

Assessment of Marital Satisfaction and Happiness in Men and Women who are Married at Early Age and Old Age

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ABSTRACT: This research examines the marital satisfaction and happiness in men and women who are married at early age and who are married at late age. The research method is survey and the sample size is 240 married persons. In women, marriage under the age of 20 was considered early marriage and marriage of over 30 was late marriage. Also in men, marriage under the age of 25 was considered early marriage and marriage over 30 was late marriage. The instruments was Enrich marital satisfaction and Oxford happiness questionnaires. The results show that there is significant different between gender and marital satisfaction and happiness and also there is significant different between marital age and marital satisfaction and happiness. Also results show that women who are married at early age are less satisfied with marital satisfaction and women who are married at old age are more satisfied with marital satisfaction. On the other side, men who are married at early age are more satisfied with marital satisfaction and men who are married at old age are less satisfied with marital satisfaction.

KEYWORDS: age of marriage, gender, happiness, marital satisfaction

Introduction

Happiness as one of the most important psychological needs of human, because of the major effect on the formation of human personality, always occupied the mind of human. With the increasing importance of happiness in mental health and well-being, as well as its effect on strengthening human psychological power, to counteract the complexities and problems of today's world, the attention of scholars, researchers and even the general public has changed towards it (Omidian 2008, 106). Researchers show that happiness, regardless of how to get it, can improve physical health. People who are happy, are feeling more secure, are more likely to decide, have more cooperative spirit and feel more comfortable with those who live with them (Mahdavi 2012, 97). Studies express that there are many factors affect happiness which in line with factors affecting happiness, psychologists and economists have introduced different theories:

A. Economic theory. In this theory, it is believed that living conditions, especially income growth, have a lasting effect on happiness. Economists prefer to focus on perceived behaviors instead of focusing on mental states that are abstract. Hence, they raise the issue of utility and believe that person can increase his level of happiness by increasing income. Although some researchers suggest that high-income people are relatively happier but many research and studies in psychology show that money and happiness are not always associated with each other. Generally when basic needs are met, income does not have much effect on happiness (Alipour and Noorbala 2007, 224).

B. Psychological theory. The most common happiness theory is the "fixed point theory". This theory states that each person has a certain amount of happiness due to the genetic and personality factors. Different life events may temporarily increase or decrease the level of happiness but due to the effect of compatibility or pleasure, happiness will return to its original value over time (Alipour and Noorbala 2007, 224). Proponents of this theory believe that the role of life events in joy is negligible. In this theory, three factors are considered as factors affecting happiness that they are:

1. Fixed point: the greatest share of happiness in genetic factors is called fixed point. In other words, the fix level of joy that stems from parents (Ayzeng 2011, 42).
2. Living condition: 10 % of total amount of happiness is allocated to itself. This part includes national, geographic, cultural-regional factors and demographic factors such as age, gender and ethnicity. This dimension of happiness encompass history of personal life and events such as accident, childhood injuries. Also living conditions include variables like social status, job security, income, health, etc..

3. Conscious activities: Sheldon (2008, 102) defines this factor as follows: this level includes a wide range of activities that people do or are thinking of doing. There are many behaviors and activities that individuals spend time and energy on doing which is called conscious activities. This dimension that play 40 % role in happiness, is divided into 3 domains:
- Behavioral activities: such as regular exercise, love others, spend time to presence in the community.
 - Cognitive activities: includes attention to blessings, thinking about positive affairs in life.
 - Voluntary activities: like meaningful efforts in life, trying to achieve personal goals (Vatankhah 2013).

Considering that happiness can be related to issues such as social and family relationships, person's status as a partner and etc. So, it can also have a great influence on happiness in common life. Marital satisfaction is one of the most important concepts of common life and also one of the broadest concepts for determining the amount of happiness and stability of relationship (Rouhani and Manavipour 2010, 116).

Marital satisfaction is a condition that during it, husband and wife feel happy and satisfied from getting married to each other and being together. This satisfaction is the result of marital consent. Actually marital satisfaction present a general assessment of the current status of the relationship (Khanmohammadi and Partovi 2016).

There are some effective factors on marital satisfaction that includes effective communication methods in solving marital conflicts, mutual respect, relationships before marriage, marriage age, couples age interval, duration of shared life, educational and family resemblance, job – social stability, the number of children in the family and the combination of above factors (Vaziri 2015, 91).

In the case of marital satisfaction, researchers in this field have different theories. Each of these theories looks at marriage and common life in separate dimensions. The most important theory is “Elis's rational–emotional theory“ (Sahabi, Khani and Khani 2013, 90).

This theory believes that marital disorder does not directly relate to the actions of the other partner or to the behavior of the spouse but it is more because of the opinion and beliefs that the couple have in this behavior. Therefore, this theory focuses on individuals. That means, instead of considering only the interactions or the only system in which the couple are intended, this approach considers persons as the main thing in disorder. The turbulent feelings and behaviors that exist in the relationship are only due to the wrong behavior of either partner or both. In other words, this theory continuously pays attention to the feelings and actions of the couple, but specially deal with the thinking of each of them (Sahabi, Khani and Khani 2013, 91).

Because happiness and marital satisfaction have an important impact on family and health, its role on people's lives is high. Therefore, this article attempts to investigate the amount of happiness and marital satisfaction among those who are married at early age and old age.

General purpose of research: Assessment of marital satisfaction and happiness in men and women who are married at early age and old age.

Minor goals of research:

- Assessing marital satisfaction in women and men
- Assessing marital satisfaction in persons who are married at early age with persons who are married at old age.
- Assessing happiness in women and men.
- Assessing happiness in persons who are married at early age with persons who are married at old age.

Background research:

- Xie, Zhan and Gong (2018) in their research express that proactive personality is positively associated with marital satisfaction through increased work—family facilitation and decreased work—family conflicts for men. However, the effect of proactive personality on marital satisfaction is complex and overall negative for women.

- Mohammadi and Makundi' research (2016) shows that there is a positive and significant relationship between marital satisfaction and quality of life in married students.
- Based on Khanmohammadi and Partovi's research (2017), results show that there is a significant relationship between marital satisfaction and traditional and modern marriage.
- Zandipour and Momenjavid's research (2012) shows that there is a significant relationship between marital satisfaction and job satisfaction in employees of wastewater company.
- Bulgan and Ciftci (2017) in their research, express that marital satisfaction and self-efficacy accounted for 45.9% of variance in psychological well-being and 25.8% of variance in life satisfaction scores.
- In McNulty, Wenner, Fisher and Terri's research (2016) is expressed that higher levels of marital satisfaction at one wave of assessment predicted more positive changes in sexual satisfaction from that assessment to the next; and higher levels of sexual satisfaction at one wave of assessment predicted more positive changes in marital satisfaction from that assessment to the next.

Hypotheses:

1. Marital satisfaction is different between women and men.
2. Marital satisfaction is different between early married persons and late married persons.
3. Women who are married at old age are more satisfied with marital satisfaction.
4. Men who are married at early age are more satisfied with marital satisfaction.

Variables:

- Independent variables: gender, age
- Dependent variables: happiness, marital satisfaction

Definition of variables:

- Theoretical definition of happiness: In Veenhoven's view, happiness refers to the individual's judgement of the degree or desirability of the quality of life in his life. In other words, happiness means how much your person loves his life (Veenhoven 1996, 16).
- Operational definition of happiness: The purpose of happiness in this study is the score that subjects receive from the Oxford Happiness questionnaire.
- Theoretical definition of marital satisfaction: Marital satisfaction is a condition that during it husband and wife feel happy and satisfied from getting married to each other and being together (Jafari 2008, 120).
- Operational definition: The purpose of marital satisfaction in this study is the score that subjects receive from the Enrich Marital satisfaction questionnaire.

Statistical population:

The statistical population in this study was married women and men in Tabriz city.

Measurement tool:

Measurement tools in this study was the Oxford Happiness questionnaire (Cronbach's alpha: 0.92) and Enrich Marital satisfaction questionnaire (Cronbach's alpha: 0.92).

Research method:

The questionnaires were distributed randomly in Tabriz to be filled in by people willing to cooperate.

Research findings and examining hypotheses:

In order to test the first hypothesis as seen in table 1, an independent t-test was used considering the equality of variances, the significance level of t-test for this hypothesis was higher than level of 0.05 and there was not a significant difference between male and female.

Table 1. T-Test results

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Marital satisfaction in Men and women	Equal variances assumed	4.463	.036	.474	148	.624

In the second hypothesis as seen in table 2, an independent t-test was used and considering the equality of variances, the significance level of t-test for this hypothesis was higher than level of 0.05 and there was not a significant difference between early married persons and late married persons.

Table 2. T-Test results

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Marital satisfaction in Men and women	Equal variances assumed	4.378	.038	.458	136	.652

In the third hypothesis as seen in table 3, an independent t-test was used and considering the equality of variances, the significance level of t-test for this hypothesis was higher than level of 0.05 and there was a significant difference between men women.

Table 3. T-Test results

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Marital satisfaction in Men and women	Equal variances assumed	4.405	.491	.375	134	.072

In the fourth hypothesis as seen in table 4, an independent t-test was used and considering the equality of variances, the significance level of the t-test for this hypothesis was higher than level of 0.05 and there was a significant difference between early married persons and late married persons.

Table 4. T-Test results

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Marital satisfaction in Men and women	Equal variances assumed	4.420	.518	.412	148	.083

Conclusion

According to the results, it can be concluded that the level of the marital satisfaction and the amount of happiness among men and women and early married persons and late married persons is different. Also results show that women who are married at early age are less satisfied with marital satisfaction and women who are married at old age are more satisfied with marital satisfaction. On the other side, men who are married at early age are more satisfied with marital satisfaction and men who are married at old age are less satisfied with marital satisfaction.

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