

Comparative study of marital satisfaction in employed women and housewives in Tehran

Latifi Arman¹, Rahmani Faegh², Naseri Ayub², Mirzaei Syavash², Ojaghi Shahnaz³, Ahmadpour Mohammad⁴, Khezeli Mohsen⁵, Khezeli Mehdi^{6*}

¹ School of Public Health and Institute of Public health Research, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran.

² School of Public health, Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Science, Tehran, Iran.

³ College of Medicine, Kermanshah Branch, Islamic Azad University, Kermanshah, Iran.

⁴ Dept of Public Health, Maragheh University of Medical Science, Maragheh, Iran.

⁵ Dept of Culture and Art, Ilam University of Applied Science and Technology (center 2), Ilam, Iran.

⁶ Dept of public health, School of Health, Kermanshah University of medical sciences, Kermanshah, Iran

Abstract

Marital satisfaction is one of the basic indicators of quality of life. This study was conducted aimed to compare marital satisfaction among employed women and housewives. The cross-sectional and descriptive-analytical study was conducted with participation of 42 employed women and 42 housewives. Data collected by questionnaire in two parts: in the demographic data and Enrich Marital Satisfaction Questionnaires. The data were analysed using with SPSS 19 using Independent T-Test, and one way ANOVA. The results showed that 54.8 percent of employed women and 79.2 percent of housewives had moderate marital satisfaction. Pearson correlation coefficient showed that among investigated variables, marital satisfaction had a significant correlation only with monthly income ($p < 0.05$). We suggest to increasing marital satisfaction in couples be implemented formal and informal education programs for all women and should be provided pre-marriage counseling.

Keywords: Marital Satisfaction, Employed Women, Housewives.

1. Introduction

Family is the most important institution of society and the social behavior unit [1] and is a social group, which contains the largest, most important and most fundamental human relations. In addition to that, family is the primary source of people's basic needs, also provides multiple opportunities for learning and forming attitudes and beliefs, which is important for social life and benefit from the cultural heritage and transmit it [2]. If a society does not have healthy and balanced families, cannot claim to be healthy. Families in which the wife and the husband feel the satisfaction of life have a better performance, and play its roles better. Marital satisfaction is a factor of progress and goals achievement in life [3]. Marital satisfaction is a condition in which the couples feel happiness and satisfaction from the marriage and being together [4]. Marital satisfaction can be considered as one of the basic indicators of quality of life [5], so that decreasing in marital satisfaction will lead to complications such as difficulty in social relationships [6], more loneliness [7], lower life satisfaction [8], severe family conflict, as well as incompatible children [9]. In addition, results of studies indicate that people, who are satisfied from their marital life generally, have a prolonged life and are more likely to be saved from cancer [10], have a healthy and proper nutrition, and are less afflicted with depression and other psychological problems [11]. Studies show those children whose parents had a stable and with consistency marriage, have a better educational status, and less willingness to alcohol or drugs [12, 13].

Meanwhile, women's employment is an important factor that affects the marital satisfaction [14]. In the past decades, economic problems and change in expectations of family life has caused the necessity of more income for the survival of the

family, and in most countries has led to the women work outside the home [15]. Female employment by creating fundamental changes can effects on the occupational structure of community, the traditional value system, the distribution of roles, and social status of men and women [16]. Review of previous studies, showed that results inconsistent. For example in that study of Farasat *et al.*, marital satisfaction in housewives was higher [17], in contrast the study of Tahmasebi *et al.*, showed that marital satisfaction in employed women was higher [15], while in two studies [18, 19], have not been reported significant difference between the marital satisfaction of employed women and housewives.

If we want to marital satisfaction in the family, we must be to identify the factors affecting it. Considering the effect of woman's in family and the society we should aware from the women's satisfaction and its determinants, In order to use in the programs and measures to increase satisfaction. In this context the present study was conducted to compare the level of marital satisfaction among employed women with housewives in the summer of 2013.

2. Methods and Materials

The present cross-sectional study was conducted with the participation of 42 employed women and 42 unemployed women (housewife). Employed women were selected amongst women working in health centers of Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences. In addition, we selected unemployed women from those who referred to health centers. Data collected by questionnaire in two parts: in the first part asked about the demographic data (including age, education level, income, housing status and number of children), and in the second part the level of Marital Satisfaction were collected

using Enrich Marital Satisfaction Questionnaires. This questionnaire contains 42 questions with five Likert scale ranged from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). Scoring to some questions is negative. On this scale, the lowest score is 47 and the highest score is 235, and those with scores under 150, have a degree of marital dissatisfaction [17]. Soleymanian translated the mentioned questionnaire to the Persian and its reliability is calculated 95% [20]. Rasooli also has reported the test-retest reliability coefficient equal to 92% for questionnaire with one-week interval [21]. After explaining the purpose of research and ensuring women from the confidentiality of information, informed consent form was obtained from participants and then they completed questionnaires about 20 minutes. Data were analyzed by SPSS version 19 using appropriate statistical tests including t-test, and one way ANOVA at 95% significant level.

3. Results

The mean age of the employed and housewives was 36.5 ±9.91 and 38.9±7.09 years, respectively. 95.5% (n = 40) of employed women had diploma or higher degree, while 55% (n = 22) of

housewives had diploma. Distribution of subjects in both groups in terms of demographic variables is presented in Table 1.

Based on the findings, marital satisfaction of 54.8% (n=23) of employed women and 79.2% (n=32) of the housewives were relatively moderate. The mean and standard deviation of marital satisfaction among employed women and housewives was of 156.1 ± 35/1 and 145/2 ± 29.3 respectively; In this regard, there was no significant difference between the two groups (p=0.128). Frequency distribution of the samples in terms of marital satisfaction is presented in Table 2.

Also in examining the relationship between demographic variables and level of marital satisfaction, Pearson correlation coefficient showed that among the studied variables including age, education level, employment status, number of children, monthly income (self and spouse), home ownership status, and age difference between spouses; only between marital satisfaction with monthly income (self and spouse) was observed a significant correlation (p <0.05). More detailed information is given in Table 3.

Table 1: Distribution of subjects based on demographic variables

Variables	Variables subgroup	Study groups				p-value
		Employed women		Housewives		
		number	percent	number	percent	
Education	Sub diploma	0	0	9	22.5	<0.001
	Diploma	2	4.8	22	55	
	Academic	40	95.2	9	22.5	
Number of Children	No children	9	21.4	4	9.5	0.195
	One children	14	33.3	11	26.2	
	Two children	17	40.5	21	50	
	Three & further	2	4.8	6	14.3	
Monthly income	<100 USD	2	4.8	8	20	0.19
	100-150 USD	7	16.7	6	15	
	150-200 USD	6	14.3	11	27.5	
	>200 USD	27	64.3	15	37.5	
Housing status	Rental	12	28.6	27	64.3	<0.001
	Private	30	71.4	15	35.7	
Age difference between spouses	Same age	6	14.3	4	9.5	0.421
	1-3 years	16	38.1	14	33.3	
	3-5 years	10	23.8	6	14.3	
	5-7 years	5	11.9	10	23.8	
	>7 year	5	11.9	8	19	

Table 2: Frequency distribution of the samples in terms of marital satisfaction

Satisfaction Category	Study groups				total		p-value
	Employed women		Housewives		number	percent	
	number	percent	number	percent			
Severe dissatisfaction	1	2.4	1	2.4	2	2.4	p>0.05
Moderate dissatisfaction	3	7.1	4	9.5	7	8.3	
Moderate satisfaction	23	54.8	32	79.2	55	65.5	
High satisfaction	12	28.6	3	7.1	15	17.9	
Extra satisfaction	3	7.1	2	4.8	5	6	
Total	42	100	42	100	84	100	

Table 3: The relationship between the studied variables with the marital satisfaction

Variables	Pearson correlation	p-value
Age	0.016	0.885
Education level	0.182	0.102
Job status	-0.167	0.128
Number of children	-0.025	0.819
Monthly income	0.249	0.024*
Housing status	-0.090	0.417
Age difference	0.111	0.316

4. Discussion

This study was conducted aimed to compare the level of marital satisfaction among employed women in health centers of Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences and housewives in the summer of 2013. The results showed that there was no difference between the demographic factors in two groups of employed women and housewives in terms of age, number of children, and age difference between spouses, but about other factors as education level, monthly income, and home ownership status significant differences was seen in two groups. Education between the two groups was significantly different, so that in employed women was higher than housewives. In addition, the monthly income of employed women was higher than the housewives. Usually one of the requirements of employment and working in government agencies particularly health centers is a specialized degree in the fields of health, because the health care services that are provided in these health centers are specialized. It is therefore natural that education level of employed women is higher than housewives and subsequently the family monthly income of employed women is more than other families. Economic situation has a significant correlation with feeling of happiness as well as feeling of happiness, affects the marital satisfaction and quality of life [22].

Statistical adjustment showed that only monthly income was associated with marital satisfaction. Results of other studies also show the effect of increasing income on marital satisfaction. Cilli *et al.* showed that employed women with the better education, income and socio-economic situation had higher marital satisfaction [23]. Vajjayanthimala and colleagues in India also showed that higher level of income and better employment status of the couples increase marital satisfaction [24]. It is natural that families with higher income have higher sense of independence, more options for choice, more discretion in the providing the necessities of life or spending money on traveling and leisure and all of these factors also affect the level of life satisfaction.

Compare mean scores of marital satisfaction using statistical samples showed that there was no significant difference between employed women and housewives. The results of other studies is different, so that the study of Tahmasebi and colleagues showed that there was a significant difference between marital satisfaction among employed women and housewives; they concluded that employed women compared to housewives are more satisfied from family life [15]. Farasat *et al.* showed that marital satisfaction in housewives was higher than the employed women [17]. In addition, two studies reported that significant difference between the marital satisfaction of employed women and housewives not seen. [18, 19]. Asiai showed that employed women due to a high emotional intelligence are more satisfied from their marital life [25]. Cilli

concluded that housewives compared to employed women are more dissatisfied from the monotony of their lives and more reported higher psychiatric illness [23]. In another study, Hall concluded that with the heavy increase in female roles, also will enhance marital dissatisfaction [26]. Differences in the results of the mentioned studies, in addition to the difference in the communities studied, may be due to differences in factors affecting marital satisfaction.

In this study, more than three-quarters of housewives and more than half of employed women had relative marital satisfaction, which is consistent with results of two similar studies [27], but is contrary to the results of Tahmasebi and colleagues which showed that employed women had higher marital satisfaction [17].

About 12% of housewives had severe dissatisfaction that this rate is higher than employed women, and it could be due to low education or less monthly income. Dissatisfaction in 12% of cases, given the importance of maintaining and stability of family institution in Iranian culture, requires attention to formal and informal educational programs in the field of marriage and communication skills. In the family which dissatisfaction is intense, is likely to be more debate and dispute between couples. In addition, the children of these families grow up in an insecure and unrest environment that can lead to school failure and mental disorders such as withdrawal, aggression, etc. in them.

5. Conclusion

Marital satisfaction in housewives and employed women was not different. Adjustment of positive and negative factors affecting the satisfaction of both groups may explain the lack of difference in marital satisfaction two groups. Low mean marital satisfaction is not satisfactory in both groups. Therefore, we propose to increase marital satisfaction in couples, be implemented formal and informal education programs for all women in different places such as health centers and at various times, or in workplace for employed women, or even pre-marriage counseling classes.

6. References

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