



Original Article

# Relationship between early maladaptive schemas and sexual satisfaction in working women in Mashhad Ferdowsi University and Shiraz University, Iran

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## Abstract

**Introduction:** Due to its basic role in the reproduction of the species, sexual relationship has always been a vital issue throughout the history, and it plays a major role in any happy and successful marital relationship. The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between sexual satisfaction in working women in Mashhad Ferdowsi University and Shiraz University based on the maladaptive schemas.

**Materials and Methods:** The statistical community of this ex-post research includes women working in Ferdowsi and Shiraz universities. Two questionnaires of early maladaptive schemas and marital satisfaction questionnaire were randomly given to 127 women working in Ferdowsi and Shiraz universities during May to July of 2014 and selected by simple random sampling through ex-post facto investigation. 95 participants met the inclusion criteria and consisted of women aged 28 to 41 years old. Research results analyses were conducted through multiple regression step models by SPSS software 17.

**Results:** According to the early maladaptive schemas, four schemas including emotional deprivation, mistrust, abandonment, and defectiveness have a significant role in the prediction of sexual satisfaction in women ( $P=0.001$ ).

**Conclusion:** Based on findings we can estimate that four schemas including emotional deprivation, mistrust, abandonment, and defectiveness in the disconnection and rejection domain have a significant relationship with sexual satisfaction and through any intervention on manipulating each factor, we can improve sexual satisfaction.

**Keywords:** Schema, Sexual satisfaction, Women

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## Introduction

Sexuality is a phenomenon that giving it importance is realistic and ignoring it is impossible (1). However sexuality is considered of primarily life issues in marital life and sexual compatibility and its balance and proportionality are of most important factors, insuccess and happiness in marital life (2).

In fact, just to satisfy the sexual urge is a natural need that must be addressed Otherwise, sexual problems may appear latent in marital life that lies with signs and symptoms such as physical discomfort, depression, and dissatisfaction with the married life

(3). In this regard women as an important part of this relationship, as well as the center of energy are raised in the families that the study of Their satisfaction of sexual relationship can play determining role in their mental health, and consequently in producing energy and dynamism needed in the family and society (4). The concept of sexual satisfaction in women is a complex aspect, affected by several factors and is studied in different areas but in all studies, the status of a variable was empty, that was investigation of the role of cognitive schemas on women's satisfaction (5).

In this case Sbrocco and Barlow (5) emphasized the importance of schemas engaged in sexuality; schemas that activates collection of thoughts, emotions and behaviors during sexual activity. It has

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been shown that Individuals who have problems in their sexuality have a collection of more dogmatic, inflexible and unrealistic beliefs and so have more negative evaluations. These cognitive structures was considered as vulnerable factors in sexual problems and so effective on sexual satisfaction (6).

Nobre and Pinto-Gouveia (7) stated that dysfunctional beliefs act as predisposing factors in activating negative maladaptive schemas in negative sexual positions. In fact cognitive schemas is responsible for how individuals interpret their experiences and so activation of these schemas by the negative sexual event affected the individual negative sexual event have affect the individuals informative and motivational system, consequently motivate the individuals negative emotions, so As a result, not only affects a person's sexual function, but also a person's sexual satisfaction as a whole were affected by this vicious cycle, and it changed (8).

The findings suggest that the presence of specific cognitive schemas, is the infrastructure of individuals sexual satisfaction and it raises a broader understanding that a wider cognitive organism can include the core infrastructure of sexual satisfaction (9, 10). In this regard early maladaptive schemas and their influence on women's sexual satisfaction have studied to provide a path for psychological interventions in women's sexual issues and framing the birth control programs on the base of findings of this study and studies that can be continuant.

## Materials and Methods

The present study is ex-post facto type and the statistical population of this study included in academia working women and the sample of this study consisted of women working in Mashhad Ferdowsi University and Shiraz University selected through convenience sampling method. The sample size was calculated by the formula. With regard to  $P=0.4$  and type I error rates 0.05 and estimation error up to 0.1, sample size was approximately 95 that for ensure, early sample size set (127 person) based on the rate of availability of people required (11). 127 participants were enrolled in the study that after describing research project and collect complicated questionnaires, 95 participant's information were analyzed statistically. This study was conducted in the period May to July of 2014. Inclusion criteria were a minimum age of 20, female gender, married and lack of specific mental and physical disorders. Participants exclusion criteria was having a medical disorder in axis 1 and 2, as well as having sexual dysfunction based on DSM-IV criteria. Participants

were studied by SCID clinical interview, in the case of lack of specific clinical disorder, and those who have clinical disorders were banned to enter. The screening participants consent filled the young schemas questionnaires (1999) and marital satisfaction questionnaire after describing the research project and questionnaires were collected by researcher after checking the full answer. The study was approved by Depart of Education Committee of Department of Psychology, Mashhad Ferdowsi University and Shiraz University.

### Research instruments

*A) Early maladaptive schemas questionnaires:* This questionnaire consists of 75 items made by Jeffrey Young (1999) to evaluate 15 early maladaptive schemas. Scoring is based on 6 rating scales. (1= strongly about me is untrue, 2= almost about me is false, 3= some right to be wrong, 4= a little about me is true, 5= almost about me is true, 6= strongly about me is true). In this way, the scores of the questionnaire obtained by adding the scores of each scale. The minimum and maximum score of early maladaptive schemas is between 1-6 that high scores indicate high levels of early maladaptive schemas in subjects. Standardization of Young Schema Questionnaire (YSQ- SF) was conducted in Iran by Aahi and validity and reliability of the questionnaire using Cronbach's alpha have been obtained 0.97 in the male population and 0.98 in the female population (12). The face validity of the questionnaire is desirable (13). Several studies have demonstrated its usefulness to separate patients based on early maladaptive schemas (10). The psychometric properties of the questionnaire in the study of Smith et al., 1995 showed that alpha coefficient for any early maladaptive schemas was between 0.83 to 0.96 and test-retest coefficient in nonclinical population obtained between 0.5 to 0.82. The internal reliability was reported 0.94 by calculating the internal consistency and Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the total score or the questionnaire (14).

*B) Marital satisfaction questionnaire:* The questionnaire was developed and validated by Salehi Fadardi. Reliability of interview form and means of sexual satisfaction was approved with the method of agreement of assessors with a correlation coefficient  $r < 0.7$  and  $r = 0.78$  respectively. He was also optimistic installation Fadardi alpha test half way up to 0.78, which indicates the appropriate and high reliability tools. The sexual satisfaction in this study points to the score that participant obtaining after the response to sexual satisfaction scale. The scale consisted of 17 questions and maximum of

points was 85, and minimum was 17. Poor sexual satisfaction ranked scores of 17-51, average sexual satisfaction, 52-67 and good sexual satisfaction, 65-85 ranked (15).

The prepared data statistically analyzed by using descriptive statistics indicators and regression test by SPSS version 17.

## Results

The age range of the sample was women between 28 to 41 years old and their average age was 34.2 and they passed an average of nine years of marriage.

Among the participants, 36 were degree (37%) and 59 were under graduate (62%). Before begin to analyze the data, we conducted the initial screening data. In connection with the replacement of the average total amount of Perth, occurred 2 missing data probably due to data entry errors when entering the questionnaire. In fact the method of replacing the average, is the most common and the most conservative method attribution when data is missing (16).

Then analyzed the data to assess the assumptions of normality. By studying the normal curve in the dependent variables of the study (early maladaptive schemas) it was found that in some cases of early maladaptive schemas, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test with significance level of 0.01, was significant. Of course, its normal curve was natural and let us enter to analyze. Now go to the hypothesis. To determine the predictability of sexual satisfaction variable in women by their early maladaptive schemas, the multiple step-wise regression model was used.

After 15 schema variables were considered as predictor variables, only four variables emotional deprivation, abandonment / instability, mistrust / molestation and defectiveness/shame were entered into the regression equation. In the table below, the four models and adjusted changes coefficient is observable.

**Table 1.** Summary of four models and adjusted changes coefficients

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R square	Standard deviation error
1	0.396 <sup>A</sup>	0.157	0.148	11.8
2	0.421 <sup>B</sup>	0.177	0.162	9.3
3	0.433 <sup>C</sup>	0.187	0.165	10.2
4	0.44 <sup>D</sup>	0.193	0.169	9.81

A: predictor variable: (fixed variable) + emotional deprivation

B: predictor variable: (fixed variable) + emotional deprivation + mistrust

C: predictor variable: (fixed variable) + emotional deprivation + mistrust + abandonment

D: predictor variable: (fixed variable) + emotional deprivation + mistrust + abandonment + defectiveness

The fourth model shows that four variables predict entered has ability to predict 0.169% of the variance in sexual satisfaction (predictable variable). In the following, ANOVA table results that show the significance of whole model, the significance level of F is less than 0.05 and show that independent variable sex plain changes in dependent variables as well. The predictor variables regression coefficients are listed in the following table.

**Table 2.** The predictor variables regression coefficients

Model	Nonstandard coefficient	Standard coefficient	T	Significant
1(fix)	72.09		27.52	0.00
Emotional deprivation	-0.72	-0.39	-4.15	0.00
Mistrust	-0.53	-0.31	-3.31	0.00
Abandonment	-0.33	-0.2	-1.98	0.00
Defectiveness	-0.19	-0.09	-1.02	0.00

Dependent variable: sexual satisfaction

Regression formula of the model will be as follows:

(Sexual satisfaction)  $y = 72.09 + (-0.19)$  (defectiveness) +  $(-0.33)$  (abandonment) +  $(-0.53)$  (mistrust) +  $(-0.72)$  (emotional deprivation)

## Discussion

The purpose of the present research was to study the relationship between early adaptive schemas and sexual satisfaction in women working in Mashhad Ferdowsi University and Shiraz University. As mentioned earlier the importance of early Maladaptive Schemas in etiology and emotional disorders is proved by experimental data. As seen with the results the four emotional deprivation, mistrust, abandonment, and defectiveness schemas have significant role in prediction of sexual satisfaction variable. This finding was in line with few studies (18-23). As mentioned in that studies, individuals have suppressed emotion in the field of abandonment in her past that experience this emotion abusive in interpersonal relations and sexual relations especially and modify the natural history of sexual route and its satisfaction (19,20). All these variables have negative relationship in correlation with sexual satisfaction variable too; this means that more scores in these schemas predict little sexual satisfaction. On the other hand four schemas have high relative scores with the individuals with low sexual satisfaction. The findings show that there was cognitive pattern in individuals with low sexual satisfaction that the main core of this cognitive pattern is abandoned by the other. According to Young early maladaptive

schemas, these four schemas all set in the disconnection and abandonment field. According to young individuals who are in this group are not able to create satisfying and safe interests with other. These individual's families that cause to form this area in childhood are usually unstable, harassment, cold, abandoned and secluded from the world. In this individuals basic needs such as security, peace of mind, acceptance, protection, stability, empathy and guidance are not considered (24).

As the above description suggests, one of the infrastructures of sexual satisfaction, security and sense of protection and connection are not included in this individuals (25) And low sexual satisfaction in women are predictable with such schemas. In fact, Oliver and Nobre (26) found that there is a strong correlation between sexual function and positive affect and cognitive schema (deprivation, defectiveness / shame, vulnerability to threats and compliance). Manzary, Makvandy, Khajevand (27) elaborate on this finding on their research that at least one of the variables explaining early maladaptive schemas, marital conflict and sexual satisfaction are effective in continuation of life of divorced ,on the verge of divorce and normal people. So what is the predict of sexual satisfaction in marital relationship is not only a moment of the experience, but also the baggages of previous relationships with the important people in his life are also included (26).

Our findings may be of clinical significance for evaluation and treatment of patients with sexual problems. In fact the assessment of the fundamental beliefs and early maladaptive schemas should set in sex therapy protocols to determine the role of these variables in patients. Moreover, women with low dissatisfaction with their sexual problems can use cognitive techniques focused on the restructuring of inefficient fundamental beliefs and learn to solve it on their therapy sessions. The results of this study should be used and studied with caution and within special frame. This study was a cross-sectional one, and more variables over time may contribute to sexual satisfaction of this research's participants, that need to longitudinal study. Also, further studies with different samples and different methods to evaluate cognitive structures (clinical interview, experimental manipulations to activate the schema) are needed.

### Conclusion

Generally according to our findings emotional deprivation, mistrust, abandonment, and defectiveness schemas have significant roles in the prediction of women's sexual satisfaction. All these variables are negatively correlated with sexual satisfaction and the higher scores predict the lower sexual satisfaction.

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