

## The Relationship between Self-efficacy and Marital Satisfaction among Married Students

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### Abstract

#### Background

The present study was designed and conducted to determine the relationship between self-efficacy and marital satisfaction among married and single students.

#### Materials and Methods

The sample of this study consisted of 50 married students of Payame Noor University in IZEH city, South West of Iran; then simple random sampling method was used to select samples. To measure self-efficacy questionnaire Scherer and Enrich marital satisfaction questionnaire was used. Data were analyses using SPSS-20.

#### Results

The mean age of students were  $23 \pm 0.739$  years. In terms of demographic characteristics, 50% of the study population were women and 50% were men. Results showed that there was a significant negative correlation between self-efficacy and marital satisfaction of male students ( $r = -0.55$  and  $P = 0.001$ ), respectively. Also, there was a significant negative correlation between self-efficacy and marital satisfaction in married women students ( $r = -0.47$  and  $P = 0.001$ ), respectively.

#### Conclusion

The root of many marital problems, including divorce, the factors they are directly or indirectly marital satisfaction. Therefore, considering these variables can be important to prevent disputes in married life and many negative consequences for physical and mental health will bring the couple and their children that can affect the beneficial aspects of married life.

**Key Words:** Self-efficacy, Marital satisfaction, Married students.

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## 1- INTRODUCTION

Family can be defined as a relative group, which takes the responsibility of socializing the children and meets the primary responsibility for some other basic needs of society; family is a group of people, which are related to each other by blood, marriage, and adoption (1). Family is represented as a social institution which is formed by a man's and woman's marriage. One of the manifestations of human social life is the sense of healthy and constructive interactions, expression of love to others as well as intimacy and empathy for them. Family institution is the origin of satisfying different needs such as physical, rational and emotional needs. It means that marital satisfaction is sub set of emotional needs and most of married people because multi reason in their life don't care about that and make a problem in their marital life. A person's consent of life means his/ her satisfaction of family, and consent of family means life satisfaction, and these results to facilitation of growth and excellence, and material and spiritual progress of society (2). At different stages in life, may encounter situations which challenge the cognitive and psychological abilities. These abilities help an individual find out the needed strategies for facing with challenges such as marital satisfaction (3). One of these abilities is the self- efficacy and the theory of self-efficacy, originally developed by Bandura (4). Self-efficacy describes a person's cognitions about whether he/she is capable of performing the behaviors necessary to produce a wanted outcome. Self-efficacy can also be thought of as a person's confidence in his/ her ability within a certain domain. Self-efficacy applied to marital relationships is a way to conceptualize an individual's confidence in his/her ability to perform relationship-affirming behaviors such as openly communicating with one's partner, providing support and nurturance, and/or

controlling feelings of hurt and anger (5). Marital satisfaction refers to a "subjective global evaluation of one's relationship" (6). Being in a satisfying marriage has consistently been associated with better physical health, mental health, and overall life satisfaction (7-8). Conversely, marital distress, separation, and divorce have been linked to increased stress, poor physical health, and emotional (6). Lent et al. in a research on university students showed that self-efficiency and environmental protection predict educational adjustment, progress in goals, and next life satisfaction (9). As literature review, the mean scores of intimacy, commitment, financial management, and sexual relationship were significantly higher in female students (10). One study carried out in America, found male married students, experienced less stress and anxiety during their studies (11). Kalantari et al. (12) and Ziaei et al. (13), examined the relationship between sex issues and marriage satisfaction; the results showed that: there is a significant relationship between sex attitude, sex awareness, sex anxiety, sex depression, and marriage satisfaction in married women. Esfandiari et al. (14), aimed to determine the relationship between control resource, self-efficacy and marriage conflicts among students. According to the research results, it can be concluded that when self-efficacy is at the high level, it means that rate of the marriage conflicts is less and if its level be at the low level marriage conflicts is at high level. Johnson (15) resulted that having a combination of high expectations and high relationship self-efficacy was the best predictor of feeling that one's expectations were met in marriage. More research in this area of study is needed and would help clarify the role expectations play in marriage as well as add to the knowledge of what contributes to marital happiness. The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between self-efficacy and marital satisfaction in married students.

## 2- MATERIALS AND METHODS

### 2-1. Samples

This study is a descriptive research and is the type of correlation. The statistical universe of the research composes of married people in PNU University of IZEH province, which are selected through simple random sampling, and finally 50 students were chosen (**Figure.1**).



**Fig.1:** The location of Izeh city, Khusestan province, Iran

### 2-2. Measuring tools

#### 2-2-1. General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES) (16)

To assess the efficacy General Self-Efficacy Scale was used. Sherer et al. developed a measure to tap these generalized beliefs. This scale is considered for general self-efficiency, and it has 17 items. 5 answers are proposed for each item of the scale, that each item is chargeable 1 to 5 point. Higher score indicates stronger self-efficiency, and lower score indicates weaker self-efficiency. Sherer (16) proved 76% validity for general self-efficiency computed through alpha kronbakh. The reliability of the scale has computed through factor reliability (Construct

Reliability). Barati, in a research on investigating validity and reliability of the scale, executed the scale on 100 subjects who were studying in the third grade of high school. The correlation (61%) obtained from self-esteem and self-evaluation scales with self-efficiency are in order to confirm factor reliability of the scale (17).

#### 2-2-2. Enrich marital satisfaction questionnaire (18)

The Enrich Marital Satisfaction scale was developed by Olson in 1989. It is comprised of 47 items and 9 sub-scales including: personality issues, marital relationship, conflict resolution, financial management, leisure activities, sexual relationship, children and parenting, family and friends, and religious orientation matters items are scored based on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). Olson et al. reported the reliability of this inventory as 0.92, using Cronbach's alpha (19). Noorbala et al. also obtained the same Cronbach's alpha (0.92) (20). Reliability of the questionnaire was obtained as 0.88 and 0.81 in the present study, using Cronbach's alpha and split-half coefficients

## 3- RESULTS

In terms of demographic characteristics, 50% of the study population were women and 50% were men, respectively. The duration of marriage for 67.8% of subjects was between 1 to 5 years, and for 32.2% between 6 to 10 years. There was a significant relationship between self-efficacy and marital satisfaction in married students.

**Table.1** shows correlation between the demographic variables, coefficients of determination and correlation coefficient test results. As can be seen in (**Table.1**), the correlation between self-efficacy and marital satisfaction of married students was ( $r= 0.239$  and  $P=0.000$ ), respectively.

The results shows, there was a low positive significant relationship between the self-efficacy and satisfaction of male students.

Results showed that there was a significant negative correlation between self-efficacy and marital satisfaction of male students ( $r = -0.55$  and  $P = 0.001$ ), respectively (**Table.2**).

**Table.3** shows the correlation between self-efficacy and marital satisfaction in married woman students. As can be seen, there was a significant negative correlation between self-efficacy and marital satisfaction in married women students ( $r = -0.47$  and  $P = 0.001$ ), respectively. It means that when the students' self-efficacy score increases their marital satisfaction decreases.

**Table 1:** The correlation between self-efficacy and marital satisfaction of married students

Coefficients of determination	Correlation coefficient (r)	P-value
5.71	0.239	0.000

**Table 2:** The correlation between self-efficacy and marital satisfaction in married men students

Number (%)	Correlation coefficient (r)	P-value
50(100)	-0.55	0.001

**Table 3:** The correlation between self-efficacy and marital satisfaction in married women students

Number (%)	Correlation coefficient (r)	P-value
50(100)	-0.47	0.001

#### 4- DISCUSSION

The results of this study showed that there is a significant correlation between marital satisfaction scores and self-efficacy among men and women students. These results are consistent with finding of Najafi Zadeh et al. (21). There was a significant correlation between self-efficacy and marital satisfaction in married male students. These findings can be interpreted that, make individual feels more responsibility in his individual and family life (21). According to the taboos on Iran's society, men have more selection right in the stage of marriage compared to the women. This is the reason which causes the men to feel that life events are under

the control of them and this is the reason that between men and women are different from the subject of self-efficacy (14). Though self-efficacy is generally considered a positive attribute, some research has suggested that having high relationship self-efficacy is not always beneficial. Arias, et al. (22) administered the Relationship Efficacy Measure (REF) to a group of 66 married women (mean age: 26.86, mean years married: 3.76) recruited via radio and flyer advertisements. The results of this study showed that there was significant differences between marital satisfaction scores and self-efficacy among men and women they found that victimized women

with high relationship self-efficacy experienced more depressive symptoms than victimized women with low relationship self-efficacy. They concluded that women who feel they can control the course of their relationship may become depressed when they are unable to control their spouse's verbal or physical aggression. Thus, having high relationship self-efficacy sometimes get people feel of pride to reach whatever they want but in this case high self-efficacy may be failed and make them to have feeling depression and resulted having high relationship self-efficacy is not pleasurable. Different researches indicate that self-efficiency and spiritual intelligence components in couples play an important role in increasing marriage satisfaction level; according to Bandura results (23), people's evaluation of their own personal efficiency is crucial for the successful functioning.

The self-efficiency beliefs are important cognitive representations which help to form beliefs about future actions and personal capacities. Feeling self-efficiency is also helpful for mental and physical health. Self-efficiency is associated with the notion of personal control, and feeling personal control has an important role in couple's adjustment with stressors factors. The couples with high self-efficiency can improve their relations with their spouses. Rajabi et al. (24) concluded in his research that there is a positive relation between marriage satisfaction and self-efficiency of nurses. Indeed, since self-efficacy beliefs are motivation and well-being introduction of people, as long as people believe that their activities don't have the desired results they have little eagerness to work and persistence in solving their lives topics, so those couples who have higher self-efficacy, have more motivation and persistence to solve their communicational problems, hence they take more effort to improve their relationship, and as a result they experience a better marriage

satisfaction (25). Moreover, significance of direct and positive effect of self-efficacy indicate that people who have higher emotional perception, have better relationship with others, and mutually recall their supports and feel more self-efficacy (25). People with high relationship self-efficacy may be more open to sharing about their marriages because they perhaps believe they have valuable skills in relationships that are worth sharing (15).

It should be noted that according to the research findings, through increased self-efficacy and raising couple's motivation to solve daily and communicational problems, and belief in their abilities can improve the quality of marriage relationship and more satisfaction experience of marriage relationship in couple(25). Najafi Zadeh and Mirzajan Tabriz showed that a positive and significant relation between three variables of emotional intelligence, spiritual intelligence, and self-efficiency and marriage satisfaction. Multiple regression analysis showed that, 8 percent of total variance of marriage satisfaction is determined by these variables. The abilities resulted from emotional intelligence, spiritual intelligence, and self-efficiency can increase marriage satisfaction level. So, through couples counseling, we can effectively improve marriage satisfaction (21).

#### **4-1. Limitations of the study**

Lack of sufficient accuracy to respond to the questionnaire. Total sample size was small.

#### **5. CONCLUSION**

In this study, there was a significant correlation between the self-efficacy and marital satisfaction. Men and women both of them are central of the family and their satisfaction from each other help them to promote situation in their life and it's very important to their parenting at resulted to

have high mental health of the children. In this case, self-efficacy of them help satisfaction comes true; in fact, marital satisfaction related to self-efficacy. Similarly, the higher self-efficacy sense can have a positive impact on the quality of marriage relationship and results in higher marriage satisfaction. Thus, we should help them to promote self-efficacy in students. We hope other research consider this problem.

## 6- CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors had not any financial or personal relationships with other people or organizations during the study. So there was no conflict of interests in this article.

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