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The Prediction of Divorce Adjustment through Emotional Adjustment with Emphasis on Gender Considerations

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: In the growing number of divorces in Iran, the present study aimed to investigate the prediction of divorce adjustment through an emotional adjustment emphasizing gender considerations.

Methods: The present study was a correlation study, and data were collected through questionnaires, field study, and library. The statistical population was all divorced women and men in Tehran city in 2017, and the sampling method was purposeful. The sample included 112 divorced women and 134 divorced men with an age range of 20-40 years. For data collection, the Fisher Divorce Adjustment Scale (FDAS) (1) and Emotional Adjustment Measure (EMA) (2) were used. Pearson correlation coefficient, multivariate regression, and multivariate analysis of variance method were used for data analysis.

Results: The results showed that there is a positive and significant correlation between emotional adjustment and divorce adjustment ($p<0.01$, $r=.29$), and men have higher scores than women in these factors; also, emotional adjustment was a significant predictor of divorce adjustment ($\beta=0.720$, $p<0.01$).

Conclusion: The results of this study reveal a series of post-divorce crises requiring management and restoration by divorced subjects. Although the challenges of life after divorce affect both sexes, women are faced with more harm in post-divorce time due to gender barriers. Therefore, programs to help increase emotional compatibility after divorce is recommended. Also, clarification of the divorce phenomenon is better to be considered from different aspects.

Keywords: Divorce, adjustment, Emotional, Gender.

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Introduction

Marriage is the most important relationship that a person has in his life (1). The divorce rate is growing, and it is estimated that forty to fifty percent of the first days of the marriages will result in separation, while the divorce rate is much higher in those who marry for the second time or more (2). In the past, when divorce was highly stigmatized, the consequences of marital disruption were almost certainly more severe than they are today so that this reason can be one of the reasons for divorce increasing (3). Divorce, the legal completion of the couple's relationship marriage, is known as one of the most disastrous incidents in individual life (2). Some experts and researchers such as Wang and Amato (2000) suggest that it is the greatest stress that a person can live with because the bad effects of divorce will persist for a long time (4).

In a general view, compatibility after divorce is an individual's success in transitioning from shared life experiences to individual life. Despite individual differences, compatibility after the divorce is usually a difficult process associated with depression, anger, anxiety, and stress in an individual (5). The severe pain and suffering that usually enters after separation can significantly affect his or her functions. The post-divorce period can impose immediate and long-term consequences on the individual (6). Of these, one can change the social networks of the divorced person, creating a disorder in his daily life, physical and psychological consequences, the mental disorder is caused by divorce (7). Several studies have also shown that the dissolution of the marital relationship can be the support network, attachment styles, and economic status that affects individuals (8).

Due to the rising rates of divorces in our societies, many people involved in a divorce find themselves in a position where compliance is very hard. Therefore, adaptation to a new position after divorce is necessary. Goode (1965) considers post-divorce compatibility as a combination of post-divorce experiences. He does not regard the individual as the identity of his previous relationship but as his current position with which to deal with it every day. Wiseman (1975) believes that when one completes the divorce process, as a divorced person, he will not experience the negative consequences. It means who has achieved complete consistency will be ready for a healthy and intimate relationship (9). Women experience more severe and short-term psychological distress compared to men before the divorce.

Meanwhile, men tend to experience longer-term psychological disturbances after divorce (10). Researches have also shown that the negative consequences of divorce and the difficulty of adapting to post-divorce conditions are greater for women than men in Iran (11, 12). This vulnerability is due to the social consequences of divorce for women (13). Social insecurity has also been more common in women, and depression has been more common in men. Some studies also show that both women and men report many difficulties after divorce concerning parenting roles and management of their children. However, these difficulties can vary according to the custody of children (14). Since women generally take custody of their children (15), they tend to be more inclined to report the difficulties caused by duplicate roles and the burden of economic problems (16). Gender analysis of life after divorce, on the other hand, showed that men report more difficulty in reducing their relationship with children and their lack of paternal authority (17).

Some other scholars and experts are convinced that adjustment after divorce is a dynamic process rather than the result that one has to achieve. Some emotional responses include feelings of guilt, insecurity, fear, anger, hatred, rejection, a sense of emptiness, self-pity, and a loss of self-confidence (18). Emotional adjustment (EA), neuroticism, emotional equilibrium, or emotional stability is one of the structures that systematically play a role in the personality structure of individuals. In the majority of personality theories, this factor is considered an essential conceptual dimension. In the five-factor

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model of personality, emotional stability is one of the factors (19). Conceptually, emotional adjustment has some characteristics such as experience negative emotions, having irrational thoughts and beliefs, and disability in controlling impulses in exposure to tense situations, touchy, irritable, pessimistic (20). Emotional adjustment plays an important role in marital satisfaction (21) and divorce (22).

At the time of this research study, few published articles specifically investigated the relationship between emotional adjustment and divorce adjustment. So this study attempts have been made to predict the emotional, adaptive states in the post-divorce adjustment of divorced women and men and comparing these factors in them.

Methods

This study was correlational study. In this research, data were collected and analyzed through a questionnaire, field study, and library. The study's statistical population was all women and men of absolute divorce in Tehran city in 2017. To select the sample, individuals who had officially registered their divorces in the past year of research time were selected through purposeful sampling with informed consent. The total population of divorced people in 2017, according to the data of the Statistics Center of Iran in the whole country, was 181049 people, of which about 40 thousand people were related to Tehran province. According to Morgan's table (23), 380 questionnaires were distributed to calculate the sample size, but the number of analyzable questionnaires was 246. 112 divorced women and 134 divorced men, available with the desired conditions, were studied among these people. For data collection, the Fisher Divorce Adjustment Scale (FDAS) (24) and Emotional Adjustment Measure (EMA) (19) were used.

Fisher Divorce Adjustment Scale (FDAS): Fisher created this scale in 1976, and this scale was revised several times at different times. This tool consists of 100 statements that are graded as 5-point Likert (24). This scale is designed to assess the level of compatibility after the end of a romantic relationship, and high scores reflecting the compatibility with poor divorce, and low scores reflecting the high level of compatibility. Clinical psychologists use this scale widely to conduct divorce and guidance matriculation and support groups, and most researchers investigating the issue of divorce and family reconciliation (25). This scale has six sub-scales that are: 1) feeling of self-worth 2) disentanglement 3) anger 4) grief 5) social trust, and 6) social self-worth. The total compatibility score is between 100 and 500, with a score of 350 and less indicating "poor compatibility," a score of 351 to 440 indicating "moderate compatibility," and 441 to 500 is considered good compatibility. In many studies conducted abroad, the validity and reliability of this questionnaire have been calculated. The results show that it has high reliability and proper validity (25). Fischer has reported the reliability of this scale at 98%, and its convergent validity has been examined through correlation with the Tennesse Self-Concept and Personality Orientation Inventory. Asenjerani and colleagues' study (2017) validated the Persian version of this questionnaire using the alpha Cronbach's method 0.93, which indicates its high and acceptable validity (26).

Emotional Adjustment Measure (EMA): Rubio and colleagues created this scale in 2007. The purpose of the test was to measure the stability or emotional balance of individuals. It has two main subscales: 1. Lack of discipline of emotional and physiological stimulation 2. Despair and not hopeful thinking. This scale includes 28 items. Contributors agree to each article on a well-developed range graded as 6-point Likert, and 21, 25, 28 are reverse items. Scores range from 48 to 153. High scores reflect the higher emotional adjustment, and low scores reflecting the lower level of adjustment. In the study of Robio and colleagues (2007), the internal consistency coefficient of the emotional adjustment scale was 0.81(19). In Shokri and colleagues' study (2017), the internal consistency coefficient of the emotional adjustment scale was 0.91(27).

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The individuals between the ages of 20 and 40 who completed the questionnaires and divorced for less than five years were surveyed. These individuals were collected through divorce centers in Tehran.

Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to check the normality of study data, Pearson correlation coefficient, multivariate regression, and multivariate analysis of variance method were used for data analysis. The SPSS Version 16 software was then used to analyze the data.

Results

The average age of all subjects was 32.95 (SD=5.33), it was 33.89 (SD=5.35) for the males, and 31.76 (SD=5.09) for the females. The average years of marriage in all subjects were 2.72 (SD=1.09), it was 2.81 (SD=1.00) for the males, and 2.7 (SD=1.11) for the females. The maximum and minimum scores, the mean, and the standard deviation of the research variables are presented in Table 1.

As observed in Table 2, Divorce Adjustment is significantly and positively correlated with Emotional Adjustment ($p<0.01$, $r=.29$).

As can be observed in Table 3, Emotional Adjustment ($\beta=0.720$, $p<0.01$), was a significant predictor of Divorce Adjustment.

Table 1. The Descriptive Data for Divorce Adjustment, Emotional Adjustment

Variables	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation
Divorce Adjustment	135.00	425.00	290.18	6.23
feeling of self-worth	23	112	62.66	19.87
disentanglement	23.00	99.00	61.4840	19.27
anger	19.00	62.00	34.1200	9.32
grief	23.00	112.00	61.4440	18.44
social trust	12.00	74.00	42.5600	16.87
social self-worth	17.00	39.00	27.9160	6.33
Emotional Adjustment	42.00	137.00	83.7520	25.61
Lack of discipline of emotional and physiological stimulation	19.00	72.00	44.2640	17.35
Despair	20.00	66.00	39.4880	13.71

Table 2. The Bivariate Correlations of Divorce Adjustment, Emotional Adjustment

Variables	Emotional Adjustment		Lack of discipline of emotional and physiological stimulation		Correlation (r)	Despair	Correlation (r)	Sig.
	Correlation (r)	Sig.				Sig.		
Divorce Adjustment	0.296**	0.001	0.253**	0.001	0.233**	0.001		
feeling of self-worth	0.330**	0.001	0.277**	0.001	0.267**	0.001		
disentanglement	.265**	0.023	.244**	0.023	.186**	.003		
anger	-0.54*	0.04	-0.54*	0.04	-0.54*	0.04		
grief	.340**	.000	.289**	.000	.270**	.000		
social trust	.016	.796	.004	.945	.025	.691		
social self-worth	.119	.060	.061	.338	.146*	.021		

**P<0.01 *P<.05

Table 3. Predicting Divorce Adjustment through the Emotional Adjustment

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	229.891	12.924		17.788	.000
	Emotional Adjustment	.720	.148	.296	4.877	.000

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Table 4. Comparing male and female in Divorce Adjustment and Emotional Adjustment

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Self-worth	Between Groups	642.852	1	642.852	1.632	.203
	Within Groups	97687.564	248	393.901		
	Total	98330.416	249			
disentanglement	Between Groups	21.323	1	21.323	.057	.811
	Within Groups	92475.113	248	372.884		
	Total	92496.436	249			
anger	Between Groups	157.783	1	157.783	1.819	.179
	Within Groups	21510.617	248	86.736		
	Total	21668.400	249			
grief	Between Groups	869.990	1	869.990	2.573	.110
	Within Groups	83863.726	248	338.160		
	Total	84733.716	249			
Social trust	Between Groups	431.350	1	431.350	1.519	.219
	Within Groups	70444.250	248	284.049		
	Total	70875.600	249			
Social self-worth	Between Groups	7.613	1	7.613	.189	.664
	Within Groups	9995.623	248	40.305		
	Total	10003.236	249			
The total score of FDMS	Between Groups	2352.327	1	2352.327	.605	.438
	Within Groups	964806.573	248	3890.349		
	Total	967158.900	249			
Lack of discipline of emotional and physiological stimulation and physiological stimulation	Between Groups	1245.990	1	1245.990	4.191	.042
	Within Groups	73728.586	248	297.293		
	Total	74974.576	249			
despair	Between Groups	172.462	1	172.462	.916	.339
	Within Groups	46668.002	248	188.177		
	Total	46840.464	249			
The total score of EMA	Between Groups	2345.566	1	2345.566	3.613	.048
	Within Groups	161011.058	248	649.238		
	Total	163356.624	249			

Table 4: shows that the total score of EMA ($p<0.05$) and lack of discipline of emotional and physiological stimulation ($p<0.05$) are different in men and women, but men and women are the same in FDMS and its subscales. Regarding the descriptive table, it is found that the mean total score of EMA in men (M=86.48) is more than in women (M=80.32). Also, the mean of lack of discipline of emotional and physiological stimulation in men (M=46.25) is more than in women (M=41.76).

Discussion

This study aimed to investigate the prediction of divorce adjustment through an emotional adjustment emphasizing gender considerations. As observed, Divorce Adjustment was significantly and positively correlated with Emotional Adjustment ($p<0.01$, $r=.29$).

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Low emotional compatibility can be one of the causes of divorce, and on the other hand, after divorce, it can cause more problems for the individual. The high score in EMA shows a lack of discipline of emotional and physiological stimulation, despair, and not hopeful thinking. Divorce is not accepted by the family and society, so a divorced person will not be accepted. In other words, divorce is the meaning of loneliness, sitting in isolation, and the abandonment of behaviors that cause a divorced person not to establish relationships with people. Lack of good feelings and hopeful thinking can increase this loneliness. Therefore, the divorced person leads to disapproval and loss of support. Friendship and popularity are important factors for emotional adjustment (28). According to Weiss (1974), when individuals are not integrated into a peer group structure, they experience feelings of social isolation, whereas when they lack an emotional closeness or exchange with chosen peers or friends, they experience feelings of "emotional loneliness" (28).

Eventually, this study showed that the total score of EMA and lack of discipline of emotional and physiological stimulation ($p<0.05$) were higher in men than women, but men and women were the same in FDMS and its subscales. This finding is similar to Ghotbi's (2004) study that showed men experience emotional problems more than women after divorce (29). Men use less psychological help after a divorce and are more worried about the quality of their lives and the formation of their new families after a divorce. Men are more likely to feel social unawareness than women. This can be attributed to the fact that the men's society is considered a manager in family affairs, where the collapse of the family can be a sign of inadequacy and lack of proper management. In addition, the dominant discourse in society considers the divorced person to be a threat to the marriage of others and, in this regard, leads to more social isolation and social pressure. Research findings also show that most divorced women reported experiencing the loss of their married friends or deliberately reducing their relationship during the post-divorce period. This issue has also been reported among some men. This view considers divorced subjects as a threat to the relationships of others, leads to the double rejection of the activists and the reduction of their social capital.

A toolkit for women is that most of them are looking for a way to hide their divorce from others. The findings of some other studies also confirm that female sexual abuse is more prevalent than single and married women in workplaces. Such a look at divorced women leads to a restriction on employment and a sense of insecurity. There is also a rotating causality in the system of gender inequality in societies, in such a way that objective social structures form individual beliefs, and individuals based on these beliefs act so that gender-based social order is strengthened (6).

Research findings also show that in addition to negative feedback from the community that affects both sexes, Iran's "gender culture" leads to additional dilemmas exclusively for women. The masculine domination, which is rooted in society, imposes excessive symbolic violence on women, and it can further reveal the hidden layers of the public that are left behind in this area. The results of this study reveal a series of post-divorce crises requiring management and restoration by divorced subjects. Even though the challenges of life after divorce affect both sexes, women are faced with more harm in post-divorce due to gender barriers. These results are inconsistent with many studies in other countries.

Women's vulnerability, especially in the economic and social dimensions, will lead to very negative consequences not only for them but also for the family, children, and society as a whole. This is a danger that policymakers must pay attention to and seek to empower women in these dimensions. Hence, efforts should be made to facilitate the individuals' rehabilitation of life after divorce and their return to the natural cycle of individual and social life to facilitate their readiness for re-marriage. By marrying again, many of the challenges and needs of couples, in particular in emotional, sexual, psychological, child management, economic management, and

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social-communication challenges, can be reduced. Achieving this goal requires micro and macro interventions at various individual and social levels. Finally, it should not be forgotten that attempts to facilitate the management of divorced people's lives will reduce the vulnerability of divorced children, which, according to most researchers, are the largest victims of the incident. . Due to the fact that this study was a correlational study, it was not possible to study the cause and effect and it is better to study it in more details in future studies and experimental designs. On the other hand, this research has been done only on people living in Tehran and it is not possible to extend it to other cities.

Conclusion

Despite the fact that the challenges of life after divorce affect both sexes, women are faced with more harm in post-divorce time due to gender barriers. Therefore, programs to help increase emotional compatibility after divorce is recommended. Also, clarification of the divorce phenomenon is better to be considered from different aspects.

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Author's contribution

All authors contributed to this project and article equally.All authors read and approved the fainal manuscript.

Conflict of interest

There is no conflict of interest for the author.

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