational. Sample size included all couples aged 18-50, lived in Ardabil province which were using social networks in 2019. The sample size according to convenience sampling method was considered 200 people. Data collection were based on infidelity in social networks, sexual satisfaction, adult attachment style, and narcissistic questionnaires.

Results:The results showed a significant positive relationship between attachment style, sexual satisfaction and narcissism with marital infidelity. The results in multivariate regression in Table 3 shows the formative predictor variables could predict social network user's infidelity ($p < 0.05$). Also squared multiple correlation indicates that predictors could predict 27% of infidelity changes. Standardized regression coefficients for anxious attachment style ($p < 0.01$), avoidant attachment style ($p < 0.01$), sexual satisfaction ($p < 0.05$), significantly and positively predict marital infidelity of network users.

Conclusion:The present research identifies the role of personality characteristics and attachment styles in marital infidelity of social networking users and their importance in predicting this problem. The importance of attachment styles and sexual satisfaction in the intimate relationships of adults and especially the marital infidelity of users was explained.

Keywords: Attachment styles, Sexual satisfaction, Narcissism, marital infidelity, Social networks.

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Introduction

Today people live in a society where everyone is connected to different networks, including social, biological and technological internet networks (5). They get a lot of information in a network, which significantly increases the information dissemination (6). The emergence and development of social sites such as Twitter and Facebook have been helpful in catastrophic situations such as natural and human disasters, and emergency situations (7). In addition to these benefits, researchers are seeking to understand how the virtual world affects interpersonal relationships, especially, emotional. Much of this, has portrayed social network as a threat to existing romantic relationships because they provide an opportunity to communicate with substitute partners through requests, comments on photos, covert and implicit communication and engaging in Cybersex (8,9). Online spaces provide a good context to make online behaviors related to marital infidelity, creating conflicts in couple's relationship, these networks also reduce their communication satisfaction (10). They provide two sources of conflicts: attractive situations to establish relationship and romantic interests and make sexual relation's situations available for couples using these networks (11). For example, virtual networks provide new opportunities to establish new relationships through sending requests, commenting on other's posts, secrete relationships, or engaging in cybersex, so it is a threat to intimate relationships. In this regard, the research of Wallen Zuela and Katz (12) indicates that the use of virtual social networks is closely related to marital dissatisfaction and marital problems. From a traditional point of view, extramarital relations mean having sexual relations with someone other than the spouse (13). But today due to changes in social relations as well as attitudes, in addition to sexual relations in particular, establishing a secret relationship with another person, unusual love and affair, emotional relationship other than common friendship, using pornography and unusual communication in virtual spaces. It is included in this definition (14).

On the other hand, anxiety attached people have a

strong need to closeness and are always worried about losing their partner. To maintain intimate relationships, they use overstimulated strategies to keep their spouse. One of those is engaging in online cheating behaviors to arouse jealousy in their spouse to maintain intimate relationship (3). Another type of on line betrayal occurs when anxious lovers feel extreme need for intimacy is not being satisfied by their partner, so they seek it out of their relationship or when they feel losing partner, try to full fill this gap by making a secret relationship. Ease in access and interaction in virtual networks by others, being anonymous, provide a context to anxious attached people to think that they are loved by others and they are present because of these individuals (16).

On the other hand, avoidant attached ones are afraid of intimacy and dependence, they have negative mental patterns towards others, they see them unreliable, so avoid face to face relationship and lean to extramarital relationship and virtual life which does not require much emotional investment. Such people due to their tendency to maintain distance, are more likely to being anonymous in social networks and see the interactions as less threatening, so, the network facilitates avoidant attached individual to engage in extramarital relationships. One of the other factors related to marital infidelity, is spouse's sexual dissatisfaction. It is a broad online cheating behaviors spectrum, including emotional and sexual interactions outside couple's domain. Sexual satisfaction is defined as an emotional response arising from individual's subjective positive and negative evaluations of sexual relation to other one (17). Researches indicate, couples who are not satisfied with their sexual relationship may be more inclined to experience this satisfaction outside of marital relationship (18). Another effective factor in marital infidelity among social network users is their personality characteristics. Narcissism is one of the personality traits which has a role in network user's marital infidelity. These individuals have a sense of self-conceit, they have mental preoccupation or imagination about their successes, strength, talent, beauty and feel self –conceit, they are exploitative in interpersonal relationships, do not have empathy and need excessive praise from others side (19). Findings show that individual with narcissistic personality traits

are more likely to engage in extramarital relationships. Love-affair is one of their characteristics and are not able to understand betrayal's obstacles, because they just think of themselves and their needs, even if their satisfaction of needs hurts others (20), also considering themselves as sexual victims, they are more likely to cheat in spouse's emotional relationships and adopt lenient views toward infidelity (21). Findings indicate that narcissism has a close relationship with using social networks (22). In such a way that it is related to checking time (23) and friend's numbers on social network pages (24). Studies show that narcissistic characters are more inclined, mentioning their information on profiles in kinds of internet communications like chat rooms (25). These people have wide but flat relationships and social networks provide them with possibilities to use extensive relations to fulfill their inner needs like showing their macromania through dominating others by posting photos and personal information (23). But researchers concluded, according conducted studies, although contradictory, which networks facilitates relationship around the world, but it causes excessive extramarital relationships and destructive effects on couples' lives in emotional, sexual and family areas. Regarding this, the present study seeks to answer the question of whether attachment style, sexual satisfaction and narcissism can play a role in marital infidelity of network users?

Methods

The research method used in this study was applied in terms of descriptive-correlational, and its statistical population included all couples aged 18-50, lived in Ardabil province during 2019, were using social network. All subjects had full freedom to participate in the research and before doing the questionnaires, all objectives were explained to comply with ethical considerations.

Materials

Adults Attachment Style Questionnaire (AASQ)

This questionnaire was developed in 1998 to measure adults' attachment styles and again revised (3). It

consists of 36 items in 7-point Likert scale (completely disagree=1 to completely agree=7), measuring avoidant and anxiety attachment components. Questions numbers 3, 15, 19, 22, 25, 27, 29, 31, 35 were reverse scored. Questionnaire reliability for avoidant and anxious attachment were 0.82 and 0.89, respectively. The even-odd sort reliability for anxiety, between 0.80 to 0.86 and for avoidant subscales were reported between 0.80 to 0.89 (26). Surveys indicated that there is a correlation between this questionnaire's anxious subscale with Shiver & Hazan's (0.40 to 0.60) and their avoidant subscales (0.28 to 0.43).

Index of Sexual Satisfaction Questionnaire (ISS)

A 25-item scale designed to measure the degree of satisfaction (2) people have with their sexual relationship and scored based on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from never (1) to always (7). Note that items 1-3,9,10,16,12,19,21,22,24 were reverse scored (1). Its reliability was assessed 0.91. Questionnaire's test-retest validity was 0.93 and discriminant validity showed its ability to distinguish between couples with and without sexual problems. Re-performing was carried out after 15 days to check scale's normative status and results analyzed (0.95) by correlation test (27). For more detailed examination, validity obtained by split-half test method and Gottman coefficient were 0.88 and 0.80, respectively.

Narcissism Personality Inventory (NPI-16)

It was designed of 16 pairs of items scored 0 or 1, and the score on the scale run from low too high in narcissism and it is unidimensional, that is there are no subscales. Items 1, 2, 3, 7, 9, 12, 14, 16 were reverse scored. The reliability was found by Cronbach alpha =0.72 and validity was obtained using convergent validity (4). The correlation of this questionnaire including extraversion and openness subscales of BFI was reported 0.32& 42, respectively. Validation was done in Iranian version and its test-retest, split-half and Cronbach's alpha reliabilities were calculated as 0.84, 0.74 and 0.79, respectively (28). Also its convergent validity through correlation measurement in MCMI-II questionnaire was obtained 0.77.

Social Media Infidelity-Related Behavior Inventory (SMIRB)

This questionnaire assesses the impact of social media on couple relationships. They were given 7 items version to analyze with 6-point Likert scale

(1=strongly disagree to 6=strongly agree). High scores indicate people tendency to online infidelity (1). Cronbach`s alpha to assess, for female and male subjects were found to be, 0.90 and 0.85, respectively. To measure validity, factor analysis was applied concluding 62 percent of whole subjects' variance, in which, 67% & 58% assesse for females and males respectively. All loadings were higher than 53%. In present study reliability through Cronbach`s alpha was obtained 0.89.

Results

Findings indicated the frequency of males and females were 49% and 51%, respectively. Samples age range for males and females were 25 to 50 and 18 to 50, respectively. Internet network social media usage illustrated. Results of social network usage assessed, 54.5% Telegram, 1.5% Instagram, 32.5% Telegram and Instagram, 0.5% Facebook and, 10.5% of subjects were using Telegram, Instagram and Facebook. The indicators of variables in the study are shown in Table 1. There have been used Pearson correlation test and results are brought in Table 2. There is a positive and significant relation between avoidant attachment and marital infidelity(p<0.01), also between anxious attachment and marital infidelity(p<0.01), sexual satisfaction and marital infidelity(p<0.01) and between narcissism and marital infidelity (p<0.05) as assessed in Table 2.

To test the predicting role attachment styles, sexual satisfaction and narcissism in social network users ` marital infidelity there have been used the multiple regression. In regression analysis the variance Tolerance and VIF should be noted. As in present study, the variance tolerance and VIF indicators for avoidant, anxiety attachment styles, sexual satisfaction and narcissism were assessed, 0.61 (1.62), 0.92 (1.08), 0.65 (1.52), 0.93 (1.07). Moreover, to investigate standard deviation of predictor & independent variables, Durbin-Watson indicator (Durbin-Watson<4) was obtained 1.79. In this regard, there would be indicate that, by using the regression analysis, linearity of variables is confirmed.

The results in multivariate regression in Table 3 shows the formative predictor variables could predict

Table 1.Descriptive indicators of variables.

Indicators	Males		Females	
	M	SD	M	SD
Anxious attachment	62.17	13.68	67.01	15.37
Avoidant attachment	49.92	13.54	49.94	12.88
Sexual satisfaction	77.62	16.07	76.66	16.62
Narcissism	6.13	3.009	5.47	3.33
Marital infidelity	17.1	7.60	16.84	7.11

social network user`s infidelity (p<0.05, F=18.43). Also squared multiple correlation indicates that predictors could predict 27% of infidelity changes.

To investigate discriminant prediction in respond variables, standardized regression coefficients of attachment styles, sexual satisfaction and narcissism are sorted separately in Table 4. Standardized regression coefficients for anxious attachment style (p<0.01, t=2.7, β=0.17), avoidant attachment style (p<0.01, β=0.31, t=4.07), sexual satisfaction (p<0.05, β=0.16, t=2.16), significantly and positively predict marital infidelity of network users. Likewise, standardized regression coefficient for narcissism personality trait (p>0.05, β=0.060, t=0.95), has no

Table 2.Correlation analysis of attachment styles, sexual satisfaction & narcissism with marital infidelity.*p<0.05 and **p<0.01

Variable	Correlation
Avoidant attachment	0.473**
Anxious attachment	0.290**
Sexual satisfaction	0.390**
Narcissism	0.173*

Table 3.Attachment styles, sexual satisfaction and narcissism in predicting marital infidelity of social network users.

Source	Regression	Residual	Total
SS	2941.9	7779.8	10721.8
df	4	195	199
MS	735.49	39.89	--
F		18.43	
Sig		0.000	
R		0.52	
R²		0.27	

Table 4. Standardized regression coefficient of attachment style, sexual satisfaction and narcissism in predicting network user's marital infidelity.

Predictor Variables	B regression coefficients	SE	Beta regression coefficients	t	Significance level
Anxious attachment	0.087	0.032	0.174	2.74	0.007
Avoidant attachment	0.176	0.043	0.317	4.07	0.000
Sexual satisfaction	0.073	0.034	0.163	2.16	0.000
Narcissism	0.139	0.060	0.060	0.95	0.34

significant role in predicting marital infidelity of social network users as assessed in Table 4.

Discussion

Present study aims at investigating attachment style, sexual satisfaction and narcissism with marital infidelity of social network users. Further, results of regression analysis showed that, Present study aims at investigating attachment style, sexual satisfaction and narcissism with marital infidelity of social network users. Further, results of regression analysis showed that, attachment style, sexual satisfaction is in significant with marital infidelity. One of the research findings was that attachment style has a positive and significant relationship with marital infidelity of social network users, and also attachment style has a significant contribution in predicting marital infidelity of social network users. Findings are in consistent with researchers' results (3, 15, 16, 29). In explaining this finding, it can be said that, people with insecure attachment have a sense of stress, mistrust and lack of security in interpersonal relationships. Anxious attached people worry about being rejected and abandoned by others. They do not see themselves as worthy of attention and love and have little satisfaction in social relationships. As a result, for these people, social networks can be a place to escape from real life and failures, and also these people do not consider social networks as a way to receive attention, approval and reassurance from others (16). By resorting to the social aspects of these networks and the ease of interaction with others, these people receive their psychological needs for approval and reduce fear of rejection. Through internet communication, they may feel that are liked by others. However, this does not reduce feeling insecure and worthlessness on them.

Therefore, social networks can become a source of distress for others in the way of communication for them. People with insecure avoidant attachment are more likely to be afraid of intimacy and dependence, they have negative mental patterns towards others. As a result, insecure people avoid face to face relationships, because they see others unreliable and more likely to lean into relationships and virtual lives that don't require lots of emotional investment. Such people tend to be anonymous in social networks due to their tendency, to keep distance from others, as there is less risk and responsibility in cyberspace interactions, they see social networks as less threatening for social interactions. One of the other findings of research was that, sexual satisfaction, predicted marital infidelity in social network users and was in consistent with other research findings (18, 30-34). Studies show that inappropriate quality of sex in marital relationships and lack of similarity and understanding, are extramarital sex factors, perhaps people involvement in this relationships is a tool to restore balance. In explaining this finding, it can be said that there is a relationship between extramarital relationships and men's sexual satisfaction. However, this relationship does not exist in women, or is stronger in men. Sexual dissatisfaction is the most important cause of marital infidelity due to lack of information about marital skills or sex disorders. Findings indicate that, unfulfillment of marital expectations, sexual and emotional dissatisfaction also revenge for spouse's infidelity, increase the marital infidelity of social network users. In Shaye's research, a significant negative correlation was found between relationship satisfaction and emotional-physical infidelity therefore, he introduced low relationship satisfaction as the best predictor of marital infidelity (33). Final researches showed a significant relationship between narcissism and marital infidelity of virtual network

users, narcissism plays a significant role by combination of other variables in predicting infidelity, but it was not able to predict alone. These findings were in line with other researchers' findings (19-24, 35, 36). Findings showed that individuals having narcissistic personality traits are more likely to get into extra marital relationships (20). In explaining this finding, it is to say that love affair is one of the main characteristics of narcissistic people. These people need to calm poor ID, psychological dysfunction and try to strengthen their self-esteem, for this reason they are not able to understand the obstacles of betrayal, as they see just themselves and their needs, even if the satisfaction of their needs harm others. They see themselves as sexual victims, they betray their spouse, and when they want to talk about infidelity, they have permissive thoughts about it. The results indicated, there was a significant relationship between personality traits specially narcissism with internet usage and virtual networks as these people needs more care and want to be noticed by others (22). Findings indicated that there is a relation between this characteristic and checking time range of internet usage (23), and social network friends and followers (24). Social networks allow them to have not deep relations and also vast, but this help them to satisfy themselves by dominating through others and entering into extra marital relationships in social networks (23). Despite the relationship between narcissism and marital infidelity, the reason for its insignificance in predicting marital infidelity, can be pointed to dual and heterogeneous nature of narcissism, because usually, in addition to the over narcissism, there is also a vulnerable narcissism, in this case there is a poor self-esteem (37) and with withdrawal and social avoidance to deal with self- threats, there are times when self-expression is impossible (38).

Conclusion

The increasing use of virtual space is associated with psychological consequences such as marital infidelity and various factors contribute to its formation. By examining the role of attachment style, sexual satisfaction, and narcissism in social network users' marital infidelity, the present study showed that

anxious attachment style, avoidant attachment style, and sexual satisfaction could predict marital infidelity in social network users. Therefore, in this research, the importance of attachment styles and sexual satisfaction in the intimate relationships of adults and especially the marital infidelity of users was explained.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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