

Sexual Desire and Materialism as Predictors of Marital Satisfaction among Men

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ABSTRACT

Background and aim: Considering the importance of marital satisfaction in married life and its relation to health and happiness, this research aimed to investigate the role of sexual desire and materialism in marital satisfaction among Iranian males. **Method:** In this study, 240 married males in the age range of 25-46 years were selected randomly among the employees in government sections in Tehran-Iran. The participants responded to standard questionnaires of Hurlburt Index of Sexual Desire, Material Values Scale and Enrich marital satisfaction. Correlation and Regression analysis were done. **Results:** Results indicated that sexual desire was positively related to marital satisfaction. Negative relationship occurred between materialism and marital satisfaction. The study revealed that sexual desire and materialism emerged as predictors of marital satisfaction. **Conclusion:** Inconsistent with previous findings, a significant relationship emerged between materialism and marital satisfaction as well as sexual desire. These factors can play an important role in family therapy and happiness.

Keywords: Marital Satisfaction; Materialism; Sexual Desire

Marital satisfaction has effects on the biological and mental health of couples (Holt-Lunstad, Birmingham and Jones, 2008), children's development, well-being, physical function, academic performance, social skills and relationships (Cummings & Davies, 2011; Hetherington & Kelly, 2002).

In some recent studies, there is a linkage between materialism and consumer behavior with attitude toward satisfaction and marriage (Kuar & Kuar, 2016; Li, Lim, Tsai & Jiaqing, 2015). Teimourpour, Moshtagh and Pourshanbaz (2012) suggested that having a pleasurable sex in mutual life is an inseparable part of happiness and marital satisfaction. In a study, Habibi (2016) indicated that there is a noticeable relationship between sexual activity and successful marriage among couples. Low sexual desire is the main reason for marital

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Sexual Desire and Materialism as Predictors of Marital Satisfaction among Men

dissatisfaction and also sexual dysfunction. (Regan & Atkins, 2006) Such attitudes direct to difficulties like premature ejaculation and impotence in men, low sexual desire, and anorgasmia in women (Zhanda, 2005).

In addition to the effect of sexual functions such as sexual desire on marital satisfaction, there are new emerging traits in modern societies such as materialism which can affect relationships and perception of happiness and satisfaction. People who are concerned about money, desire less physical intimacy and want to participate in more solitary activities. Various studies exist in support of this idea, revealing that materialistic values are associated with shorter, less positive, and more negative relationships and low happiness (Burcham, 2012).

Unsuccessful marriage among spouses probably is an obstacle to happy life and well-being. Marital relations are one of the important factors in achieving happiness in life (Sarookhani, 2006). Furthermore, marital satisfaction is significantly dependent on healthy sexual behavior to increase the enjoyment and satisfaction of spouses and even help to face all stresses and difficulties of daily life (Mccarthy, 2002).

Some researchers believed that being financially established and materialistic values lead to a happier marital relationship (Fox, Benson, DeMaris, & Van, 2002). However, other researchers revealed the association of materialism with shorter and less positive relationships. In a survey, Swinyard, Kau and Phua (2001) showed that the American participants had significantly higher happiness than Singaporean, while the Americans were lesser materialistic than Singaporean. The results indicated that the significant differences between life pleasure and overall materialism in a negative relationship. However, Burcham (2012) reported that the materialistic values and high income actually lead to greater relational enjoyment.

Sánchez-Fuentes (2014) analyzed the results of 197 empirical studies issued between 1979 and 2012 year. The review showed that marital satisfaction is a complex dependent on several variables including: a) individual variables such as socio-demographic and psychological characteristics such as physical and mental health status; b) close relationships and sexual act were positively correlated to marital satisfaction; c) social support and family relationships have a positive correlation with marital satisfaction and happiness; and d) the factors of cultural beliefs and values like guilt had reverse effect on the marital satisfaction. Another comprehensive survey by Karney and Bradbury (1995) on the marital satisfaction and stability, declared that sexual satisfaction was the important predictors of marital satisfaction.

Sprecher and Cate (2004) revealed that with some exception, the sexual relation and enjoyment depend on the satisfaction and life-long of relationship. However, the relationship and sexual satisfaction can be independent variables. Adrienne (2010) reported that frequency of sexual activity, based on the quantitative data analysis obtained from the general social

Sexual Desire and Materialism as Predictors of Marital Satisfaction among Men

survey 2004-2008, was a significant predictor of both general and marital happiness and suggested it contributes to the happiness and well-being.

Marital satisfaction refers to the feelings of pleasure, satisfaction, and enjoyment of married life by both wife and husband. A progress of emotional interaction in which, a couple transfer their love to each other through vocal or just by signs such as gestural and physical motions (Ellis, 1992). Marital satisfaction is the cornerstone of making mutual life in the form of family or partnership to develop next generation and behaving children (Larson & Holman, 1994).

The review of literature highlighted gaps in this area, such as differences in cultures of selected cases areas in most of studies. There are very rare studies on the sex-related topics which considered the sexual desire targeting Muslim community in Iran as it is a taboo. Besides, such studies have targeted just some of variables and not as a predictor of happiness in marriage life.

Although materialism and sexual function have a great impact on marital satisfaction, there are very few investigations to explain the effects and relationships of such parameters. Therefore, the aim of this research is to find the role of sexual desire and materialism in the prediction of marital satisfaction among males.

Based on the review of literature the following hypotheses were proposed:

H1: sexual desire will be positively related to marital satisfaction among males.

H2: materialism will be negatively related to marital satisfaction among males.

H3: sexual desire and materialism will emerge as predictors of marital satisfaction.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

This study was conducted on males working in governmental organizations in Tehran-Iran belonging to Shia community. A random sample of 240 individuals of age in between 25 and 46 years of age was contacted. The participants answered the standardized questionnaire and they also answered demographic questions including sex, race, education, age, sexual orientation, marital status and information regarding their mental health, staying in the core of family in the urban area and at least have a diploma. Purposive sampling technique was used for this study.

Tests and Tools

The following tests were used in the present investigation:

- **Hurlburt index of sexual desire** (Apt & Hurlburt, 1992): The HISD was invented by Apt and Hurlbert and consists of 25 questions in Likert scale (0-4) with the total score range of 0-100. Cronbach's alphas of the questionnaire and test-retest reliability (with two weeks interval) were 0.95 and 0.86. Psychometric properties of the questionnaire are satisfactory (Behshart, 2009).

Sexual Desire and Materialism as Predictors of Marital Satisfaction among Men

- **Enrich marital satisfaction** (Fowers & Olson, 1993): In this study, the short form with (47 questions) was used. Soleimanian in a study got the alpha Cronbach of the Persian version 0.95. Correlation of the questionnaire with life satisfaction was 0.32-0.41 which indicates good construct validity. In addition, the examiner can discriminate between spouses with marital troubles and those without problems (Soleimanian, 1994).
- **Material values scale** (Richins & Dawson, 1992): In order to create the Native Material Values Scale the researchers adapted the items from the original MVS. Then, in order to test its reliability and validity, NMVS-I was administered to 384 students of Islamic Azad university branches. Factor analysis indicated that the materialism was a second-order construct with material factors. The final Iranian version was 18 items like origin form, including three main factors of possession, happiness, and luxury (Hanzaee & Adibifard, 2012).
- **Besides Demographic questionnaire:** a questionnaire was designed by the researchers to assess demographic data including sex, age, marital status, marriage duration, education, pregnancy status, consumption of a specific drug, alcohol, and narcotics, and any physical disease or psychological disorder.

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics viz, mean and standard deviation was performed. The age mean of sample group was 34.62 ± 5.47 and also the mean of sexual desire was 50.12 ± 13.27 , for materialism the mean of scores was 43.70 ± 10 and finally for marital satisfaction was 79.65 ± 18.79 .

Data have been analyzed via multiple linear regression, a model for marital satisfaction has been developed using two independent variables, Materialism and Sexual desire. The result indicated that two variables employed in the model, about 52.2% ($R^2=0.522$) explained the total variance in the marital satisfaction with total variability about 14.13 in the prediction (Table 1). To access the significance of the result means the model is basically predictor, the ANOVA statistical analysis has been performed. The result indicated that the model showed p value equals 0 explained that the model has good prediction outcome which is reject the H0 hypothesis of ANOVA. The significance implied that the higher R^2 value has the smallest standard error. The result of ANOVA analysis is presented in Table 2.

Table 1, The Impact of MATERIALISM and SEXUAL DESIRE on the level of satisfaction

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.72 ^a	0.52	0.52	14.12868
a. Predictors: (Constant), MATERIALISM, SEXUAL DESIRE/ b. Dependent Variable: MARITAL SATISFACTION				

The evaluation of each independent variable to determine which variable has most efficacy to predict the model, demonstrated in The Coefficients table (Table 2).

Sexual Desire and Materialism as Predictors of Marital Satisfaction among Men

Table 2. ANOVA analysis of dependent variable

Model		Sum of Squares	Df*	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	51653.1	2	25826.1	129.38	0.00* ^a
	Residual	47309.85	237	199.62	p<0.05	
	Total	98963.85	239			
a. Predictors: (Constant), MATERIALISM, SEXUAL DESIRE						
b. Dependent Variable: MARITAL SATISFACTION						

The skeptical significance $p=0$ showed the statistical significant unique contribution to predict the marital satisfaction.

The result of co-efficient and effectiveness of variables were presented in Table 3.

Table 3, the Co-efficients and correlation analysis of predictors (sexual desire and materialism)

Model	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations
	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Part
(Constant)		7.64	0.000	45.11	76.62	
SEXUAL DESIRE	0.51	9.61	0.000*	0.64	.97	0.43
MATERIALISM	-0.21	-5.56	0.000*	-0.78	-.37	-0.25
a. Dependent Variable: MARITAL SATISFACTION						

DISCUSSION

The present study initially purposes to investigate the relationship between sexual desire, materialism and marital satisfaction. The result showed the computed coefficient values of marital satisfaction (constant), sexual desire and materialism in the B column, which indicates the steepness of the regression line. The standardized coefficient's values were 0.515 for sexual desire and -0.298 for materialism, which means that sexual desire can increases the marital satisfaction approx 2 times, however, materialism showed a negative effect on marital satisfaction about one fourth. It shows the sexual desire has the strongest contribution to explain the marital satisfaction. The part correlation coefficient, showing the most effective variable in the prediction of the model (total R²), was the sexual desire, 43% explain the total R² of marital satisfaction. These values indicated both variables (predictors) have paradox correlations, sexual desire positive while materialism negative correlations, to predict the marital satisfaction. Therefore, the most satisfied males from their marriages were among those who had most successful sexual activity and had the highest level of sexual satisfaction. However wealth-seeking and materialism could reduce the satisfaction of their married life may be due to lack of time to spend with their spouses, their mental pressure to manage their business and time or challenging with financial problems to earn more and more

Sexual Desire and Materialism as Predictors of Marital Satisfaction among Men

money. So the stress of daily challenges won't allow them to spend more time with their family or get relaxation beside them, result in un-satisfaction of marital status.

The results supported the hypothesis, H1: which expected a positive relationship between sexual desire and marital satisfaction among males and H2: which expected that a negative relationship between materialism and marital satisfaction among males. So, the sexual desire and materialism can be considered as the predictors of marital satisfaction.

The results of this study are concurrent with the other studies predicted the marital satisfaction and supporting these foundations and hypothesis. Sprecher (2002) investigated how sexual satisfaction is associated with relationship quality and consistency in premarital spouses. Sprecher found that sexual satisfaction was associated with relationship satisfaction, love, faithfulness, and consistency by collecting the data in many years from a sample of heterosexual spouses. In every stage of research, sexual satisfaction was associated positively with relationship satisfaction, love, and faithfulness for both males and females. In addition, some evidence has resulted that sexual satisfaction was associated with relationship consistency. Overall, sexual satisfaction had stronger links with relationship quality for men than for women. Besides, Chartier, (2009) found that sexual desire has a positive and significant correlation with sexual satisfaction.

Javed and Gul, (2016) in a study in two cities of Pakistan on 200 married males ranging from 22 to 46 ages on sexual desire and marital satisfaction found that sexual desire has a positive correlation with marital satisfaction among males.

Consistent with a study, (Brezsnyak, 2004) found that marital satisfaction has a powerful correlation with sexual desire among individuals. In another study by Teimourpour, et al. (2012) acknowledged that marital satisfaction is associated with higher scores of sexual desire. Regan and Atkins (2006) revealed that sexual desire as a motivational state that leads to interest and tendency to a sexual object or sexual activity. They distinguish sexual desire from psychological and physiological sexual arousal. Fisher and Johnston (1998) introduced an emotional-motivational system and believed that basic emotions are the result of distinguished neuron circuits or systems. She believed that human beings have three basic motivational circuits or systems which are evolved to lead behaviors. The first system is androgen system which affects lust (including sexual impulse and desire). Next system is dopamine that affects attraction (romance) and the last one is Oxytocin which affects attachment.

The reason for correlation of sexual desire and marital satisfaction can be explained by different factors which influence the instability and changes in sexual desire. Sometimes the individuals are not aware of these factors but they affect their sexual desires (Bach, Barlow & Wincze, 2005).

Sexual Desire and Materialism as Predictors of Marital Satisfaction among Men

There are so many various psychological factors that probably influence sexual desire and marital satisfaction which have not been already investigated. One of these factors is attachment style. Attachment is an important phenomenon in the process of every individual's development. In 1987, Hazan and Shaver suggested that attachment theory can be extended to explain adolescent's` and adults' romantic-sexual relationships. They believed that attachment styles reflect mental representations of self and others and lead to different orientations in close relationships. Different attachment styles are assumed as in personality dimensions, which have a very important role in every person's relationship with others, both in childhood and adulthood. Marital satisfaction is another factor which may affect sexual desire.

Different studies suggested that one of the main reasons for sexual dysfunction is communicational problems and couple distress. The connection between spouses is a substantial factor that affects sexual desire and mental functioning of women with hypoactive sexual desire disorder (Bach et al, 2005).

In a study by Ryan and Dziurawiec (2001), it was revealed that materialism is negatively related to marital satisfaction. The study stated that those individuals who were high in materialism were less satisfied with their `life as a whole' and with specific `life domains' than those who were low in materialism. Kahneman and colleagues (2006) found that materialistic values often do not result in people being happy, or being satisfied with their marriage. Another study by Burcham (2012) found that less expensive weddings, and less materialistic values, would lead to happier marriages in real life and lead to marital satisfaction, where wedding cost and size have no influence on marital satisfaction, and that materialism actually leads to more satisfying relationships.

Another objective of this research was to specify the significant predictors for criterion variable marital satisfaction. For this, multiple regression analysis was applied to the sample. The variables i.e. sexual desire and materialism were entered as predictors. The results revealed that sexual desire and materialism can predict marital satisfaction. Furthermore, there is some evidence to support the concept that, through bottom-up processing, sexual satisfaction leads to marital satisfaction. According to Karney and Bradbury's (1995) review of the longitudinal marital study, there is a strong correlation with sexual satisfaction to marital satisfaction. Indeed, McNulty and Karney (2002) found that daily sexual satisfaction correlated with daily evaluations of the marriage as a whole (Yeh, Lorenz, Wickrama, Conger & Elder, 2006). Brezsnjak and Whisman (2004) predicted that marital satisfaction with sexual desire and this association would strongly correlated with sexual desire among individuals who perceive themselves as having less power in their relationship. Results indicated that marital satisfaction was significantly associated with sexual desire. Overall, marital satisfaction is one of the most important factors affecting sexual desire.

In recent Iranian study, Habibi (2016) indicated a positive relationship between intimacy, sexual and marital satisfaction. Due to the economic dependency of females on males in

Sexual Desire and Materialism as Predictors of Marital Satisfaction among Men

some regions of Iran, still, men are responsible for all living expenses in this country. In addition, men's sexual fantasies tend to be centered on the fulfillment of lust, and as such contain depersonalized sexual objects, and place less importance on the context and feelings of sexual interactions (Ellis & Symons, 1990). In agreement with the notion that men place more emphasis on the sexual aspects of the relationship when determining satisfaction, McNulty and Fisher (2008) found that, for men, previous sexual satisfaction and changes in sexual frequency were significantly associated with later reports of sexual satisfaction.

Several studies confirm that the more people endorse materialistic goals, the less happy and satisfied they are with life (Belk, 1985; Kasser & Ryan, 1996; Richins, 1994; Richins & Dawson, 1992). For example, the more people agree with statements such as "Some of the most important achievements in life include acquiring material possessions" and "Buying things gives me a lot of pleasure," the less satisfied they are with life (Richins & Dawson, 1992). Similarly, the more people endorse aspirations such as "You will buy things just because you want them" and "You will have a job with high social status," the lower their self-reported subjective well-being, (Kasser & Ryan, 1993). The financial problems have been determined to be an inadequate predictor of future marital dissolution (Andersen, 2000), research on the relationship between conflicts over money and marital satisfaction concur that the two are related. Li et al. (2015) indicated that materialistic values led to more negative attitudes towards marriage, which led to more negative attitudes toward children, which in turn led to a decreased number of children desired. In a more recent study conducted by Kaur and Kaur (2016) role of relationship satisfaction and narcissism in bringing materialistic tendencies to the fore in an individual has been examined in countless studies across the globe. It is understood that the materialists who seek happiness in possessions, not people, also exhibit narcissism along with relationship dissatisfaction.

CONCLUSION

According to statistical predicted model and with respect to previous findings, a significant relationship emerged between materialism, sexual desire, and marital satisfaction. Variables have a significant contribution to explaining the predicted model of marital satisfaction, where sexual desire with the highest part correlation coefficient value showed the significantly larger contribution in the prediction of the model. Results showed the negative correlation between independent variable to predict model and significant contribution, around 52.2%, to explain the total variance with variability about 14.13 in the marital satisfaction prediction model. These factors can play an important role in family therapy and happiness.

However, the influence of other factors in predicting marital satisfaction should not be ignored. The importance of the role of spiritual and religious factors, sexual, interpersonal, communication and interactive factors and mental health in marital satisfaction has been acknowledged in most studies (Mortazavi, Bakhshayesh, Fatehizadeh, & Emaminiya, 2014; Javanmard, & Garegozlo, 2013; Alipour, Rahimi, & Zare, 2013; Rabani, & Beheshti, 2011; Ibrahimi, & Jhanbozorgi, 2008). Also, in most papers, the impact of some socio-demographic

Sexual Desire and Materialism as Predictors of Marital Satisfaction among Men

factors such as employment, duration of the marriage, age, number of children, economic factors and income has also been emphasized (Shams, Kajbaf, & Iranpanah, 2014).

LIMITATION

There is not any comprehensive research on the selected topic; also, the present study contains few limitations as below:

This study was entirely quantitative in nature with much reliance on the self-report measures and these types of measures might bring in social desirability factor. There is a chance of biased responses on part of the participants.

The present study engaged purposive sampling technique due to the nature and design of the study, hence, limiting its generalization.

Only limited age ranges were selected. Though it was done to guarantee homogeneity, however incorporating wider age group range could have offered better generalization to people belonging to different age groups.

The major limitation encountered in the present study was the non-availability of sufficient psychological research and literature in Iranian context necessitating dependence upon the research conducted abroad. Similar studies need to be replicated in different parts of Iran, for different age groups, women and self-employed men groups as well. More research is needed to get an insight into the marital satisfaction and its predictors. Additional research in this area could provide a better understanding of the predictor of marital satisfaction.

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Sexual Desire and Materialism as Predictors of Marital Satisfaction among Men

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Sexual Desire and Materialism as Predictors of Marital Satisfaction among Men

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Sexual Desire and Materialism as Predictors of Marital Satisfaction among Men

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Sexual Desire and Materialism as Predictors of Marital Satisfaction among Men

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