

The relationships between emotional intelligence, sensation seeking, and marital satisfaction among female teachers

Hatam Siavoshi^{1*}, Ali Jahanian², Mojtaba Abbasi Asl³, Mohammad Mafakheri⁴

¹ MA of educational psychology, Shahid Beheshti University, Tehran, Iran

² MA student, career counseling, Kharazmi University, Tehran, Iran

³ MA Student, family counseling, Kharazmi University, Tehran, Iran

⁴ MA, Physical Education and Sports Science, Payam Noor University, Tehran, Iran

Corresponding author and reprints: Hatam Siavoshi, Shahid Beheshti University, Tehran, Iran.

Email: h.norian91@gmail.com

Accepted for publication: 20 December 2016

Abstract

Background: Marriage and matrimony is an issue widely affected by emotional intelligence and sensation seeking. The purpose of the present study was to investigate the relationships between emotional intelligence, sensation seeking, and marital satisfaction among female teachers in the city of Borujerd.

Methods: The statistical population consisted of all married female teachers in the city of Borujerd among whom 100 were selected as the sample using random cluster sampling method. To collect the data, Enrich marital satisfaction, Bar-On emotional intelligence, and Zuckerman sensation seeking questionnaires were used. Data analysis was performed using SPSS software running Pearson's correlation test and stepwise regression.

Results: The results of the analysis indicated that, with a significance level of $P < 0.001$, there was a negative and significant relationship between sensation seeking and marital satisfaction, and there was a positive and significant relationship between emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction. Also, a statistically significant relationship was found between sensation seeking and emotional intelligence. Due to the inverse relationship, any increase in sensation seeking scores results in a decrease in marital satisfaction and vice versa. Moreover, because of the direct relationship between the two variables, any increase in emotional intelligence results in an increase in marital satisfaction.

Conclusion: Considering the findings of the present study, sensation seeking and emotional intelligence have a significant relationship with marital satisfaction. The results of the study can help psychologists and counselors to pay more attention in marital satisfaction and affecting factors to enhance couples' relationships.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence; Female Teachers; Marital Satisfaction; Sensation Seeking

Cite this article as: Siavoshi H, Jahanian A, Abbasi Asl M, Mafakheri M. The relationships between emotional intelligence, sensation seeking, and marital satisfaction among female teachers. SDH. 2016;2(4):148-54.

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22037/sdh.v2i4.16273>

Introduction

Family is the most ancient social core existing since the dawn of mankind. It is the basic institution for children's upbringing which conserves social traditions and strengthens human relations.

Marital satisfaction is one of the most important aspects of matrimony which a spouse experiences in marriage and has an important role in the strength and duration of a marriage (1).

In studies related to spousal satisfaction, two perspectives are prominent: the first is concerned with interpersonal issues. This perspective is quite popular among behavioral psychotherapists. Based on this point of view, the main problem of couples is their maladjustment. In this sense, behaviors are more followed by punishment than reward. This is because distressed couples have weak social skills and demonstrate a lot of negative behavioral actions and reactions in relation with their spouse. The second perspective is concerned with causes of adjustment in personality which is more popular among traits and psychoanalysis theorists. In this sense, the spouses' personality traits are the reasons for a lasting and satisfactory relation, or instability and dissatisfaction (2). Yet, little is known about the relationship between emotional intelligence, sensation seeking, and marital satisfaction, especially among teachers.

One of the variables related to marital satisfaction is emotional intelligence. In fact, marriage and matrimony is an issue which is greatly affected by emotional intelligence. In other words, if there is one aspect in which emotional intelligence is important, that would be marriage, because the foundation of satisfaction depends on the ability to understand and control the emotions. Bar-On defines emotional intelligence as a set of abilities, competence, and skills in a non-cognitive form which affect a person's capability to succeed when encountering environmental demands and pressures (3). According to Fitness et al. study, emotional intelligence or at least some of its aspects have the capacity to enrich a marriage with satisfaction, adjustment, and stability, and people with higher emotional intelligence experience higher marital satisfaction compared to people with less emotional intelligence (4). The results of the study by Smith et al. on 45 couples suggested that emotional intelligence is an effective factor in marital satisfaction; after a one-year follow-up on those couples, it was observed that emotional intelligence had still maintained its strong influence on

marital satisfaction (5). The previous studies also suggested that emotional intelligence has a positive and significant relation with marital satisfaction (4, 6, 7, 8). Agha Mohammad et al. conducted a study on emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction among 112 employees of Rafsanjan University of Medical Science. The results obtained in their study suggested that not all the aspects of emotional intelligence have a significant relationship with marital satisfaction. It seems that education and training on emotional intelligence strengthen the family (9). Eslami et al. also found that there was a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction (10). On the other hand, people are extremely different in terms of genetic arousal and reactivity toward external stimuli. The level of arousal is at its base when there are no environmental stimuli; reactivity means the extent of reaction toward external stimuli (11).

Sensation seeking is defined as the ability to be aroused, seeking various, fresh and complicated experiences and emotions, and the tendency for financial, legal, social and physical risk taking (12). Sensation seeking is a basic biological human need and affects man's life in all stages (11). A sensation seeking person prefers constant brain stimulation, is bored by monotonous tasks, and always seeks to heighten his arousal through stimulating experiences (12). Sensation seeking individuals take different measures in order to achieve optimal arousal. They interact with various people, not to affect others' lives but to achieve arousal (13). They may even get involved in dangerous activities (14-16). Samifar et al. concluded that there is a negative and significant relation between marital satisfaction and sensation seeking. In other words, as sensation seeking increased, the marital satisfaction decreased (17).

As such, the aim of the present study was to determine the relationships between emotional intelligence, sensation seeking, and marital satisfaction among female teachers.

Methods

The present investigation was a descriptive correlational study. The statistical population consisted of all female teachers in the city of Borujerd. A total of 100 teachers were selected as the sample using random cluster sampling method. First, Bojnoord Office of Education was divided into two education districts and regions 1 and 2 were randomly assigned. Next, 6 to 8 schools in each education district were randomly selected. Next, in coordination with school officials, questionnaires were distributed among the school teachers who were willing to participate in the research. To collect the data, Enrich marital satisfaction questionnaire, Bar-On emotional intelligence questionnaire, and sensation seeking questionnaire were used. Higher scores in marital satisfaction and emotional intelligence questionnaires mean higher levels of marital satisfaction and emotional intelligence for the person.

Enrich marital satisfaction questionnaire

This questionnaire was designed in 1989 in U.S by Olson, Fomier, and Druckman to assess marital satisfaction (18). It consists of 115 items divided into 12 subscales. The answers to each question were arranged on a Likert scale (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly agree). The scores on this instrument range from 47 to 235. The score for some questions was calculated directly and for some others, it was calculated in an inverse manner. No cut point is defined for this tool. The mean score for Enrich questionnaire was 50 and the standard deviation was 10. Cronbach's alpha reported in Rajabi et al. study was 0.93 for Enrich questionnaire. He then repeated his study on 35 couples after 12 days and the correlation of the first test and retest was calculated to be 0.78% for men and 83% for women. Using Cronbach's alpha and split-half method, the reliability coefficients of this questionnaire were measured to be 0.91% and 0.87%, respectively (19).

Emotional intelligence questionnaire

To assess emotional intelligence, the Bar-On emotional intelligence questionnaire was employed. This questionnaire, which is designed based on Bar-On emotional-social intelligence model, is a self-report scale for assessment of behaviors related to emotional and social intelligence. Bar-On questionnaire consists of 117 items, each having a score of 1 to 5 (3). The range of scores on this instrument varies between 117 to 585. No cut point is specified for this tool either. In Iran, this questionnaire was standardized by Samoui in Isfahan. The normalized version contains 90 items. The Cronbach's alpha for this questionnaire was measured to be 93%. Also, using the odd-even split method, the reliability of this instrument was measured to be 88%. The average reliability coefficients for different components were between 58% (self-assertion) and 9 % (pressure tolerance) (20). In order to assess emotional intelligence and its components, we used the Bar-On questionnaire. Using Cronbach's alpha and split-half method, the reliability coefficients of this questionnaire were measured to be 93% and 85%, respectively.

Zuckerman's sensation seeking scale

The Zuckerman (21) sensation seeking questionnaire (SSS) contains 40 items in the form of yes/no questions. The range of scores on this instrument varies between 0 to 40. There is no cut point defined for this tool either. This scale is used for the assessment of sensitivity to thrill and adventure seeking, sensation seeking, experience seeking, boredom susceptibility, diversity seeking, and dis-inhibition. In the study by Fathi et al., the assessed reliability for this questionnaire using Cronbach's alpha was reported to be 0.73 (22). In the present study, however, using Cronbach's alpha, the reliability of 0.71 was obtained.

Data analysis was done using SPSS.22 software, Pearson's correlation test, and step-wise forward regression. The significance level was set at 0.05.

Results

Demographic variables of the study participants are illustrated in table 1.

Descriptive indices of mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum concerning variables of marital satisfaction, emotional intelligence, and Zuckerman sensation seeking scale are presented in Table 2.

According to Table 3, the results of Pearson correlation matrix indicate that, with a significance level of $P<0.001$, there was a negative and significant relation between sensation seeking and marital satisfaction. Also, with a significance level of $P<0.001$, there was a positive and significant relation between emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction. There was also a significant relationship between sensation seeking and emotional intelligence with a significance level of $P<0.001$.

The results of Table 4 reveal that sensation seeking is the best predictor of marital

satisfaction, and the obtained f with $P<0.001$ was significant and explained 63.8 % of the variance in marital satisfaction. In addition, emotional intelligence was the second best predictor of marital satisfaction. The obtained f with $P<0.001$ is statistically significant. Emotional intelligence along with sensation seeking explains 54 % of the variance in marital satisfaction.

According to Table 5, regression coefficients of predictors of marital satisfaction are ($t=31.4$, $B=-0.63$) for sensation seeking, and ($t=5.45$, $B=0.38$) for emotional intelligence. Due to the inverse relationship, any increase in sensation seeking scores leads to a decrease in marital satisfaction and vice versa. Moreover, because of the direct relationship between two variables, any increase in emotional intelligence leads to increase in marital satisfaction.

Table 1. Summary of the demographic variables (N=100)

Variable	N (%)
Age (years)	
≤25	26 (8.2)
26–40	33 (39.8)
≥41	41 (52)
Education	
Bachelor	58 (60.2)
Postgraduate (Master & PhD)	42 (39.8)
Work experience (years)	
Less than 10	51 (42.4)
More than 10	49 (57.6)

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of the variables

Variable	N	Mean (SD)	Maximum	Minimum
Sensation seeking	100	18.2 (6.52)	49.00	10
Satisfaction	100	162.3 (30.29)	215.00	101.00
Emotional intelligence	100	317.2 (32.21)	406.00	269.00

Table 3. Correlation between sensation seeking, marital satisfaction, and emotional intelligence

Variable	Sensation seeking	Satisfaction	Emotional intelligence
Sensation seeking	1	-	-
Marital satisfaction	-0.63**	1	-
Emotional intelligence	-0.27	0.53**	1

** $P<0.001$

Table 4. Summary of regression analysis for variables predicting marital satisfaction

Model		Sum of squares	df	Mean squares	F	P	R	R ²
Sensation seeking	Regression	33049.2	1	33049.2	67.1	<0.001	.63	.40
	Residual	48215.8	98	491.9				
	Total	81265.0	99					
Intelligence	Regression	44343.4	2	22171.7	58.2	<0.001	.73	.54
	Residual	36921.6	97	380.6				
	Total	81265.0	99					

Table 5. Summary of regression analysis for variables predicting marital satisfaction

Model	B	SE B	β	P	CI 95%
1 Constant	207.218	6.590			62.19_78.03
Sensation seeking	-2.705	0.330	-0.638	<0.001	-0.73_-0.30
2 Constant	92.7	21.808			59.36_74.92
Sensation seeking	-2.256	0.302	-0.532	<0.001	-4.24_-2.11
Intelligence	0.337	0.062	0.388	<0.001	0.80_2.93

Discussion

The results of the present research showed that for the studied sample, the average score of sensation seeking was 18.27 and the score of marital satisfaction was 162.32, which are good results as this score can more explain marital satisfaction. In addition, the average score of the present sample on emotional intelligence was 317. The score of sensation seeking in the study by Agha Mohammad Hasani et al. was reported 337 and in the study by Haghani et al., on university professors of the medical sciences, it was found to be 340. These results correspond to the results obtained in the present study (9, 23). The difference in the obtained scores is probably due to the difference in the study population.

It seems that the sample of the present study obtained higher scores on emotional intelligence due to their higher education and social success. The present study found that sensation seeking and emotional intelligence had a significant relationship with marital satisfaction. Similarly, Weisman et

al. stated that the level of stress and anxiety among individuals is a predictor of marital satisfaction (24).

The results of the present study revealed a significant difference between emotional intelligence and its components and marital satisfaction. This finding is in alignment with those of the study by Foroughi et al. who demonstrated a positive and significant relationship between emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction, and between components of social intelligence and marital satisfaction (25). Considering the obtained correlation coefficient, marital satisfaction can be predicted by emotional intelligence. This also corresponds to the results of the study by Eslami et al. who concluded that there is a significant correlation between emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction (10). However, it is not in alignment with the results of the study by Agha Mohammad et al., who concluded that not all subscales of emotional intelligence have significant relationships with

marital satisfaction (9). This can be due to using a different instrument in the current study.

Also, the present study revealed that there is a negative and significant relationship between emotional intelligence and sensation seeking; as the score for emotional intelligence increases, the score of sensation seeking drops. This was supported by the findings of the study by Khalafi et al., who concluded that emotional intelligence among ordinary youth in the scales of interpersonal skills, stress management, and adaptation skill is higher than that of delinquent youth; and that delinquents demonstrate higher levels of sensation seeking than the ordinary young people (26). It seems that increase in emotional intelligence among women leads to decrease in their sensation seeking which in turn leads to their marital satisfaction.

The findings of the present study indicated that there was a negative and significant relationship between the scores of sensation seeking and marital satisfaction. Considering the obtained correlation coefficient, marital satisfaction can be predicted by sensation seeking. This is in alignment with findings of Samifar et al. who concluded that there is a negative and significant relationship between marital satisfaction and sensation seeking (17). This also corresponds to the findings reported by Hosseini et al who concluded that there is a negative relationship between quality of marital life and sensation seeking, experience seeking, and risk taking (18).

Among the limitations of the present study was that only female teachers in the city of Boroujerd were studied, so caution must be observed when generalizing the results of the study.

Considering the importance of research findings, this research can help psychologists and family therapists to obtain more insights in this area. They can meanwhile do new interventions to improve marital satisfaction in couples.

Conflict of interest

Authors declare no conflict of interests.

References

1. Fazel A, Hagh SH, Keshavarz Z. The Predictive power of personality traits and life Style on a Couple satisfaction Women nurses in Shiraz. *J Sci Res Sociol Women*. 2011;2-3.
2. Bani AH. The effect of effective individual-social factor on 32-marital satisfaction human science. *J Sistan Bluchestan Uni*. 2002;5:27-31.
3. Bar-On R. Emotional intelligence and self-actualization. *Emotional intelligence in everyday life: A scientific inquiry*. 2001:82-97.
4. Fitness J. Emotional intelligence and intimate relationships. *Emotional intelligence in everyday life*. 2001:98-112.
5. Smith L, Ciarrochi J, Heaven PC. The stability and change of trait emotional intelligence, conflict communication patterns, and relationship satisfaction: A one-year longitudinal study. *Personality and Individual Differences*. 2008;45(8):738-43.
6. Abdullahi A. The relationship between emotional intelligence and styles of coping with marital satisfaction and harmony. *Evolutionary psychology. Iran Psychol*. 2011;27:279-83.
7. Kausar R. Relationship between social skills and mental health of female college teachers. *Indian Journal of Health and Wellbeing*. 2013;4(4):745.
8. McNulty RD, Brineman JM. Infidelity in dating relationships. *Annual review of sex research*. 2007;18(1):94-114.
9. Agha Mohammad Hasani P, Mokhtaree MR, Vazirinejad R, Asadian F. Study of Marital satisfaction in the employees of Rafsanjan University of medical sciences in 2011. *Community Health Journal*. 2013;7(2):30-9.
10. Eslami AA, Hasanzadeh A, Jamshidi F. The relationship between emotional intelligence health and marital satisfaction: a comparative study. *J Educ Health Promot*. 2014;3(1):24.
11. Rogers RW, Deckner CW. Effects of fear appeals and physiological arousal upon emotion, attitudes, and cigarette smoking. *J Pers Soc Psychol*. 1975;32(2):222-30.
12. Zuckerman M. The sensation seeking scale V (SSS-V): Still reliable and valid. *Personality and Individual Differences*. 2007;43(5):1303-5.
13. Lopes PN, Salovey P, Straus R. Emotional intelligence, personality, and the perceived quality of social relationships. *Personality and individual Differences*. 2003;35(3):641-58.
14. Holmes AJ, Hollinshead MO, Roffman JL, Smoller JW, Buckner RL. Individual differences in cognitive control circuit anatomy link sensation seeking, impulsivity, and substance use. *Journal of Neuroscience*. 2016;36(14): 4038-4049.
15. Cauffman E, Feldman S, Watherman J, Steiner H. Posttraumatic stress disorder among female juvenile offenders. *J Am Acad Child Adolesc Psychiatry*. 1998;37(11):1209-16.

16. Lauriola M, Panno A, Levin IP, Lejuez CW. Individual differences in risky decision making: A meta-analysis of sensation seeking and impulsivity with the balloon analogue risk task. *Journal of Behavioral Decision Making*. 2014;27(1):20-36.
17. Samifar H, Shakerinejad Gh. The Relationship between Sensation Seeking and Marital Satisfaction among Women. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary and Current Research*. 2014;2:592-5.
18. Fowers BJ, Olson DH. Enrich marital inventory: a discriminant validity and cross-validation assessment. *J Marital Fam Ther*. 1989;15(1):65-79.
19. Rajabi GR. Factorial structure of marital satisfaction scale in married staff members of Shahid Chamran University. *Iranian Journal of Psychiatry and Clinical Psychology*. 2010;15(4):351-8.
20. Samouei R, Kamali F, Alavi M, Yazdi M. Comparison of management capabilities of health services management students and medical students based on indicators of emotional intelligence in Isfahan University of medical sciences. *Iranian Journal of Medical Education*. 2011;10(5):1209-15. (Full Text in Persian)
21. Zuckerman M. Item revisions in the sensation seeking scale form V (SSS-V). *Personality and Individual Differences*. 1996;20(4):515.
22. Fathi K, Mehrabi Zadeh M. Depression, sensation seeking, aggression, attachment styles and parental education as a predictor of drug dependence in adolescents in Ahwaz. *Journal of Education and Psychology Studies*. 2008;9(2):23-45.
23. Haghani F, Aminian B, Changiz T. Do the Teachers who are selected by Students Have a Higher Emotional Intelligence?. *Strides in Development of Medical Education*. 2012;8(2):132-40. (Full Text in Persian)
24. Whisman MA, Jacobson NS. Depression, marital satisfaction, and marital and personality measures of sex roles*. *J Marital Fam Ther*. 1989;15(2):177-86.
25. Forooghi A, Hosseinian S, Yazdi SM. The relationship between emotional intelligence and its components with marital satisfaction of hospital staff. *Counseling Research & Developments*. 2009;7(26):25-35. (Full Text in Persian)
26. Khalafi A, Tangestani Y, Khanmohammadi S, et al. Comparative study of emotional intelligence and sensation seeking in delinquent youths normal Ahwaz. *Evaluation*. 2014;1250:1253.