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The Relationship between Problem-Solving Skills and Conflict Resolution Styles with Marital Intimacy and Compatibility among Couples

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A B S T R A C T

The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between problem-solving skills and conflict resolution styles with marital intimacy and compatibility among couples in Bandar Abbas. This study is functional in terms of the purpose and is correlation-based in terms of the descriptive methods of collecting information. 182 men and 205 women were randomly selected for sampling. 28-article Questionnaire of conflict resolution styles of Rahim (1983), intimacy questionnaire by Thompson and Walker (1983), compatibility questionnaire by Graham Spanier (1976) and problem-solving questionnaire of Heppner and Multivariate regression and Pearson correlation coefficient were used to analyze the findings of the survey. The results showed that collaborating, compromising and accommodating marital conflict resolution styles are as positive predictor and avoidance and accommodating styles are as negative predictors of marital compatibility. The total of marital conflict resolution styles, compromising, accommodating, avoiding and control are significant predictors of marital intimacy. Among the three components of problem-solving skills, two skills of problem solving are positive predictor with confidence, and avoidance solutions are considered as negative predictor for the marital compatibility variable. Among the three components of problem solving, only the avoidance solution is considered as the negative predictor for the marital intimacy variable. In a general conclusion from this study, it can be stated that constructive problem-solving skills (solving the problem with confidence) and constructive marital conflict resolution styles (integration, compromising and accommodating styles) have crucial roles in increasing marital intimacy and marital compatibility. Moreover, destructive problem-solving skills (avoidance problem-solving skills and self-control) and destructive marital conflict resolution styles (avoiding and control styles) have a role in reducing marital compatibility and in reducing marital intimacy.

Keywords: Problem-Solving Skill, Marital Conflict Resolution Styles, Marital Intimacy, Marital Compatibility.

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INTRODUCTION

There are many problems in life requiring effort to cope with and solve them. In fact, happiness of the human is not in not facing any problem but it is in solving them when facing them. Some people have discomfort and distress for the slightest problem of and are not able to remove it. These people are susceptible to a variety of social and psychological injuries. There are other people who are facing very difficult crises and are able to successfully come over them. One of the reasons that enables these individuals and provides the opportunity for their success in the crisis is choosing the right way to solve their problem¹. The function of problem-solving skill in family and couples is the title of the goal to be pursued in this study. Family is a structure the function of which is formed through interactional patterns. An influential family is the one in which the couple often talk with each other and shape their communication patterns in these negotiations. So, it is not necessarily the conflict, but it is the way to cope with the conflict that can be destructive or constructive^{2,3}.

Based on the definition, marital compatibility is a situation in which married couples are satisfied from being together and feel happy with each other. It is believed that marital compatibility is the balance between the status quo and the expected situation. Accordingly, marital compatibility can be achieved when the current situation in the marital relationship is consistent with the expected one. In addition, Alice in 1989 states that marital satisfaction is the actual feeling of happiness, satisfaction and experienced pleasure by the husband or wife when they consider all the aspects of their marriage^{4,5}. In this study, the researcher seeks to know whether the problem-solving skills and conflict resolution styles can have a relationship with marital intimacy and compatibility among couples in Bandar Abbas.

METHODOLOGY

According to the research subject, the method of survey in this study has been functional in terms of purpose and the method of descriptive information collecting has been correlation-based. One of the kinds of descriptive research methods (non-experimental) is correlation research. The statistical population in this study is the studied population of coupled in Bandar Abbas. Among the studied population, 384 subjects were selected as the sample by multistage random sampling method and size sample formula (Cochran). For data collection used Intimacy questionnaire by Thompson and Walker (1983), 32-question questionnaire of Compatibility by Graham Spanier (1976), Problem-solving questionnaire of Heppner and Conflict solving styles' questionnaire (ROCI)

RESULTS

Table1. The summary of the regression model between the problem-solving skills and marital intimacy

Predicting variables	Correlation coefficient	Determining coefficient	Adjusted determining coefficient
problem-solving skills	0.24	0.06	0.053

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Multivariate simultaneous linear regression methods were used to analyze the first hypothesis of the research. In general, the multiple correlation coefficients between problem-solving skills with marital intimacy are 0.24 and the coefficient of determination is 0.06 and adjusted coefficient of determination is 0.053. In other words, 3.5% of the marital intimacy variable is explained by two variables of the problem-solving skills.

Table2. Variance analyses for marital intimacy based on the problem-solving skills

Model	Model index	Sum squares	Degree of freedom	Mean square	F	P
Enter	Regression effect	33854.97	3	11284.99	8.18	0.01
	Remnant	528393.81	383	1379.61		
	Total	562248.79	386			

The table above shows the results of ANOVA test. The F= 8.18 is significant in the alpha level of 0.01. This means that the above regression model is significant for analyzing the linear relationship.

Table3. Regression coefficients for the prediction of marital intimacy based on problem-solving skills

Intimacy	Non-standard coefficients		Standard amount of β	t	Level of significance
	B value	Standard error			
intercepts	120.25	10.18		11.80	0.01
Confident solution	0.38	0.21	0.10	1.78	0.07
Avoiding solution	-0.80	0.28	-0.20	-2.80	0.01
Self-control	-1	0.68	-0.10	-1.46	0.14

The table above showed the regression coefficients of the regression equation for predicting marital intimacy based on problem solving components. The component of the confident solution of the problem with the β value of 0.10 in the alpha level of 0.07 is not considered a significant predictor for the marital intimacy variable. The component of the avoiding solution of the problem with the β value of -0.20 in the alpha level of 0.01 is a significant negative predictor for the marital intimacy variable. The component of self-control solution of the problem with the β value of -0.10 in the alpha level of 0.14 is not a significant predictor for the marital intimacy variable. Overall, the analysis of the first hypothesis of the research showed that among the three components of problem solving only the avoiding solution of the problem is a negative predictor for the marital intimacy variable.

Table4. Summary of the regression model among the problem-solving skills and marital compatibility

Predicting variables	Correlation coefficient	Determining coefficient	Adjusted determining coefficient
problem-solving skills	0.28	0.08	0.074

Multivariate simultaneous linear regression methods were used to analyze the second hypothesis of the research. In general, the multiple correlation coefficients between problem-solving skills with marital compatibility are 0.28 and the coefficient of determination is 0.08 and adjusted coefficient of determination is 0.074. In other words, 7.4% of the marital compatibility variable is explained by the problem-solving skills.

Table5. Variance analyses for predicting the marital compatibility based on the problem-solving skills

Model	Model index	Sum squares	Degree of freedom	Mean square	F	P
Enter	Regression effect	12294.22	3	4098.89	11.21	0.01
	Remnant	139979.21	383	365.48		
	Total	152237.44	386			

The table above shows the results of ANOVA test. The $F = 11.21$ is significant in the alpha level of 0.01. This means that the above regression model is significant for analyzing the linear relationship

Table6. Regression coefficients for the prediction of marital compatibility based on problem-solving skills

Marital compatibility	Non-standard coefficients		Standard amount of β	t	Level of significance
	B value	Standard error			
intercepts	112.06	5.24		21.06	0.01
Confident solution	0.57	0.11	0.30	5.14	0.01
Avoiding solution	-0.55	0.14	-0.26	-3.72	0.01
Self-control	0.04	0.35	0.009	0.12	0.89

The table above showed the regression coefficients of the regression equation for predicting marital compatibility based on problem solving components. The component of the confident solution of the problem with the β value of 0.30 in the alpha level of 0.01 is considered a significant positive predictor for the marital compatibility variable. The component of the avoiding solution of the problem with the β value of -0.26 in the alpha level of 0.01 is a significant negative predictor for the marital compatibility variable. The component of self-control solution of the problem with the β value of 0.009 in the alpha level of 0.89 is not a significant predictor for the marital compatibility variable. Overall, the analysis of the second hypothesis of the research showed that among the three components of problem solving, two components of confident solution of the problem is a positive predictor and avoiding solution of the problem is a negative predictor for the marital compatibility variable.

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Table7. Summary of the regression model for the marital conflicts resolution styles with the marital intimacy variable

Predicting variables	Correlation coefficient	Determining coefficient	Adjusted determining coefficient
marital conflicts resolution styles	0.72	0.52	0.51

Multivariate simultaneous linear regression methods were used to analyze the third hypothesis of the research. In general, the multiple correlation coefficients between marital conflicts resolution styles with marital intimacy are 0.72 and the coefficient of determination is 0.52 and adjusted coefficient of determination is 0.51. In other words, 51% of the marital intimacy variable is explained by the marital conflicts resolution styles.

Table8. Variance analyses for predicting marital intimacy based on the marital conflicts resolution styles

Model	Model index	Sum squares	Degree of freedom	Mean square	F	P
Enter	Regression effect	294148.20	5	58829.64	83.60	0.01
	Remnant	268100.58	381	703.67		
	Total	562248.79	386			

The table above shows the results of ANOVA test. The F= 83.60 is significant in the alpha level of 0.01. This means that the above regression model is significant for analyzing the linear relationship.

Table9. Regression coefficients for the prediction of marital intimacy based on the marital conflicts resolution styles

Marital Intimacy	Non-standard coefficients		Standard amount of β	t	Level of significance
	B value	Standard error			
Intercepts	108.24	12.72		8.50	0.01
Collaborating style	0.59	0.49	0.06	1.18	0.23
Compromising style	2.29	0.49	0.28	4.59	0.01
Accommodating style	2.40	0.64	0.25	3.75	0.01
Avoiding style	1.18	0.42	-0.14	2.76	0.01
Control style	2.66	0.82	-0.12	3.22	0.01

The table above showed the regression coefficients of the regression equation for predicting marital intimacy based on the marital conflicts resolution styles. The component of the Collaborating style with the β value of 0.06 in the alpha level of 0.23 is not considered a significant predictor for the marital intimacy variable. The component of the Compromising style with the β value of 0.28 in the alpha level of 0.01 is a significant positive predictor for the marital intimacy variable. The component of Accommodating style with the β value of 0.25 in the alpha level of 0.01 is a significant positive predictor for the marital intimacy variable. The component of avoiding style with the β value of -0.14 in the alpha

level of 0.01 is a significant negative predictor for the marital intimacy variable. The component of Control style with the β value of -0.12 in the alpha level of 0.01 is a significant negative predictor for the marital intimacy variable. Overall, the marital conflicts resolution styles, collaborating style, compromising style, accommodating style, avoiding style and control style are significant predictor for the marital intimacy variable.

Table10. Summary of the regression model for the marital conflicts resolution styles with the marital compatibility variable

Predicting variables	Correlation coefficient	Determining coefficient	Adjusted determining coefficient
marital conflicts resolution styles	0.82	0.67	0.66

Multivariate simultaneous linear regression methods were used to analyze the fourth hypothesis of the research. In general, the multiple correlation coefficients between marital conflicts resolution styles with marital compatibility are 0.82 and the coefficient of determination is 0.67 and adjusted coefficient of determination is 0.66. In other words, 66% of the marital compatibility variable is explained by the marital conflicts resolution styles.

Table11. Variance analyses for predicting marital compatibility based on the marital conflicts resolution styles

Model	Model index	Sum squares	Degree of freedom	Mean square	F	P
Enter	Regression effect	102358.63	5	20471.72	156.26	0.01
	Remnant	49914.81	381	131.01		
	Total	152273.44	386			

The table above shows the results of ANOVA test. The $F=156.26$ is significant in the alpha level of 0.01. This means that the above regression model is significant for analyzing the linear relationship.

Table12. Regression coefficients for the prediction of marital compatibility based on the marital conflicts resolution styles

Marital Intimacy	Non-standard coefficients		Standard amount of β	t	Level of significance
	B value	Standard error			
Intercepts	3.33	5.49		0.60	0.54
Collaborating style	0.72	0.21	0.16	3.36	0.01
Compromising style	1.65	0.21	0.29	5.87	0.01
Accommodating style	1.12	0.27	0.22	4.97	0.01
Avoiding style	59	0.18	-0.13	3.20	0.01
Control style	2.07	0.35	-0.18	5.81	0.01

The table above showed the regression coefficients of the regression equation for predicting marital compatibility based on the marital conflicts

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resolution styles. The component of the Collaborating style with the β value of 0.06 in the alpha level of 0.16 is considered a significant positive predictor for the marital compatibility variable. The component of the Compromising style with the β value of 0.29 in the alpha level of 0.01 is a significant positive predictor for the marital compatibility variable. The component of Accommodating style with the β value of 0.22 in the alpha level of 0.01 is a significant positive predictor for the marital compatibility variable. The component of avoiding style with the β value of -0.13 in the alpha level of 0.01 is a significant negative predictor for the marital compatibility variable. The component of Control style with the β value of -0.18 in the alpha level of 0.01 is a significant negative predictor for the marital compatibility variable.

Overall, the results of the fourth hypothesis showed that the marital conflicts resolution styles of collaborating, compromising and accommodating are positive predictor and avoiding and accommodating are negative predictor for the marital compatibility variable.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between problem-solving skills and conflict resolution styles with marital intimacy and compatibility among couples in Bandar Abbas in Iran. The results showed that the multiple correlation coefficients between problem-solving skills and marital intimacy are 0.24 and the coefficient of determination is 0.06 and the adjusted coefficient of determination is 0.053. In other words, 5.3% of the marital intimacy variable is explained by the two variables of problem-solving skills. Moreover, the results of the regression coefficients showed that the avoiding solution of the problem is a significant negative predictor for the marital intimacy variable. This research finding is consistent with the findings of Zarepour⁴ because he showed in his research that problem-solving skills are significantly effective in increasing the general intimacy of couples and the dimensions of intimacy such as psychological, intellectual and physical intimacy increase.

Regarding the intimacy, it can be stated that intimacy should be known as the product of a growth process in a relationship, a process that begins before marriage and continues after that and is even eternal. Stehman states three parameters for describing an intimate relationship and says that intimacy is a relationship in which there is protection, mutual trust and acceptance. It is as an ability to be vulnerable and accept the vulnerability of the spouse. Vulnerability is the need expression for the intimate links between two people and is an important part of intimacy. However, the ability to vulnerability is not the only factor creating intimacy. The sympathetic response of the spouse is also important. When couples

engage in an intimate relationship, there are both action and reaction for the two individuals.

Another explanation in this regard can be this that sexual intimacy is a variable that is influenced by other variables during the marriage. One of these variables is the problem-solving skills or methods. As the results of this study show, the avoiding problem-solving skill is a negative and destructive method in the marital relationship and has a negative relationship with marital intimacy. Continuing in using avoiding problem-solving method will reduce the couple's intimacy on the one hand and will also decrease marital satisfaction on the other hand³. An important point that should be noted briefly is that although problem-solving skills are effective on the increase or decrease of marital intimacy, we should note that women and men do not have the same understanding of the intimacy. This may cause many problems. In the methods of problem solving, the closeness of the understanding of the both sides to intimacy is very important.

The results of simultaneous linear multiple correlations showed that the multiple correlations between problem-solving skills and marital compatibility variable are 0.28 and the coefficient of determination is 0.08 and the adjusted coefficient of determination is 0.074. In other words, 7.4% of the marital compatibility variable is explained by the problem-solving skills. Overall, the analysis of the second hypothesis of the research showed that among the three components of problem-solving, the two problem-solving skills with confidence are positive predictors and avoiding solution is the negative predictor for the marital compatibility variable.

The explanation in this regard can be this that marital compatibility is a multi-dimensional expression which illuminates the multi stages of the marriage and is a process which is established during the lives of couples since it requires the consistency of interests, the knowing of the persons' characteristics, establishing behavioral rules and conducting interactional patterns. Therefore, marital compatibility is an evolutionary process between the couple. Marital compatibility is a method in which married people consist with each other in order to stay married so that marital compatibility is one of the most important factors in determining the stability and continuity of marital life. In the field of the relationship of problem-solving skills with the marital compatibility, it can be stated that there is a strong bilateral relationship between the two variables since the marital compatibility is been made over time, so compatibility is a function due to the variables such as problem-solving. The ability to properly deal with the issue and the successful solving will be followed by marital compatibility in long time.

Marital conflict resolution styles such as comprising and accommodating are significant positive predictor and marital conflict resolution styles such as avoiding

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and control are significant negative predictor of marital intimacy. In other words, the constructive marital conflict resolution methods such as compromising and accommodating styles have positive relationship with marital intimacy.

Regarding this finding of the study, it can be said that marital intimacy which means to establish a close relationship between the partners is affected by the way that couples resolve their conflicts and problems. Couples who use constructive methods of conflict resolution have higher intimacy score. This research finding states the fact that the more the couple feels satisfaction in their life, the higher ability they have to establish a close relationship between them. Since they can talk together more and as a result self-expression about their characteristics increases. Self-expression which is one of the most important components of the intimate relationship causes fact that the relationship between the couple gets closer and closer in the shadow of this consent and self-expression³. Interactive process of intimacy states that understanding and perceiving the feeling is essential to establish an intimate relationship. Heller and Wood (1998) found that couples who have understood their partner show a higher level of intimacy. Wayne Garten (1991) believed that most of times intimacy is as a communication features that people are able to identify each other deeply.

Collaborating, compromising and accommodating styles of marital conflict are as positive predictors and avoiding and accommodating styles are negative predictors of marital compatibility. Meaning that marital compatibility will increase by increasing the constructive marital conflict resolution styles between couples like collaborating, compromising and accommodating styles. On the other hand, with increasing destructive styles of conflict resolution between the couples, such as avoiding and accommodating styles, marital compatibility decreases.

When it is spoken of compatibility, a positive and constructive characteristic is been considered in the minds of people. Accordingly, this psychological structure causes the promotion of marital life quality. It was shown in the present study that the problem-solving skills and marital conflict resolution styles have a significant relationship with marital compatibility. Marital compatibility effects on many aspects of people's individual and social life which is actually the perfect cornerstone for the family and facilitates the parental role and causes the economic development and satisfaction of life. On the other hand, the existence of incompatibility in the couple's relationship causes difficulty in social relationships, tendency to social and moral deviations and the decline of cultural values among couples besides the previously mentioned problems.

In a general conclusion of the study, it can be stated that the constructive problem-solving skills (problem-solving with confidence) and constructive marital conflict resolution styles (collaborating, compromising and accommodating styles) have a determining role both in the increase of marital intimacy and marital

compatibility. However, the destructive problem solving skills (avoiding problem-solving skills and self-control) and destructive marital conflict resolution styles (avoiding styles and control) have a role both in the reduction of marital intimacy and marital compatibility.

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