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Editor's note

Research in the humanities, particularly in the special, widely used, and necessary domains and topics in the present age, are one of the concerns of thinkers, especially in the disciplines and fields that address social pathologies. Undoubtedly, appropriate and scientific planning in this field needs to be supported by rigorous research with various basic, applied, and developmental approaches.

The issue of science production and new theorizations, especially in women and family, which is one of the new challenges of the present age, has various dimensions in the legal, social, economic, political, psychological, and cultural aspects. And the direct and indirect effects of these aspects on the family institution in particular and women in general double the necessity of localization and deepening of research.

The Quarterly "*Journal of Woman and Family Studies*" the scientific journal of the *Women Research Center* of Alzahra University, tries to

prioritize the publication of original articles resulting from theory construction articles with new ideas in women and the family.

The present publication welcomes new research findings and scientific and applied articles that include the issues needed by the Iranian society among its strategic goals.

This journal accepts new research findings and scientific and applied research articles whose strategic goals have addressed topics needed by Iranian society.

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Lived Experience of Women in Response to Their Husband's Infidelity: A Descriptive Phenomenological Study

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ABSTRACT

Infidelity is an important matter in marital relationships and it has undesired and deleterious outcomes for family institution. The aim of this study was to investigate the lived experience of women in response to their husband's. The qualitative design of descriptive-phenomenological method has been used to collect and evaluate the data on response to spouse's infidelity in marital life. Nine female participants were recruited using purposive sampling method and the data collecting was administered using semi-structured interviews until reaching to theoretical saturation. The data analysis showed 13 contributing components of women's lived experience in response to husband infidelity which include women's lived experience in response to husband infidelity which include: self-harm, deciding to end the relationship and separation, threatening husband to mutual infidelity, disruption of normal routines of everyday life, loss of belief in being unique, feeling inferior and humiliated, disbelief in religious beliefs and justice in the world, losing self-confidence, losing touch with the outside world, attributing to oneself, distrust of the world, losing the meaning of life, aggression and quarreling. The results showed that women who experience the infidelity of their spouse experience different reactions, these reactions are based on internal experiences and external reactions towards the spouse. Therefore, considering the effect of marital infidelity on the person and the relationship, it is necessary to know and understand these reactions.

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Introduction

Infidelity appears to be universal, and some people cheat on their partners in all cultures (Fisher, 2017; Josephs, 2018). However, unfaithful spouses do not always manage to hide and are often detected (Apostolou & Ioannidou, 2021; Apostolou & Demosthenous, 2021). Dealing with infidelity is an almost common phenomenon; the prevalence of these events in different studies has been reported from 26 to 92% for males and at a range of 17 to 87% for females (Norris, 1992). Reacting to stressors and traumatic factors to different issues in family is almost different. Each family therapist may encounter with the clients who want to cope with these stressful and unusual factors; the therapist who are dealt with couples and families affected by these psychological traumas have always been witnessed the penetration and influence of these traumatic events on the system of interpersonal relationships (Donald, 2004). For example, the women who were informed of their cancer were first shocked and then experienced anxiety and distress, and most of them developed severe mental disorders such as depression and psychiatric disorders (Donald, 2004). Infidelity can be a disruptive event in a romantic relationship with a devastating impact on both partners' well-being (Vowels et al., 2021).

The betrayed people showed reactions such as denial, rage, talkativeness, or emotions such as self-blame, guilt, and responsibility, as well as mental rumination about the loss (Kübler-Ross, 1969). Another traumatic and stressful phenomenon the family therapists are dealt with is the growing issue of infidelity. Although infidelity is a common problem for couples, dealing with that is one of the most difficult and challenging problems (Atwood & Seifer, 1997). Various causes can lead people to infidelity, including curiosity, variety-seeking, the motivation to experience, struggling with inefficiency and gaining self-confidence, entertainment, escaping from reality, revenge, and sexual curiosity (Glasser & Glasser, 2010). According to Glasser (Harris, 2003), couples begin their life with love, but gradually they realize that the initial intimacy is faded and the romantic life is ended or continues with blame and monotony. The couples turn to infidelity to experience intimacy and love again. According to Harris (Bird et al., 2007), women express a sense of



emotional disconnection from their partner and dissatisfaction with their relationship with partner as the main cause of infidelity while sexual attractions are the main cause of infidelity for men. After physical violence, infidelity is the most harmful and destructive event in marriage, which can lead to harm to both parties involved in the fidelity, and finally to separation (Lusterman, 2005). When the person is informed of her/his spouse's infidelity, s/he feels anger, shame, feelings of hurt and loss, jealousy, deception, fear, and mistrust (Humphrey, 2013).

Initial reactions to disclosure of infidelity include trauma (shock), anger, and denial (Spring, 2012). The studies showed that the people affected by marital infidelity often have strong emotions ranging from anger towards the infidel spouse and inner feelings of embarrassment, depression, and a sense of victimhood (Aminiha et al., 2015; Brown, 2013; Gordon et al., 2004). Men are more upset over a mate's sexual infidelity than women, whereas women are more upset over a mate's emotional infidelity than men (Buss, 2018). Men are more likely to engage in sexual infidelity (Labrecque & Whisman (2017) whereas women may be more likely to engage in emotional infidelity (Selterman, et al., 2019).

The high costs of infidelity cause women to show strong anger and jealousy in response to infidelity, and ultimately these reactions lead to the use of physical violence or ending the relationship (Buss, 2021). Infidelity can be one of the most important factors that lead women to divorce (Apostolou et al., 2019).

The couples use different strategies and reactions after that the spouse's infidelity is discovered. The studies have shown that both parties show a wide range of negative emotions such as rage, frustration, guilt, and inefficiency after the revelation of spouse's infidelity, and some spouses turn to Allah (Drigotas et al., 1999). Shackelford et al. (2000) identified 15 emotional reactions to infidelity: Undesirable/Insecure, Hostile/Vengeful, Depressed, Helpless/Abandoned, Happy, Shocked, Nauseated/Repulsed, Blameworthy, Content/Relieved, Humiliated, sexually aroused, Tired, Homicidal/Suicidal, Anxious, Forgiving.

The revelation of spousal infidelity threatens the physical, psychological, and emotional well-being of both spouses, and violence, murder, and suicide have been reported in these cases (Momeni Javid & Shoakazemi, 2011b).

Answering to the questions of the betrayed spouse and discussing the details of the matter and paying attention to the betrayed spouse's reactions to the infidelity increases the likelihood of recovering and preventing the possible dangers of re-infidelity. The more responsive the unfaithful spouse is, the better the quality of the marital relationship will be and the sooner the betrayed spouse will be recovered (Allen & Baucom, 2004). In different types of extramarital relationships (sexual-emotional), men and women react differently (Spring, 2012). In general, women try more to recover their relationship while men tend to end it and look for a replacement; women attribute their husbands' illegitimate relationship to their own incompetence and men to their sexual incompetence (Nadler & Dotan, 1992). When a woman is betrayed, she is more likely to strive to recover the relationship, partly due to this fact that she has been learned in the community to make others pleased and deprive herself. Another reason women try to save their relationships is that they think the only option they will have is living lonely, and this is what they are afraid of (McGrathEllen 1990). According to the National Working Group of the American Association (DePaulo et al., 1993), women are twice as likely as men to suffer from clinical depression after discovering their husbands' affairs; because, first, they tend to criticize themselves more than others, second, women define themselves based on their relationship with others and equate their worth with being loved. Women are more likely than men to become obsessed with their husbands' illegitimate relationship and focus on their husbands' deception and lies, and recall the details of their husbands' infidelity, and thus, the pain of mistrust never goes away (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003). Apostolou et al (2022) employed quantitative research methods on a sample of 757 Greek-speaking participants, and classified these reactions into 17 broad factors. Among the most probable reactions, were experiencing negative emotions, terminating the relationship, keeping physical distance from the unfaithful partner, and getting more information about the incident.



Amani et al. (2020) examined the experience of women affected by infidelity, and reported three main themes: increased life problems, psychological distress, and disrupted communication functions. Rasoulzadeh Aghdam et al. (2021) reported two themes of destructive behaviors and corrective behaviors of spouses reported by betrayed women. Morsali et al. (2018) reported four main themes in women's forgiveness of spouse infidelity: self-focused factors, spouse-focused factors, relationship-focused factors, and external-focused factors. Accordingly, spousal infidelity is a traumatic experience for women and can cause many problems for them. After experiencing infidelity, women report different inner experiences and engage in different behaviors.

Given cultural issues, Iranian women's internal experiences and external behaviors in response to their husband's infidelity can be different from the experiences of women in other cultures. Moreover, the studies conducted in Iran have less focused on women's deep inner experiences and their psychological reactions. These inner experiences and behaviors based on them play a major role in women's adaptation after trauma. To this end, this study seeks to deeply investigate women's inner experiences and behaviors in response to their husband's infidelity. Thus, the following question is addressed in this study what is the experience of women affected by husband's infidelity and how do they express their experiences?

Methods

Study Design and participants

This research was a phenomenological research design. The participants in the research were selected from among the betrayed women who had referred to Ahvaz city counseling centers and those who responded positively to the research call after conducting the initial interview. The criteria for entering the research include 1- Marriage, 2- Experience of emotional and sexual infidelity of the spouse in the last 1 year, 3- Living in Ahvaz city, Education at least diploma and 5- Willingness to participate in the research. The exclusion criteria were: 1- Having psychological disorders

The researcher interviewed with women with experience of husband's infidelity, and the interviews continued until reaching data saturation. It should be noted that all interviews were recorded on tape, then carefully transcribed on paper and matched with the recorded information. The research design was qualitative. According to Husserl's phenomenological views, Giorgi (Giorgi, 2009) determined the analytical stages used in this study to investigate the experience of betrayed women. These stages included exact transcription of the interviews and reading the texts of the interviews for several times to gain the meaning of the whole, identifying the semantic units with a phenomenological attitude, transferring the meanings from the participants' natural language to psychological meaning. Finally, the researcher used the imagination-based change technique to combine the

Table 1. the participants' demographic information

NO	AGE	Education	Duration of marriage	Occupation	Number of children
1	40	Bachelor's degree	19	Housewife	2
2	37	Master's degree	14	Employed	3
3	29	Master's degree	6	Employed	-
4	25	Diploma	4	Housewife	1
5	32	Diploma	8	Housewife	1
6	36	Diploma	7	Employed	-
7	43	Bachelor's degree	17	Employed	2
8	34	Bachelor's degree	9	Housewife	-
9	35	Bachelor's degree	16	Housewife	1

semantic units into a whole (Cano & O'Leary, 2000), indicating the final structure of the participants' experience of husband's infidelity. The participants in the present study were women with the experience of husband's



infidelity, who participated in this study at the invitation of the researcher. The sampling method was purposeful. The participants were 9 women, as determined based on data saturation criteria. The participants' mean age and marital life duration was 33.7 years old and 10.6 years, respectively. The interviewed were performed using semi-structured interviews. The interview time for each participant was about 1 hour.

Data Analysis

The researcher attempted to analyze the data obtained from the interviews with the participants on their experience of husband's infidelity according to the descriptive phenomenological stages proposed by Giorgi.(2009) To this end, the researcher carefully transcribed the recorded interviews. Then, the transcriptions were read for many times to get a meaning of the whole. In this point, the researcher attempted to avoid the influence of the assumptions on the participants' descriptions, and constantly used the process of bracketing. Reading the interviews helped the researcher to recognize the moment of data saturation; so that no duplicate information was obtained. Then, the researcher extracted the semantic unit of each interview on the reaction to husband's infidelity, and put a slash to divide the semantic unit for each participant. In this point, the researcher had descriptive phenomenological attitude and tried to consider the influence of assumptions and remain more faithful to the participants' natural language in reacting to husband's infidelity. In the next stage, the researcher used imagination-based change technique to transfer the semantic units of the reaction to husband's infidelity from the participants' natural language to the researcher's psychological language and combine the semantic units and express them in form of meaningful phrases of the reaction to husband's infidelity in wives with the experience of husband's infidelity. In the final stage of the study, the researcher tries to combine the meaningful phrases into an integrated structure and express then as the nature of the reaction to husband's infidelity in the context of marital life.

After coding the content of the interviews by the researcher, the extracted codes were given to three subject-matter experts and they were asked to independently determine the semantic units of the interviews. The semantic

units extracted by the researcher and three experts had a good agreement, confirming the validity of the coding scheme used in this study.

To ensure the credibility of the findings, the data collection and analysis procedures were performed accurately so that the readers can get a real understanding of the subject when reading the article. Moreover, the story notes were sent to the participants to read them and comment on the degree to which each story/narrative matched their case. The participants stated that they can recognize themselves in the story presented. Finally, with the progress of the research procedure, theoretical sampling was used. The extracted codes and categories were named based on the expressions or words used by the participants if they were adequately representative of the underlying themes.

Finding

The findings of this study on the lived experience of wife's reaction to husband's infidelity included 13 components that formed the general and final structure of this phenomenon in the participants' experience.

The first component: self-harm: The participants in this study mentioned that the pain and grief they experienced because of their husbands' infidelity led them to commit suicide and harm themselves. The participants who experienced marital infidelity described the experience so horrific and catastrophic that they even decided to commit suicide. *"When I discovered my husband's affairs, I became very angry and tried to suicide two or three times, and once I went on a bridge to fall, but other people stopped me"* (Participant 1).

The second component: deciding to end the relationship and separation: The participants expressed that they decided to end their marital life and get divorced. They told that there was no reason or motive to continue living with their husbands after their husbands' infidelity and asked for separation, and the love and affection that were the cause of living together all were disappeared and the husband's repeated infidelity brought them to the point in their lives that they could not stand relationship and decided to separate and leave their husband. *"I told myself that I was ready to have my belongings on*



my shoulders and live in the street, but I could no longer live with such a person. I cannot stay here and so, I separated" (Participant 6).

The third component: threatening husband to mutual infidelity: The participants in this study expressed that revenge and retaliatory action and having relationship with a man other than their husband was another reaction and consequence of their husbands' infidelity. They described their experience of husband's infidelity that they tried to do a retaliatory action and threatened their husband to have relationship with another man to harm him. This component was repeated in the literature. *"The moment I found out, I told him I wanted to kill him and cut his penis with a knife or tore his belly"* (Participant 3).

The fourth component: disruption of normal routines of everyday life: These components included the disruption of normal routines of the participants' everyday life and the effects the husband's infidelity had on wives' sleep, nutrition, and weight. Describing their experience of their husbands' infidelity, these participants stated that they couldn't sleep most nights and thought of what happened. They said that thought they spent most of their time in bed, they rarely slept and most of their little sleep was nightmare, and they talked to themselves in their sleep. They also expressed that their husbands' infidelity had a severe effect on the amount of food they ate. *"I was very sleep deprived and could not sleep at all. I also am too much. I couldn't control myself to eat less, so I became overweight"* (Participant 7).

The fifth component: loss of belief in being unique: The participants believed that the infidelity of their husband destroyed their belief in their husbands' love and that no one could make the husbands happy except them. They expressed that after their husbands' infidelity, they felt that not only were they not unique, but they became a person who lost the charm and sense of being loved. *"I used to spent all my time for my husband with all my heart and said to myself that he loved me as I loved him, but I found out that it was not true"* (Participant 7).

The sixth component: feeling inferior and humiliated: In general, the participants in this study, after experiencing husband's infidelity, sometimes experienced a feeling of extreme humiliation, so they saw themselves

strangely inferior to others. When they were in a group, they felt that others were more valuable to their husband, and they thought everyone was superior and better than them. When the participants in this study realized their husbands', secret relationship felt inferior and worthless since they saw that their husband spent more time and money for the third party. They considered themselves too inferior and weak. *"The most painful part of my husband's infidelity was that I saw how much he was spending much money for that woman, but I was beside him but he paid no attention to me"* (Participant 4).

The seventh component: disbelief in in religious beliefs and justice in the world: The belief of the participants, in this study, in order and justice in the world collapsed after realizing their husbands' infidelity. In fact, the presumption that they were a good human being and the universe was a safe and meaningful place had become a source of doubt for them. The participants expressed that they used to perform all religious rites and rituals, but after revelation of their husbands' infidelity, they lost their relationship with Allah because they thought they were not worthy of such bad behavior. They believed that if Allah had cared of them, He would not have left them in such a cruel world. The literature indicated this fact, too. *"I always complained to Allah because He did not help me and destroyed my dreams and did not treat me fairly. I no longer believe in Allah"* (Participant 8).

The eighth component: losing self-confidence: Losing self-confidence in the participants of this study was defined as inability to perform normal daily tasks and inability to perform activities that they used to do before engaging in marital extramarital affairs and began to change their appearance and clothing style. The participants expressed they lost their self-confidence after realizing their husbands' infidelity and felt that their husband was attracted to other women because they were not beautiful and did not have a fit body. *"I lost my self-confidence and cannot do the activities I used to do. I feel very bad about myself and sometimes I change my clothing style"* (Participant 2).

The ninth component: losing touch with the outside world: The participants mentioned the adverse effects of their husbands' extramarital affairs on their outside world. They expressed that they had limited contact with those around them and had no motive to go out after they realized their husbands' infidelity. They stated that they did not like going out anymore and



even had no contact with their family. They preferred to be alone and have no contact with others. They often lock themselves at home. *"I do not call anymore. I do not answer if somebody calls me. I do not answer my intimate friends' calls, and even I do not open the door for them when they knock on the door"* (Participant 8).

The tenth component: attributing to oneself: The participants of this study blamed themselves for what happened when they realized their husbands' infidelity. They tried to make themselves more sexually and physically attractive by changing their appearance and clothing style because they blamed themselves and attributing the causes of their husbands' infidelity to themselves. They in fact wanted to compensate the shortcomings and unkindness they felt they had towards their husband. *"I told myself that I was ugly. I was not the string and useful person my husband liked. I thought I was overweight but my husband liked a slim woman"* (Participant 4).

The eleventh component: distrust of the world: This component indicated the participants' distrust of the world. They expressed that they not only lost their trust in their husband, but in all men, and unlike usual, there was no one and nothing reliable for them after they realized their husbands' infidelity. *"After my husband's infidelity, I cannot trust in anyone, and unlike in the past, I do not talk to anyone and I cannot trust in them"* (Participant 4).

The twelfth component: losing the meaning of life: This component included the loss of life and marital life meaning after the husband's infidelity. The participants stated that they felt emptiness and nihilism after their husbands' infidelity. In fact, they felt worthless. *"The worst feeling I had was that I became nothing and I was no longer valuable"* (Participant 9).

The thirteenth component: aggression and quarreling: This component refers to long-running quarrels and disputes after revelation of husband's infidelity. The participants expressed that they often quarreled and beat each other. Their husbands' infidelity, according to them, led them to break respect and dignity and start quarreling and aggression. There are lots of evidence in this regard in the literature. *"We had been arguing since then, and he broke*

my nose for many times. Once we quarreled from night until morning" (participant 6).

Discussion & Conclusion

Women's reaction to their husbands' infidelity were associated with self-harm, and rage and suicide attempts were reported as well. Discovering the husband's infidelity threatens the wife's psychological well-being and self-harm has been reported in this regard (Humphrey, 2013; Momeni Javid & Shoaakazemi, 2011b; Spring, 2012; Touesnard, 2009). immediately after the discovery of the husband's infidelity, many women seek to find out the cause of the infidelity and they ask "why did this happen to me". Furthermore, they tend to blame themselves or their husbands. Some women focus on their role in infidelity and some on the role of the husband. The participants in this study pointed out the role of their husbands in making them to decide about ending the relationship and separation. One of the most important threats to the stability of marital life and the most prevalent reason for divorce in different cultures is the issue of spouse's infidelity (Amato, 2004; Charny & Parnass, 1995; Hertlein et al., 2005; Knight, 2010; Young & DeBlasio, 1998).

Although ending the relationship and divorce is one of the women's reactions to infidelity, not all women seek to end the relationship after discovering the infidelity. Because several factors such as loving the spouse, children, financial support of the spouse, etc., make the person stay in the relationship. Mutual infidelity and threatening the spouse to have affairs is another reaction to and consequence of spouse's infidelity. The betrayed spouse feels rage and aggression to the cheating spouse and turns to extramarital affairs for revenge (Aminiha et al., 2015; Bird et al., 2007; Brown, 2013; Gordon et al., 2004). Most betrayed women in this study suffered from disruption of their every day and routine life, sleep and eating disorders, as well as changes in their weights. Discovering infidelity disrupts wives' normal activities and causes problems such as experiencing nightmares and sleep and eating disorders for betrayed wives (Azadnam & Nariman, 2013; Baucom et al., 2009).

Cheating challenged the belief and trust of women participating in this study, regarding the oneness and uniqueness of their marital relationships. A



study (Corsini & Wedding, 1989) showed that such relations cause emotions such as worthless and loss of identity. According to Adler's theory, feeling of humiliation arises from a sense of imperfection and defect in every aspect of life, and its extreme form involves negative attitudes towards oneself (Spring, 2012). The interviews with betrayed women revealed that they had experiences emotions such as humiliation, inferiority, foolishness, and weakness. The studies have indicated that spouse's infidelity challenges another party's religious beliefs, and people experience different religious behaviors after discovering the spouse's cheating (Atkins et al., 2001). In the present study, after discovering their husbands' infidelity, women lost their belief in the orderliness and justice of the universe and since they did not deserve such oppression, it led them to feel disconnected from Allah. A study (Knight, 2010) showed that the couples who deal with extramarital affairs experienced low self-confidence.

The participants in this study tried to regain their self-confidence by blaming themselves, criticizing their appearance, and changing their clothing style. People's negative reaction to spouse's infidelity includes isolation and feeling lonely, leading them to lose their contact with others (Blow & Hartnett, 2005; Brown, 2013; Olson et al., 2002). The betrayed women pointed out that their husbands' infidelity led them to lose their contact with the outside world. A study (DePaulo et al., 1993) indicated that dealing with the spouse's infidelity, women are more likely than men to attribute this issue to their own incompetence and inefficiency in marital life and criticize themselves. The interviews conducted in this study showed that women put the blame on themselves for their husbands' extramarital affairs by criticizing themselves, comparing themselves to their husbands' partner, and focusing on their weaknesses. One of the usual reactions of betrayed people to spouse's infidelity is denial of cheating (Wiederman, 1997; Young & DeBlasio, 1998). Justifying their husbands' behaviors, their job requirements, and denying the issue, the betrayed women try to convince themselves that their husbands had no extramarital affairs. The spouse's infidelity causes severe emotional turmoil in the couple (Azadnam & Nariman, 2013). The participants in this study, as they asserted, cried and felt misery. Mistrust and negative thinking of the world is another consequence of spouse's infidelity. Illegitimate

relationships questioned the spouse's trust and the betrayed spouse can never trust his/her partner as before (Humphrey, 2013; Knight, 2010). The literature showed that people lose their identity after their partner's betrayal (Donald, 2004).

Feeling nihilism, worthlessness, and having no motive to live have been reported in betrayed women. The participants in this study reported quarrel, beatings, anger and aggression. Long-running quarrels and feeling rage to the cheating husband have been observed in families dealing with extramarital affairs (Fairbrother et al., 2005; Momeni Javid & Shoaakazemi, 2011a; Wiederman, 1997; Young & DeBlasio, 1998). Some women react aggressively and tend to hurt their husbands after discovering their husband's infidelity. These reactions may vary from verbal aggression to spousal killing (Buss, 2021). They may also harm their husbands in various other ways, such as inciting their children against their husbands, seeking revenge against their spouses, and disgracing them. In this study, women also reported different reactions such as hitting their husbands, insulting their husbands, going to their husband's workplaces and fighting at their workplace, and frequent fights at home. Based on the betrayed women's experiences, the present study investigated the very important issue of marital infidelity on the part of husband in the cultural-social context of the country. As findings of this study showed, the betrayed women experienced cognitive, emotional, physical, and spiritual injuries. Women reacted inefficiently to their husbands' infidelity. Due to the important position of family in the Iranian culture, the results of this study indicated that the extent and severity of this harm is significant. Therefore, with emphasis on conducting further studies on spousal infidelity, the family counselors and psychologists are suggested to adopt preventive and interventional measurements to improve the interactions of couples. Since the main purpose of this study was to investigate the lived experiences of betrayed women in a specific context, it is limited to the participants and caution should be exercised in generalizing these results. It is suggested to conduct the same study in male community and other contexts.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval: The researchers informed all participants about the objectives of the study by telling them about the study design and assuring them of their anonymity and the confidentiality of their data, as well as their



ability to withdraw their participation at any time; following this, informed consent was obtained from all participants. The time of the interview were determined by the participants. This research was approved by the Ethics Committee of Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz (EE/99.3.02.24959/scu.ac.ir).

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The Power Structure in Family and Women's Sexual Satisfaction

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ABSTRACT

Sexual satisfaction is one of the most influential factors in marital satisfaction and stability of married life. This study tried to explore the relationship between the family's power structure and its dimensions with women's sexual satisfaction. The population consisted of all married women residing in Tabriz. A sample of 400 women was selected using Cochran's formula and multi-stage cluster sampling. A standard questionnaire was used to collect data, and SPSS software was used to analyze the data. The descriptive results showed that the mean score of sexual satisfaction among the participants was 244.40 (average), and the mean score of the power structure in the family was 42.5 (average). Regarding sexual satisfaction, the mean score of sexual expression was 23.13 (relatively low), the mean score of sexual participation was 35.40 (relatively high), the mean score of sexual excitement was 22.45 (relatively low), the mean score of sexual desire was 25.02 (relatively high), the mean score of sexual fulfillment was 41.02 (relatively high), the mean score of sexual attitude was 52.46 (high), and the mean score of sexual awareness was 52.94 (relatively high). Regarding power structure, the mean score of the dimension of participation in decision-making was 9.54 (relatively low), the mean score of persuasion was 17.67 (average), and the mean score of power symmetry was 15.33 (average). The results of the Pearson correlation test revealed a positive and statistically significant relationship between power structure in the family and sexual satisfaction among women. Moreover, there exists a significant relationship between all dimensions of the power structure in the family and sexual satisfaction. It can also be argued that strengthening the democratic and participatory structure of families would enhance all dimensions of women's sexual satisfaction. According to the study, it is recommended that society a cooperative and democratic power structure be institutionalized within the family in order to enhance women's sexual satisfaction.

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Introduction

Family is the smallest and the most significant institution, which consists of husband, wife, and children. The form, type, and boundaries of relationships between family members constitute the structure of the family (Garrousi, 2009). The satisfaction of spouses is a crucial aspect of married life, which in turn influences many of its other aspects. Marriage should be based on a satisfying relationship so that partners can meet their emotional and psychological needs, feel psychologically secure, and fulfill their sexual needs in a peaceful environment (Farajnia, 2013).

Regulating sexual relationships is a fundamental function of the family unit. That is, marriage and family formation serve as primary avenues for the interaction and sexual relationships between men and women. In such a state, that family, marriage, and sexual relations are in harmony with one another. Marriage is viewed as a comprehensive union that encompasses emotional relationships, sexual relationships, and economic relationships between spouses. This relationship is authorized by Sharia and law, and the commitment made between the couples is a key issue in this multifaceted relationship. Sexual relationship is such a significant, powerful, and determining factor that it affects married life emotionally and physically (Heidari, 2010).

Social sciences researchers have always focused on satisfactory marital relationships and their determinants. Sexual issues, including sexual satisfaction, are the main determining factors in marital compatibility and satisfaction, but in some countries, women hold the belief that explicitly discussing their sexual concerns is not socially acceptable. Women are expected to demonstrate respect towards their spouses and family by not talking in public. The patriarchal and collaborative nature of decision-making left no space for research on the sexual satisfaction of marital relations among women (Bilal et al., 2020).

Sexual satisfaction has been defined from the "positive affect" perspective as the degree to which a person is satisfied with his/her sexual relationship (Sprecher & Cate, 2004) and an emotional response that results from subjective evaluation of positive and negative aspects of sexual relationship (Lowrance & Byers, 1995). Additionally, sexual expectations have always served as the foundation for sexual satisfaction. This can be defined as the degree to which a person's sexual activity meets his expectations (Delamater, 1991). Similar to numerous other definitions of life satisfaction, these definitions view satisfaction as a mental and subjective issue. Thus, the ultimate decision rests within the person and is influenced by a set of unique experiences (McClelland, 2010). Sexual satisfaction is a highly personal feeling that is closely tied to one's personal previous sexual acts, current expectations, and future ambitions. It is a significant factor in sexual health and satisfaction. Moreover, experiencing a satisfying sexual life is considered by some to be the foundation of having a happy marriage and family, as well as a key component of healthy life (Zegeye et al., 2019).

Sexual dissatisfaction, on the other hand, is one of the primary causes of divorce and relationship problems, as well as one of the primary factors affecting women's health. Sexual dissatisfaction is more prevalent among women than men on a global scale. 15% to 50% of women are dissatisfied with their sexual activities, and 50% of divorces are caused by sexual dissatisfaction (Zegeye et al., 2019). Numerous studies have demonstrated that sexual issues are among couples' most significant issues. Moreover, numerous studies have demonstrated that sexual satisfaction is essential for maintaining an intimate relationship, making it the primary factor determining the success or failure of a couple's relationship (Masoumi et al., 2017). Other studies have demonstrated that some couples have sexual problems but avoid discussing it because they view it as forbidden. This issue causes unresolved problems and conflicts between couples and has a negative impact on intimacy and life satisfaction (Masoumi et al., 2017). Significantly more research has been conducted over the past three decades on the factors that predict and contribute to sexual satisfaction or the subjective sense of happiness from sexual experiences and relationships. Importantly, research has distinguished sexual satisfaction from sexual distress, which refers to negative emotions such as worry, frustration, or anxiety associated with sexual experiences and



has been a diagnostic criterion for clinically significant sexual dysfunction. In addition, numerous studies have demonstrated that sexual satisfaction has positive effects on mental, relational, and physical health, enhances sexual performance, reduces depression, and protects the quality of life from health-related concerns (Frei Hart et al., 2020). Quinn-Nilas (2019) demonstrated that relationship satisfaction increases linearly in long-term, stable marriages between middle-aged Americans while sexual satisfaction decreases linearly. According to their path analysis, all changes in relationship satisfaction and sexual satisfaction are closely related.

They discovered that both relationship satisfaction and sexual satisfaction evolve over time. Half of the participants in Zegeye et al.'s (2019) study reported moderate sexual satisfaction, while only .39 percent reported the highest level of sexual satisfaction. Such factors as low self-esteem, a lack of social responsibility, poor sexual performance, a lack of prior knowledge about sexuality, and the stigmatization of sexual conversation are closely related to sexual satisfaction. Velten et al. (2017) demonstrated that sexual performance, sexual distress, frequency of sexual activity, sexual desire discrepancy, sexual initiative, sexual dialogue, sociosexual orientation, masturbation, and life satisfaction are all significantly related to sexual satisfaction. However, there is no significant correlation between age and the length of a relationship, and sexual satisfaction. However, there is no significant correlation between age and the length of a relationship, and sexual satisfaction. Carcedo, et al. (2020) discovered that women without a romantic partner experience greater sexual satisfaction and mental health issues. In addition, there is a correlation between higher levels of sexual satisfaction and lower levels of anxiety and depression in young adults. These findings are more pronounced in people who are in a relationship. This study stressed the significance of sexual satisfaction as a protective factor against mental health disorders, particularly in the context of a romantic relationship. Hyde & Delamater (2006) demonstrated that partners' communication factors significantly correlate with their sexual satisfaction. Bilal et al. (2020) demonstrated that sexual satisfaction significantly impacts the relationship between marital and life satisfaction among married women. Without a satisfying sexual life, married women cannot experience marital and life

satisfaction. Shah Siyah, et al. (2009) found a significant correlation between marital commitment, the duration of the marriage, and sexual satisfaction. Lee (2016) also demonstrated a correlation between sexual satisfaction and relationship satisfaction, affection, commitment to a romantic partner, and relationship stability. In a study of individuals seeking divorce, 32% of women and 30% of men cited sexual problems as the cause. Consequently, a number of longitudinal studies have demonstrated that couples who report lower levels of sexual satisfaction are more likely to separate or dissolve their relationship (Lee, 2016).

The main idea is that a variety of variables influence sexual satisfaction, as numerous factors have been suggested by various studies. The family power structure is another essential social factor that can influence sexual satisfaction. Power is an essential social variable that must be considered when analyzing any social structure, institution, or even interpersonal relationship. The nature of power relationships in life can be studied, and the family is no exception. How power is distributed and exercised in life affects the development and growth of personality, socialization, self-esteem, cohesion, satisfaction, alienation, loneliness, and marital satisfaction (Bakhshipour et al., 2017). Family power structure refers to the patterns of power dynamics within the family. Most researchers divide decision-making patterns into four categories based on the type of relationship between the husband and wife in the family, including the husband and wife's joint efforts to solve their problems, their independent space, the dominance of the woman, and the dominance of the man. Litel et al. (1996) demonstrated that power-sharing between husband and wife is associated with the maximum level of satisfaction, whereas female dominance in a couple relationship would be associated with a lower level of satisfaction than partnership and male dominance. Some scholars, such as Abbou (1993) and Isvan (1991), identify family decision-making as a criterion of family power. Others view the manner of exercising power as the most important criterion. When examining the power structure in the family, Wiggins (1994) and Blood (1969) paid particular attention to the degree of participation of the husband and wife as well as the aspect of power symmetry, and they hold that the best decisions should be bilateral and symmetrical (Mahdavi & Khosrowshahi, 2003).



Lack of imbalance and equality of power within the family diminishes the value of equality in a relationship and makes one partner, male or female, feel less important, leading to dissatisfaction. The distinction in the couple's relative power influences the couple's life satisfaction. The balance of power over decisions has varied effects on couples. For both men and women, power equality improves relationship satisfaction. To examine power in the family, Isvan focuses on the following dimensions: decision-making power in deciding whether or not to have children, decision-making power in social affairs, decision-making power regarding economic affairs, and independence in the family. Before a few decades, the predominant family structure in Iran was the extended family based on tradition and religion, with the father as the head. In the power hierarchy, a husband or father occupies the apex of the pyramid. With the modernization of Iran, this form of family relationship power shifted. Numerous documents demonstrate that women's education, employment, and income outside the household can alter their status (Barani et al., 2016).

Today, there has been a shift in the power dynamics within the family unit. The concept of power structure within the family refers to the established patterns of power dynamics that govern familial relationships. Researchers have categorized decision-making patterns in families into four distinct situations based on the nature of the relationship between the husband and wife. These include joint problem-solving efforts, independent decision-making domains for each spouse, female sovereignty, and male sovereignty. Little et al.'s (1996) research demonstrated that the degree of power-sharing between spouses is positively correlated with relationship satisfaction. Gray-Little et al. (1996) found that power-sharing between husband and wife is associated with the highest level of satisfaction, while female dominance in a couple relationship is associated with less satisfaction than in a cooperative relationship and male dominance. Scholars such as Abboutt (1993) and Isvan (1991) have explored decision-making within the family as an indicator of power dynamics.

Several scholars have posited that the way of exercising power constitutes the primary criterion. Scholars, including Wiggins (1994) & Blood (1969),

have given particular consideration to the degree of participation of both spouses and the concept of power symmetry when analyzing the formation of power dynamics within the family unit. According to Mahdavi and Khosrowshahi (2003), it is believed that optimal decisions should possess bilateral and symmetrical attributes. The distribution of power within the family and the decision-making patterns, such as male or female dominance, are critical factors that determine the power structure in the family. The power distribution issue within the family, the degree to which each partner possesses it, and the decision-making patterns employed (e.g., male or female dominance) are key factors that shape the power dynamics within the family unit. A spectrum can be identified based on the decision-making process within families. Collaborative decision-making is observed on one end of the spectrum, where decision-making power is equally distributed between men and women. On the other end, decision-making power is unequally dominated by either the husband or wife in certain families (Katebi, 2013). The inequality and equality of power within the family diminish the value of equality in a relationship and cause one of the spouses, male or female, to feel less significant than the other, leading to dissatisfaction. In fact, the difference in power between the partners affects the couple's life satisfaction. The distribution of the power to make decisions influences men and women differently. Equal power results in increased relationship satisfaction for women. This is also true for men, and this balance of power impacts women's sexual satisfaction by increasing their life satisfaction. According to the theory of power, a couple's satisfaction and dissatisfaction are influenced by how much each spouse contributes to joint decisions; as a result, persons in relationships who believe that the power (each individual's contribution to decision-making) is unfairly distributed feel unsatisfied.

Various societal transformations have resulted in alterations in family and marital relationships. Historically, families have had a diverse range of gender role models. Traditionally, men were assigned to perform tasks outside the home, while women were responsible for domestic duties. The current economic challenges and shifting societal values related to family roles have prompted a need for increased financial stability, leading women to express greater interest in pursuing personal growth and development beyond domestic responsibilities. This increased their visibility in scientific



communities and the labor market (Bahmani et al., 2011). Litel et al. (1996) demonstrated that power distribution between husband and wife results in the highest degree of satisfaction, whereas female dominance in their relationship results in a lower level of satisfaction than in cooperative relationships and male dominance. However, social norms heavily influence one or both parents' desire for power in decision-making, the resources available to each parent, and their level of problem understanding (Khakpour et al., 2014). In situations where one partner perceives an imbalance in the distribution of responsibilities within the relationship, they may experience a sense of indebtedness to their spouse and perceive their own performance as inadequate. In such circumstances, the individual endeavors to restore their diminished power. According to Davoudi, et al. (2018), if there is a sense of the unequal distribution of responsibilities, it is unlikely that a relationship will be sustainable and thriving. The relationship between power dynamics within a family unit and levels of satisfaction with marriage has been examined by certain scholars. The study conducted by Aida and Falbo (1991) provided empirical evidence to support the proposition that spousal satisfaction is positively correlated with equality in power dynamics between husbands and wives.

Tiffani & Kisler (2008) discovered that the association between sexual satisfaction and the balance of sexual rewards and costs was stronger in females than in males. The study conducted by Michael & Marka (2010) centered on the topics of marital satisfaction and power dynamics within a relationship. The study demonstrated a positive correlation between marital satisfaction and sexual desire, with the added factor of marital power moderating this relationship so that marital satisfaction is more strongly associated with sexual desire among those who view themselves as having less power in their relationship.

The findings show a strong association between marital satisfaction and sexual desire, but there is no evidence of a moderating role for various forms of marital power.

The quality of a husband and wife's relationship improves if they can pay attention to one another, respond to each other's feelings effectively,

comprehend one another's feelings, and accept that they might influence one another's emotions. If couples fail to understand one another, the fundamental capabilities required for a successful relationship will prove to be inadequate. The concept of power balance within a couple pertains to the extent to which each partner prioritizes and attends to the relationship and their perceived ability to communicate their needs and have them met. Social gender processes are related to power differences in couple relationships (Davoudi et al., 2019). The wives' perception of their position of authority within the family has a significant impact on their relationships and interactions with their spouses. The superior position of husbands and the inferiority of wives, which confers power to men and subordination to women, is one of the most significant factors causing problems for women in every area of life, particularly in the communication and interaction between couples (Mirhosseini, et al., 2021).

The idea of sexual satisfaction is a complex and multifaceted construct that is subject to the influence of various factors, including the socio-cultural context of a given society, as well as individual and psychological considerations (Mirhashemi et al., 2020). The attitudes of couples towards themselves, love, intimacy, and their close relationship are influenced and directed by cultural values and norms. Cultural values that endorse patriarchy and non-democratic familial dynamics may influence intimate relationships between couples. The impact of socio-cultural values on couples is reflected in their expectations, perceptions, and attitudes toward their marital and sexual relationship. According to Mohsenzadeh (2014), the degree of satisfaction in a relationship and sexual satisfaction are largely influenced by the impressions and perceptions of the couples involved.

In light of the issues above, the necessity of conducting such research stems from the fact that patterns such as the division of responsibilities, the division of advantages and power in the family, and husband-wife relationships have been changing, resulting in dissatisfaction in marital relationships. Communication, conflict, acceptance, and commitment all impact romantic relationships (Fallis et al., 2016; Whiting, 2008). Since dissatisfaction in one part of a couple's relationship readily spreads to other parts, it is generally true that identifying and understanding the causes of dissatisfaction will reduce



other dissatisfactions and solve other problems in life. This issue is now so important that it must be investigated. Although sexual satisfaction is typically investigated in psychological studies, sociological factors influence it indirectly; these include the impact of the Internet, satellite television, images of women's bodies, trust in the spouse, and family power structure.

A review of the research on sexual satisfaction reveals that some studies have examined the effects of modernization on relationships, gender, education, and income on sexual satisfaction (Latfizadeh, 2018; Besharat, 2016). The absence of sound theory hampers sexual satisfaction. Researchers differentiate between those who define sexual satisfaction as a subjective feeling towards sexual relationships and those who view objective indicators of sexual satisfaction, such as the occurrence of orgasm, as indicators of sexual satisfaction. In Iran, the lack of research on sexual relationships and sexual satisfaction is more pronounced due to socio-cultural factors than in other nations. Despite recent efforts to increase the number of studies, there is no research on the relationship between family power structure and sexual satisfaction. This study sought to determine whether family power structure influences the sexual satisfaction of wives.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant relationship between the power structure in the family and the level of women's sexual satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2: There is a significant relationship between cooperative decision-making in the family and women's sexual satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3: There is a significant relationship between power symmetry in the family and women's sexual satisfaction.

Hypothesis 4: There is a significant relationship between the husband's persuasion and women's sexual satisfaction

Methods

Study Design and participants.

The present investigation employed an applied and survey-based methodology, utilizing questionnaires as the primary instrument for data collection during the initial 6 months of 2019. The sample size of 384 married

women was determined using Cochran's formula from a population of 739,445 married women in Tabriz, as reported by the 2016 census. A total of 400 participants were ultimately selected to prevent potential issues and asked to complete the questionnaires.

The study employed a multi-stage cluster sampling method. A cluster of ten districts in Tabriz was identified, and a random selection of regions was made within each cluster. Subsequently, a random sampling of individuals was conducted.

$$n = \frac{Nt^2Pq}{Nd^2+t^2pq} = \frac{739445 \times (1.96)^2 \times .5 \times .5}{739445 \times (.05)^2 + (1.96)^2 \times .5 \times .5} = 384$$

Table 1: Number of allocated samples according to the 10 regions at Tabriz in 2018

Regions	Female population by region	Number of samples
Region 1	103141	54
Region 2	84649	44
Region 3	121365	66
Region 4	157024	85
Region 5	45705	28
Region 6	45994	28
Region 7	70813	37
Region 8	14600	7
Region 9	143	1
Region 10	96011	50
Total	739445	400

The dependent variable, namely sexual satisfaction, was measured using the Marital Sexual Function Scale. The scale assesses sexual satisfaction across seven distinct dimensions.

Sexual partnership: According to this component, the purpose of having sex is to be concerned with the well-being and satisfaction of the partner, and while the individual may consider the rewards and costs, he considers assisting the other party in satisfying their needs to be more rewarding than costly. **Sexual expression:** the social skill of displaying and expressing sexual behaviors in sexual contexts.

Furthermore, since the definition of expression in the *Dehkhoda* dictionary is revealing, expressing, and displaying, one can define the sexual expression



as the capacity to disclose and express sexual desires and needs to the partner. Sexual excitement and sexual feeling: Golman uses the term excitement to refer to a feeling, thought, and its psychological and biological state, as well as the tendencies and desires to act based on it; therefore, in this study, the component is used to examine the ability to identify and direct sexual excitement and feelings. Sexual desire: incorporates mental activity to generate sexual motivation. It is referred to as the desire for sexual goals or performance, and it compels a person to interact with another person in order to satisfy their need. Sexual realization is the experience of intense sexual pleasure, which is the rhythmic contractions of the genital organs' muscles and the release of sexual tension, as well as attaining what is expected and gaining satisfaction from sex. Sexual attitude: beliefs regarding sexual roles and activities. Sexual attitude is an optimistic or pessimistic way of interpreting sexual events and communication. Sexual awareness: an individual's knowledge and awareness of sexual activity, as well as his or her capacity for performing sexual acts and knowing about gender-specific bodily functions and behaviors (Farajnia, 2014).

In addition to the seven scores associated with the components, a total score between 60 and 300 was calculated for each issue. A high score on this scale indicates that each woman is sexually satisfied. 6 indicates total agreement, 5 indicates agreement, 4 indicates partial agreement, 3 indicates disagreement, 2 indicates disagreement, and 1 indicates complete disagreement.

The questionnaire's validity was evaluated by a panel of experts. Cronbach's alpha was used to measure and validate the items' internal consistency. Cronbach's alpha measures .95 for sexual satisfaction and .89 for each component of sexual participation, .90 for sexual expression, .87 for sexual excitement and feeling, .87 for sexual desire, .85 for sexual attitude, .91 for sexual fulfillment, and .93 for sexual awareness. In addition, the opinions of supervisors and advisors were used to confirm the questionnaire's validity in this study. In this manner, the questionnaire was given to professors and advisors as experts for review prior to its implementation, and their feedback was incorporated into the final questionnaire.

12 questions from Sabouri & Mahdavi's (2009) questionnaire that are divided into three categories (the degree of symmetry of relationships in the family, the extent of the husband's persuasion and the wife's acceptance of it, and the area of decision-making and action of each couple) were used to assess the power structure in families. The scale used to rate the responses was the Likert scale, with 6 denoting complete agreement, 5 agreement, 4 agreement, 3 disagreement, 2 disagreement, and 1 disagreement. Cronbach's alpha value of the family's power structure was .71 for the husband's persuasiveness, .62 for the family's symmetry of power, and .77 for the decision-making process. Supervisors' and advisors' opinions were used to gauge the validity of a questionnaire on the power structure in families. The questionnaire was given to supervisors and advisers after it had been prepared and before it had been finalized in order to incorporate their feedback.

The descriptive statistics section used important metrics like mean and standard deviation for data analysis. The variables were tested using regression, Pearson's correlation coefficient, and one-way analysis of variance.

Results

The data analysis results are discussed in two parts: descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. The descriptive results indicate that the average age of the examined sample is 35 years old. 44.2% of the participants have an average age between 31 and 40, 39.5% of them have an average age between 20 and 30, 13.0% have an average age between 41 and 50, and 3.2% have an average age between 51 and 60. The majority of participants are between the

Table 2. Descriptive statistics on sexual satisfaction index, power structure in the family and related dimension

variable	Min	Mean	Max	Standard Deviation	Skewness	kurtosis
Sexual satisfaction	127	244.40	340	4.11	-.10	-.43
Sexual partnership	14	35.40	48	7.86	-.67	-.05
Sexual assertiveness	13	32.13	48	9.09	-.19	-.81
Sexual excitement	9	22.45	36	6.09	.26	-.62



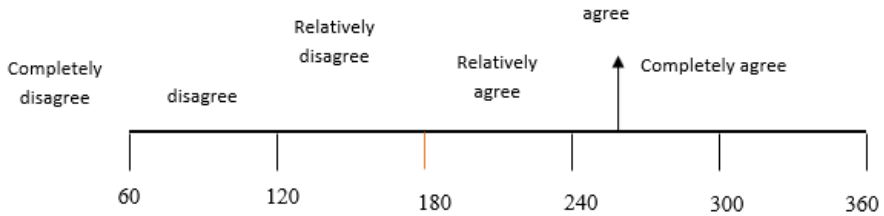
Sexual desire	12	25.02	36	5.68	-.09	-.46
Sexual realization	15	41.02	60	10.46	-.53	-.07
Sexual attitude	32	52.46	66	9.05	-.43	-.57
Sexual awareness	31	52.94	66	.40	-.31	-.43
Power Structure	18	42.50	68	10.01	.20	-.48
Participation in decision making	4	9.54	24	4.29	.54	-.17
Persuasion	5	17.67	30	4.54	-.14	-.26
Symmetry of power	6	15.33	24	3.18	.25	-.01

ages of 31 and 40. Regarding education, 36.5% (146 participants) of participants hold a bachelor's degree. Then, those with a master's degree are the most frequent, with 23.8% (95 participants). The lowest frequency of illiterate respondents is 1% (4 participants). The greatest frequency based on the responses of the women surveyed about their current jobs is housekeeping at 43.5% (167 participants), followed by private employment at 21.5% (84 participants).

Table 2 displays the mean and standard deviation of the family power structure, sexual satisfaction, and their respective components. According to the data in the table, the mean power structure reveals a symmetrical power structure within the family. In the family, the level of persuasion and power symmetry is relatively high, whereas the level of power sharing is relatively low. All aspects of women's sexual satisfaction are relatively high.

According to Table 2 and Appendix 1, the mean sexual satisfaction of married women was 244.40 out of 360 (67 out of 100). It can be posited that the women exhibit a satisfactory level of sexual satisfaction, ranging from moderate to high.

Appendix 1. Average of sexual satisfaction among married women



According to Table 3, 44.04% of Tabriz women report high sexual satisfaction, 34.96% report average sexual satisfaction, and 22.01% report low sexual satisfaction. Considering the variables' multimode nominal, ordinal, and interval nature, Pearson's correlation coefficient test and one-way analysis of variance were used to test the hypotheses. The results of the one-way analysis of variance are presented in Table 3. It demonstrates that the average level of sexual satisfaction among women varies by educational level, age category, and type of employment. Therefore, the higher the education level, the greater the sexual satisfaction. The highest average level of sexual satisfaction belongs to participants with doctoral degrees, while the lowest average level of sexual satisfaction belongs to women with little or no formal education

In addition, women with government employment demonstrated high sexual satisfaction. In contrast, the average score for sexual satisfaction among retired women was the lowest.

The results of the correlation coefficient test are displayed in Table 4. The results indicate a positive and statistically significant correlation between power structure and sexual satisfaction. Furthermore, a positive and statistically significant relationship exists between family power structure dimensions and women's sexual satisfaction.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics on women's sexual satisfaction

variables	High		Medium		Low		Total	
	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent
Sexual satisfactor	223	55.26	120	29.41	57	15.33	400	100.0
Sexual partnership	155	38.68	152	35.40	93	25.51	400	100.0
Sexual assertiveness	134	32.51	188	47.21	78	20.20	400	100.0



Sexual excitement	142	35.50	166	41.33	92	23.13	400	100.0
Sexual desire	182	45.50	159	39.59	59	14.88	400	100.0
Sexual realization	123	29.49	93	23.13	184	41.0	400	100.0
Sexual attitude	245	71.35	114	28.71	41	14.04	400	100.0
Sexual awareness	172	44.04	142	34.96	87	22.01	400	100.0

The relationship between the persuasion dimension of the power structure and sexual satisfaction was significant, while the relationship between the decision-making dimension and sexual satisfaction was below average. Stepwise multiple regression analysis was employed to assess the influence of each dimension of power structure on sexual satisfaction.

Table 4. Results of sex satisfaction analysis of variance test according to some contextual variables

variable	Sexual satisfaction	Mean	Degree of freedom	F	<i>p-value</i>
Education	illiterate	13.00	391	12.001	.000
	Elementary	20.56			
	Junior	21.93			
	Diploma	24.85			
	Post- diploma	23.14			
	Bachelor	24.22			
	Master	25.06			
	PhD	30.27			
Employment	Private job	24.32	393	6.66	.000
	State job	28.77			
	Free job	23.31			
	Housewife	23.93			
	Retired	22.56			
	Student	25.95			
Age group	30-20	25.26	395	5.31	.001
	40-31	24.29			
	50-41	23.22			
	60-51	21.32			

According to Table 5, the calculated F value is statistically significant (*p-value* = .000).

Table 5. Pearson correlation coefficient results between family power structure and sexual satisfaction

variables		Sexual satisfaction	Sexual partnership	Sexual assertiveness	Sexual excitement	Sexual desire	Sexual realization	Sexual attitude	Sexual awareness
Power Structure	r	.49	.38	.50	.41	.40	.42	.31	.27
	p-value	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Participation in decision making	r	.54	.47	.50	.44	.41	.52	.36	.23
	p-value	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Persuasion	r	.38	.24	.40	.40	.34	.31	.07	.29
	p-value	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.14	.000
Symmetry of power	r	.57	.44	.56	.51	.46	.51	.31	.32
	p-value	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

Table 6. Results of regression test

variables	Beta	T	p-value	Analyse of variance		Model summary		
				F	p-value	R Square	.590	
Variable entered	Persuasion by the Husband	.398	7.55	.000	96.8	.000	Adjusted R Square	.349
	Balance of Power in the Family	.260	4.93	.000			Std.Error of the Estimate	.345
Variable Removed	Participation decision making	.095	1.89	.706			Durbin-Watson	1.71

Additionally, the dimensions of power symmetry within the family and the level of persuasion exerted by the husband account for approximately 34% of the variance in sexual satisfaction. The table presented indicates that the variables of persuasion by husband, with a beta coefficient of .398, and power symmetry in family, with a beta coefficient of .260, account for the greatest amount of variance in sexual satisfaction (Table 6).



Discussion and conclusion

Numerous research studies have centered on the concept of sexual satisfaction, delving into and verifying the influence of diverse factors on the attainment of sexual satisfaction. Each of the research studies centered on distinct variables. The present study aimed to investigate the correlation between family power dynamics and female sexual satisfaction. The statistical analysis indicates that there exists a significant positive correlation between the variables, according to the results of the hypothesis testing. The study suggests a positive correlation between the degree to which a family structure adopts a participatory decision-making approach that values mutual respect and reasonable freedom and the level of sexual satisfaction experienced by women under investigation. The presence of a positive correlation between the power structure within a family, specifically the level of family democracy, and sexual satisfaction is suggested by the positive nature of the relationship. The findings suggest a correlation between variations in the degree of family democratic practices and variations in the level of sexual satisfaction among the female participants under investigation. The findings obtained from the analysis of hypothesis 2 indicate a statistically significant association between the variable "power symmetry" within family structures and the various dimensions of female sexual satisfaction. It can be posited that conjoint decision-making within the family unit, coupled with the husband's attentiveness to his wife's viewpoints, results in a significant rise in sexual participation, expression, excitement, desire, realization, attitude, and awareness. Furthermore, the statistical significance of the correlation between the family power dynamics and the indicator of sexual satisfaction, with a *p-value* of .000, suggests that one of the factors influencing women's sexual satisfaction is the level of attention that a husband devotes to his wife.

Greater attention given to a wife may result in increased levels of relaxation and satisfaction within the context of a sexual relationship. The results of testing hypothesis 3 indicate a positive and statistically significant relationship between the husband's persuasion and sexual satisfaction. In other words, all aspects of women's sexual satisfaction improve if unilateral decisions decrease

and spouses speak and express their opinions rationally (rather than coercively) with their wife's consent.

The results of testing hypothesis 3 (i.e., a positive and significant relationship between practical participatory decision-making and sexual satisfaction and its dimensions) demonstrated that men's work in the home, assistance with housework, and shared decisions increase women's sexual satisfaction across all dimensions.

In general, one-sided relationships decline as couples' involvement in decision-making increases and are replaced by interaction and exchange. The type of power in the family has an impact on how couples interact and relate, and one-way power hinders couples from understanding each other's actions and words as well as their needs and feelings. Due to the circumstances, they have grown distant from one another over time, and both of them—especially the wife—experience marital and sexual dissatisfaction. Couples' connection, intimate relationships, and level of life and marriage satisfaction rise as family decision-making cooperation does. Women feel more sexually pleased in personal relationships. Furthermore, a healthy power structure within the family boosts women's agreement and confidence, which in turn contributes to their satisfaction. In most families, a two-way power dynamic produces close connections between couples. All other relationships in life, including sexual relationships—one of the most crucial issues—are influenced by intimate connections. Nonetheless, in cases where the husband unilaterally makes decisions without considering his wife's needs and perspectives, there is a significant likelihood of relational frigidity and emotional detachment between the partners. The circumstances at hand may lead to a sense of dissatisfaction with life in general, as well as impact intimate and spousal relationships.

According to Giddens, a noteworthy characteristic of a well-functioning and enduring family unit is the equilibrium in its power dynamics, where both the husband and wife share equal power. The disruption of power balance within a familial unit, whether originating from external or internal sources, may result in increased dissatisfaction among partners across multiple areas, such as emotional and sexual relationships. In families where management is based on shared ideas and patriarchal or feminist tendencies are avoided and



where freedom of expression and democratic decision-making are practiced, relational dissatisfactions are likely to decrease. Women's satisfaction is positively correlated with the degree of symmetrical power structure in the family, the level of women's participation in decision-making, and the extent of their consultation and involvement. Additionally, women's satisfaction is positively associated with the level of persuasive power.

According to a review of previous research on this subject, no study has directly examined the relationship between family power structure and sexual satisfaction. The majority of related research has examined the relationship between family power structure and marital or life satisfaction. As sexual satisfaction is one of the main components of marital satisfaction, it can be said that the power structure within the family influences both marital satisfaction and sexual satisfaction. This study's findings are consistent with those of other studies. Nayebi et al. (2021) reached the conclusion that power inequality in families has a negative relationship with an equal affective relationship. Thus, the more unequal a family is, the more emotionally distant the wife is from her spouse. The issue will impact the emotional and sexual contentment of the wife. Now, everyone expects to be treated equitably and equally in society and the home. This expectation should be felt more than anywhere else in a couple's emotional relationship. The unequal distribution of gender power in families contrasts with the expected equality of the modern era and the equality of emotional relationships (Nayebi et al., 2021). Khakpour et al. (2014) investigated the effect of family power structure on marital satisfaction and concluded that power structure can predict marital compatibility. In addition, they concluded that marital compatibility increases when the family's power structure is cooperative. Researchers believe that families with a symmetrical power structure will have high quality and stability as a result of emotions, empathy, and closeness (Khakpour et al., 2014). Participatory relationship activities among couples improve the qualities of marriage and relationships in two ways: a) they create common interests and experiences between husband and wife, and b) they promote marital intimacy by eliminating power imbalances. Intimacy and a positive emotional relationship between couples with equal power will result in emotional and sexual satisfaction for both partners. Modiri (2017) asserts that

the level of marital vitality is related to the extent to which families share economic concerns. Thus, when individuals experience a low level of marital vitality, the husband is likely in charge of the family's financial management and expenses. Pina & Bengston (1995) also reported that there is a positive and significant correlation between domestic division and women's psychological health. Dividing housework makes the partner feel supported. When a wife believes that the division of housework is unequal, she perceives a lack of support from her husband. The spouse's lack of support and understanding causes less satisfaction with marriage and depression in the wife; This issue itself leads to reduced emotional and sexual satisfaction in women. The husband's cooperation in housework implies love and connection. His help in housework generates an emotional experience of supporting the marriage, and this feeling affects the woman in her marital interactions and relationships and promotes higher marital satisfaction (Soleymani et al., 2015). Rezapour et al. (2019) focused on women's lived experience of homemaking lifestyle and claimed that society has been changing from a traditional state to a modern state, and the indicators of modernity, such as involvement and progression, are increasing among women. Women understand and interpret housework according to their personal and social experiences. Their responsibility and religious modeling play a crucial role in accepting the role of the housewife and internalizing its norms. Women's satisfaction and dissatisfaction with housekeeping are influenced by their marital satisfaction, and the power structure index in the family plays an important role in their submission to husbands in helping them with household affairs. Many studies and theories have proved that wives' employment, financial independence, and the kind of gender attitudes are among the most important factors that impact couples' relationships in the family. Women's employment influences decision-making (distribution of power) and division of work at home. Women's employment and their financial power have challenged the power relations within the family.

Normative changes in attitudes and expectations of the role of husband and wife in families have pushed couples' relationships towards cooperation and equality (Mehdzadeh et al., 2017). One of Shahmoradi et al.'s (2014) hypotheses was the demand-withdrawal cycle. Thus, power perception has a significant relationship with the demand-withdrawal cycle. A partner who



feels less powerful in the relationship is more likely to engage in demand-oriented behavior, whereas a partner who feels more powerful tends to recede. The more a person experiences love, intimacy, and trust in their partner, the more likely they are to refer to their partner and request affection. Experiencing a sense of power serves as the fundamental basis for the absence of any perceived need. The person who has a higher sense of power feels superior and perceives his position as such that he does not need to ask his/her spouse for affection. Thus, the increasing distance between husband and wife progressively cooled their relationship (Shahmoradi et al., 2014). Some wives' reluctance to respond to the questions constituted a limitation of this study. Since this study was limited to ten Tabriz districts and socio-cultural and economic differences exist between different parts of the city, the researchers are cautious about generalizing their findings. Additionally, the study was carried out on a female population, and it has been observed that women tend to exhibit more conservative tendencies than men. The aforementioned matter could have impacted their inclination to withhold their authentic viewpoint, creating potential bias in the research.

In order to foster a more democratic family structure, there must be an increase in the involvement of wives in family affairs and decision-making. Additionally, it is crucial that men recognize and acknowledge the significance of their wives' contributions to the decision-making process. The incorporation of education and mass media is crucial in promoting a more democratic family structure. The findings of the study suggest that pre-marriage training courses should place greater emphasis on instructing individuals about the significance of power distribution and balance within the family unit.

Ethical Considerations

Authors' contribution: Each of the authors has participated in all stages of the research.

Conflict of interest: There is no conflict between the interests of this project and the interests of individuals or organizations.

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Investigating the Relationship Between the Virtual Education Activity of Female Teachers and Family Functioning, Conflict, and Couple Burnout During the COVID-19 Lockdown

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ABSTRACT

Investigating the psychological challenges female educators face is a fundamental endeavor that can yield a wide range of impacts on the well-being of women, families, and students. This study aimed to examine the correlation between the virtual education activity of female educators and their family functioning, conflict, and marital burnout during the COVID-19 lockdown. The utilized research methodology was descriptive-correlational in nature, with the target population consisting of female teachers residing within the Tabadakan district of Mashhad City. A convenience and voluntary sampling method was employed to select a sample of 390 individuals from a larger population, following the guidelines provided by Krejcie and Morgan's table. The data was gathered using The McMaster Family Assessment Device (FAD), the Marital Conflicts Questionnaire (MCQ) developed by Sanaei and Barati, and the Couple Burnout Measure created by Pines. The data was analyzed using SPSS 21 software, employing Pearson's correlation test and regression analysis. The results of the study indicate a statistically significant association between the virtual education activity of female teachers and family functioning, conflict, and marital burnout ($p < .05$). Furthermore, the virtual education activity of female teachers was found to be a predictor of family functioning, conflict, and marital burnout during the period of lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, given the anticipated integration of Virtual education into educational curricula in the future, it is recommended that particular emphasis be placed on empowering female educators in the Virtual education domain. Additionally, efforts should be made to devise Virtual education approaches that align with family functions, aiming to enhance family functioning and mitigate marital conflict and burnout experienced by female teachers.

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Introduction

Women face significant challenges in both their roles as mothers or wives within the family unit and as social and professional activists, such as teachers. It is crucial to acknowledge the personal and family challenges faced by female educators and to develop strategies to address these concerns. Existing research indicates that women's employment has been linked to positive outcomes, such as increased marital satisfaction (Farji Pak et al., 2020). However, the rise in help-seeking behaviors points to serious issues with family mental health, and according to Bodenmann (2016), 40% of referrals to mental health facilities are the result of conflict between spouses. According to Wilson et al (2017), marital conflict arises when two people believe their aims are irreconcilable. According to Flanagan and Flanagan (2015), conflict is an integral part of family interactions and the cause of marital dissatisfaction. Burnout in a marriage rarely happens overnight. Low energy, mental tiredness, weakness, and a variety of physical and psychological problems are characteristics of couple burnout, which is also known as chronic fatigue (Brummelhuis et al., 2012). According to Rahim (as cited in Mahmoudpour et al., 2020), five distinct styles are outlined in his conflict resolution model. These styles encompass the integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding, and compromising styles. Yet an additional consequence of marital conflict is the deterioration of family functioning (Wagner et al., 2019). According to Shariatmadari (2015), a family that is dysfunctional is incapable of adequately fulfilling the needs of its members.

At the same time, an additional consequence of marital conflict is the deterioration of family functioning (Wagner et al., 2019). According to Shariatmadari (2015), a family that is dysfunctional is incapable of fulfilling the needs of its members. McMaster (1985; as cited in Karimi, 2017) presents a framework consisting of six functions, namely (1) roles, (2) behavior control, (3) problem-solving, (4) communication, (5) affective responsiveness and (6) affective involvement, which are associated with families that exhibit effective functioning. According to Goldenberg (2017), the effective execution of such tasks by families can significantly influence the overall functionality of the family unit. The various issues discussed related to conflicts, burnout, and family dynamics in the context of employed women



are particularly relevant to women in the teaching profession. Moreover, the addition of virtual education exacerbates these challenges, placing additional strain on the families of female teachers and necessitating extra attention. Temporal occurrences, such as widespread diseases, pandemics, or similar crises, pose a significant threat to the mental well-being of women and their families. The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted various sectors, including the Ministry of Education, in addition to its well-documented effects on healthcare and treatment systems worldwide. The global outbreak of the Coronavirus has had a significant impact on face-to-face education programs worldwide, resulting in the closure of educational institutions and affecting the attendance of both students and teaching staff (Haji et al., 2021). As a result, the countries' educational systems encountered an unusual and unprecedented circumstance. Teachers were compelled to instruct students virtually, which increased interest in the technology (Arabi, 2017) and participation in social media activity and content creation (Mohammadi, 2020). Due to the time, energy, and mental strain that comes with having more female teachers in their social networks, teachers may experience issues in their marriages and families. Additionally, the increased presence of female teachers may alter the user's everyday interpersonal interactions and relationships and may even have an impact on their personal, family, and social health (Choliz, 2014).

Salimi et al (2021) conducted a study that demonstrated a substantial association between reliance on social networks and marital problems, with stress induced by the COVID-19 pandemic being identified as one of the contributing factors. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on daily life and has disrupted family dynamics (Zhu et al., 2020). As individuals face various challenges related to work, finances, education, and social obligations, the family environment is disturbed, leading to heightened marital conflicts (Bo et al., 2020).

For female teachers, this problem created a dual psychological load: mental strain from the obligations and responsibilities of virtual education, on the one hand, and the regular concerns for themselves and their families, on the other. The investigation of issues related to female educators appears to be a notable research gap during the quarantine time and the era of virtual education. This

underscores the heightened need to undertake research in this area. The research conducted on women teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic and their utilization of virtual education methods has broader implications beyond the specific context of quarantine. These findings can also be applied to other medical and social circumstances that necessitate the use of virtual education (Firouzfard et al., 2016; Kazempour et al., 2016).

Coper (2004) defines virtual education as the implementation of educational activities through the utilization of electronic resources, including audio, video, computer, and network technologies (Najimi et al., 2017). Nevertheless, virtual education has not successfully attained fundamental objectives within the education system, such as fostering creativity and promoting a sense of responsibility (Kian, 2014; Zare, 2014). Virtual education programs may be deficient in quality due to teachers' limited familiarity with modern technologies (Vali Tabar Karamati, 2016).

In light of the aforementioned factors, including the quarantine restrictions imposed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the transition to online education, and the active engagement of female educators in virtual platforms to facilitate student learning, it is crucial to examine the implications of their increased presence in cyberspace on individual well-being, marital relationships, and family dynamics. This investigation is necessary to offer appropriate guidance and counselling services for individuals and families. Moreover, it is important to note the dearth of cohesive, integrated, and comprehensive research on this subject matter, which underscores the urgency to address this research gap and generate relevant data to inform policymakers and stakeholders. This study aims to answer this question: Is there a correlation between the virtual training of female educators and the dynamics of family functioning, and marital conflict and burnout during the period of COVID-19 isolation? The questions presented are structured as hypotheses in the following manner.

The initial hypothesis posits that "Virtual training activity of female teachers predicts family functioning, marital conflict and burnout and their components in virtual training during Corona quarantine".



The second hypothesis posits that “*There exists a correlation between the virtual training activity of female teachers, family functioning and its components, and virtual training during the Corona quarantine days.*”

The third hypothesis: “*There exists a correlation between the virtual training activity of female teachers with marital conflict and its components in virtual training during the Corona quarantine days*”.

The fourth hypothesis: “*There exists a correlation between the virtual training activity of female teachers, marital burnout and its components, and virtual training during the Corona quarantine days*”.

Methods

The present study is characterized as practical research due to its intended goal. The statistical population for this research consisted of all female instructors in the Tabadakan district of Mashhad city during the academic year of 2019-202. Given the unavailability of precise data on the demographics of female instructors, the selection criteria for our sample was determined by the population size of 10, 000 individuals. Following the guidelines provided by the Krejcie and Morgan table, a sample size of 390 individuals was deemed appropriate. Female teachers who met the criteria of having experience in virtual education during the COVID-19 pandemic were invited to participate in the research. Their participation was completely voluntary and required their full consent. Since direct access to the teachers was not possible, the online questionnaires were shared again on social media platforms that were relevant to teachers. The participants responded using an online platform, and once the sample size reached its predetermined limit, the collected data was subjected to analysis. The data analysis and hypothesis testing procedures were conducted utilizing Pearson's correlation test and univariate regression analysis, employing the SPSS version 21 software.

Measurements

The Couple Burnout Measure (CBM) is a questionnaire developed to assess the level of burnout experienced by couples in their relationship. It comprises 21 items that are categorized into three subscales: physical fatigue, emotional problems, and psychological problems (as cited in Becker, 2009). The internal consistency of the variables falls within the range of 84% to 90%.

The test-retest reliability coefficient showed a value of 89% within a one-month duration, 76% within a two-month duration, and 66% within a four-month duration. The internal consistency of the data was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, yielding values ranging from 91% to 93%. The present study utilized Cronbach's alpha method to establish a reliability coefficient of .846 for this scale.

The McMaster Family Assessment Device (FAD). FAD is a scale consisting of 60 questions that was developed by Epstein et al (1983) and is grounded in the McMaster model. This paradigm encompasses seven dimensions of family functioning, namely problem-solving, communication, members' roles, emotional companionship, emotional integration, managing behavior, and overall performance. To evaluate the test, it is necessary to assign a score to each question ranging from 1 to 4, where 1 represents an entire agreement and 4 represents a complete disagreement (Sanaei, 2008). The internal consistency method was employed to determine the reliability of this test, yielding alpha coefficients ranging from .42 to .74 for the subscales. The study conducted by Saghi et al (2002) examined the validity of the Family Assessment Device in Iran. The findings of this investigation indicated that the scale yielded satisfactory results. Furthermore, this questionnaire possesses the capability to distinguish between individuals belonging to clinical families and those belonging to non-clinical families. Hence, it is widely acknowledged that the seven aspects of the aforementioned construct demonstrate strong validity among various populations (Sanaei, 2008). The present study utilized Cronbach's alpha method to acquire a reliability coefficient of .921 for this scale.

The Marital Conflict Scale, developed by Sanai et al. (2003), comprises 54 questions that are assessed using a Likert scale. The questionnaire yields a maximum total score of 270 and a minimum score of 54 (Sanaei, 2008). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the whole questionnaire administered to a sample of 270 individuals is reported to be .96, indicating a high level of internal consistency. Additionally, the questionnaire has favorable content validity (Sanaei's, 2000; Bakhshipour et al., 2012). The present study utilized Cronbach's alpha method for determining the reliability coefficient of this scale, yielding a value of .943.



The virtual education scale created by researchers: A 10-item questionnaire with questions regarding the duration of use of virtual spaces in relation to family life was used to collect data on the efforts made by teachers in cyberspace. Seven professionals in the fields of psychology and educational sciences attested to the scale's content validity, and Cronbach's alpha method yielded a reliability coefficient of .798.

Results

The demographic findings indicate that the participants had an average of 11.92 years of professional work experience, with a standard deviation of 8.4.

Table 1. Mean, and standard deviation of research variables

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Family functioning	86	185	173.30	19.20
Marital Conflict	66	200	121.30	6.50
Virtual education activity	17	43	31.70	5.40
Marital burnout	1	5.05	3.05	.90

A significant proportion of the participants (36.2 percent) reported a marriage history of fewer than 5 years. Additionally, the participants' educational background was examined in terms of the type of schools attended. The majority of individuals were employed in public schools, accounting for 94.1% of the total.

Based on the data shown in Table 1, it can be observed that the participants exhibited an average score of 31.7 in virtual education activities, with a standard deviation of 5.4. The mean score for marital burnout among the participants was found to be 3.5, with a standard deviation of .9. The analysis of the questionnaire suggests that there exists a potential for experiencing marital burnout.

Table 2. Relationships of variables and Pearson's correlation coefficient

Variable	Virtual Education Activity	Family Functioning	Marital Conflict	Marital Burnout
Virtual education activity	1.00	.291**	.265**	.583**
Family functioning		1.00	.504**	.530**
Marital Conflict	.265**	.504**	1.00	.354**
Marital burnout	.538**	.530**	.354**	1.00

** $p < .01$. * $p < .05$

Based on the findings shown in Table 2, the Pearson correlation coefficients between virtual education activity and family functioning, marital conflict, and marital burnout are .291, .265, and .538, respectively. Furthermore, the statistical significance levels associated with these correlations are all below .01. Hence, significant positive associations exist between the variable of virtual education activity and family functioning, conflict, and marital burnout. In order to examine the relationship between virtual education activities and family functioning, marital conflict, and burnout, it is necessary to conduct three separate univariate regression models. In order to assess the validity of the assumptions made for a linear model in this study, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was initially employed to ascertain the normality of the criterion variables.

Table 3. Regression coefficients of predicting family functioning, marital conflict and burnout based on virtual education

Model		Unstandardized coefficients	SE	Unstandardized coefficients	t	p
Prediction of family functioning based on virtual education activity	constant-coefficient	104.50	5.60	-	18.8	.00
	virtual education activity	1.034	.173	.291	8.99	.00



Prediction of marital conflict based on virtual education activity	constant-coefficient	73.90	8.90	-	.314	.00 0
	virtual education activity	1.494	.276	.265	.408 5	.00 0
Prediction of marital burnout based on virtual education activity	constant-coefficient	.656	.229	-	2.87	.00 4
	virtual education activity	.089	.007	.538	12.6	.00 0

The analysis of the regression coefficients presented in Table 3 reveals that the significance level for all three models is below .05. Consequently, we can conclude that the presence of a constant coefficient and the coefficients associated with virtual education activities in all three models hold statistical significance. Given that the significance levels of all three tests exceed .05, it may be concluded that the hypothesis regarding the normality of the residuals for all three models is not rejected. Consequently, the confirmation of the assumption of constant variance in all three models is observed. Additionally, based on the aforementioned table, it can be inferred that the Watson camera statistics for all three models fall within the range of 1.5 to 2.5, indicating that the errors are uncorrelated. Lastly, the regression models are provided. The regression models that have been provided have been found to be valid. Consequently, the process of obtaining these regression models is as follows:

$$Y1 = (1.034)X + 104.5 \quad Y2 = (1.494)X + 73.9 \quad Y3 = (.089)X + .656$$

The variable Y1 represents the family function, Y2 represents marital conflict, and Y3 represents marital burnout. These variables are present in three virtual education activity models, denoted as X.

Discussion and Conclusion

The objective of the current study was to predict the levels of family functioning, marital conflict, and burnout among female instructors based on their participation in virtual training activities throughout the period of quarantine imposed due to the Coronavirus. The initial hypothesis positing a

connection between the virtual training activity of female teachers and family functioning, conflict, and marital burnout in the context of virtual education has been confirmed. In other words, a significant relationship has been established between the virtual training activity of female teachers and the aforementioned aspects, along with their respective components. These findings are consistent with the studies conducted by Qale Nou et al. (2015), Imani et al. (2015), Arabi (2017), Rezapour et al. (2017), Shujai-Joushaghani et al. (2018), Ghafouri et al. (2018), Jafarinderabadi (2018), Ebrahimpour et al. (2018), Mohajerin (2019), Zolfaqari (2019), Shafaatzadeh et al. (2020), Rezaei (2020), Salimi et al. (2021), Charis et al. (2019), Homai Mojaz et al. (2015), and Saleh et al. (2015).

In explaining this finding, it may be posited that the phenomenon of virtual schooling exhibits a multifaceted trajectory with regard to family dynamics, spousal discord, and ennui. Participating in virtual networks has been found to diminish human relationships and diminish interest in alternative activities. Social media platforms possess inherent characteristics that diminish genuine interpersonal connections, including those within families, while concurrently fostering individuality among individuals. The excessive use of social networks has led to a decrease in interpersonal connections among couples, resulting in a decline in relationship warmth and a lack of attentiveness towards each other's needs. Consequently, this has contributed to the emergence of emotional and sexual tensions within the relationship (Moradi et al., 2018).

The decline in interpersonal connections has the potential to impact the quantity of time that couples allocate to engaging with one another and cultivating face-to-face relationships. In this manner, both partners engage in the substitution of interpersonal interactions within the family with virtual networks. This substitution results in a reduction of cooperation in shared activities, leading to diminished interests and decreased communication between spouses. Consequently, this phenomenon contributes to diminished levels of intimacy, empathy, and cooperation, as well as lowered problem-solving abilities and goal planning. Simultaneously, it undermines the sense of shared enjoyment within the marital relationship, fosters emotional distance from one's spouse, generates conflicts, induces marital boredom, and ultimately diminishes overall family functioning.



Furthermore, based on the results obtained from the current study, the second hypothesis has been validated. This implies that a significant correlation exists between the virtual educational engagement of female teachers and family dynamics, with virtual education serving as a potential predictor of family functioning. This finding is consistent with the studies conducted by Shojaei-Joushaghani et al (2018), Jafari Nadrabadi (2018), and Imani et al (2015).

In the explanation of the current study, it can be stated that couples strive to establish and maintain balance in the family's functioning. Due to the lack of classroom attendance and instructors being required to use online education as a result of the Corona situation, the duration of family members' communication and emotional companionship has decreased. In addition, people spend less time visiting friends and family and conversing with family members, and when they are in the family environment, they follow their personal tasks and responsibilities in virtual education networks, resulting in a decline in family performance.

Based on the results obtained from the current study, it can be concluded that the third hypothesis has been validated. There exists a statistically significant correlation between the engagement of female instructors in virtual education activities and the occurrence of marital conflict. Moreover, virtual education activities can serve as a predictor of marital conflict. This finding is consistent with the studies conducted by Salimi et al (2021), Ebrahimpour et al (2018), and Rezapour et al (2017).

When partners encounter conflicts inside their marriage, these conflicts engender cognitive entrenchment, impeding the exploration of alternative perspectives and hindering the identification of viable resolutions. Hence, it is possible for couples to exhibit impulsive behaviour and opt to avoid conflict rather than actively resolve it. One potential strategy for mitigating confrontations and finding resolutions to problems and conflicts in life involves utilizing virtual platforms and seeking solace in online interactions within social networks. In essence, the abundance of options within the virtual realm overwhelms individuals, hindering their ability to focus on resolving real-life challenges. Consequently, this phenomenon diminishes the emotional

impact of conflicts, replacing negative sentiments with positive ones within this digital environment. Consequently, individuals are inclined to gravitate towards content within the virtual space. Consequently, the overutilization of virtual platforms and increased time allocation for online education result in a decline in everyday engagements and a transformation in the nature of communication and family responsibilities for couples, thereby diminishing individuals' sense of duty towards their families. Consequently, with time, couples may experience a decline in their mutual affection, leading to potential conflicts within the family unit.

Upon analysis of the research findings, it is evident that the fourth hypothesis of the study has been confirmed. In this context, a significant and positive association exists between the virtual educational engagement of female educators and marital burnout, with virtual education serving as a potential predictor of marital burnout. These findings align with the studies conducted by Rezaei (2020), Shafaatzadeh et al (2020), Mohajerin (2019), Zoulfaqari (2019), Ghafouri and Beigi (2018), Arabi (2017), Nouri Ghale Nou et al (2015), Charis et al (2019), Homai Mojaz et al (2015), and Saleh et al (2015).

Physical exhaustion encompasses a range of symptoms such as fatigue, numbness, and sleep difficulties. The experience of boredom can lead individuals to see the deterioration of their interpersonal connections. This emotional state is often accompanied by a decline in the enjoyment of formerly pleasurable activities. Without proactive efforts to address these concerns, the situation is likely to deteriorate further (Daghaghele et al., 2012). Meanwhile, those who are unable to fulfil their diverse demands within the context of their marital relationship tend to increasingly engage with virtual platforms and explore numerous media outlets in order to satisfy their wants. This phenomenon occurs in spite of the individual's growing reliance on the virtual realm and the fulfilment of various dimensions of their wants within it, leading to a gradual preference for dependency on the virtual space over their relationship with their spouse.

This incidence leads to a decrease in the efficacy of couples' relationships, resulting in alterations in communication patterns and family dynamics, as well as the onset of emotional burnout. In relation to the potential correlation



between engagement in virtual education and mental exhaustion, a component associated with burnout, it can be posited that mental exhaustion typically manifests as a decline in self-esteem and a negative disposition towards individuals in one's social circle, particularly one's partner. Hence, with the prolonged utilization of virtual space, individuals exhibit diminished presence in social settings and assume a diminished role in interpersonal connections. The phenomenon of virtual schooling has a notable impact on individuals' social development and interpersonal connections. Additionally, the individual's engagement in virtual environments reduces their inclination for social interaction and undermines their capacity to establish and cultivate interpersonal connections in everyday situations, including within family contexts.

The findings indicate that multiple factors contribute to the deterioration of family functioning and the escalation of marital conflict and burnout. One such factor is the prevalence of the coronavirus disease, which has led to the absence of in-person education and the reliance on virtual platforms for training purposes. The presence of interpersonal disputes and feelings of burnout, along with a decline in family functioning, induces individuals to experience stress and seek avenues of escapism from the challenges and quandaries of life. Currently, the most convenient and readily available method to alleviate intrusive thoughts is through the utilization of online media platforms.

These platforms offer a vast array of information, which is both broad and limitless, hence providing individuals with the means to be entertained for extended periods. The increasing reliance on online media has been observed to foster individual dependence, potentially resulting in shifts in familial roles and a decline in face-to-face interactions. Consequently, this can lead to a growing emotional distance between couples, ultimately impacting family dynamics, and giving rise to conflicts and disagreements. Consequently, virtual educational activities have the potential to predict marital conflict and hinder family performance.

The study also possesses several limitations, such as its focus solely on female teachers within the urban setting of Tabakan district. Consequently, it

is not feasible to generalize the findings to include the gender differences of individuals beyond those specifically specified. Furthermore, caution should be exercised when attempting to generalize the research outcomes to other regions within the country. In order to enhance the expertise of teachers in the realm of virtual education, it is imperative to organize courses that are both of high quality and efficient. Additionally, educational resources should be made available to teachers, families, and children, with the aim of fostering the development and improvement of various indicators of family functioning and promoting responsible utilization of virtual platforms.

Ethical considerations

Compliance with research ethics: The present study is derived from a thesis that has been endorsed by the graduate education committee with the designation FR231-01/21 and dated 07/11/1400.

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Predicting Emotional Divorce Based on Dyadic Perfectionism and Resilience in Women

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ABSTRACT

The current study aimed to predict emotional divorce in women through dyadic perfectionism and resiliency. The target population for the research consisted of all women living in Tehran in 2021. A descriptive correlational design was employed, and a sample size of 360 was selected using convenience sampling. Participants were asked to complete three questionnaires: the Gottman Emotional Divorce Questionnaire (1994), the Shea and Slaney Perfectionism Questionnaire (1999), and the Connor and Davidson Resiliency Questionnaire (2003). The multivariate regression analysis revealed a positive correlation between emotional divorce and perfectionism and a negative correlation between emotional divorce and resiliency ($p\text{-value} < .05$). As such, the study concluded that both perfectionism and resiliency could significantly predict emotional divorce in women. Moreover, the findings underscored the importance of resiliency in moderating the positive relationship between emotional divorce and abnormal perfectionism.

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Introduction

The rising prevalence of divorce has been identified as a significant factor that impedes the trajectory toward a sound and healthy lifestyle, increasing in households headed by single parents (Van Gasse & Mortelmans, 2020). The ramifications of divorce are evident in various aspects of society, including divorced women, children of divorce, and the broader community. The psychological and physical effects of separation and divorce on couples have been well-documented (Kanter et al., 2019), highlighting this phenomenon's moral and social implications. According to Dehghani & Yousefi's (2018) research, there was a 3.4% increase in the percentage of divorce changes between 2013 and 2014. Additionally, the study found that in 2014, an average of 19 divorces were registered per hour in Iran. The concept of divorce can be classified into two distinct categories, namely open and hidden. Open divorce refers to the legal separation of a couple through the intervention of a court, whereas hidden divorce pertains to situations where the couple is compelled to continue living together due to various factors. The mentioned classification of divorce is commonly referred to as a "silent divorce" or an "emotional divorce" in academic literature (Basharpour et al., 2021). Emotional divorce is a phenomenon that arises from a dearth of positive interactions with one's spouse, failure to fulfill emotional needs, sexual discontentment, physical unattractiveness, infidelity, financial difficulties, chronic illnesses, physical abuse, and other similar factors. This condition is often accompanied by anxiety, depression, guilt, despair, social withdrawal, and negative and persistent views towards oneself, one's partner, and the future (Assr & Abdelmaksoud, 2021). Emotional divorce is prevalent in families where couples choose to cohabit despite experiencing emotional detachment. This decision is often influenced by factors such as adherence to family customs, irrational beliefs, societal stigmatization of divorced women, worry about solitude, separation from children, or financial insecurity (Ghaibi et al., 2022; Hosseini & Kaviani, 2018).

Xu et al. (2016) assert that individuals' standards and beliefs regarding marriage positively affect their intimate relationships. These norms provide a set of moral strategies for the routine life of romantic partners. However,

issues arise when said standards are not upheld or when couples perceive them as excessively high and unrealistic expectations within their relationship. According to Hewitt et al. (2017), establishing high standards and expectations for oneself and others is linked to relational disagreement and holds significant implications for problems within the context of marriage. Relational perfectionism or dyadic perfectionism is the term used to describe the act of an individual imposing perfectionistic standards and expectations on others (Shea et al., 2006; Stoeber, 2012).

Perfectionism is negative perfectionism and a set of extremely high-performance standards that are accompanied by negative self-evaluations, criticism, and self-blame (Sironic & Reeve, 2015). A person who practices marital perfectionism has high standards and a perfectionist outlook on his spouse. This type of perfectionism occurs when one of the partners has high expectations of the other and believes the other cannot live up to those expectations (Fritts, 2012). According to Mackinnon et al. (2012), marital absolutism can lead to various issues, including strife in marriages, aggressive interpersonal behaviors, a loss of closeness, and conflict. These individuals retreat from their spouses rather than attempting to resolve their differences during arguments (Fons-Scheyd, 2007). A person who practices marital perfectionism has high standards and a perfectionist attitude toward his spouse. This type of perfectionism occurs when one of the partners has high expectations of the other and believes the other cannot live up to those expectations (Fritts, 2012). According to Mackinnon et al. (2012), marital absolutism can lead to various issues, including strife in marriages, aggressive interpersonal behaviors, a loss of closeness, and conflict. These individuals retreat from their spouses rather than attempting to resolve their differences during arguments (Fons-Scheyd, 2007). Marital distress, hostile interpersonal behaviors, decreased intimacy, and conflict are just a few problems that marital perfectionism can lead to (Mackinnon et al., 2012). These individuals withdraw from their spouses rather than attempting to resolve their differences during arguments (Fons-Scheyd, 2007).

Individuals with perfectionistic tendencies believe that a strong intimate bond with their significant other is predicated upon attaining perfection. However, given the unattainable nature of perfection, these individuals eventually come to the realization that achieving such high standards is



impossible. Consequently, they experience a sense of emotional breakdown (Mackinnon et al., 2012). According to Davis et al. (2018), individuals who exhibit perfectionistic tendencies tend to experience lower levels of marital satisfaction, hold negative perceptions of their relationship with their spouse, experience a lack of positive emotions towards their partner, and exhibit lower levels of marital adjustment when compared to individuals who do not exhibit such tendencies.

Perfectionism develops in a relationship, persists, prevents it from being fulfilled and successful, and as a result, it causes the relationship to break down and fail (Shariati et al., 2014). Perfectionism is a significant factor in the development of communication and emotional difficulties, as well as the perpetuation of psychological wounds. Perfectionists experience heightened stress and emotional distress in their lives due to their intense ambition. The aggregation of stress on individuals and its subsequent transmission to the future diminishes the degree and standard of life satisfaction and resiliency (Bugay, et al., 2016). Therefore, negative communication between partners generally results in a decline in the quality of marital life and distress in their relationships. In fact, one factor influencing a relationship's quality is the experiences and personal characteristics each partner brings to it (Arcuri, 2013). Perfectionism has been linked to emotional divorce, according to previous research (Sherry et al., 2014; Arcuri, 2013). Dyadic perfectionism is one of the variables that are related to perfectionism.

On the other hand, several studies have validated the correlation between perfectionism and communication patterns as well as relationship quality in couples (Arcuri, 2013). Additionally, research has shown an association between forgiveness, intimacy, marital satisfaction (Safarzadeh et al., 2011), communication satisfaction, and long-term commitment (Stoeber, 2012), among other related factors. According to Peterson's (2017) findings, a statistically significant positive correlation exists between perfectionism and conflict and a statistically significant negative correlation between perfectionism and marital satisfaction among couples. The existing research (Ahmadlou & Zainali, 2016; Bastani et al., 2010; Zamani et al., 2013) has demonstrated a positive and statistically significant correlation between negative perfectionism and emotional divorce. Perfectionism is a significant

factor in the development of communication and emotional difficulties, as well as the perpetuation of psychological wounds. Perfectionists experience heightened stress and emotional distress in their lives due to their intense ambition. The aggregation of stress on individuals and its subsequent transmission to the future diminishes the degree and standard of life satisfaction and resiliency. In another study, Kilbert et al. (2014) established the correlation between perfectionism and resiliency.

According to Dantzer et al. (2018), individuals can cultivate resiliency, which enables them to persist in the face of adversity, including failures, crises, and challenges, as well as positive events, growth, and increased responsibilities, without losing motivation to pursue further success. According to Richardson (2002), resiliency is a protective factor influenced by individuals' personality characteristics. This quality enables individuals to better withstand challenges and conflicts, ultimately contributing to increased marital compatibility and heightened satisfaction levels within couples. As a result, the family institution can function effectively, leading to a vibrant and thriving society. According to Sedghi & Cheraghi (2019), resilience is a crucial human ability that facilitates effective adaptation to stressful and challenging circumstances. Connor & Davidson (2003) define resilience as the capacity of an individual to maintain biological and psychological equilibrium in hazardous circumstances. Numerous studies have been conducted on resilience and its relationship to various variables. Resilience aids individuals in facing and adapting to challenging and stressful life circumstances (Yazdian et al., 2010) and reduces depression and stress (White et al., 2010). Resilience has the potential to act as a moderator in stressful family situations by mitigating the levels of stress and impairment while also enhancing the problem-solving skills of family members. The presence of resilience within a family unit mitigates psychological issues among its members while also acting as a safeguard against the potential psychological impacts of adverse events (Pinquart, 2008).

Numerous studies confirm the correlation between resilience and marital satisfaction. Individuals with greater resilience exhibit higher levels of adjustment and satisfaction (Huber et al., 2010). Previous research has established a negative correlation between resilience and various negative psychological outcomes such as psychological distress, stress, and negative



emotions (Frisby et al., 2012), as well as stress and burnout (Hao et al., 2015). Conversely, a positive and significant correlation exists between individuals' resilience and their ability to manage stress (Loprinzi et al., 2011; Sood et al., 2011), as well as their mental well-being (Davydov et al., 2010). In addition, research indicates a significant and inverse correlation between resilience and divorce rates (Eskandarpour, 2015; Afrasyabi & Jafarzadeh, 2015).

The scientific investigation of emotional divorce and its contributing factors, such as dyadic perfectionism and resilience, holds significant value as it pertains to the psychological well-being of individuals. The findings of this research have the potential to enhance the implementation of preventative measures aimed at maintaining and strengthening the family foundation, with a particular focus on the well-being of women. Despite the extensive research conducted on emotional divorce in Iran, the researchers of this study found no research on predicting emotional divorce based on dyadic perfectionism and resilience among married women. This gap underscores the increased significance of conducting research in this particular domain. The present study attempts to predict emotional divorce based on dyadic perfectionism and resilience.

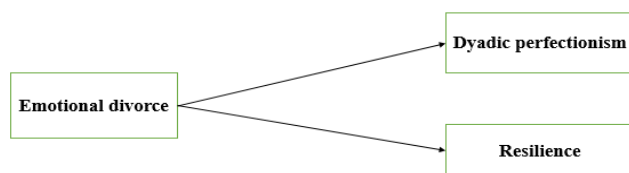


Figure1. Conceptual model of research

Methods

The present study used a descriptive-correlational research design. The present study's target population comprises married women residing in Tehran in 2021. The sample was selected from the 13th district, which is one of the 22 districts in Tehran. Subsequently, a non-random convenience sampling method was employed to recruit 360 participants who had volunteered to participate in the study and met the specified inclusion and exclusion criteria. Participants then proceeded to complete the designated research instruments (It is noteworthy that the selection of the 13th district from among the 22

districts of Tehran was based on the convenience of sample accessibility and proximity to the researcher's place of residence). The study's inclusion criteria comprised being married, expressing willingness to participate, completing the questionnaires, having no prior history of divorce, having a minimum of two years of married life, having at least a diploma, and residing within the 13th district of Tehran. The exclusion criteria included completing the questionnaires incompletely and unwillingness to participate. The study's exclusion criteria comprised incomplete questionnaire completion and unwillingness to participate.

Upon establishing the preferred sample size, a link for the necessary questionnaires was generated at <https://form.avalform.com>. Following the required coordination with Islamic Azad University, Tehran North Branch authorities, permission was obtained to conduct the research, and the respondents' willingness to participate in the study was ascertained. The research objectives were communicated, and the desired questionnaires were disseminated through online platforms, including social networks and mobile devices. The distribution was carried out among the individuals who met the eligibility criteria for participation in the study. Participants were instructed to thoroughly peruse all items and carefully respond to the questionnaires provided. Surveys have been created without mentioning first or last names to minimize administrative concerns, maintain privacy, and ensure confidentiality. Three distinct scales—emotional divorce, resilience, and dyadic perfectionism—were included in each set of surveys. The present study employed descriptive and inferential statistics, specifically Pearson correlation and multivariate regression analysis, to examine the collected data. The statistical software used for data analysis was SPSS version 23.

Measurements

The Gottman Emotional Divorce Questionnaire is one of the frequently used instruments to measure emotional divorce. Gottman developed this questionnaire in 1994, and it contains statements on different aspects of life with which a person may agree or disagree. There are 24 questions on this scale, and the answers are yes or no. A yes answer receives one point, whereas a no response receives zero. When the results are added up, if the percentage of yes answers is 8 or above, it indicates that the person's marriage is in



jeopardy and that he is showing indicators of an emotional divorce (Gottman et al. 1995). Aspects of emotional divorce are (questions 1-6) separation and distance from each other; (questions 7-12) loneliness and isolation; (questions 13-18) yearning for friendship and companionship; and (questions 19-24) boredom and restlessness. All questions have factor loads that are within the acceptable range of .49 to .80. Experts have also validated its face validity (Mousavi & Rezazadeh, 2014). By using Cronbach's alpha approach, a reliability score of .91 for this questionnaire in the current study was obtained.

The Dyadic Almost Perfect Scale (DAPS) is a tool developed by Shea & Slaney (2006) that consists of 26 questions and is utilized to assess perfectionism within a couple's relationship. The instrument above comprises three distinct sub-scales, namely Discrepancy (ranging from 1 to 16), High Standards (ranging from 17 to 22), and Order (ranging from 23 to 26). An individual's high score in the High Standards subscale and Order subscale is indicative of normal couple perfectionism, whereas a high score in the Discrepancy and High Standards subscale is suggestive of abnormal couple perfectionism. The current investigation centered on abnormal perfectionism, and as such, two subscales comprising a total of 22 items out of 26 test items, namely Discrepancy and High Standards, were employed. The order subscale was excluded from the study due to its low psychometric properties (Bogi et al., 2016) and its emphasis on normal perfectionism.

The scale is based on the Revised Scale of Perfectionism (APS-R) (Salney et al. 2001). The study conducted by Shi et al. (2006) revealed that the Discrepancy and High Standards subscales exhibited a correlation of .21, while the Discrepancy and Order subscales showed a correlation of .19. Additionally, the High Standards and Order subscales demonstrated a correlation of .43. Abazari (2015) reported Cronbach's alpha coefficients of .86, .84, and .90 for the High Standards, Discrepancy, and Order subscales, respectively. The current investigation yielded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .84 for the total questionnaire, while the subscales of Discrepancy and High Standards demonstrated coefficients of .77 and .80, respectively.

Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale. This questionnaire was created by Connor & Davidson (2003) through a comprehensive review of research

literature spanning from 1979 to 1991 in the area of resilience. The scale's psychometric properties above have been examined in six distinct cohorts, including the general population, primary care patients, psychiatric outpatients, individuals diagnosed with generalized anxiety disorder, and two groups of patients suffering from post-traumatic stress. According to Mohammadi et al. (2006), the developers of this scale assert that it possesses the capability to differentiate individuals with resilience from those without resilience in both clinical and non-clinical populations and can be employed in clinical and research settings. The resilience questionnaire developed by Conner & Davidson (2003) comprises 25 items that are scored using a Likert scale ranging from 0 (indicating complete falsity) to 5 (indicating constant truth), resulting in a total score range of 25-125.

The resilience questionnaire comprises five dimensions, namely 1) Personal Competence (25-24-23-17-16-12-11-10); 2) Trust in One's Instincts and Tolerance of Negative Affect (7-14-15-15-19-18-20); 3) Positive Acceptance of Change and Secure Relationships (1-2-4-5-8); 4) Control (13-21-22) and 5) Spiritual Influences (3-9). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the resilience scale was reported as .89 by Connor and Davidson. The reliability coefficient obtained through the retest approach over four weeks was .87. The standardization of this scale in Iran was conducted by Mohammadi et al. (2006). The reliability of Connor and Davidson's resilience scale was assessed using Cronbach's alpha method, yielding a reliability coefficient of .89. Even though this particular scale assesses various facets of resilience, it does possess a total score. Samani, et al., (2007) have established the validity of the test through the factor analysis method, as well as convergent and divergent validity. Additionally, these authors have verified the reliability of the test through the retest method and Cronbach's alpha in various groups, including those considered normal and those at risk. In a study conducted by Jokar (2007) on 577 high school students, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was utilized to determine the internal consistency of this scale, resulting in a reported value of .93. Additionally, the principal components factor analysis method was employed, confirming the existence of one factor in this scale. The present study's questionnaire reliability was determined using Cronbach's alpha, yielding a value of .94.



Ethical considerations

The ethical considerations pertaining to the current study are outlined as follows: All participants were informed about the study and provided their voluntary consent to participate. The participants were provided with the assurance that all data collected would remain confidential and solely utilized for research objectives. To ensure privacy protection, the participants' full names were not documented. Individuals who expressed a desire to obtain their answer sheet scores were provided with a PDF document containing their results and any pertinent explanations.

Results

The study involved a sample size of 360 individuals obtained from District 13 of 22 districts in Tehran. All the participants possessed a minimum of a bachelor's degree and were in a state of married life. The demographic characteristics of the sample group were analyzed, revealing that 144 individuals were aged between 20 and 30 years, 158 individuals were between 30 and 40 years, and 58 individuals were between 40 and 50 years. In terms of the number of children, 120 individuals had one child, 176 individuals had two children, and 64 individuals had three children. With respect to the length of the marriage, a total of 136 individuals were married for a period of less than 10 years, while 224 individuals were married for a period exceeding 10 years. Prior to conducting data analysis, the normality of the data distribution was assessed through the utilization of the "skewness index for symmetry or asymmetry of data". Skewness and kurtosis are statistical measures that can be utilized to assess the normality of variable distribution, as presented in Table 1.

Given that the values of the variables under investigation fall within the range of -3 to +3, it can be inferred that the distribution of scores pertaining to these variables conforms to a normal distribution. Consequently, it is recommended that multivariate regression be employed. This study investigated the assumptions of multivariate regression analysis, including the interval scale of variables, linearity of relationships, normality of data distribution and error scores, and independence of predictor variables. The findings indicated favorable results. Hence, the prerequisites for employing

regression analysis have been satisfied. The present study employs Pearson's correlation coefficient and multivariate regression as the statistical methods for analyzing research data. The research hypothesis is tested by reporting the correlation coefficients, followed by the sources of change in the dependent variable, and finally, the regression coefficients.

The present study hypothesizes that the emotional divorce of women can be predicted by their levels of marital perfectionism and resilience.

Multivariable regression was employed to examine the hypothesis, utilizing marital perfectionism and resilience as predictor variables and emotional divorce as the criterion variable. Table 1 presents the statistical measures for the variables under study, including the mean, standard deviation, skewness, and Pearson correlation coefficient.

The descriptive statistics and correlation coefficients between the research variables have been presented in Table 1. As shown in the table above, all binary correlations between marital perfectionism, resilience, and emotional divorce variables are significant. Skewness is an index used to evaluate the distribution of data. Given that the value of this index in the variables under study falls between -3 and +3, the distribution of these variables is normal. The correlations marked with (*) and (**) in Table 1 are statistically significant at the .05 and .01 levels, respectively



Table 1. Mean, standard deviation, skewness, and correlation matrix between marital perfectionism, resilience, and emotional divorce components.

	Emotional Divorce				Dyadic Perfectionism			Resilience						
	Separation and loneliness from each other	loneliness	friendship	boredom	Total	Discrepancy	Discrepancy	Total	Personal Competence	Trust In One's Instincts	Positive Acceptance	Control	Spiritual Influences	Total
Emotional Divorce	1													
<i>separation and loneliness and distance from each other</i>	1													
<i>loneliness and isolation</i>	.868**	1												
<i>yearning for friendship and companionship</i>	.846**	.860**	1											
<i>boredom and restlessness</i>	.790**	.813**	.879**	1										
<i>Total</i>	.930**	.940**	.955**	.928**	1									
Dyadic perfectionism	.549*	.585**	.520*	.551*	.590**	1								
<i>Discrepancy</i>	.329**	.366**	.315**	.338**	.361**	.712**	1							
<i>Standards</i>	.519**	.557**	.492**	.523**	.560**	.978**	.842**	1						
<i>Total</i>	-.28**	-.240**	-.242**	-.248**	-.263**	-.071	.015	-.050	1					
Personal Competence										1				
Trust in One's Instincts and Tolerance of Negative Affect											1			
Positive Acceptance of Change and Secure Relationships												1		
Control													1	
Spiritual Influences														1
<i>Total</i>														
Mean	1.98	2.11	1.93	1.96	2.00	3.87	4.51	4.05	3.52	3.28	3.45	3.44	3.89	3.47
Standard deviation	.75	.81	.86	.82	.77	.96	.99	.91	.85	.81	.76	.93	1.06	.72
Standard error	.04	.04	.05	.04	.04	.05	.05	.05	.04	.04	.04	.05	.06	.04
Skewness	.659	.348	.637	.66	.529	.18	-.517	-.032	-.365	-.09	-.442	-.405	-1.027	.000

Linear regression results

Table 2. A summary of the linear regression outcomes for predicting the criterion variable of emotional divorce using marital perfectionism and resilience as predictors.

Criterion variable	Sources of change	Sum of squares	Degrees of freedom	Mean square	F test	The significance level	The coefficient of determination	Durbin-Watson
Total	Regression	83.39	2	41.69				
	Residual	128.76	356	.36	115.2	.001	.393	1.835
	Total	212.14	358					

Based on the findings presented in Table 2, it can be inferred that the null hypothesis is rejected as the calculated F value (115.2) exceeds the critical F value at a significance level of $p\text{-value} < .01$, with 2 and 356 degrees of freedom. Based on the rejection of the null hypothesis, it can be inferred that both marital perfectionism and resilience are predictors for the criterion variable, namely emotional divorce. The R-squared value in the given equation is .393, indicating that the collective predictor variables have successfully accounted for and predicted 39.3% of the variations in the dependent variable. Table 3 presents the standardized and non-standardized regression coefficients for the predictor variables.

Table 3. Standardized and non-standardized regression coefficients and t-statistics and collinearity of predictor variables.

Variables	predictor variables	Non-standardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	T	Significance level
		B	Error	Beta		
Criterion						
Total score	constant value	1.20	.22		5.51	.001
Emotional divorce	total score of dyadic perfectionism	.46	.03	.54	13.14	.001
	total score of resilience	-.30	.04	-.28	-6.86	.001

In the third column of Table 3, the regression coefficients (Beta) of predictor variables are displayed. Concerning these coefficients, it can be explained that a change in a standard score (z) in the predictor variable will



result in a change in the beta value (Beta) in the standard score of the criterion variable. For instance, an increase of one standard score ($z=1$) in the predictive variable of marital perfectionism will increase the beta value (Beta=.54) in the standard z score of the emotional divorce criterion variable in the sample.

Table 3 displays the statistical significance of the predictor variables' effect on the criterion variable, as determined by the t-test. Based on the findings presented in the table, it can be observed that the computed t-values for the predictor variables of dyadic perfectionism and resilience exceed the critical t-value (at a significance level of .05). As a result, the null hypothesis is rejected, and it can be inferred with 95% confidence that the variables above effectively predict emotional divorce within the studied sample. The regression equation incorporates marital perfectionism and resilience to estimate the i-th subject's score in the emotional divorce criterion variable. The extractive model of this analysis is as follows:

$$\hat{y} = a + b_j(x_i) + e_{ij}$$

Discussion and Conclusion

The objective of the current investigation was to predict the emotional divorce of women through the utilization of dyadic perfectionism and resilience as predictors. The findings derived from the analysis of the data indicate a significant positive correlation between emotional divorce and dyadic perfectionism. The present finding is consistent with the findings reported by Ahmadlou & Zeinali (2016) and Zamani et al. (2013). The researchers introduced negative perfectionism as a social factor contributing to emotional divorce among couples in their study. Prior research has indicated that perfectionism can have negative effects on romantic partnerships (Sheri et al., 2014; Arcuri 2013). Given that dyadic perfectionism is a construct closely aligned with perfectionism, it may be associated with emotional divorce. According to Bastani et al.'s (2013) study, a potential approach to addressing emotional divorce and its associated outcomes involves diminishing the perfectionistic standards that couples hold for one another. This study is consistent with the results of Amato's (2010) study, which identified an increase in irrational and unrealistic perfectionist

expectations as one contributing factor to heightened divorce rates and emotional detachment among couples.

Consistent with these findings, Fons-Scheyd's (2007) study demonstrated that couples exhibiting higher levels of dyadic perfectionism tend to disengage from their partners rather than seek a resolution when faced with disagreements. The research findings indicate that individuals who scored high on the discrepancy scale exhibited lower levels of commitment, satisfaction, and respect toward their life partner and the relationship. Based on the results of this study, it appears that couples exhibiting high levels of negative dyadic perfectionism tend to employ emotion-oriented and withdrawal/avoidance strategies when faced with marital conflicts rather than problem-oriented approaches. This ultimately results in long-term separation and emotional detachment between partners. Moreover, in explaining the findings, it can be suggested that individuals who exhibit perfectionistic tendencies are susceptible to various psychological conditions, including but not limited to obsession, depression, anxiety, stress, and a sense of failure, due to their distinctive behavioral and cognitive attributes. Consequently, it adversely impacts their emotional communication and interaction with their partners, ultimately leading to marital dissolution and emotional detachment.

The findings suggest a statistically significant inverse correlation between emotional divorce and resilience. The present study's findings are consistent with those of Eskanderpour (2015) and Afrasiabi & Jafarzadeh (2015), who investigated the correlation between personal characteristics and emotional divorce. Their research concluded that self-confidence and self-esteem, self-efficacy, anger management, and problem-solving skills are among the most significant personality traits contributing to couples' relationships' longevity. The findings of these studies are consistent with those of Samani et al. (2016), whose research demonstrated that resilience is positively associated with life satisfaction through the mitigation of emotional difficulties or the enhancement of mental well-being.

According to the study's findings, resilience is a positive and desirable trait that can be enhanced through various techniques, such as improving existing supportive factors or developing new supportive ones. In this way, resilience indirectly affected the level of marital satisfaction of couples and, as a result,



their emotional divorce. Due to their capacity to handle events logically, calmly, and attentively while focusing on their abilities and rights, resilient people can react maturely and sensibly in stressful circumstances and refrain from emotional withdrawal from their life partner. Resilient people, particularly those who are married, behave rationally, take action to uphold their marriage as crucial and work to eliminate emotional estrangement. In actuality, boosting resilience lessens susceptibility to separation and emotional detachment.

Undoubtedly, understanding and knowledge in assisting individuals in family issues, specifically emotional divorce, marital perfectionism, and resilience, can significantly benefit women. Given their crucial role in the family unit and child-rearing, such knowledge can enhance their satisfaction with diverse facets of married life and promote healthy and consistent performance. The research indicates that family counselors and couple therapists have the potential to mitigate emotional divorce among women by enhancing their resilience and transforming their negative perfectionism into realistic and logical standards. The present study focuses on the female population residing in the 13th district of Tehran. Consequently, it is recommended that further investigations be carried out on women in different geographical areas and that alternative assessment methods, such as interviews, be employed to enhance the accuracy and credibility of the outcomes and conclusions.

On the other hand, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, administering the questionnaires in a physical setting and engaging with the participants directly was unfeasible. Consequently, the questionnaires were formulated online and shared via social media platforms through an online hyperlink. Using various electronic communication channels such as Instagram, Telegram, WhatsApp, and email for distributing the questionnaires to the participants may have potentially resulted in adverse impacts on the accuracy and precision of their responses. Hence, to enhance the reliability and consistency of the outcomes derived from the utilization of research instruments, it is recommended to undertake an investigation concerning the subject matter of the present study and to administer the research instruments in person to ensure precise and valid responses of the participants to the questionnaire items.

Ethical Considerations

All subjects participated in the study by filling out a consent form, and the researchers assured them that their identity was kept confidential.

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Authors' contribution: In conducting this research, the first author was responsible for data collection and writing the article; The second author supervised the study and reviewed the paper. The third author was responsible for the statistical analysis.

Conflict of interest: This research is not in conflict with personal or organizational interests.

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Relationship Between Communication Patterns and Distress Tolerance: The Mediating Role of Family Emotional Atmosphere in a Sample of Married Women

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ABSTRACT

This research aimed to examine the potential mediating effect of family emotional atmosphere on the association between married women's distress tolerance and communication patterns. A correlational design utilizing structural equation modelling was employed in the study. The sample comprised 217 married women residing in Tehran city in 2021, which was selected using the convenience sampling technique. The research instruments included the Communication Patterns Questionnaire, Family Emotional Atmosphere scale and Distress Tolerance Scale. The collected data were analyzed using the path analysis method using AMOS software. The results showed significant relationships between married women's communication patterns and distress tolerance with the mediating role of family emotional atmosphere. Emotional atmosphere significantly mediated the relationship between mutual constructive communication ($P\text{-value}=.001, \beta=.22$) and mutual avoidance communication ($P\text{-value}=.001, \beta=-.19$) on distress tolerance. According to the research findings, it is crucial to intervene in the communication patterns and emotional atmosphere within families that influence the distress tolerance of married women. This intervention aims to enhance the distress tolerance of married women by addressing underlying and causing variables.

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Introduction

Couples' satisfaction is a crucial factor for maintaining stability in married life. The emotional atmosphere, communication patterns, and ability to tolerate distress are key elements that contribute to couples' satisfaction and the overall stability of their marriage (Mehrpouya et al., 2021; Riahi et al., 2020). Distress tolerance refers to the capacity to both experience and withstand negative psychological states (Dorley et al., 2019). Distress tolerance plays a crucial role in married life as it determines a couple's ability to handle and endure stressful situations that arise in their lives, ultimately impacting their marital relationship (Riahi et al., 2020). Distress tolerance plays a significant part in married life, functioning as a skill or ability that enables couples to enhance their adaptability and effectively resolve conflicts (Shahabi et al., 2021). The family's emotional climate is one of the factors associated with distress tolerance. The family emotional atmosphere is one of the factors associated with distress tolerance (Ensafdaran et al., 2022). When the emotional atmosphere within a family is positive and healthy, and authoritative and genuine educational methods are employed, family members are better equipped to manage their negative emotions and respond to conflicts in an adaptive and rational manner. Consequently, these individuals demonstrate a high level of tolerance towards distress and negative emotions (Bonanno, 2004).

The emotional atmosphere of a family relates to the dynamics and interactions among its members in meeting their emotional needs. Consequently, it is essential for the family to provide a secure and soothing environment, enabling its members to acquire the necessary skills to address and resolve social challenges. Interpersonal interactions significantly influence the development of the emotional atmosphere inside a family and can have a notable impact on emotional and behavioral responses on specific occasions (Johnson, 2019). Family communication patterns play a significant role in shaping how people communicate, as they are closely linked to the emotional atmosphere inside the family (Rashidi et al., 2017). Individuals displaying significant emotional resilience have a deep awareness of their

emotions, comprehend the potential outcomes of their emotional experiences, and adeptly convey their emotional states to others. Individuals who exhibit the ability to comprehend and communicate emotional states demonstrate greater adjustment to their surroundings and interpersonal relationships and a higher competence in managing negative experiences (Taylor et al., 2014). A key factor in predicting individuals' conduct in adulthood is the family unit and the emotional atmosphere generated inside it. Several studies have indicated that the emotional atmosphere within a family plays a significant role in influencing the emotions experienced by its members (Costa et al., 2019). Communication patterns between partners might contribute to the emotional atmosphere of the family (Rezaei et al., 2021).

Effective communication is the fundamental pillar of every successful relationship. Effective communication between couples fosters intimacy and minimizes misunderstandings. It allows them to gain insight into each other's perspectives and worldviews, thus enhancing their connection. (Saberi Fard & Haji Arbabi, 2017). Individuals who experience failure in their marriage relationships and face conflict within their romantic relationships tend to have diminished levels of life satisfaction. Consequently, these individuals are more prone to experiencing an escalation in both physical and mental diseases (Zhu et al., 2018). Hence, communication patterns have the potential to influence the emotional atmosphere within the family. The emotional atmosphere inside a family significantly influences the development of individuals' emotions (Sabri Fard & Haji Arbabi, 2018). The communication patterns, emotional atmosphere, and distress tolerance of couples significantly influence the stability of married life. It is crucial for societies to prioritize and enhance relationships in order to improve the stability of married life since the stability of marital relationships enhances societal well-being, and given the high prevalence of divorce and separation in Iranian society, it mitigates the societal expenses (Rezaei et al., 2021). Alternatively, the emotional atmosphere within the family and the relationships within the family may serve as the foundation for individuals to develop coping mechanisms and adaptability in the face of challenges and sources of stress, hence enhancing their ability to tolerate distress (Dorrance Hall et al., 2020).

One important aspect to consider in the relationship between psychological variables is that they do not always directly cause psychological disorders in



a straightforward manner. Instead, it is crucial to recognize the role of interaction and mediation in this context. As previously stated, there is a significant correlation between communication patterns and distress tolerance among family members. It is worth noting that the emotional atmosphere within a family is a factor that is connected to both communication patterns (Sabri Fard & Haji Arbabi, 2018) and the distress tolerance of family members (Ensafdarani et al., 2022). Consequently, the emotional atmosphere can be seen as a mediating variable that potentially influences the relationship between communication patterns and distress tolerance, particularly among married women. The emotional atmosphere within a family is a dynamic factor that can be directly influenced by the communication patterns of its members. In turn, it can also directly impact the overall functioning and performance of family members. Consequently, the emotional atmosphere of a family can serve as a mediator for the reciprocal influences of various variables associated with the family.

Several investigations have indicated an association between the emotional atmosphere inside a family and both family communication and emotional well-being. For example, Shahmoradi et al. (2021) found a significant correlation between the emotional atmosphere inside a family and its members' communication patterns and emotions. Abdolmaleki et al. (2015) found a significant correlation between the emotional atmosphere within families and the regulation of emotions in individuals with addiction. In their study, Saberifard & Haji Arbabi (2017) found a significant correlation between the emotional atmosphere within a family and both emotional self-regulation and resilience.

Overall, given the significance of women's contribution to strengthening the family unit and fostering a positive emotional environment (Ensafdarani et al., 2022) and the importance of women's communication patterns and distress tolerance to the emotional atmosphere and family harmony (Dorrance Hall et al., 2020), it appears imperative to undertake further investigation in this domain. In light of the points above and the dearth of research investigating the role of mediating variables and the desired variables within a structural model in this domain, the current study investigates the correlation between

the communication patterns of married women and distress tolerance with the mediating effect of a family's emotional atmosphere.

Methods

The current research is fundamental in its objective, employs a quantitative theoretical approach, and utilizes correlational research methodology through path analysis modeling. The population under consideration for this study consists of married women between the ages of 20 and 50 residing in Tehran who possess a diploma or higher level of education. There is a diversity of viewpoints regarding the sample size in research studies that employ the path analysis correlation research method. However, it is widely agreed that the path analysis pattern is similar to the statistical technique of factor analysis, which is typically carried out with a large sample (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). According to Boomsma (1983), a minimum sample size of 200 people is considered sufficient to fit the model. The present study included a sample group of 217 subjects who were selected through an Internet survey over a period of 2 months. The data of 33 individuals who answered the questionnaires incompletely were removed from the sample. The participants were chosen using a convenience sampling method. The research included individuals who met the following inclusion criteria: being married, aged between 20 and 50 years, and providing informed consent. The exclusion criteria for the research was the presence of incomplete information.

Measurements

Distress Tolerance Scale (DTS). The scale is a self-report measure designed by Simons & Gaher (2005) to assess an individual's ability to tolerate emotional distress. This scale assesses distress tolerance by measuring an individual's capacity to endure emotional suffering, subjective evaluation of distress, attentiveness to negative feelings as they arise, and strategies for managing and enduring distress. The scale consists of 15 questions and is divided into four subscales: Tolerance (items 5, 3, and 1), Absorption (items 15, 4, and 2), Appraisal (items 12, 11, 10, 9, 7, and 6), and Regulation (items 14, 13, and 8). The elements of this scale are assessed using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). Scoring high on this measure indicates high distress tolerance (Simmons & Gaher, 2005). The alpha coefficients for these subscales are calculated to be .72, .78, .70,



and .82 for all scales. Azizi et al. (2009) found that the intraclass correlation of this scale was .61 after 6 months. They also observed a correlation of .21 between this scale and problem-oriented coping strategies and a correlation of -.28 between this scale and emotion-oriented coping methods. In the present study, the internal consistency of the total score of this scale was determined using Cronbach's alpha method, resulting in a value of .83.

Family's Emotional Atmosphere. The questionnaire, developed by NodargahFard (1994), aims to assess the emotional atmosphere within families. It consists of 35 questions, each rated on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (very much). According to Abdolmaleki et al. (2015), the total score of the subject in this test is determined by adding up the scores obtained in all the questions. The minimum score is 35, while the maximum score is 175. A higher score on this scale indicates that the emotional atmosphere within the subject's family is more likely to be destructive and negative. Conversely, a lower score suggests that the emotional atmosphere within the family is more likely to be positive. The researchers Heydarihzadeh et al. (2022) confirmed this scale's validity by using the second-order factor analysis method. In Abdul Makli et al.'s (2015) study, the scale's reliability was found to be .91 using the split-half method and .95 using Cronbach's alpha. In this study, the internal consistency of the overall scale score was determined to be .93 using Cronbach's alpha method.

Communication Patterns Questionnaire (CPQ). The questionnaire was developed by Christensen and Sullaway (1984) at the University of California and consists of 35 items. Responses are scored using a 9-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (indicating no possibility) to 9 (indicating a high likelihood). This study examines the behavior of spouses at three distinct stages of their conflict. This questionnaire consists of three components: Mutual Constructive communication, Mutual Avoidant communication, and Demand-Withdraw communication. In Betman and colleagues' (1996) study involving Swiss and German participants, Cronbach's alpha values for the components of this scale ranged from .74 to .78. In Iran, Ebadatpour (2000) conducted a validation study on this scale and established its validity by examining its subscales and their correlation with marital satisfaction. The

correlation coefficients obtained for the three subscales of mutual constructive communication, mutual avoidant communication, and demand-withdraw communication are .58, .58, and .35, respectively. All of these values were statistically significant at the .01 level. The questionnaire's reliability was assessed by calculating the internal consistency of its subscales. The resultant values for Mutual Constructive, Mutual Avoidance, Demand (male)-Withdraw (female), and Demand (female)-Withdraw (male) were .50, .51, .53, and .55, respectively. In this study, the internal consistency of the scale was assessed using Cronbach's alpha method. The estimated values for mutual Constructive Communication, Mutual avoidance, and Demand/withdrawal were .79, .81, and .84, respectively.

Procedure

The Press Line site was utilized to transform questionnaires into links, which were then distributed to married women on social media platforms for the purpose of gathering study data. The link sent to the sample group had certain criteria for participation. Only those who were married and between the ages of 20 and 50 were asked to complete the questionnaires. The participants were given essential details on the confidentiality of information, which helped establish their trust and willingness to engage in the research. The current research employed Amos24 software and path analysis structural equation modeling to test the hypothesis.

Results

The mean age and standard deviation of the research participants was 7.78 ± 34.71 . In terms of the length of marriage, 6.4% of the participants had been married for a period ranging from 1 to 10 years, while 39.6% had been married for a period ranging from 11 to 20 years. Regarding education, 27.2% of the individuals possessed a diploma or an Associate Degree, 33.3% held a bachelor's Degree, 27.2% had a master's Degree, and 2.3% had a doctoral Degree. Regarding employment status, 47.9% of the surveyed individuals were identified as housewives, while 52.1% had been identified as employed. In order to assess the normality of the data, skewness and kurtosis values were calculated, which indicated that the research variables exhibit a normal distribution.

**Table 1. Descriptive findings**

Variable Statistics	N	M	Std	Mutual constructive	Mutual avoidance	Demand-withdraw	Family's emotional atmosphere	Distress tolerance
Mutual constructive	217	6.53	3.91	1				
Mutual avoidance	217	12.47	5.80	-.48**	1			
Demand-withdraw	217	16.24	5.43	-.56**	.17*	1		
Family's emotional atmosphere	217	67.01	23.02	.42**	-.21**	-.40**	1	
Distress tolerance	217	4.73	1.39	.35**	-.28**	-.22**	.56**	1

Table 1 displays the mean and standard deviation of the research variables. An assumption in path analysis modeling is that the multivariate distribution is normal. Mardia's multivariate Kurtosis coefficient is employed to validate this assumption. Bentler (2005) proposes that Mardia coefficients exceeding 5 indicate a deviation from normality in the data distribution (Byrne, 2010). The data of the present study yields a Mardia coefficient value of 3.67, indicating the validity of the assumption of multivariate normality.

Table 2. The fit indices of the research model

Model fit criterion	Acceptable level	Model fit indices
Chi-Square Divided By The Degrees of Freedom	<3	2.54
Root Mean Square Error Approximation (RMSEA)	<.1	.06
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	>.9	.92
Normed Fit Index (NFI)	>.9	.91
Goodness of Fit Index (GFI)	>.9	.94
Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI)	>.9	.93

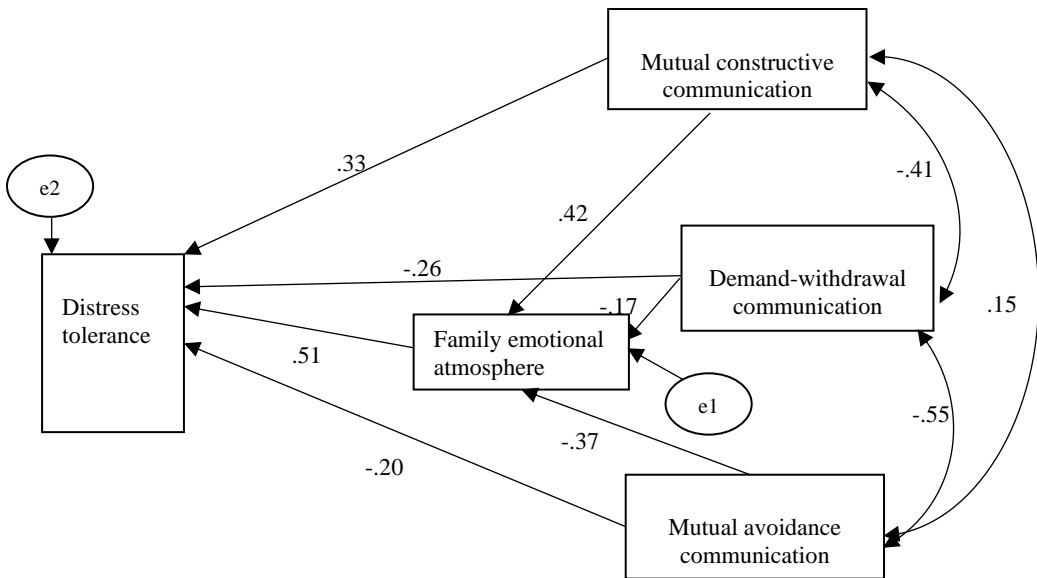


Fig 1. Standardized coefficients for the structural equation model

Furthermore, given that the tolerance index of the variables was approximately 1 and the variance inflation factor of the variables was less than 2, it can be concluded that there was no collinearity among the predictor variables. Once the assumptions were confirmed, path analysis modeling was employed. The figure and table below display the results related to the execution of the initial model in the standard mode, as well as some of the key fit indicators of the first model. The fit indices presented in Table 2 indicate that the research model exhibits a satisfactory fit.

The table's findings indicate that married women's communication patterns significantly affect their distress tolerance. The standardized β values and significance t-test results indicate a confirmed relationship between the communication patterns of married women and distress tolerance, with a 95% confidence level. This relationship is observed through the direct effects of the variables of mutual constructive communication, relationship withdrawal/demand, and mutual avoidance. The standardized β values and significance t-test indicate the direct effect of the family's emotional atmosphere on distress tolerance. Additionally, the direct effects of mutual constructive communication, withdrawal/demand, and mutual avoidance on



distress tolerance are also evident. These findings support the hypothesis regarding the relationship between women's communication patterns. The marital status and the emotional atmosphere inside the family have been verified with a confidence level of 95%.

Table 3. Coefficients and significance of direct effects of research variables

Criterion variable	Predictor variable	Effect type	Unstandardized coefficient	Standardized β	t
Distress tolerance	Mutual constructive communication	Direct	.65	.33	4.49
Distress tolerance	Demand-withdrawal communication	Direct	-.57	-.26	-3.67
Distress tolerance	Mutual avoidance communication	Direct	-.51	-.20	-3.09
Distress tolerance	The family's emotional atmosphere	Direct	1.05	.51	5.13
The family's emotional atmosphere	Mutual constructive communication	Direct	.89	.42	4.87
The family's emotional atmosphere	Demand-withdrawal communication	Direct	-.42	-.17	-2.75
The family's emotional atmosphere	Mutual avoidance communication	Direct	-.81	-.37	-4.56

The Sobel test was used to analyze the impact of the mediating variable of family emotional atmosphere on the association between communication patterns and distress tolerance of married women. The results of this analysis can be seen in Table 4.

The findings presented in the table above indicate that within the communication patterns of married women, distress tolerance is influenced indirectly by mutual avoidance and constructive communication through the family's emotional atmosphere as a mediator (p -value<.05). Furthermore, the findings demonstrate that withdrawal/demand communication had no indirect effect on married women's distress tolerance through family emotional atmosphere mediation.

Table 4. Coefficients and significance of indirect effects of communication patterns on distress tolerance of married women

Criterion variable	Predictor variable	Effect type	Unstandardized coefficient	Standardized β	Sobel statistics	Sig
Distress tolerance	Mutual constructive communication (mediated by the family's emotional atmosphere)	Indirect	.93	.22	3.84	.001
	Demand-withdrawal communication (mediated by the family's emotional atmosphere)	Indirect	-.44	-.09	1.06	.12
Distress tolerance	Mutual avoidance communication (mediated by the family's emotional atmosphere)	Indirect	-.85	-.19	3.57	.001

Discussion and Conclusion

The current study set out to examine how married women's communication styles and distress tolerance are influenced by their family's emotional atmosphere and its mediating role in these relationships. The statistical findings demonstrated a strong correlation between mutually constructive communication, married women's mutual avoidance communication, and distress tolerance, with the emotional atmosphere of the family playing a mediating function. These outcomes are consistent with the research findings of Saberi Fard and Haji Arbabi (2018), Shahdoost et al., (2018), and Rashidi et al. (2018).

When considering the connection between mutual constructive communication and the distress tolerance of married women, with the mediator role of the family's emotional atmosphere, it can be observed that individuals who engage in constructive communication patterns, rather than avoidance and withdrawal patterns, are more likely to have opportunities to openly express their emotions and feelings. Engaging in effective discussions and communication with family members can enhance resilience and increase tolerance for distress in individuals. Family communication plays a crucial role in promoting mental health and overall well-being (Marra et al., 2020).



Additionally, coping strategies are another significant factor that can protect and improve individuals' mental health when faced with life's challenges. According to a recent study by Yildirim et al. (2022), individuals who engage in positive family communication tend to adopt more positive coping strategies. As a result, they are better equipped to handle challenging situations and experience lower levels of psychological distress. The constructive communication pattern promotes effective communication skills and encourages active participation from all parties involved in conflict resolution. As a result, there is an increase in mutual understanding and satisfaction within the relationship. This pattern also benefits women by fostering a healthy sense of identity and greater overall satisfaction. Additionally, the creation of a sincere and supportive emotional atmosphere within the family enhances the ability to manage negative emotions. These improved emotional skills have a positive impact on the overall functioning of the family. When Women are in a positive emotional atmosphere, it can lead to the development of effective communication patterns. This, in turn, can influence their ability to tolerate distress and respond to negative emotions in a constructive and rational manner, especially in stressful situations (Amin al-Raaya et al., 2015). Furthermore, families that have received training or have been exposed to effective communication skills, such as problem-solving, stress management, and anger control, are more adept at resolving their issues and conflicts. As a result, they tend to experience higher levels of satisfaction within their relationships.

The communication pattern adopted by married women is influenced by the emotional atmosphere and parenting approach of their family of origin (Dorrance Hall et al., 2020). Furthermore, couples replicate their parents' communication patterns, parenting styles, and the positive or negative atmosphere within their family and incorporate these experiences into their own marital and parental interactions (Shahdost et al., 2018). When the emotional atmosphere within a family is positive and healthy, and authoritative and sincere educational methods are employed, all family members feel comfortable expressing their opinions and feelings without fear. They consult one another during conflicts and problems and respect each other's independence. This type of environment has a positive impact on

family members, particularly mothers who play a crucial role in raising children. They are better able to manage their negative emotions and respond to conflicts in a consistent and rational manner. As a result, they experience less ambiguity, uncertainty, and even physical pain. Consequently, these individuals exhibit a high level of tolerance for distress and negative emotions. According to Bonanno (2004), positive family communication patterns have been found to enhance resilience in individuals. This increased resilience, in turn, can improve the distress tolerance of married women.

In the communication pattern known as mutual avoidance, conflicts are left unresolved and problems are denied, resulting in the persistence of these conflicts. This can have a range of negative consequences for women, such as depression, anxiety, loneliness, distress, and physical discomfort. Consequently, these avoidance behaviors contribute to a detrimental and negative emotional atmosphere within the family, ultimately resulting in marital dissatisfaction. The dissatisfaction with the marital relationship and the negative emotional atmosphere within the family have a detrimental impact on the distress tolerance of married women. Families that have poor communication patterns and strained relationships tend to seek external help to resolve their problems. Additionally, these individuals experience a decrease in their ability to tolerate distressing situations (Amin al-Raaya et al., 2015).

This can lead to conflicts and result in ineffective and inconsistent responses to stressful life situations. On the other hand, individuals who experience stress in confusing situations may exhibit unstable reactions, leading to a higher likelihood of impulsive and extreme behaviors. Individuals with these characteristics tend to have low distress tolerance (Shahdost et al., 2018). Consequently, a healthy family communication pattern has the effect of enhancing the positive emotional atmosphere among family members. This, in turn, increases the family's tolerance for distress. When the emotional atmosphere is positive, and the family has a high tolerance for distress, individuals are better equipped to cope with traumatic and stressful events.

Furthermore, the findings indicated that the withdrawal/demand component did not exert an indirect influence on the distress tolerance of married women through the emotional milieu of the family. It is worth noting



that no previous research aligning with these results has been found in this specific field. Glaser contends that the primary and foremost need for women is the desire for affection and a feeling of belonging, which may be attained within the suitable emotional atmosphere of the family. Glaser asserts that the absence of a genuine emotional bond within the family serves as the fundamental cause of enduring psychological issues in individuals (Tahuri & Karimi, 2022). Repeated and intense engagement in the withdrawal/demand communication pattern within a couple might result in a decline in marital happiness. Thus, it can be inferred that while the withdrawal/demand pattern may directly impact the distress tolerance of married women, it does not appear to have the ability to influence distress tolerance by mediating the emotional atmosphere of the family, which is a more influential factor. This pattern may exacerbate the tension in the couple's relationship, as women whose husbands exhibit withdrawal and avoidance in this manner receive a disapproving message that implies their spouses do not prioritize fostering meaningful contact with them. Conversely, men may resort to verbal or physical violence when they witness their female partners displaying avoidant behavior. Given the negative emotional atmosphere that prevails in such situations, it is likely that women's ability to tolerate distress will be diminished in this particular pattern.

This study found that the emotional atmosphere within a family mediated the association between communication patterns and distress tolerance in married women. Specifically, both mutual constructive and avoidance communication styles were found to directly and indirectly, predict the distress tolerance of married women. One of the limitations of the current research was the use of a convenience sample approach, which was prompted by the widespread Corona pandemic, hence preventing researchers from doing random sampling. Given that the current study sample consisted of married women in Tehran, it is important to use caution when generalizing the findings to the wider society. This study acknowledges that intervening factors, such as mental and internal processes, have influenced the participants' responses to the questionnaire. However, it is important to note that the study did not consider the participants' personality characteristics, IQ, and financial situation. One of the limitations of the current study was the utilization of a

correlational design, which relied on data obtained at a single point in time and hindered precise causal inferences. It is recommended to employ alternative sampling methods and conduct studies on samples with diverse demographic characteristics to enhance the generalizability of the results. Based on the research findings, it is crucial to address underlying factors that impact the distress tolerance of married women, such as communication patterns and the emotional atmosphere within their families. By intervening in these areas, we can effectively enhance the distress tolerance of married women.

Ethical considerations

Compliance with research ethics: This research is based on the master's thesis conducted at Imam Khomeini International University (RA) in Qazvin. The research was carried out in accordance with ethical guidelines.

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