

Marital Satisfaction and Its Components in Families of Naval Officers

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Abstract

Background: The health of military families including factors affecting the productivity and satisfaction of employees and armed forces are of great importance.

Objectives: This study aimed to compare the public health and scale corresponding to the four groups of military families (surface, subsurface, marines, and pilots).

Patients and Methods: The sample in this study included 200 families of naval officers who were selected through stratified sampling method

Results: The results showed that the officers' families of shallow subsurface, marines and pilots differed in terms of public health. The findings also showed that in families of small-scale pilot officers, subscales physical symptoms, sleep disturbances, symptoms of anxiety, and depression symptoms subscale scores were higher. There was a difference in the marital satisfaction and its components among different families of the naval officers. To explain the findings, we had to note that the mean of marital satisfaction and its subscales in the three groups of naval families (i.e. surface forces, submarine forces and marine forces) was different from the families of the naval pilot officers. Consequently, since the group of naval pilot families had the highest level of difference both in the general variable of marital satisfaction and its subscales, it is necessary to study this subject further in future researches.

Conclusions: Given the importance of the military in safeguarding our borders, the study found that public health is relatively good in the four studied forces, but the pilot families should pay some more attention to their health to achieve improved public health.

Keywords: Marital Satisfaction, Naval Families

1. Background

One of the most important characteristics of any balanced life is the spousal emotional interactions. Everybody feels the need for other people's emotions in their lives. Emotional interaction is as important for the beginning of any marital life as it is for the continuation of life. This is while many couples ignore the importance of their experienced emotions and feelings in their mutual lives. Instability and weakness of the family foundation and the decrease of intimacy and emotion among the family members is one of the consequences of our contemporary industrial societies. When couples refer to therapists, they usually experience considerable emotional distresses. There are enough obvious evidences showing that couples experience severe problems in their relationships. They often confess that their spouse is unable to understand them properly, and hence, one can observe the lack of intimacy, trust and satisfaction, along with unsecure attachment ties between the couples (1).

People are always learning and increasing their experiences. Individuals' interests, activities and other individual characteristics are always changing. Since the personality of each person changes, the nature of his/

her relationship with others differs as well. The available literature on this issue show that every man and woman who have benefited from healthy and balanced patterns of family in their childhood and adolescence, will have a more successful and balanced marital life (2). The conducted researches and analyses of the effective factors on marital satisfaction show that one of the effective factors on marital satisfaction is the sexual intercourse. Sexual intercourse of women is the most determining factor of a marital life. In no part of a marital relationship the symbolic meaning is stronger and more active than the sexual intercourse, because any concern on this issue can lead the woman to the interruption of the sexual relation.

In the research of Zelkowitz and Milet on "postpartum psychiatric disorders: their relationship to psychological adjustment and marital satisfaction in wives" (3), the indexes showed that wives with mental disorders had more symptoms and lower scores in their marital satisfaction and performance, while the indexes of husbands showed a higher level of marital dissatisfaction and more changes in normal issues of life and intimacy with their wives compared to the control group.

Azar et al. (4) studied the “relationship between female sexual distress and mental health status in cases referred to two public and private settings in Iran” and concluded that sexual disorder and marital satisfaction were significantly different between healthy women and women with mental pathological problems (stress, depression, physical complaint).

In another research, Lundblad and Hansson (5) it was shown that the existence of mental disorders reduced the marital satisfaction compared to the normal group. Moreover, Dube et al. (6) studied a case of the murder of five infants by their parents a week after their birth in Ottawa, Canada. They concluded that the mothers of these victims were not at a suitable level of fertility due to their marital dissatisfaction and mental health issues. These mothers were mainly aggressive and anxious with borderline personalities. They had a very low level of marital satisfaction and intimacy with their spouses and the mental disorder had played an important role in their incompatibility. On the other hand, another showed that the marital dissatisfaction of people who have a shift work was significantly lower than the other cases.

Enayati and Abd Alrahimi (7) conducted a research on “comparing the mental health and marital dissatisfaction of women with wanted pregnancy and unwanted pregnancy in Ahvaz”. The findings of this research showed that there was a significant difference ($P < 0.005$) between the marital satisfaction on one hand and wanted and unwanted pregnancy on the other hand.

Mikaeili (8) performed a research on “tolerance, marital satisfaction and mental health in parents who have children with learning disabilities and those who have normal children”. The results showed that there was a significant different between the two groups in terms of their marital satisfaction, psychological tolerance and general health. Banaeian et al. (9) studied 400 married women in Boroujen City of Iran who had referred to a health center. They concluded that healthier women had a better situation in terms of their marital satisfaction.

A subject that has not been sufficiently studied is the effective factors on marital satisfaction of the military forces. Due to the nature of their professional missions, the military forces face several occupational and psychological problems compared to employees of other organizations. The Work strains and the stress of their work, complicated missions, tough rules and regulations, possibility of being injured, handicapped, captivated or even killed are some of the problems that make the job of military forces different from other jobs (10).

2. Objectives

In this research, we attempted to study the marital satisfaction of military families with regard to their specific roles in guarding the borders of the country. The main objective of this research was to study marital satisfaction and its components among four levels of the Iranian naval forces.

3. Patients and Methods

3.1. Statistical Population, Sample and Sampling Method

This research was conducted based on a post-event descriptive method. The statistical population of the research included the families of all naval officers of Iranian navy forces resided in one of the military towns of Bandar Abbas during 2011 - 2012. The statistical sample of the research included 200 naval families who were selected using stratified sampling method as follows:

First, we classified the naval families of the town in four groups. Then, all the families in each group were identified and 50 families were selected from each of these groups to be participated in the research.

3.2. Enrich Marital Satisfaction Scale

We used ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire for studying the level of marital satisfaction. This questionnaire is a valid research tool that has been used in many researches for investigating marital satisfaction. This inventory was first produced in a study. That study which used this questionnaire for marital satisfaction assessment believed that this scale can be used in the middle of people's lives. Soleimanian (11) calculated the validity of the ENRICH questionnaire against its original form as equal to 0.95. On the other hand, another study obtained the validity of ENRICH questionnaire against the Couple Compatibility Scale as equal to 0.92. A study reported the reliability of the ENRICH scale using Cronbach's alpha as equal to 0.92, while Soleimanian obtained its reliability as equal to 0.93 with the same method (11). In this research, we used Cronbach's alpha and split-half method for calculating the reliability coefficient of the questionnaire, which was equal to 0.81 and 0.75, respectively. ENRICH questionnaire contains 11 subscales including “idealistic distortion”, “marital satisfaction”, “personality issues”, “communication”, “conflict resolution”, “financial management”, “leisure activities”, “sexual relationship”, “children and parenting”, “family and friends”, and “religious orientation”. In a report, the Cronbach's alpha values of the ENRICH Questionnaire for the subscales of conflict resolution, marital satisfaction, personality issues, communication, conflict resolution, financial management, leisure activities, sexual relationship, children and parenting, family and friends, and equalitarian roles were 0.9, 0.81, 0.73, 0.68, 0.75, 0.74, 0.76, 0.48, 0.77, 0.72, and 0.77, respectively.

3.3. Hypothesis of the Research

Hypothesis of the research was formulated as follows: “There is a difference in marital satisfaction and its components among different families of the naval officers”.

4. Results

Table 1 shows the results of the one-way variance analysis test for determining the significance of the mean differ-

ences. As shown in the table, the mean differences of the total marital satisfaction and the subscales of idealistic distortion, marital satisfaction, personality issues, communication, conflict resolution, financial management, sexual relationship, and children and parenting were statistically

significant at the level of 0.001 (with F values equal to 7.26, 14.53, 4.5, 22.23, 5.18, and 3.70, respectively).

On the other hand, we used Scheffe's test to determine that in which levels of the families of naval officers the mentioned difference were significant (Table 2).

Table 1. Results of the One-Way Variance Analysis Test

Subscales	Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Square	F Value	P Value
Total marital satisfaction					.001
Intra-group	11932.24	3	3977.41	7.26	
Inter-group	196	547.27			
Total	199				
Idealistic distortion					.003
Intra-group	111.57	3	37.19	5.53	
Inter-group	1317.02	196	6.71		
Total	1428.59	199			
Marital satisfaction					.01
Intra-group	4.97	3	4.65	4.14	
Inter-group	1601.22	196	11.22		
Total	2205.19	199			
Personality issues					.001
Intra-group	708.52	3	236.17	22.23	
Inter-group	2081.80	196	10.62		
Total	2790.32	199			
Communication					.001
Intra-group	811.13	3	270.37	18.88	
Inter-group	2805.66	196	14.31		
Total	3616.79	199			
Conflict resolution					.002
Intra-group	172.12	3	57.37	4.97	
Inter-group	2200.59	196	11.52		
Total	1431.12	199			
Financial management					.001
Intra-group	570.40	3	190.13	23.51	
Inter-group	1548.88	196	8.08		
Total	2155.28	199			
Sexual relationship					.002
Intra-group	139.01	3	46.33	5.18	
Inter-group	196	8.93			
Total	1889.36	199			
Children and parenting					.01
Intra-group	79.05	3	26.35	3.70	
Inter-group	1393.90	196	7.11		
Total	1472.95	199			
Family and friends					.81
Intra-group	7.56	3	2.52	0.32	
Inter-group	1545.16	196	7.88		
Total	1552.72	199			
Religious orientation					.67
Intra-group	11.88	3	3.96	0.51	
Inter-group	1577.16	196	8.04		
Total	1515.92	199			
Leisure activities					.49
Intra-group	19.32	3	6.44	0.80	
Inter-group	1577.16	196	8.08		
Total	1599.42	199			

Table 2. Results of Analysis of Variance Test for Comparing the Mean of Marital Satisfaction Between the Groups

Subscales	N	Subset for Alpha: 0.05		
		1	2	3
Idealistic distortion	50			
Submarine forces		10.34		
Surface forces		11.06	11.06	
Marine forces		11.02		
Naval pilots			12.40	
P Value		0.50	0.50	
Marital satisfaction	50			
Submarine forces		14.18		
Surface forces		14.20		
Marine forces		14.46		
Naval pilots		14.54		
P Value		0.95		
Personality issues	50			
Submarine forces		11.68		
Surface forces		12.54		
Marine forces			14.30	
Naval pilots				16.60
P Value		0.55	1.00	1.00
Communication	50			
Submarine forces		11.10		
Surface forces		13.06	13.06	
Marine forces			14.96	
Naval pilots				16.46
P Value		0.05	0.06	0.19
Conflict resolution				
Submarine forces		13.90		
Surface forces		14.02		
Marine forces		14.36		
Naval pilots			16.20	
P Value		0.90	1.00	
Children and parenting	50			
Submarine forces		13.34		
Surface forces		13.88		
Marine forces		13.94		

Naval pilots			15.98	
P Value		0.78		1.00
Financial management	50			
Submarine forces			12.50	
Surface forces			12.58	
Marine forces				14.54
Naval pilots				16.62
P Value		0.99		1.00
Sexual relationship	50			
Submarine forces			13.68	
Surface forces			13.70	
Marine forces			14.70	14.70
Naval pilots				15.70
P Value		0.32		0.34
Family and friends	50			
Submarine forces			15.82	
Surface forces			16.02	
Marine forces			16.12	
Naval pilots			16.36	
P Value		0.77		
Religious orientation	50			
Submarine forces			16.32	
Surface forces			16.58	
Marine forces			16.94	
Naval pilots			17.12	
P Value		0.49		
Leisure activities	50			
Submarine forces			15.58	
Surface forces			16.04	
Marine forces			16.06	
Naval pilots			16.24	
P Value		0.63		
Total marital satisfaction	50			
Submarine forces			167.80	
Surface forces			171.92	
Marine forces			175.92	
Naval pilots				188.44
P Value		0.30		1.00

Table 2 shows the results of the variance analysis for comparing the mean of marital satisfaction and its components among the groups of naval families. As shown in the table, in terms of idealistic distortion, there was a significant difference between the groups of submarine forces and marine forces and the group of naval pilots; but there was no significant difference between the groups of surface forces and marine forces. Since the mean of idealistic distortion in the naval pilot group was higher than the submarine forces group, these two groups of naval families had a higher levels of idealistic distortion. In terms of the marital satisfaction subscale, no significant difference was observed among the four groups of naval families because the results of the performed tests were not statistically significant. In terms of personality issues, there was a significant difference between the groups of submarine forces and surface forces and the groups of marine forces and naval pilots. Therefore, with regard to the higher level of this subscale in the group of naval pilot, the families of this group had higher differences compared to the other three groups. In terms of the communication subscale, considering the mean of the naval pilot group, there was a significant difference between the group of surface forces and the groups of marine forces and naval pilots; moreover, the observed difference between the marine forces group and the naval pilot group was significant as well, while again, the mean of the naval pilot group was higher than the other group. Besides, the findings of the conflict resolution subscale showed a difference between the groups of submarine forces, surface forces and marine forces and the group of naval pilots, in which the styles of conflict resolution was significantly different from the other three groups. In terms of the children and parenting subscale, a significant relationship was observed in the groups of submarine forces, surface forces and marine forces with the naval pilot group; thus, the ways of parenting in the naval pilot group was significantly different from the other groups. In terms of the financial management subscale, there was a significant difference between the groups of surface forces and submarine forces and the groups of marine forces and naval pilots. In terms of the sexual relationship subscale, a significant difference was observed in the groups of surface forces and submarine forces with the naval pilot group. However, in the subscale of family and friends, religious orientation, and leisure activities, no significant difference was observed among the four groups of naval families. Finally, in terms of the variable of marital satisfaction, the group of naval pilots had a higher mean than the other groups and thus, the families of this group experienced a higher level of marital satisfaction compared to the other three groups of the naval families.

5. Discussion

The main objective of this research was to compare the marital satisfaction and its subscales among four groups of families of naval forces (i.e. surface forces, submarine

forces, marine forces, and naval pilots) resided in the military town of Bandar Abbas. The results of the research showed significant differences among these four family groups. Since we concluded that marital satisfaction was significantly different among the compared groups; the obtained results are consistent with the findings of Zelkowitz and Milet (3), Azar et al. (4), Lundblad and Hansson (5), Dube et al. (6), Enayati and Abd Alrahimi (7), Mikaeili (8), and Banaeian et al. (9).

To explain the findings, we have to note that mean of the variable of marital satisfaction and its subscales in three groups of naval families (i.e. surface forces, submarine forces and marine forces) was different from the families of the naval pilot officers. The reason of this difference can be found in the nature of the missions, occupational stresses, distance from the family, the level of the officers' participation in military operations and maneuvers, the attitude of the family members toward the absence of the husband in home, and their homesickness. Consequently, since the group of naval pilot families had the highest level of different both in the general variable of marital satisfaction and its subscales, it is necessary to study this subject in future researches.

Footnotes

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