

A Quantity Study of Marital Satisfaction, Romantic Jealousy and Female's Aggression (Psychological and Physical)

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Abstract: The objective of this study is to determine the relationship among marital satisfaction, romantic jealousy and female's aggression (physical and psychological). The women who participated in this study were those already registered as aggressive women in the counselling clinics. All of the 337 wives who were included in this study suffered from level of physical and psychological aggression were selected randomly for this investigation. Physical and psychological aggression were measured through Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS). The Spearman's Rho for Rank Order Correlation test was used to determine the relationship among marital satisfaction, romantic jealousy and physical aggression. The test showed a positive relationship between jealousy and women's physical aggression and a negative relationship between marital satisfaction and women's physical aggression. The Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Test was utilized to determine the relationship among jealousy, marital satisfaction and psychological aggression. It showed a positive relationship between jealousy and women's psychological aggression. Also there was a negative relationship between marital satisfaction and women's psychological aggression. The Multivariate Regression Analysis was used to answer the last objective. The analysis showed that from the two predictor variables such as marital satisfaction and romantic jealousy, were found to be significant in explaining the observed variation in psychological aggression (DV). Generally, the final model has explained 21.5% of total observed variance in psychological aggression.

Key words: Marital satisfaction, romantic jealousy, female aggression, women aggression, physical aggression, psychological aggression

INTRODUCTION

There are two main variables of interest, namely, romantic jealousy and marital satisfaction in the present study. It is believed that the above variables contributed to a noticeable amount of variation observed in the female's physical and psychological aggression. The focus of the present study is to investigate the probability of determining the most contributing variables within the context of the current Iranian society with special focus on female's role in the Iranian society.

Marital satisfaction means good feeling of marriage. Kaplan and Maddux (2002) stated that marital satisfaction is an individual experience in marriage which can only be evaluated by each person in response to the degree of marital pleasure.

It depends upon the individual's expectations, needs and desires in their marriage. Marital satisfaction refers to the degree of satisfaction between the couple. This satisfaction can be addressed both from the wife's perspective towards her husband and the husband's perspective towards his wife.

Some researchers like Bookwala *et al.* (1994) found that in a violent couple relationship, lower level of relationship satisfaction existed as compared to a non violent couple relationship. Sagrestano *et al.* (1999) argued that marital satisfaction has a negative relationship in relation to physical violence. Researchers such as Lewis and Fremouw (2001) stated that violence and marital satisfaction are bidirectional, which means that there may be a low satisfaction in the past that leads to violence or vice-versa.

Hamidi (2007) found that there is a positive significant relationship between attachment styles and marital satisfaction. Students with secure attachment style indicated higher marital satisfaction than students with insecure attachment styles. No significant difference was found between male and female students in marital satisfaction. It was also noted to have no significant difference between male and female students in attachment styles.

Rajaei *et al.* (2007) examined the relationship between the attachment styles and marital satisfaction. Data showed a significant and positive correlation between

marital satisfaction and secure attachment but negative correlations with avoidant and ambivalent attachment styles. Adult attachment styles explained 52% and attachment to mother styles accounted for 29% of the variance in marital satisfaction. Males and females were not significantly different in terms of level of the marital satisfaction. The individual sample is consisted of 105 married students (54 females and 51 males) who were selected through simple random sampling method.

In a sample, Byrne and Arias (1997) found that 30% of women have used physical violence against their husbands as compared to 25% of men. They found that women's marital satisfaction was negatively correlated with their use of physical aggression. Dissatisfied women were more likely to use physical aggression.

Along with marital satisfaction, jealousy is the second variable. Its contribution has been investigated in female aggression. Romantic jealousy is a strong negative feeling resulting from the actual or threatened loss of love to a rival. When a valuable relationship is threatened, the individual responds with jealousy. It can happen when partner or an individual feels threatened by whether an imagined or actual threat.

The possibility or actual loss of an important loved one to a real or imagined rival may potentially harm a relationship but not necessarily destroy or end it (Salovey, 1991). It is one of the most powerful emotions which can influence a romantic relationship (Knobloch *et al.*, 2001). Many researchers explained that jealousy is experienced throughout societies and cultures and a repeating topic in human societies and relationships (Speed and Gangstead, 1997).

Research showed that women were more jealous than men (DeWeerth and Kalma, 1993). They became more jealous than men when they thought that their marital relationship had been damaged (Buunk, 1984). Women were believed to make a greater attempt to maintain a relationship (Bryson, 1991). Women were more emotionally reactive in jealousy-stimulating positions that in response to the discovery of an infidelity, women are more likely than men to report that they will physically and verbally abuse their unfaithful mates and becoming more emotionally reactive (DeWeerth and Kalma, 1993).

Mathes and Verstraete (1993) argued that jealousy is considered as a strong feeling pointed at the rival but when revealed as an aggression it is more likely to be focused on the intimate partner than the rival. Felson and Outlaw (2007) sampled 10,000 people out of 16,000 that were married. Their findings showed that women are just as controlling and jealous toward their male partners that is, the controlling spouses in current marriages are more likely to act violently.

Objectives of the study: The general objective of this study is to determine the relationships between marital satisfaction, romantic jealousy and aggression (physical and psychological) among married women in Shiraz city, Iran. However, the clustered variables are divided into the following specific objectives:

- To examine the relationships between marital satisfaction and female aggression (physical and psychological) among respondents
- To examine the relationships between romantic jealousy and female aggression (physical and psychological) among respondents
- To determine the factors that uniquely predicts physical and psychological aggression

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The current researcher method used is a survey. It attempts to present the plausible patterns of aggression among the target population where the absence of similar studies is realized. From the practical point of view, the most economical and less time consuming research plan is assumed to be conducting a survey whereas, planning a longitudinal survey would have been out of the time and scope of the present study. However, the adopted research instrument strongly calls for collecting data from a manageable sample in a cross-sectional survey. Furthermore, the adequacy of the adopted questionnaire with respect to the factors and variables of interest has been proved by the research literature (Straus, 2008).

The sample size needed to derive with the research findings was determined using the following formula suggested by Krejcie and Morgan (1970).

The current study was conducted in Shiraz city, Iran which provided the researcher with an adequate sample of aggressive women. Moreover, there are over sixty clinics for guidance and family counselling in this city. Having a population of around 1,800,000 people, Shiraz is the fourth biggest city and the biggest southern city in Iran. The population of the study has included 3510 aggressive married women in Shiraz who were referred to the counselling centres. Compared with divorced and incomplete families, these families better represent the interaction among family members especially spouses which play a significant role in aggression in the families. In addition, these women outnumbered the others, therefore, the findings of the study on them can be generalized to many other similar cases.

Out of the whole population, a final number of 346 women were selected. Nine cases were excluded due to incomplete questionnaires or information provided.

From each clinic, the sample was chosen according to the proportional number of aggressive women that were referred to them. From clinic region one 53 (15.31%), region two 55 (15.89%), region three 55 (15.89%), region four 58 (16.76%), region five 60 (17.34) and region six 65 (18.78%). The above proportion of participating individuals were sustained across the research procedure.

After choosing the sample and obtaining written consent, the questionnaires were personally distributed among the sample and with the help of other colleagues who were experienced in conducting a survey research. The respondents were asked to be present 1 h prior to their consultation time. The questionnaires were collected on the same day.

White and Mullen developed the Romantic Jealousy Scale (RJS) to measure romantic jealousy. The translation of this instrument, its validity and reliability have already been established and provided to the participants. The RJS evaluates the respondent's view of themselves as jealous or not jealous in the current relationship, proposing six Likert-type questions such as how intense is your jealousy in your present relationship?. The reliability of this scale for this study was 0.77.

The KMS is used to measure marital satisfaction (Schumm *et al.*, 1986). The satisfaction of the respondents with their marital relationship was evaluated through this scale. It includes three questions and responses will range from 1 (extremely dissatisfied) to 7 (extremely satisfied). The sum of these three responses is considered as the total score. This instrument is reported to have high internal consistency with alphas ranging from 0.89-0.98 and high inter-correlations among items ranging from 0.93-0.95. The alpha reliability of women marital satisfaction was observed at 0.95. In this study, the level of marital satisfaction reported by women was used.

The Conflict Tactic Scale (CTS) was originally developed by Straus (1979). It measures physical and psychological aggression in couples that are dating, cohabiting or married. The questions used in this study include the subscales of physical and psychological aggression. The Cronbach Alpha value for conflict tactic scale was 0.79.

The reliability test was employed to measure the reliability of the study instruments. The Cronbach alpha test was used for this purpose. A representative sample of 35 subjects answered the scales to help the researcher calculate and measure the Internal Consistency Reliability. The results are shown in Table 1.

The data collected from personal interviews are exported to the computer and were analyzed utilizing the computer software of Statistical Package for Social

Table 1: Reliability coefficients cronbach Alpha

Scale	CTS	Rom	Mari
Current coefficients research	0.79	0.77	0.95

Rom = Romantic Jealousy; CTS = Conflict Tactic Scale; Mar = Marital Satisfaction

Sciences (SPSS) version 16th. In order to facilitate the data analysis, the following statistical procedure was employed:

This study employs a correlation research that investigates how the scores of one variable or variables will decrease or increase in relation to the change in the scores of the other variable(s).

Product-moment correlation (for parametric data) and Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient (Because the data obtained from physical aggression questionnaire were not normal and they were non parametric) were calculated to determine the degree of relationship. Positive correlation coefficient index (r) indicated a positive relationship while a negative coefficient reflected otherwise.

Bivariate correlations were used to measure the relationship between the two variables. There are also ordinal and interval variables for which the Likert type scale was used to measure 1 disagree strongly, 2 disagree, 3 unsure, 4 agree and 5 agree strongly. Multiple Regression Analysis was used to determine the link between a range of independent variables and female aggression. This analysis results from the development of a formula that explains how to identify independent variables that can be combined to form the best prediction of the dependent variable.

RESULTS

In this study, the descriptive data is shown in Table 2 which includes the level of marital satisfaction, romantic jealousy and aggression (physical and psychological) among the respondents.

The participants for this study were women seeking treatment for domestic violence and aggression (n = 337, including no missing data in this section). The mean of romantic jealousy was observed M = 17.08 and standard deviation was SD = 7.09. Based on the tabulated data (47.5%) 160 of respondents have low level of jealousy, whereas (45.4%) 153 have medium jealousy and (7.1%) 24 have high level of jealousy.

The other variable in this tabulated data represents the level of marital satisfaction. As shown in Table 2-4, according to female reports, the level of their marital satisfaction is high, where the calculated mean M = 15.40 and the standard deviation was SD = 5.82. From this total figure (21.4%), 72 of respondents have low satisfaction

and (19.3%), 65 have medium satisfaction. However, (59.3%) 200 have a high level of marital satisfaction. This reveals that the level of their marital satisfaction is high despite of the fact that there are some problems in their relationship.

A great number of women have expressed their satisfaction concerning marriage that in spite of the experiences of aggression and familial disputes, they continue loving their husbands and are satisfied with them. One of the justifications of this satisfaction may be related to their willingness to undertake counselling because they wanted to solve this problem. They have felt that the problem which has spoiled their married life should be indentified and solved. Another reason may be that women are well aware that in the case of divorce and remarriage, it is more difficult to find a spouse of their choice and they have to pay higher individual and social costs as compared to the time when they were younger. They tried their best to keep the present husband and solve their problems. At the same time, the importance and credit of Islam has greatly influenced the women to be satisfied with their marriage and keep it. It is of great value to remember that according to Islamic rules, women are encouraged to be obedient and get along well with their husbands.

Therefore, it is assumed to constitute the most important finding of the current research, as it entails to investigate the other sources of stimulating violence, although less insignificant in their contributions to the observed aggression.

For physical aggression, the mean was observed as $M = 6.19$ and standard deviation was $SD = 8.68$. The tabulated data represents that (92.0%), 310 of respondents have a low level of physical aggression, while (6.2%) 21 have medium physical aggression level and (1.8%), 6 have a high level of aggression. For psychological aggression, mean was observed $M = 19.28$ and standard deviation was $SD = 8.13$. It represents that approximately (23.1%), 78 of respondents have a low level of psychological aggression (48.7%), 164 of them have medium psychological aggression and (28.2%), 95 of respondents have high level of psychological aggression.

In accordance with the objectives, the data representing the correlation between marital satisfaction, romantic jealousy and women aggression (physical and psychological).

The Spearman's Rho for Rank Order Correlation test was used to determine the relationship between jealousy and physical aggression. Based on the achieved test, it derived to a positive and negligible relationship between the two variables, where $r_s = 0.184$ and the critical value of p was adopted, $p < 0.001$. It can be stated that the two variables fluctuate in a concurrent pattern where the increase in one variable (jealousy) will lead to a small portion of about 18% increase in the other variable (aggression).

The Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Test was utilized to determine the relationship between jealousy and psychological aggression. A positive relationship was found where, $r = 0.323$ and $p < 0.05$. It can be translated that jealousy is positively correlated with psychological aggression, although the correlation magnitude is small. Based on the Guilford Rule of Thumb, the relationship between the two variables of interest is low. Therefore, the hypothesis is not rejected.

The Spearman Rho of Rank Order test of correlation was used to determine the relationship between marital satisfaction and physical aggression variables. A negative, yet low to moderate relationship was found between the two variables, where $r_s = -0.374$ and the

Table 2: Marital satisfaction, romantic jealousy and aggression (physical and psychological)

Variables	n	%	Mean	SD
Romantic jealousy (n = 337)			17.08	7.09
Low (<16)	160	47.5		
Medium (16-27)	153	45.4		
High (>27)	24	7.1		
Marital satisfaction (n = 337)			15.40	5.82
Low (<9)	72	21.4		
Medium (9-15)	65	19.3		
Physical aggression (n = 337)			6.19	8.68
Low (<17)	310	92.0		
Medium (17-34)	21	6.2		
High (>34)	6	1.8		
Psychological aggression (n = 337)			19.28	8.13
Low (<12)	78	23.1		
Medium (12-24)	164	48.7		
High (>24)	95	28.2		

Table 3: Correlation between romantic jealousy, marital satisfaction and aggression

Variables	Correlation coefficient (r)	
	Physical	Psychological
Jealousy	0.184**	0.323**
Marital satisfaction	-0.374**	-0.408**

**p = 0.01; *p = 0.05

Table 4: Summary of regression analysis of the main variables contributing to psychological aggression

Predictors of DV	Unstandardized coefficients	SE	Beta unstandardized coefficients	t	p-value
Constant	22.24	1.697	-	13.105	0.000
Jealousy	0.26	0.058	0.229	4.551	0.000
Marital satisfaction	-0.48	0.070	-0.346	-6.871	0.000

p-value was adopted as $p < 0.001$ and the null hypothesis was rejected. The results of this statistical test showed that marital satisfaction is effective in women's physical aggression. Thus, an increase in the marital satisfaction will lead to a moderate decrease in physical aggression.

The Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Test was utilized to determine the relationship between marital satisfaction and psychological aggression. It derived to a negative and moderate relationship between marital satisfaction and psychological aggression where, $r = -0.408$, p-value was adopted as $p < 0.05$. It is interpreted that marital satisfaction is negatively correlated with psychological aggression.

The factors which contribute to the women's aggression:

The Multivariate Regression Analysis was used to answer the last objective. The analysis showed that the two predictor variables, such as romantic jealousy and marital satisfaction, were found to be significant in explaining the observed variation in psychological aggression (DV). Generally, the final model has explained 21.5% of total observed variance to psychological aggression.

In the model, the first variable which is known as romantic jealousy has explained the highest variance to psychological aggression. This result is further supported by Pearson product moments correlation analysis. After that marital satisfaction explained the next highest variance to psychological aggression (DV).

DISCUSSION

The results showed that marital satisfaction is effective in women's aggression and an increase in marital satisfaction will lead to a decrease in psychological aggression. Marital satisfaction refers to the couple's relationship inside the family. It is one of the factors that plays an important role in women's aggression. Quarrel and aggression in the family and marital relationships are inevitable and do not indicate that the marital relationship must be cut off or end in divorce. The ability to communicate and handle aggression is the two most important elements for a satisfying marriage. Sagrestano *et al.* (1999) argued that marital satisfaction has a negative relation with physical violence.

One of the other variables discussed in this study is romantic jealousy. This variable has been proven to play an important positive role in women's physical and psychological aggression. Because of the physiological conditions, women enjoy stronger emotions and are aggressive with the slightest abnormal and unpleasant situation. One of the important functions of jealousy is to

protect a valued relationship. When the relationship is at breaking point, romantic jealousy occurs. One of the main reasons of women's jealousy is the fear of their husband's remarriage or the fear of losing their husbands. Jealousy is a result from the actual or threatened loss of love to a rival.

According to social learning theory, all behaviour is learned through a combination of positive and negative reinforcement and modelling. This theory suggests that via direct experience or through observation from others, new behaviours can be acquired or learned (e.g., jealousy and satisfaction in their marriage life). Usually, the consequences of the behaviour of other people being observed, one can learn which behaviour, even those socially inappropriate will achieve the desired results without drawing a negative sanction. This learning is influenced and mediated by cognitions in a way of making generalizations as well as developing the hypotheses by observance and imagination of different outcomes, without having the actual experiences. This theory is often called as the observational learning or modelling which focuses at a certain point that reinforcement of behaviours can cause successful or adaptive modes of behaviour as well as motivating and regulating them (Bandura, 1986).

In Iranian society, polygamy is rejected by most women although regulations do not oppose it. Nevertheless, it is unacceptable for most women and to support this finding, Mathes (1991) mentioned that romantic jealousy has been significantly and positively correlated with a high sense and significance of monogamy.

Breaking news about men's remarriage has caused aggression for married women. According to the law, men can be engaged to many women as Sigheh (temporary marriage terms as seen in civil law and advocated by rules of Islam). The problem becomes more evident when many women considered this as a source of income due to the poverty and the gap among social classes. They make a living through such relationships. When for some reasons like guardianship of the children born in such marriages, there is the need to refer to the courts, naturally many women will be worried and understand that they need to be more cautious, jealous and this leads to permanent stress and aggression. This explains why women are worried about their husband's relationships with other women. The stress and anxiety showed by women in these cases seems to be natural and logical.

The present regulations which entitle men to polygamy and Sigheh have placed the women in a crucial situation. They are facing many problems like unemployment and lack of support from the family to help

them from stopping their husbands to remarry. As, they are economically dependent on their husbands and when breaking up, they will confront many problems. As such, they are worried about their relationship with their husbands (Moazami, 2004). Consequently, they will react against any factors likely to disturb their relationship. With respect to the conditions in Iran, where cases of having a second or even third wife is considered legal and men are allowed to remarry, romantic jealousy is aptly expected.

Bhugra (1993) argued that romantic jealousy happens when a danger exists to something one possessed. Nowadays, women have more awareness and better understanding about the current situation and considered their husbands not only as their sexual partners but also as the life partners. They are not ready to easily accept the second wife as the past generations did. Jealousy has also been associated with the darker side of the relationships (Buss, 2000).

CONCLUSION

There is a need in the pursuit of more research to further identify women's aggressiveness. The results of the study showed variables such as the couple's degree of satisfaction in marriage and romantic jealousy which have correlation with women physical and psychological aggression.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The standardized questionnaires are not likely to be applicable for the society like Iran. The new set of questionnaires designed by the researcher seem better to identify the data regarding the problems of women in Iranian context.

Due to the governing attitude in Iran, qualitative research usually provides better and more exact results than the quantitative one. The researcher believes that qualitative studies can deeply explore and identify the problem, provided that trust has been established leading to a friendly and confidential environment provided for the participants.

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