

Studying the Relationship between Religious Orientation and Marital Conflicts of Spouses

Elaheh Rostami Bayg^{1*}, S. Reza Fallahchai² and Eghbal Zarei¹

¹Department of General Psychology, Islamic Azad University, Science and Research Branch, Hormozgan, Iran

²Hormozgan University, Bandar Abbas, Iran

Received: March 2 2014

Accepted: April 10 2014

ABSTRACT

This research was conducted in 2013 in Bandarabbas with the aim of studying the relationship between religious orientation and marital conflicts in the spouses. Research method is correlational and descriptive. The statistical population of research consists of all spouses in Bandarabbas. A total of 300 individuals were selected as research sample using Cochran's formula. Sampling method is simple random sampling. Information is collected by field observation. Tools for gathering information include religious orientation (Alport) and Marital Conflicts Questionnaire (MCQ). Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the information gathered through questionnaires. Results are as follows: there is a relationship between religious orientation and marital conflicts in spouses. Components of religious orientation can altogether explain almost 32.6% of marital conflicts variance. Therefore, religious orientation is related with marital conflicts of spouses

KEYWORDS: Religious Orientation, Marital Conflicts, Spouses.

1. INTRODUCTION

The importance of spirituality and spiritual growth of human has attracted the attention of psychologists and mental health professionals in recent decades. The advances of psychology on one side and the dynamic and sophisticated nature of modern communities on the other side have caused the spiritual needs of human grow before the material needs and demands and become more important so that the world health organization points out to physical, mental, social, and spiritual dimensions in defining the aspects of human existence and introduces the fourth dimension, i.e. spirituality in growth and evolution of human. Despite the increasing focus of scientists on the spiritual aspect of human growth, a unit definition has not yet been presented which may encompass the integrity of spirituality [1].

One factor that may influence the quality of marital life is the religious and value system of spouses. Similarity or difference in values and beliefs of spouses will influence the dynamism of marital life. These cultural elements can be the result of class, race, or socialization process. The role of religion is very important among these elements [2]. Vaughan [3] defined spirituality as permanent effort of humans to answer to the whys of life. Spirituality is an internal need of humans which some thinkers have regarded it as entailing the highest levels of the grounds of cognitive, ethical, emotional, and individual growth and the permanent effort of individuals to answer to the whys in life.

Results of some studies indicate a relationship between religious orientation and conflicts, as well as a relationship between religious orientation and the communication models between spouses. Some of them are referred to in brief as follows: Koenig [4] in a research showed that people with stronger religious beliefs have better adjustment to the conflicts and situations in life. Also Rasouli and Soltani [5] in a study showed that there is a relationship between religious orientation and marital adjustment. Religious deeds and beliefs are effective in increased satisfaction and marital adjustment and conflict solving process. Saroglou [6] in a research stated communication patterns are connected to more internalization of ethical and religious values.

Most of the conducted studies deal with the relationship between religion and marital satisfaction. Only few studies have dealt with the relationship of religion, religious orientation, communication patterns and marital adjustment. Having observed such problems, the increase of marital conflicts particularly among young and religious spouses, the author decided to study exactly these variables and discover their relationships.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research is a descriptive study in that it studies and identifies the relationship among variables in the present conditions. In descriptive research it is possible to assess the characteristics of the population under study through a survey study or opinion poll.

On the other side the author of this research has tried to choose a statistical population and a known sample in order to explore and identify the relationship of research variables from the viewpoint of study participants. Finally

*Corresponding Author: Elaheh Rostami Bayg; Department of General Psychology, Islamic Azad University, Science and Research Branch, Hormozgan, Iran; E-mail: elaheh.rostami66@gmail.com.

this research can be regarded among correlational studies. Correlational studies include all research where it is attempted to discover or determine the relationship of various variables using correlation coefficient [7].

The statistical population of this research includes all spouses of Bandarabbas. Research population consists of 300 individuals selected by Cochran's formula ($N = \frac{z^2 pq}{d^2} = \frac{(1.96)^2 (0.5 * 0.5)}{(0.05)^2} = 300$). Sampling method was simple random sampling. The method of gathering information was field observation and the used tools included religious orientation questionnaire (Alport and Ross) [8] and marital conflict questionnaire (MCQ, Sanayi) [9].

Religious orientation questionnaire: Alport and Ross [8] developed this scale to assess internal and external religious orientations. Every initial studies conducted in 1950 on this basis showed that the correlation between internal and external orientation was 0.21. This test was translated and normalized in 1999 with appropriate validity. Its internal consistency was calculated 0.611 in this research using Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

In this research options 1 to 12 assess external religious orientation ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The first option (A) is strongly disagree, the second option (B) is almost disagree, the third option (C) is almost agree, and the fourth option (D) is strongly agree. Answers are negative in the next 9 items from number 13 to number 21 measure internal religious orientation; the first option (A) is quite agree, the second option (B) is almost agree, the third option (C) is almost disagree, and the fourth option (D) is strongly disagree (Mokhtari, 2001).

Marital Conflicts Questionnaire (MCQ): this questionnaire consists of 54 questions to assess 7 aspects of marital conflicts including family and friends (questions 1, 8, 15, 21, 23, 29, 32, 37, 43, 46, 50), financial management (questions 2, 10, 17, 24, 33, 39, 48), communication (questions 3, 12, 26, 28, 41, 42, 47), personality issues (questions 4, 7, 20, 25, 34, 45, 30, 52), sexual relationship (questions 5, 13, 19, 35, 40), conflict solving (questions 6, 11, 14, 16, 26, 36, 51, 18), and children and parenting (questions 9, 22, 31, 38). Psychometric studies show that this questionnaire has a favorable content validity. In this research, Cronbach's alpha coefficient has been calculated 0.919 for the entire questionnaire. The questionnaire was scored according to Likert 5-scale questionnaire.

In this research, the collected questionnaires were entered in SPSS and inferential and descriptive statistics were used to analyze the collected information. In descriptive statistics, mean, standard deviation, and correlation matrix were used. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient was used to assess the reliability of tools. In inferential statistics, multivariate regression analysis statistical method was used to determine and predict standard variable by predictive variables.

3. RESULTS

Table 3 shows the score for marital conflicts and its components. The highest mean was related to family and friends, i.e. 19.90, and the lowest was related to children and parenting, namely 8.66. The highest variance was 52.603 for family and friends, and the lowest was 8.066 for sexual relationship.

Table 4 shows the score for religious orientation and its components. The highest mean was 25.74 for external religious orientation. The lowest mean was 20.45 for internal religious orientation. The highest variance was 57.344 for external religious orientation, the lowest was 5.720 for internal religious orientation. In order to analyze the hypothesis we used simple regression by concurrent entry of variables. Religious orientation variable will be a predictive component to determine marital conflicts dependent variable.

The determination coefficient in these tables $R^2 = 0.326$. Religious orientation components in 32.6% can explain marital conflicts dependent variable. Data distribution around this regression is 21.185.

Table 1. Frequency and Percent Related to the Sex of the Subjects Participating in this Research

Sex	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Male	150	50.0	50.0	50.0
Female	150	50.0	50.0	100.0
Total	300	100.0	100.0	

The above indicates the sex of subjects that include 150 male and female equally.

Table 2. Frequency and Percent related to the Age of Subjects Participating in this Project

Age	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
<25	13	4.3	4.3	4.3
25-30	108	36.0	36.0	40.3
30-40	141	47.0	47.0	87.3
40-50	38	12.7	12.7	100.0
Total	300	100.0	100.0	

The above table indicates the age of subjects, the highest frequency being 141 subjects aging 30-40 years and the lowest frequency being 13 subjects aging below 25 years.

Table 3. Mean, Variance, Standard Deviation for Marital Conflicts and its Components

Component	Number	Lowest	Highest	Mean	Standard deviation	Variance
Marital conflicts	300	53	179	119.42	24.815	615.788
Family & friends	300	11	43	19.90	7.253	52.603
Financial management	300	7	31	17.03	3.448	11.891
Communication	300	7	30	19.59	3.576	12.787
Personal issues	300	8	28	18.33	2.797	7.825
Sexual relationship	300	5	19	9.83	2.840	8.066
Conflict solving	300	8	30	19.19	4.513	20.365
Children and parenting	300	2	53	8.66	5.093	25.941

Table 4. Mean, Variance, Standard Deviation for Religious Orientation and its Components

Component	Number	Lowest	Highest	Mean	Standard deviation	Variance
Religious orientation	300	33	62	46.19	7.198	51.807
External religious orientation	300	16	40	25.74	7.573	57.344
Internal religious orientation	300	13	28	20.45	2.392	5.720

Table 5. Determination Coefficient Related to Religious Orientation Components with Marital Conflicts
Dependent Variable

R coefficient	R ² determination coefficient	Adjusted determination coefficient	Standard error
.571	.326	.321	21.185

Table 6. One-way Variance Analysis of the Results of Regression Analysis Related to Religious Orientation
Components with Marital Conflicts Dependent Variable

Variable sources	Squares sum	Degree of freedom	Squares mean	F	Significance level
Regression	64427.149	2	32213.574	71.779	.001
Remaining	133290.731	297	448.790		
Total	197717.880	299			

Results of one-way variance analysis in table 4-11 show that this amount is equal to $F=71.779$ in level $p<0.01$. Therefore, the obtained relationship is the best possible linear combination between religious orientation components and marital conflicts dependent variable.

Table 7. β Coefficient and t amounts and significance level for religious orientation components and marital conflicts dependent variable

Sources	Non-standard coefficients		Standard coefficients	t	Significance level
	Regression coefficient B	Standard error	β		
Fixed	76.708	13.122		5.846	.001
External religious orientation	1.904	.170	.561	11.185	.001
Internal religious orientation	-.327	.539	-.030	-.607	.544

According to table 4-12, external religious orientation significantly predicts marital conflicts so that $\beta=0.561$ and $t=11.185$ positively predict marital conflicts in significance level $\alpha=0.001$ (less than $P=0.01$). Internal religious orientation with $\beta=-0.030$ and $t=-0.607$ negatively predicts marital conflicts in non-significant level $\alpha=0.544$ (more than $P=0.05$). With regard to the very low β and large significant level, it cannot be regarded as predictive variable.

In general terms, the above components as mentioned in table 4-10 can altogether explain almost 32.6% of marital conflicts variance.

5. DISCUSSION

This research is aimed at studying the relationship between religious orientation and marital conflicts in spouses. The determination coefficient of religious orientation components and marital conflicts dependent variable was $R^2=0.326$. This means that religious orientation components could explain marital conflicts dependent variable at 32.6%.

This finding is coordinated with the findings of previous studies which are referred to in the following: Rasouli and Soltani [5] carried out a research, studied, and compared the relationship of religious orientation and acting according to religious beliefs with marital adjustment and religious students and other students. Research findings showed that there is a relationship between religious orientation and marital adjustment. There is a relationship between acting according to religious beliefs and marital adjustment in both groups. Religious students have higher religious orientation, acting according to religious beliefs, and marital adjustment than other students. Religious people have higher marital adjustment and orientation due to religious beliefs. Religious beliefs and deeds are effective in increasing satisfaction, marital adjustment, and problem solving process. Ahmadi et al. [10] carried out a research and proved that religious beliefs and imitations influence all aspects of human life including family relations so that religious beliefs are important in both arising and solving marital disputes. In a research under the title of studying the influence of religious beliefs on mental pressures, Shati et al. [11] showed that cognitive beliefs of religious people helps them cope with mental pressure. Lambert and Dollahite [12] conducted a study to deal with the question as how religion can help prevent, solve, and overcome marital conflicts. Results of their study show that religion can help the process of conflict solving in three ways: 1. Conflict solving. 2. Preventing the arising of problem. 3. Conciliation in relationships. Therefore, regarding the previous studies and the finding of this research it can be stated that there is a relationship between religious orientation and marital conflicts in spouses.

REFERENCES

1. Yaghoubi, A. 2008. Studying the relationship between spiritual intelligence and happiness in students of Buali University of Hamedan.
2. Zulling, K.J; Ward, R. M; Horn, T. 2006. The association between percieved spirituality, religiosity and life satisfaction: The mediating role of self- rated health. *Social Indicatore Research*, No. 79, 255-274.
3. Vaughan, F. 1993. Spiritual in psychotherapy. *Journal of Transpersonal psychology*, 23(2), 105- 119.
4. Koenig, Harold G. 2007. Spirituality and Depression: A Lookat the Evidence, *Southern MedicalJournal*, Vol.100, Iss.7, 737-739.
5. Rasouli, R. & Soltani, S. 2012. Comparison and study of the relationship of religious orientation and acting according to religious beliefs with marital adjustment in university students and students of religious centers, *Family Studies Quarterly*, winter 2013; 427-439: (32) 8
6. Saroglou, V. 2002. Religiousness, religious fundamentalism, and quest as predictors of humor creation. *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 12, 177-188.
7. Delavar, A. 1997. Theoretical and practical fundaments in human sciences and social sciences, Tehran, publications of ministry of culture and Islamic guidance, second edition, pp 186 and 109.
8. Allport, G.W., & Ross, J.M. 1967. Personalreligious orientation and prejudice. *Journal ofPersonality and Social Psychology*, 5, 432-443.
9. Sanayi B, 2000. Scales of Family and Marriage Assessment. First pub. Tehran. Besat Publication.
10. Ahmadi, Kh and Fathi Ashtiani, A and Arabnia, A. 2006. Studying the relationship between religious imitations and marital adjustment. *Family Study Quarterly*, 2nd year, issue number 5, pp 55-67.
11. Shati, M; Ghodsbin, F. and Ziadloo, S. 2004. The role of prayer and religion in coping with stress.
12. Lambert, N. M. & Dollahite, D. C. 2006. How Religiosity Helps Couples Prevent, Resolve, and Overcome Marital Conflict, *Family Relations*, 55, 439–449.