

## STUDYING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COUPLES COMMUNICATION MODELS AND SEXUAL PROBLEMS

### Introduction and Aim

Communication has embraced all human life and life begins with the commencement of communication and ends with its discontinual. Human being is born in the lap of this rapport (communication) and satisfies his demands of any type, and survives, grows and evolves with the aid of rapport. The happiness and beatitude of human being depends on, to some extent, the how of his rapport with others. It is to be noted that the importance of some other types of rapports in this setting is more than others, because some of the types of rapport are economical, some social and some other are spiritual and mental. But one of the longest and deepest relationships that have all above dimensions is marital relation. It is a relationship that we expect it to fulfill all our needs and meet all of our wishes (1). Satisfying marriage is so useful for physical health of both partners (2). In comparing divorced or unmarried people, married and specially people who are justified with their marriage, have had long life and less sexual problems, and other disease (3).

Marital rapport is a process that during it, the husband and wife, either verbally or non-verbally, try to exchange the thoughts and feelings. Such kind of rapport is considered as one of the main sources of obtaining satisfaction in life. Marriage is regarded as a kind of perfection. Human has a set of needs and instincts that in case a non-satisfactory state or a defect occurs in any of the needs, then, will cause a destabilization in personality and he needs to get married based on the law of the creation and for providing all his different mental, social needs and the survival of his generation, and his physical and mental composure and solving different problems of life .(4)

" Bolton": The rapports of the members of the family with one another will enable them to speak about their desires, demands, and needs. They show their love and desire to each other and can cope with their problems in the family. However, the lack of near and sincere skills will change them into a parallel relation and without sincerity and nearness. When near relations and rapports stops, the energy of love changes into anger and as a result, what follows are non-stop disputes, criticisms and sexual non-interest.(5)

Nowadays, sexual health is regarded as part of general health. "Bancroft (6) stated that 65% of women and 40% of men suffer from sexual disorder". In examining the structure of the family, one of the ways is attending to communicative channels of the members of the family, especially, husband and wife. The communicative channels which are continuously used are called "communicative patterns". (7)

Christensen & Sullaway emphasize on three main patterns of marital rapport:

- 1- Mutual constructive communication
- 2- Mutual avoidance of communication
- 3- Demand-withdraw communication (8)

Affection should also be considered as one of the main aspects of marital interactions and it is a good distinguishing factor between desolate and non-desolate couples. " Noller & Fitzpatrick believe that the slighness of positive affection and the excess of negative affection and mutual negative affection are the characteristics of desolate couples". " Bradberi et al state that affection is one of the main factors in evaluating the variance of the quality of marriage." (9)

The quality of the relation of the couples is the origin of many sexual problems. The lack of communication, hostile relations and inability in manifesting and exchanging the affections are the characteristics of the couples who suffer from sexual malfunction. Sexual problems and the maladjustments of the couples are correlated with the settings of non-sexual relations(6). Most of the couples with sexual problems are engaged in marital maladjustments and most of the couples with marital problems suffer from sexual disorders. In the studies of Sigger (1974-1976), 75% Of the couples who had referred for the treatment of their marital problems, besides their marital problems, they complained about sexual disorders and mutually, 70% of the couples of whose main problem was sexual malfunction, were faced with the problems of non-sexual relations. In fact, sexual problem is the reason for the couples' maladjustments and the couples' maladjustments are is the cause of sexual problem. Bilateral causality, binds sexual with non-sexual problems (10). Considering the above-mentioned issues and the investigation of other studies, the aim of this study is the examination of the relation between the patterns of marital rapport with sexual problems.

#### **The hypotheses:**

- 1-There exists a meaningful relation between the patterns of mutual constructive communication and sexual problems.
- 2-There exists a meaningful relation between the patterns of mutual avoidance of communication and sexual problems.
- 3-There exists a meaningful relation between the patterns of demand-withdraw communication and sexual problems.
- 4- There is a meaningful relation between sexuality and using the patterns of marital rapport.

#### **Research Method:**

By considering the final aim of the study which is the examination of the relation between the variables related to the patterns of marital rapport and the variable of sexual problem, a descriptive research in a correlation form is used.

The statistical universe in this study includes all the married students of the faculty of literature of Isfahan University in the year 2009-2010 whose number amounted to 450. The samples of the study are around 200 persons from the

statistical universe, who are chosen randomly.

**Data collection instrument:**

Considering the subject of study and the main aim of the study, for the purpose of data collection, two questionnaires have been used as measuring instruments that each will be described.

1- The questionnaire of sexual problems prepared by Golombok-Rast.

2- The questionnaire of marital communicative pattern prepared by Christensen and Sullaway.

**1- The questionnaire of sexual status by Golombok-Rast (1986)**

This questionnaire is a test of 28 questions. The questions, in a scale of five degrees of Likert, evaluates the type and the intensity of sexual problems in seven grounds and two separate forms for men and women, with marks from zero to four. The lowest testable mark in this scale is zero and the highest is 112. The subscale of the women's questionnaires includes "infrequency, non-communication, dissatisfaction, dissatisfaction, avoidance, non-sexuality, vaginismus, anorgasmia," and in men it includes "impotence, premature ejaculation, dissatisfaction, avoidance, infrequency of rapport and non-sexuality". In addition to the leveled marks of the subscales, the leveled overall mark of each subject shows the intensity and the status of his/her sexual problems on a continuum with 9 degrees from mark 1 (the lowest rate of sexual problem) up to mark 9 (the highest rate of sexual problem). (11)

**B) The questionnaire of communicative patterns:**

This questionnaire has been made by Christensen and Sullaway in 1984 in California University (12). It is a 35 questioned self measuring tool that has been designed to measure marital relation of couples, and it measures couples' behaviors in three steps of marital conflicts. These steps include:

1- When there is a problem in couples' communication. 2- Length of time that problem is discussed about. 3- After discussion about communicational problem. Couples grade each behavior on a 9 graded scale that its range is from 1 (impossible) to 9 (very possible). Questionnaire of communication models is composed of three subscales:

1- Mutual constructive communication 2- mutual avoidance communication 3- Demand-withdraw communication that has two parts: A) scale of demand (man)/ withdraw (woman) B) scale of demand (woman) / withdraw (man)

It should be mentioned that questions in questionnaires of communicational models are made in such a way that answering each one of couples to questions can define models of their marital communication and high coordination among independent answers of couples in subscales of this questionnaire has been 71% in American sample in all models (13) and in Iranian sample, it has been 62%, quoted by Ebadatpour, in 2000 that its statistical society was chosen from Tehran that it is meaningful in level of 0/05. (9)

In this research in order to analyze data, descriptive statistics methods like mean, standard deviation and etc and also in inferential statistics T test, Pearson alliance factor and analyzing variance were used.

### **The Used Statistical Method in Data Analysis:**

In this study, for the purpose of the analysis of the data, the descriptive statistical methods among the mean, standard deviation and etc, the test of T, the correlation coefficient of Pearson and the analysis of variance are used.

### **Data Analysis:**

A) Descriptive findings: the information related to quantitative variables that are not presented here because of limitation.

### **The first hypothesis:**

**Table (1): Examination of the relation between the pattern of mutual constructive communication and sexual problems.**

variables	sexual problems	level
Pattern of mutual constructive communicaion	0.010	- 0.196

For the investigation of the relation between constructive communication pattern and sexual problem, Pearson correlation coefficient is used. The results show that the calculated correlation coefficient at the significance level of 0.05 is bigger than the correlation of the table. As a result, the relation of the two variables are significant. The direction of the relation is negative and inverse, i.e. those who have a constructive communicative pattern, have fewer sexual problems and vice versa.

With regard to this hypothesis, the results are in harmony with Sharafi's study (15) about the significant correlation between the pattern of mutual constructive communication and mental health and that of Siavashi quoted from Shafiei Nia (16) about the positive effect of teaching the skills of solving the conflicts on the amelioration of positive constructive relation. Also, with the study of the Christensen(1986) and Jacobson (1992) , quoted from Ebadatpour (9), it was figured out the fact that lower constructive communication pattern is seen in groups with problems. So, it can be said that those who have sexual problems try to discuss about their communicative problems and suggest solutions, show their feelings to each other and in such conditions; they get more satisfaction out of their marital life.

### **The second hypothesis:**

**Table 2: The relation between mutual avoidance pattern and sexual problems**

variables	sexual problems	level
Pattern of mutual avoidance communication	0.156	0.042

For the purpose of investigating the relation between mutual avoidance pattern and sexual problems, Pearson's correlation coefficient will be used. The results showed that the calculated correlation at the significance level of 0.05 is bigger

than the table's correlation.

### The third hypothesis:

**Table 3: The relation between sexual problems and the pattern of demand-withdrawal communication**

variables	sexual problems	level
pattern of demand-withdrawal communication	0.17	0.026

For the purpose of investigating elation between sexual problems and the pattern of demand-withdrawal communication, Pearson's correlation coefficient is used. The results showed that the calculated correlation at the significance level of 0.05 is bigger than the table's correlation. As a result, the relation between the two variables is significant. The direction of the relation is positive and direct, i.e. those who have a higher level of sexual problems, get higher marks in the pattern of demand-withdrawal communication and vice versa.

### The fourth hypothesis:

For the purpose of investigating the relation of sexuality and the use of the patterns of marital communication, the T test, the analysis of the variance and LSD have been used.

This hypothesis examines the relation between the differences of sexuality and the use of the patterns of marital communication that in them, each pattern has been compared in both sexes.

**Table 4: The results of T test of women and men in choosing the pattern of marital communication.**

Variance analysis	gender	mean	Standard deviation	Range of freedom	Difference of means	T	Meaningful level
Marital communication models	Men	57.18	9.45	197	0.78	80%	P<0/05
	Women	56.40	8.07				
Mutual constrictive communication	Men	49.29	5.98	197	0.07	0.07	P<0/05
	Women	49.99	6.07				
Mutual avoidance of communication	Men	48.12	9.36	197	4/43	4.142	P<./001
	Women	52.45	9.98				

The results resulting from the performance of "T" test show that the difference between women and men is not statistically significant and meaningful in using the pattern of mutual constructive pattern and mutual avoidance and it was observed that "T" was bigger than critical "T". Considering this explanation, women use the mutual avoidance pattern more than men.

**Table 5: The results of variance analysis for determining the differences of men and women's use of marital communication pattern.**

Variance analysis Gender	Source of changes	Total of squares	Range of freedom	mean	F
Men	Error Factors	486.48	1	644.8	67.42
		141921.6	99	95.65	
Women	Error Factors	1476.31	1	1476.31	17.09
		15580.18	98	82.43	

The results resulting from the accomplishment of the analysis of one-variable variance with continuous measurement show that in both groups of men and women, the difference of the variance of at least one of the factors is statistically significant and it was observed that F in the two groups at the level of  $P < 0.001$  with the rate of 67/42 and 17/9 is bigger than critical F. Hence, by considering the obtained information and the above explanation, it can be concluded that hypothesis 4 is confirmed, i.e. significant difference in using the patterns of marital communication exists in men and women. For examining the observation differences in the mean of the factors, the LSD test has been used, the results of which are in table 6.

**Table 6: Examining the observation differences in the mean of the factors (LSD test)**

Gender	mean	Factors	mean	49.29	48.12
Men		Mutual constrictive communication	57.18	7.89	9.06
		Mutual avoidance of communication	49.29		
		Demand - Withdraw	57.17		1.17
		Factors	Mean	49.99	52.47
Women		Mutual constrictive communication	56.04	6.04	3.09
		Mutual avoidance of communication	49.99		
		Demand - Withdraw	52.45		2.46

The results resulting from the accomplishment of the LSD test show that in the group of men only the difference of the mean of pattern of the first is statistically significant and meaningful with the second and the third. Thus, men use the mutual constructive communication more than the two other styles. The results of the above table show that women use all the three communicative patterns, however, respectively, the pattern of mutual constructive communication, mutual avoidance and the pattern of woman's demand-man's withdrawal and man's demand-woman's withdrawal and the pattern of demand-withdrawal are of importance. These results, along with the results of the above variance analysis, confirm the fourth hypothesis.

#### **Discussion and conclusion:**

By having a glance at the tables, we understand that our hypotheses have all been confirmed. The first hypothesis shows an inverse and meaningful relation, meaning that the more we use the mutual constructive pattern, the fewer sexual problems we shall have. It means that those who use the pattern of mutual avoidance, the pattern of woman's demand-man's withdrawal, and the pattern of man's demand-woman's withdrawal will have more sexual problems. The fourth



hypothesis show that men use the mutual constructive pattern and the women use the avoidance pattern more than other patterns. Sexual satisfaction entails non-stop attempts of the couples for establishing the constructive communicative patterns and the exchange of feelings, affections, sexual feedbacks are of the main characteristics of these patterns. (14)

Considering the investigations done, those who use more the mutual constructive patterns have fewer sexual problems, and mentally more concentrated and from the viewpoint of personality, much more organized. Such people have placed the pivot of their lives on achievement and are less vulnerable to marital problems. Negative behavioral patterns between couples can be changed and reformed by means of appropriate interferences. Such interferences are possible via sexology and marriage therapy which have been designed for the decrease or elimination of critical exchanges or extreme demands and expectations and prevent from increasing negative emotions. With the exception of the mutual constructive pattern, other patterns are not suitable and if people use these patterns, will face more problems in life; among which sexual problem is one (though the role of sexual problems is obvious in matrimonial life). Gatman 1994 found that one of the early signs indicating that the marriage is at risk is of severe criticism of the two parties. (17)

Such people need especial training and treatment and the advisors, sexologists, psychologists and therapists can play a significant role. At the end, it is suggested that some approaches be offered for sexual training to couples and appropriate patterns of rapport and communication. Perhaps, one of the approaches is to train the appropriate patterns of communication via television programs which has many viewers and also bringing the suitable sexual trainings out of their taboo framework for all age groups appropriate to their needs.

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#### **Ամուսնական հարաբերությունների մոդելների և սեռական խնդիրների միջև եղած կապի ուսումնասիրությունը**

Ամուսնացած անձանց ամենատարածված հիմնական խնդիրներից են սեռական խնդիրները, որոնք կարող են այնպիսի ազդեցություն գործել նրանց հոգեբանական վիճակի վրա, որը կդառնա ընտանիքի և ամուսնական հարաբերությունների բայթաբան պատճառ: Այս հետազոտությունը կատարվել է ամուսնացած ուսանողների ամուսնական հարաբերությունների մոդելների և սեռական խնդիրների միջև եղած կապը ուսումնասիրելու նպատակով:

Սույն հետազոտությունը նկարագրական է և կատարվել է հարաբերակցության եղանակով: Սպահանի համալսարանի գրականության ֆակուլտետի ամուսնացած ուսանողներից պատահականորեն ընտրվել են 200 հոգի: Հետազոտության գործիքներն են եղել զույգերի հարաբերությունների մոդելների և սեռական խնդիրների վերաբերյալ հարցաթերթիկները, որոնց պատասխանել են բոլոր ընտրված անձինք: Տվյալները հավաքելուց հետո, դրանք վերլուծության են ենթարկվել հարաբերակցության տեսերի, տարբերությունների վերլուծության և «T» թեստի միջոցով:

Տվյալները ցույց տվեցին, որ փոխադարձ կառուցողական հարաբերությունների մոդելների և սեռական խնդիրների միջև կա բացասական իմաստալից կապ: Իսկ ամուսնական հարաբերությունների այլ մոդելների և սեռական խնդիրների միջև՝ դրական իմաստալից կապ: Ձեռք բերված արդյունքները ակնհայտ են դարձնում կործանարար հարաբերությունների մոդելներին ուշադրություն դարձնելու և դրանց ուղղելու անհրաժեշտությունը: Ամուսնական բավարարվածությանը հասնելու համար զույգերը պետք է հետևողականորեն ջանքեր գործադրեն կառուցողական հարաբերություններ հաստատելու համար: Օգնություն ցուցաբերելու հարցում առաջնային են համարվում հոգեբաններն ու խորհրդատուները: