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Prediction of Marital Satisfaction based on Perfectionism

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Abstract

This study aims to predict marital satisfaction based on positive and negative perfectionism. Therefore, 123 people (67 men and 56 women) were selected as the study samples from all the counseling centers located in the city of Tehran through multi-stage random sampling method. The study methodology was correlation. Participants in the study were tested using Hill Perfectionism Inventory and Enrich Marital Satisfaction Scale. The multiple regression method was used for statistical analysis. The results obtained from this study indicated that there is a positive correlation between positive perfectionism and marital satisfaction and a negative correlation between negative perfectionism and marital satisfaction.

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1. Introduction

The motivation of perfectionism is influence human behavior widely and comprehensively discussed by psychologists and particularly theorists of psychoanalysis approach all through the history (Stoeber & Stoeber, 2009). “Perfectionism” is in principle the constant tendency of the individual to create perfect and unachievable criteria and the attempts made to realize them that is accompanied by critical self-evaluations of personal performance (Donkley et al, 2006; Barnes, 1980). Freud (1975) describes perfectionists in the following way: the main stimulus in the lives of these individuals is not achieving happiness in life, but to gain superiority and perfection (Verdy, 2001). According to Freud (1926-1959), when the strict super-ego puts a person under pressure for progress and perfect behavior, the tendency for perfectionism emerges in that person (Hill et al., 1997 qtd. in Kooroshnia & Latifian, 2011). Horney (1950) considers perfectionism a way of life, which is employed by people in order to get rid of fundamental anxieties. He defines perfectionism as a psychotic tendency for being perfect and ideal, regarding the slightest error an unforgivable sin, and anxiously waiting for ominous consequences (Sadati et al., 2008). Alice (1958) defines perfectionism as: the acceptance of the belief that the individual needs to be

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completely meritorious and intelligent, a pioneer in all aspects of life and that there is always an exact, comprehensive and correct way for solving human problems without which life would be disastrous (Egan, 2005). Adler (1973) believes that the attempt to achieve high criteria and ambition to reach perfection in a proper way is among the conditions that will lead to human development. However, a psychotic attempt could be revealed by the desire for power and control over others (Sharif et al., 2011). It was assumed in the past that perfectionism was a one-dimensional concept (Bronze, 1980). However, it is now believed that it has a multi-dimensional nature (Stamoff & Parker, 2000). A group of theorists (like Adler, 1956; Rogers, 1961; Mazlo, 1970; Spence and Holmbridge, 1983 qtd. in Mohammadi & Jekar, 2010) have considered the healthy aspect of perfectionism by considering it as the attempts made by individuals to realize their potential capacities and talents. Meanwhile, another group of theorists (such as Hamachek, 1978; Frost et al., 1993; Sliny et al. qtd. in Mohammadi & Jekar, 2010) have regarded the two main dimensions of perfectionism; one dimension expressed in terms of natural, healthy, adapted, and normal, and the other dimension expressed in terms of psychotic, unhealthy, unadapted, and uncoordinated. Terry-Short et al. (1995) have proposed a distinction between normal perfectionism and neuroticism using theoretical bases. Positive or normal perfectionism is defined as a motivation for progress towards a defined goal to reach a desirable (positive) outcome and negative or neurotic perfectionism is defined as the motivation towards a defined goal in order to prevent the occurrence of undesirable (negative) outcomes (Bahadori Khosroshahi & Babapoor Kheiral-Din, 2012).

Perfectionism influences all aspects of life including romantic relationships and marital satisfaction (Stoeber & Stoeber, 2009). The results of the studies indicate that the spouses who have abnormal (negative) perfectionism show less marital satisfaction (Dimitrioski et al., 2002; Martin & Ashby, 2004; DiBarto & Barlow, 2006; Kim, 2011; Safarzadeh et al., 2011; Ehteshamzadeh et al., 2011) and the spouses who have normal perfectionism show higher marital satisfaction (Ashby et al., 2008). According to the influence of perfectionism on marital satisfaction and the report made by the European Commission proving that 96 per cent of people have regarded family life as the only important and valuable aspect of life and consider family a secure environment and an improving place for the development of its members (Govahi Jahan, 2008), the present study was conducted with the aim of predicting marital satisfaction based on perfectionism.

2. Method

The study methodology was correlation. To analyze the data according to the measurement level of analyzed variables, descriptive statistics (central and dispersion index) and inferential statistics (multiple regression) were used and all data processing operations were done by SPSS software.

2.1. Statistical Population, Sample and Sampling Method

The statistical population of this study included all 24-44 spouses in the city of Tehran in 2011. From among this population, 123 people (67 men and 56 women) were selected using the multi-stage random sampling method from the counseling centers located in the north, south, east, and west of Tehran.

2.1.1. Instruments

Enrich Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire: This questionnaire consists of 12 subscales, including idealistic distortion, marital satisfaction, personality issues, communication, conflict resolution, financial management, leisure activities, sexual relationship, children and parenting, family and friends, egalitarian roles, and religious orientation. Enrich questionnaire was normalized by Soleimani (1994) in Iran with 47 questions. The main form of the questionnaire, which included 115 questions, was reported to be 92 per cent reliable with the Cronbach's alpha and the alpha coefficient for the shortened form was 95 per cent. Mirkheshti (1996) also calculated the validity of the shortened form by alpha coefficient equivalent to 92 per cent. The score of each subject in this questionnaire is between 47 and 235 (Rohani & Manavipoor, 2008).

Hill Perfectionism Inventory: includes 59 sentences and 8 subscales. The subscales of this inventory include: concentration on mistakes, need for approval, rumination, perceived parental pressure, organization, planfulness,

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