

The prediction of extra marital relationships based on identity status

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Abstract

The aim of the present study was to examine the relation between extra marital relationships and identity status. The samples were comprised of 117 female prisoners and 68 male prisoners from Selected prison's who were selected through available sampling Darigotas questionnaire of extra marital relationships and Adams et al. questionnaire of identity status were used in the study. The results indicated that there is direct relation between moratorium and diffusion identity status and extra marital relationships. There is a reverse relation between achievement identity status and extra marital relationships as well. These three identity status can predict 15% of changes in extra marital relationships.

Keywords: Extra marital relationships, identity status, prisoners.

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1. Introduction

As a social unit, “family” is a core place or institution for development, healing, transformation of injuries and their complications which could be a platform on which the relations between family members could be flourished or collapsed. Preserving the family institution depends on the continuity and healthy (good) relationship between husband and wife (Farasat, 2012; as cited in Rezai et al., 2011).

The need for family pathology is discussed when this institution cannot realize the expected functions or is on the verge of collapse and disintegration. In such circumstances, the factors affecting these damages should be examined and the elements underlying the collapse of the family must be identified (Rezaei et al., 2011). Also, survey research on couples and therapists shows that extramarital affairs are of the most damaging events in the marital life.

Weissmann, Dixon and Johnson (1997) ranked extramarital affairs as the second most damaging problem to relationships (in the classification of negative pressures), with only physical abuse having a more negative impact.

In recent years, the problem of extramarital affairs has become one of the [important] social problems - a problem which is often hidden and sometimes could be led to the commitment of a crime after disclosure. Police-reported homicide statistics show that about 30 percent of murders are family murders, one of the most important causes of which is extramarital affairs (Mahboubi, 2012). Also, according to statistics, Tehran province is ranked first in wife/husband killings. In 80 percent of these cases, the presence of a third person; i.e. the extramarital affair, has been the main driver of wife/husband killings (Mahboubi, 2012). A recent study found that the incidence of extramarital affairs among women has been closer to its incidence among men, and it is more common specifically in the younger age group (Atkinson, Bacom & Jacobson, 2001; quoted from Fisher and Aaron, 2010). Also, in a variety of extramarital affairs (sexual and emotional) there is a difference in reaction to it between men and women (Allen & Baom, 2004, Atkinson et al., 2001; Brand et al., 2007; Van den Eden, Bonk and Basold, 2000). Biological studies show that testosterone and estrogen sex hormones in men and women (Capaldi, Aggeler, Wilkens & Grüber, 1996), the presence of specific genes such as DRD4 on dopamine receptors (Garcia et al., 2010), the presence of dissimilar genes in the vasopressin system (Valom et al, 2008) can be related to extramarital affairs and reactions to extramarital affairs.

Research also shows that the duration of marriage is associated with the extramarital affairs (Wiggins & Lederer, 1984; as cited in Fisher & Aaron, 2010). In the field of education, recent research shows that couples' educational level is effective on extramarital affairs (Tracy and Giessen, 2000; Weissman and Saynder, 2007). The income, with regard to the gender factor, is associated with extramarital affairs (Munch, 2010).

One of the factors for investigating this issue is the [rate of] wife/husband killings. According to the UN World Statistics, approximately 5,000 women and girls are annually murdered in the name of honor and dignity. Also, according to the latest surveys, in addition to the highest rank of wife/husband killings in the family crimes, a significant percentage of defendants or accused persons are those women who have attempted to murder their husbands. Usually these murders are done by women whose husbands had extramarital affairs. In his study entitled “the phenomenon of husband killings by women”, it is showed that extramarital affairs have been one of the phenomena effective in husband killings in Tehran Province in recent years. Husband’s sexual dysfunction or being far from their husbands play the key role in the formation of the criminal inclinations of women and their tendency to interact with other men.

Based on the study conducted by Betzig (1989) on 160 different cultures, extramarital affairs have a global outbreak and are a major underlying cause of divorce and separation. On the other hand, it is necessary to point out the high incidence of divorce in Iran. According to the report released by Statistical Center of Iran, during the first 9 months of 2010, 100837 divorce cases have been

registered, indicating an increase of 2.7% as compared with the same period in the previous year. This center also reported that, in nine months of 2010, the largest number of registered divorces are related to the men and women in the age group of 25-29 and 20-24 years, respectively, which include a total of 12194 cases. On the other hand, according to the Organization for Civil Registration, the rate of divorce reached from 2% in 2004 to 13% in 2010.

2. Research Method

2.1. Population

This correlational study was conducted aiming at predicting extramarital relationships on the basis of identity statuses. The statistical population included all men and women residing in Selected Prisons for committing crimes related to marital infidelity (extramarital affairs).

2.2. Sample & Sampling method

Among such prisoners, 185 persons (68 men and 117 women) were selected for the study, using non-random convenience sampling technique.

2.3. Research instruments

According to previous studies and theoretical bases, the Persian translation of two standard inventories (likelihood of infidelity by Drigotas et al. and Adams Identity Status Inventory), with psychometric properties that well fit Iranian society, were used.

2.3.1. Likelihood of Infidelity Inventory

This test has a relatively high stability. Its validity was obtained as 0.98, using Cronbach's Alpha (Drigotas et al.).

To calculate the reliability of the test, the correlation value of 0.8 was obtained between the subjects' scores in this scale and behavior of infidelity, indicating a type of criterion validity.

Drigotas Safstrom and Gentiliaputs (1999) that gaining average and higher scores indicates likelihood of sexual and emotional extramarital behaviors. According to them, although the overall score does not necessarily suggest sexual/emotional relationship, it is related to such behaviors.

Fricker (2006) presented the subscales of Drigotas likelihood of infidelity in three parts:

cognitive, emotional, and sexual subscales.

Cognitive subscale: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Emotional subscale: 7, 8, 9

Sexual subscale: 5, 6, 10, 11

In this way, three scores, each belongs to a certain subscale, are obtained.

2.3.2. Identity Statuses

The Adams Identity Statuses Inventory was developed by Bennion and Adams (1984). It includes four subscales, namely identity achievement, diffusion, foreclosure, and moratorium.

This inventory also has two dimensions, namely strategic identity and interpersonal identity.

It includes 64 items, out of which 32 items relate to ideological identity and 32 items address interpersonal identity.

Validity of this test for identity achievement, exploration (suspension), foreclosure, and diffusion subscales was obtained as 0.81, 0.65, 0.72, and 0.51, respectively. The sample was comprised of 28 subjects (including students of second-grade of primary school, third-grade of high school, and pre-university).

2.4. Data description

Table 1 shows the distribution of frequency and percentage of sample group on the basis of demographic properties, as well as the mean and standard deviation of age, age at marriage, and length of marriage.

Table 1. Distribution of frequency and percentage of sample group on the basis of demographic properties (n=185)

variable	f	%	M	SD
extramarital affairs				
Have	139	75.1		
Have not	46	24.9		
Gender				
man	68	36.8		
women	117	63.2		
Crime				
extramarital affairs	45	24.3		
extramarital affairs and More Crime	94	50.8		
Crime	46	24.9		
Age				
			34.13	8.347
20-29	49	26.5		
30-39	94	50.8		
40-49	30	16.2		
50-59	12	6.5		
Educational level				
Illiterate	5	4.3		
Less than Diploma	65	35.1		
Diploma	80	43.2		
Post Diploma	18	9.7		
Bachelor	10	5.4		
Master Degree or Higher	2	1.1		
Missing	2	1.1		
Age of marriage				
			20.46	5.031
<20	85	45.9		
20-28	90	48.6		
29-37	10	5.4		
Length of marriage				
			9.43	7.177
≤5	44	23.8		
6-10	45	24.3		
11-15	28	15.1		
16-20	10	5.4		
20<	10	5.4		
Missing	48	25.9		

The mean and standard deviation of research variables are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Mean and standard deviation of research variables

Variable	subscale	With a history of Tend to Extra Marital Relationships n=139		Without a history of Tend to Extra Marital Relationships n=46		Total n=185	
		<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
		Tend to Extra Marital Relationships	cognitive	31.68	7.71	0	0
	emotional	19.29	5.52	0	0	14.49	9.63
	sexual	18.14	7.66	0	0	13.63	10.29
	total score	63.42	15.46	0	0	47.65	30.57
	diffusion	51.62	12.5	44.13	10.14	49.76	12.36
Identity status	exploration	50.2	16.99	49.22	17.61	49.96	17.1
	foreclosure	63.93	11.67	58.13	11.32	62.49	11.82
	achievement	70.21	12.77	73.57	7.75	71.04	11.79

Regarding that the validity of tests depends on research sample, internal consistency of the test used in this study was estimated with Cronbach's alpha, before data analysis and hypotheses testing, to ensure the accuracy of results. This index was obtained as 0.96 and 0.87 for the Likelihood of Infidelity Inventory and Identity Statuses Inventory of Adams et al., respectively. This indicates the acceptable validity of results obtained from the administration of inventories on the sample group.

The statistical tests used for testing research hypotheses are of parametric types. Regarding that the normality of data distribution is a presumption of such statistical tests, the normality of data obtained from measuring research variables was investigated, using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. Results indicate normal distribution of data in the current study ($p < 0.05$).

3. Results

Research Hypothesis: There is a correlation between identity statuses and tendency to extramarital relations.

$$H_1 : \rho_{XY} \neq 0$$

$$H_0 : \rho_{XY} = 0$$

Pearson's correlation coefficients between variables and the result of Pearson correlation test between the score of tendency to extramarital relations (and its subscales) and the score of identity statuses are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Correlation coefficients and result of correlation coefficient test between identity statuses and tendency to extramarital relations.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1 diffusion	1.000						
2 exploration	0.283**	1.000					
3 foreclosure	0.518**	0.205**	1.000				
4 achievement	-0.005	-0.005	0.304	1.000			
5 cognitive	0.265**	0.024	0.274**	-0.175*	1.000		
6 emotional	0.262**	0.002	0.203**	-0.083	0.923**	1.000	
7 sexual	0.303**	-0.040	0.236**	-0.171*	0.844**	0.786**	1.000
Tend to Extra Marital Relationships	0.296**	0.004	0.256**	-0.155*	0.977**	0.955**	0.911**

* $P < 0.05$, ** $P < 0.01$

- There is a [direct] relationship between identity diffusion and moratorium with tendency to extramarital relations.

- There is an [inverse] relationship between identity achievement and tendency to extramarital relations.
- Identity foreclosure and tendency to extramarital relation are not correlated.

Research Hypothesis: Identity statuses can be predictors of tendency to extramarital relations.

To test this hypothesis, the multivariate linear regression analysis has been used. In this way, the coefficient of determination (the squared coefficient of correlation) between the scores of identity diffusion, moratorium, and achievement, as the predicting variables, and tendency to extramarital relations, as the criterion variable, were first calculated and tested. Results of the significance test for the coefficient of determination are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Regression analysis for predicting tendency to extramarital relations based on identity statuses

Predictor variables (X)	Y	R	R ²	df	F
Diffusion Identity					
Exploration Identity	Tend to Extra Marital Relationships	0.383	0.147	2, 181	10.356**
Achievement Identity					

**P<0.01

Regarding that the calculated F (10.356) is larger than critical $F_{0.01}$ with the degrees of freedom of 181 and 3 (3.38), the null hypothesis maintaining the insignificance of the calculated coefficient of determination (0.147) is rejected at the confidence level of 99%.

Identity diffusion, moratorium, and achievement are predictors of tendency to extramarital relations.

About 15 percent of changes in tendency to extramarital relations is explained with identity diffusion, moratorium, and achievement ($R^2=0.147$).

Further, to determine the role of each identity status in the prediction of tendency to extramarital relations, the coefficient of correlation was calculated and tested. Results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Regression analysis for predicting tendency to extramarital relations based on identity statuses

Y	Predictor variables (X)	b	Std. Error	Beta	t
	(a)	29.801	15.792	-----	1.887*
Tend to Extra Marital Relationships	diffusion	0.429	0.203	0.173	2.117*
	exploration	0.608	0.222	0.235	2.735**
	achievement	-0.584	0.191	-	-3.063**
				0.225	

*P<0.05, **P<0.01

Based on the results from the calculation of regression coefficients and their statistical tests, regression equations for predicting the tendency to extramarital relations have been provided on the basis of identity statuses.

* Regression equations for predicting the tendency to extramarital relations based on identity statuses:

Tend to Extra Marital Relationships = 0.429 (Diffusion Identity) + 0.608 (Exploration Identity) – 0.584 (Achievement Identity) + 29.801

4. Discussion and conclusion

Among demographic variables, evidence indicates that gender is a strong predictor of extramarital sex. Men are more likely to accept, have, and justify such relationships (Buss & Shackelford, 1997; Buunk & Bakker, 1995; Greeley, 1994; Johnson, 1970; Pestrak, Martin & Martin, 1985; Miring, Alpine & Mcwherter, 1986; Shepherd, Nelson & Andreoli-Mathie, 1995; as cited in Habben & Sporkowski, 2000). This result was not observed in this study.

According to evidence, motivations and justification behind extramarital relationships vary by gender. According to the findings of Glass and Wright (1985), men forge such relationships for sexual and physical reasons and women for emotional motives. This result was not observed in this study.

Those with multiple relationships before marriage continue to have such connections with a lot of people. In addition to individual factors, social groups can play a part in showing extramarital behaviors (Boxtel, Ruder, Laglino & Sutil, 1978; Buunk & Baaker, 1999; as cited in Habben & Sporkowski, 2000). The probability of the occurrence of extramarital behavior depends on the degree of individual readiness for such behaviors. Greeley (1994) puts that increased number of employed women, compared to previous decades, boosts the chance of extramarital affairs. Despite this, women have always been a part of workforce. What may change from the past is that women have taken jobs that entail greater personal independence and thus gain greater financial independence (Greeley, 1994; as cited in Habben & Sporkowski, 2000). This result was not observed in this study.

There is a [direct] relationship between identity diffusion and moratorium with extramarital relationships.

There is an [inverse] relationship between identity achievement and tendency to extramarital relationships.

Identity foreclosure and tendency to extramarital relationship are not correlated.

Identity diffusion, moratorium, and achievement are predictors of tendency to extramarital relationships.

About 15 percent of changes in tendency to extramarital relationships is explained with identity diffusion, moratorium, and achievement ($R^2=0.147$).

According to the results, the tendency to extramarital relationships is greater in those with stronger identity diffusion and moratorium.

On the other hand, the tendency to extramarital relationships is lower in those with stronger identity achievement.

Identity moratorium occurs when an individual has not made a commitment or has experienced identity crisis but still not made a commitment. Identity diffusion occurs when one has not experienced any crisis at all and not made a commitment. As a result, those who do not make a commitment during identity crisis, as the main element of development during adolescence, are unstable in other areas and other periods, including marital relationships. Therefore, such people will tend more to extramarital relationships.

Identity achievement is a status in which after a process of experiencing identity crisis, an individual does not make a commitment. They also show this commitment in different areas of social relationships. Therefore, research findings, maintaining an inverse correlation between tendency to

extramarital relationships and identity achievement, suggest the status of making commitment during identity crisis in extramarital relationships.

On the other hand, identity foreclosure shows that there is no correlation between tendency to extramarital relationships and identity foreclosure. Regarding that the commitment of people with identity foreclosure is only a stereotype of others' commitment, their commitment is not directly related to their personal structure and social relations, and thus the obtained result may be attributed to it.

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