

# The Impact of Sexual Esteem, Sexual Consciousness and Sexual Satisfaction on Marital Satisfaction

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## Abstract

The present study aimed to determine the relationship between sexual esteem, sexual consciousness and sexual satisfaction with marital satisfaction. 200 of the married university students were selected and were asked to fill out the Multidimensional Sexuality Questionnaire (MSQ), Larson's Sexual Satisfaction Questionnaire and ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale. The coefficients of correlation between sexual esteem and sexual consciousness obtained for marital satisfaction were 0.37 and 0.32, respectively. In addition, a strong correlation was found between sexual satisfaction and marital satisfaction (0.87). The results of multivariate regression have shown that sexual esteem, sexual consciousness and sexual satisfaction variables have been able to explain about 73.7% of variances of marital satisfaction. Sexual factors, including sexual consciousness, sexual esteem and sexual satisfaction, have significant relationships with marital satisfaction and explain almost 50% of the variances of the marital satisfaction variable. Evaluating sexual issues in couple therapy seems to be essential and these variables must be seriously considered in therapeutic interventions.

**Key words:** Sexual Esteem, Sexual Consciousness, Sexual Satisfaction and Marital Satisfaction.

## Introduction

Many scholars are trying to understand the factors that lead to marital satisfaction. Among these factors, the role that sexual satisfaction plays in marital satisfaction seems to be rather significant (Ashdown, Hackathorn and Clark, 2011). Marital satisfaction is an important dimension of general health and marital dissatisfaction, on the other hand, is related to physical and mental health disorders and it is a significant risk factor in association with divorce (Bloch, Haase and Levenson, 2014).

## Literature review

Marital satisfaction is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon (Rebello, Junior and Brito, 2014). There are numerous factors that have an impact on marital satisfaction such as level of education, how one has selected their spouse, the role that is played by spouses in selecting their significant other, economic and cultural closeness of spouses and also sexual satisfaction of the spouses (Winch, 1974; cited by Motamedin, 2004). Sexual satisfaction is defined as one's tendency to be satisfied with the sexual dimension of her/his life to a large extent (Snell, Fisher and Walters, 1993). Sexual satisfaction is a complex concept. However, this exact belief, i.e. being sexually satisfied, is relatively obvious and comprehensible (McClelland, 2010). Sexual satisfaction is the last stage of the response cycle and it is an improved mode of mental and physical health. Welfare and quality of life have a strong relationship with sexual satisfaction (Sanchez-Fuentes, Santos-Iglesias and Sierra, 2014). Sexual satisfaction is related to many social and demographic variables such as age (middle aged people report a higher level of sexual satisfaction), high level of education, having a stable marriage (being married or roommates) and a high socioeconomic level (Barrientos and Paez, 2006). Given the studies conducted by Laman et al., about 50% of adults have reported dissatisfaction with the sexual dimensions of their lives; whereas, 31% of men and 43% of women have reported that they have experienced some kind of sexual issue over the past year (Brassard, Dupuy, Bergeron, & Shaver, 2013). In an eighteen-month longitudinal study, the relationship between marital satisfaction and sexual satisfaction was reviewed and it was concluded that individuals with high levels of sexual satisfaction have reported high levels of marital satisfaction as well (Byers, 2005).

There is a strong correlation between one's sexual self-esteem and sexual satisfaction. Sexual self-esteem also has a relationship with sexual satisfaction and a negative relationship with sexual issues such as sexual pain (Menard and Offman, 2009). Sexual self-esteem is defined as positive attention and the ability to be sure of experiencing sexual issues in a delightful and satisfying way (Snell, Fisher and Walters, 1993). Sexual self-esteem is one of the components of overall self-esteem of an individual; however, sexual self-esteem is reflective of feelings, thoughts and experiences that a person has about their own sexuality (Zeanah and Schwarz, 1996).

Sickness, sterility, sexual abuse in childhood, sexual assault as an adult and living with physical disabilities are factors that might have negative impacts on one's sexual self-esteem (Menard and Offman, 2009). Zeanah and Schwarz are among scholars who have developed and broadened Harter's self-esteem model and extended it to self-esteem from the aspect of importance of preliminary learning, family integration, peers and society and have stated that any individual considers it as a critical factor and a criterion for evaluating their own thoughts, feelings and sexual behaviors when it comes to the evolution of their norms. They believe that a person's emotional reaction to their mental assessments is the basis of sexual self-esteem and the five components it is composed of. Skills, experience, control, attractiveness, moral judgment and adaptiveness are considered as the main five domains of sexual self-esteem (Zeanah and Schwarz, 1996). Shapiro and Schwarz (1997) have concluded that the level of sexual self-esteem of women who have been victims of rape in the moral judgment, control and adaptiveness dimensions is lower than those who haven't gone through such difficulty. Moreover, the level of sexual self-esteem of women who have experienced sexual abuse in their childhood is lower in the control and moral judgment dimensions (van Bruggen, Runtz and Kadlec, 2006). Low sexual self-esteem might be related to performance disorders, sexual behaviors such as having multiple sexual partners and extreme sexual behaviors (James, 2011). Sexual self-esteem contributes to interpersonal performance and to the development of a healthy sexual life. Sexual self-esteem has a relationship with sexual satisfaction and sexual problems including sexual pain (Brassard, Dupuy, and Bergeron, and Shaver 2013).

Self-consciousness usually overlaps with focus. It has been observed that increased self-consciousness can disturb intelligence and academic activities (Gapinski, Brownell and LaFrance, 2003). One of the pathological processes in inefficient individuals is the attentional process. Self-focus is associated with concerns about performance. Self-focus can also be concentrated on physical sensations, thoughts, feelings (private self-focus) or the information about environmental self (public self-focus). The public self-focus adjective refers to self-consciousness. Just like self-focus, and as previously mentioned, self-consciousness has two dimensions: private and public. In Meston's study, a higher level of private self-consciousness leads to having a better performance in regards to sexual desire, orgasm and compatibility with one's partner and sexual satisfaction (Jacques, Van Lankveld, Wendy and Geijen, 2008). In contrast, individuals with higher levels of public self-consciousness have reported higher levels of sexual discomfort (Celik, 2013). Sexual consciousness is defined as one's tendency to think about the nature of sexual issues (Snell, Fisher and Walters, 1993). Self-consciousness might stress out an individual throughout a sexual experience and therefore, it prevents him/her from feeling peaceful and enjoying the experience. Therefore, sexual self-consciousness might reduce consciousness about an individual's physiological excitement (Masters and Johnson, 1970). Sexual self-consciousness is the

catalyzer in association with the negative relationships between body shame, excitement and reduction of sexual desire. For instance, sexual self-consciousness might increase anxiety associated with physical appearance and reduce one's self-focus throughout the experience (Gapinski, Brownell and Lafrance, 2003). Ingram showed that there is a positive relationship between high levels of self-consciousness and various mental disorders. In a survey done by Feningstin et al., it was specified that women have higher levels of overall self-consciousness. Van Lankveld et al. found that women's sexual self-consciousness is higher than men's. Gediraz stated that a higher level of body objectification and body shame is related to high physical self-consciousness and low sexual self-esteem (Celik, 2013).

## Research method

The present study is a descriptive-correlational research. In this type of research, the researcher wants to know whether or not there is a relation or a correlation between two variables or two information groups (Nadi et al. 2010). The tool that has been used in this research for examining the relationship between sexual consciousness and self-esteem and sexual satisfaction is a questionnaire.

### Statistical population and sample

The statistical population of the present study has been composed of all of the married students of Islamic Azad University of Roodehen who were a student in 2014-2015.

### Sample size and sampling method

For descriptive research, it is essential to select a sample of at least 100 research subjects. In correlational research, it is necessary to select at least 50 individuals in order to explain the relationships (Delavar, 2011).

200 of the married students of Islamic Azad University of Roodehen were selected as the research sample using cluster sampling method. Islamic Azad University of Roodehen has ten faculties: faculty of educational sciences and consultation, psychology, social sciences, agriculture, Persian literature and foreign languages, art and architecture, basic sciences, engineering, economy and accounting and Islamic teachings. 6 of these 10 faculties were selected using the cluster sampling method: faculty of educational sciences and consultation, psychology, social sciences, Persian literature and foreign languages, engineering, economy and accounting. 34 students from the faculty of educational sciences and consultation and 34 students from the faculty of psychology were tested in this study. From each of the following faculties, 33 students were tested: faculties of social sciences, Persian literature and foreign languages, engineering, and economy and accounting.

## Data collecting tools and reliability and validity of questionnaires

### *Multidimensional Sexuality Questionnaire*

The Multidimensional Sexuality Questionnaire (MSQ) (Snell, Fisher and Walters, 1993) is an objective tool for self-evaluation which has been designed for measuring human being's sexual issues with 12 subscales.

The 12 dimensions of this questionnaire are: 1- sexual esteem: positive attention and the ability to be sure of experiencing sexual issues in a delightful and satisfying way; 2- sexual preoccupation: tendency to over think about sexual relationships; 3- internal sexual control: believing that the sexual aspects of one's life are controlled by them; 4- self-consciousness: one's tendency to think about the nature of sexual issues; 5- sexual motivation: tendency to become involved in a sexual relationship; 6- sexual anxiety: feeling tension, discomfort and being anxious about sexual dimensions of life; 7- sexual assertiveness: one's tendency to be assertive when it comes to sexual dimensions of life; 8- sexual depression: this happens when an individual experiences upset, sadness and depression about his/her sexual life; 9- external sexual control: in such situations, the individuals believe that their sexual issues are affected by external factors that are out of their control; 10- sexual monitoring: one's tendency to be aware of the effects of their sexual issue on others; 11- fear of sex: fearing having sexual intercourse with another person; 12- sexual satisfaction: one's tendency to be satisfied with the sexual dimensions of their life to a large extent (Rahafar, 2010).

### *Larson's sexual satisfaction questionnaire*

Sexual desire and instincts and the issues associated with it are with us from the moment we are born until the moment we die. Many of human activities are substantially affected by their sexual tendencies and their desire to be sexually satisfied, whether the activities are establishing relationships with others or the goals of the efforts that are made in order to have an income. Thus, sexual issues, sexual satisfaction, sexual problems and the importance of these factors in people's life and in association with moral, cultural, social and medical health of the society is quite significant and undeniable. Sexual problems and conflicts have always been and will continue to be one of the leading causes of divorce and marital conflicts. Larson's sexual satisfaction questionnaire was proposed by Larson et al. in 1998. This questionnaire has 25 items and the five-option Likert scale has been used for answering these questions (1 to 5) (Mohammadi, 2013).

### *ENRICH marital satisfaction scale*

Forezo and Elson have used this scale in order to study marital satisfaction and believed that this scale is quite sensitive to the changes that are made in the family. Forezo and Elson used randomized sampling method in a national study on 5039 couples and showed that this scale can be used for distinguishing between satisfied and dissatisfied couples with accuracy of 85-95%. Each of the subjects of this questionnaire is associated with one of the important fields. Evaluating these fields in a marriage can

describe potential problems of couples and it can specify the fields they are strong in. This tool can also be used as a diagnostic tool for couples who are seeking couple therapy or marital consultation and who are trying to reinforce and strengthen their marriage.

#### *Validity and reliability of the multidimensional sexual satisfaction questionnaire (MSQ)*

Internal consistency of the subscales of the multidimensional sexual satisfaction questionnaire was obtained by calculating the Cronbach's alpha coefficients. 327 individuals were selected as the research sample (265 women and 117 men and 4 of these samples didn't specify their gender) who were selected out of the students in the earlier stages of their psychology programs in the small universities of one of the central states of America (Snell, Fisher and Walters, 1993). The alpha coefficients were calculated for each of these 12 subscales. Each coefficient was based on the five items. The alpha coefficients for all of the sample members in the 12 subscales (from subscale 1 to 12) were as follows: 0.87, 0.94, 0.80, 0.71, 0.91, 0.83, 0.77, 0.92, 0.86, 0.90, 0.82, 0.90. The reliability of the retest was calculated for each subscale (1 to 12) as follows: 0.85, 0.73, 0.63, 0.75, 0.83, 0.64, 0.65, 0.70, 0.68, 0.69, 0.67 and 0.76. In brief, the internal consistency and reliability of the retest of each of the 12 subscales of MSQ were more than desirable (Rahafar, 2010).

#### *Reliability and validity of Larson's sexual satisfaction questionnaire*

The reported reliability and validity of this questionnaire are 0.90 and 0.86, respectively. In other research, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were used to calculate the reliability of this questionnaire and according to the reports, the reliability of this tool for the fertile group was 0.93 and the reliability of this tool for the infertile group was 0.89 (Mohammadi, 2013).

#### *Reliability and validity of ENRICH marital satisfaction scale*

The ENRICH couple scale was used by David Elson and Amy Elson in 2000 on 25,501 married couples. The alpha coefficients of the questionnaire for the marital satisfaction subscales, i.e. communication, solving conflicts and ideal deviations, were 0.86, 0.80, 0.84 and 0.83, respectively. The validity of retesting this questionnaire for each subtest was 0.86, 0.81, 0.90 and 0.92, respectively. In Asoodeh's research with a sample composed of 365 couples, the alpha coefficients of the questionnaire was 0.68 (question 24 with an alpha coefficient of 0.78 was omitted in this study), 0.78, 0.62 and 0.77 (Asoodeh, 2010).

#### **Method of conduction**

In the data collection process, the researcher firstly asked the students about their marital status. If they were married, they were asked to sign a consent form and they were reassured that they would have enough time to respond to the questions. Then, the researcher explained the process of the research and how to respond to the questions of the questionnaire (with the necessary explanations), the questionnaires were individually handed out to the married students.

#### **Data analysis method**

The present study has aimed to determine the relationship between sexual esteem, sexual consciousness and sexual satisfaction and marital satisfaction of the selected students and the obtained results were analyzed. In this section, firstly the statistical indexes associated with data description, including descriptive indexes associated with the multidimensional sexual satisfaction scale, Larson's sexual satisfaction scale and ENRICH marital satisfaction scale have been presented. Then, in the data analysis section, the research hypotheses were studied by proper statistical tests. The statistical calculations were done using the statistical software SPSS 20. The statistical analysis is both a descriptive and an inferential analysis which will be presented below.

#### **Descriptive statistical analyses**

In this section, after collecting the necessary data, the descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, central indexes (mean) and dispersion (variance and standard deviation) have been used for describing the samples.

#### **Descriptive indexes of the research variables:**

According to the obtained results which have been presented in Table 1, the mean score of the sexual esteem variable was 14.03 in the group under study. Since the higher score for this variable is 20, it can be stated that the level of sexual esteem is higher than average in the individuals under study.

According to the obtained results which have been presented in Table 1, the mean score of the sexual consciousness variable was 8.8 in the group under study. Since the higher score for this variable is 20, it can be stated that the level of sexual consciousness is lower than average in the individuals under study.

According to the obtained results which have been presented in Table 1, the mean score of the sexual satisfaction variable was 73.29 in the group under study.

**Table 1: Descriptive indexes of the research variables**

Variable	Test index		
	Number	Mean	Standard deviation
Sexual esteem	200	14.0350	6.18588
Sexual consciousness	200	8.8800	3.97803
Sexual satisfaction	200	73.2900	12.26122

Since the higher score for this variable is 20, it can be stated that the level of sexual satisfaction is higher than average in the individuals under study.

**Table 2: Descriptive indexes of the marital satisfaction variable**

Variable	Test index		
	Number	Mean	Standard deviation
Marital satisfaction	200	31.5450	7.79305
Communications	200	27.5650	6.49.049
Solving conflicts	200	26.9050	5.34592
Ideal deviations	200	14.6200	3.00512
Total	200	101.3950	16.60232

According to the obtained results which have been presented in Table 2, the mean score of the marital satisfaction variable was 101.39 in the group under study. Since the higher score for this variable is 175, it can be stated that the level of marital satisfaction is higher than average in the individuals under study.

### Research hypothesis

Sexual esteem, sexual consciousness and sexual satisfaction are predictors of the marital satisfaction variable.

**Table 3: Results of the correlation matrix for the relationship between marital satisfaction and sexual esteem, sexual consciousness and sexual satisfaction**

Marital satisfaction		Sexual esteem	Sexual consciousness	Sexual satisfaction
1	Marital satisfaction	0.0623**	0.411**	0.807**
2	Communications	0.001	0.192**	0.614**
3	Solving conflicts	0.166*	0.337**	0.670**
4	Ideal deviations	-0.169	-0.557**	-0.539**
5	Total	0.375**	0.327**	0.875**

\*\* Significance level of 0.01

Given the data presented in Table 3, since the  $r$  value is 0.375 in the relationship between sexual esteem and marital satisfaction and it is 0.327 in the relationship between sexual consciousness and marital satisfaction and this relationship is negative, thus the relationship between sexual satisfaction and marital satisfaction ( $= 0.875$ ) is a positive and direct relationship that is significant at 0.05. Therefore,  $H_0$  (lack of a relationship between these two variables) is rejected and the research hypothesis (presence of a relationship between the two variables) is confirmed. In other words, as sexual esteem and sexual satisfaction increase, one's marital satisfaction also improves and as sexual consciousness lowers, marital satisfaction increases.

**Table 4: Results of the multivariate regression analysis of marital satisfaction from sexual esteem, sexual consciousness and sexual satisfaction**

Model	Index Source of variations	Total of squares	Degrees of freedom	Mean of squares	F	Sig
1	Regression	8880.009	3	2960.003	180.984	0.000a
	Residual	3205.586	196	16.355		
	Total	12085.595	199			

The results obtained from the regression analysis presented in Table 4 show that the regression of marital satisfaction variable from sexual esteem, sexual conscious and sexual satisfaction is statistically significant and these variables do explain a percentage of variances of marital satisfaction. In other words, this result shows that the regression coefficients are significant and there is enough evidence to confirm the research hypothesis. To put this differently, the sexual esteem, sexual conscious and sexual satisfaction variables have a statistically significant relationship with marital satisfaction.

**Table 5: Results of the multiple regression analysis of marital satisfaction behavior from sexual esteem, sexual consciousness and sexual satisfaction**

Criterion variable	Predictor	Unstandardized coefficients		Standard coefficients	t	Sig
		B	Unstandardized error coefficient			
Marital satisfaction	Fixed effect	-5.070	1.753		-2.893	0.004
	Sexual esteem	0.445	0.057	0.353	7.827	0.000
	Sexual consciousness	-0.205	0.089	-.104	-2.304	0.022
	Sexual satisfaction	0.439	0.028	0.691	15.758	0.000
<b>1</b>	R	0.857		R	0.737	

Given the value of R in Table 5, it can be concluded that the sexual esteem, sexual consciousness and sexual satisfaction variables in the proposed model explain about 73.7% of the variances of the marital satisfaction variable. The value of beta in the proposed model shows how much of the variances of the predictor variables have been explained by the criterion variable. According to the standard beta coefficients, the most important role in terms of explaining the marital satisfaction is played by the sexual satisfaction variable; meaning that each unit of change in the variance of sexual satisfaction causes a change equal to 0.691 of a unit in the variance of marital satisfaction. The sexual esteem and sexual consciousness variables also play significant roles in explaining the variance of the marital satisfaction variable (0.353 and -0.104, respectively).

**Table 6: Results of the multivariate regression analysis of communication from sexual esteem, sexual consciousness and sexual satisfaction**

Model	Index Source of variations	Total of squares	Degrees of freedom	Mean of squares	F	Sig
<b>1</b>	Regression	4056.544	3	1352.181	61.255	0.000a
	Residual	4326.611	196	22.075		
	Total	8383.155	199			

The results obtained from the regression analysis presented in Table 6 show that the regression of the communication variable from sexual esteem, sexual consciousness and sexual satisfaction is statistically significant and these variables do explain a percentage of variances of the communication variable. In other words, this result shows that the regression coefficients are significant and there is enough evidence to confirm the research hypothesis. To put this differently, the sexual esteem, sexual conscious and sexual satisfaction variables have a statistically significant relationship with communication.

**Table 7: Results of the multiple regression analysis of communication behavior from sexual esteem, sexual consciousness and sexual satisfaction**

Criterion variable	Predictor	Unstandardized coefficients		Standard coefficients	t	Sig
		B	Unstandardized error coefficient			
Marital satisfaction	Fixed effect	2.465	2.036		1.211	0.227
	Sexual esteem	-0.392	0.066	-0.374	-5.942	0.000
	Sexual consciousness	0.018	0.103	0.011	0.170	0.865
	Sexual satisfaction	0.415	0.032	0.785	12.829	0.000
<b>1</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>0.696</b>		<b>R</b>	<b>0.484</b>	

Given the value of R in Table 7, it can be concluded that the sexual esteem, sexual consciousness and sexual satisfaction variables in the proposed model explain about 48.4% of the variances of the communication variable. The value of beta in the proposed model shows how much of the variances of the predictor variables have been explained by the criterion variable. According to the standard beta coefficients, the most important role in terms of explaining the communication variable is played by the sexual satisfaction variable; meaning that each unit of change in the variance of sexual satisfaction causes a change equal to 0.785 of a unit in the variance of the communication score. The sexual esteem variable also plays a significant role in explaining -0.374 the variance of the communication variable.

**Table 8: Results of the multivariate regression analysis of conflict resolution behavior from sexual esteem, sexual consciousness and sexual satisfaction**

Model	Index Source of variations	Total of squares	Degrees of freedom	Mean of squares	F	Sig
<b>1</b>	Regression	2758.567	3	919.522	61.540	0.000a
	Residual	2928.628	196	14.942		
	Total	5678.195	199			

The results obtained from the regression analysis presented in Table 8 show that the regression of the conflict resolution variable from sexual esteem, sexual consciousness and sexual satisfaction is statistically significant and these variables do explain a percentage of variances of conflict resolution. In other words, this result shows that the regression coefficients are significant and there is enough evidence to confirm the research hypothesis. To put this differently, the sexual esteem, sexual consciousness and sexual satisfaction variables have a statistically significant relationship with conflict resolution.

**Table 9: Results of the multiple regression analysis of conflict resolution behavior from sexual esteem, sexual consciousness and sexual satisfaction**

Criterion variable	Predictor	Unstandardized coefficients		Standard coefficients	t	Sig
		B	Unstandardized error coefficient			
Marital satisfaction	Fixed effect	5.201	1.675		3.105	0.002
	Sexual esteem	-0.201	0.054	-0.233	-3.702	0.000
	Sexual consciousness	0.148	0.085	0.110	1.748	0.082
	Sexual satisfaction	0.317	0.027	0.726	11.885	0.000
<b>1</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>0.696</b>		<b>R</b>	<b>0.485</b>	

Given the value of R in Table 9, it can be concluded that the sexual esteem, sexual consciousness and sexual satisfaction variables in the proposed model explain about 48.5% of the variances of the conflict resolution variable. The value of beta in the proposed model shows how much of the variances of the predictor variables have been explained by the criterion variable. According to the standard beta coefficients, the most important role in terms of explaining the conflict resolution is played by the sexual satisfaction variable; meaning that each unit of change in the variance of sexual satisfaction causes a change equal to 0.786 of a unit in the variance of the score of the conflict resolution variable. The sexual esteem variable also plays a significant role in explaining -0.233 the variance of the conflict resolution variable.

**Table 10: Results of the multivariate regression analysis of the ideal deviation from sexual esteem, sexual consciousness and sexual satisfaction**

Model	Index	Total of squares	Degrees of freedom	Mean of squares	F	Sig
	Source of variations					
<b>1</b>	Regression	836.252	3	278.751	56.860	0.000a
	Residual	960.868	196	4.902		
	Total	1797.120	199			

The results obtained from the regression analysis presented in Table 10 show that the regression of the ideal deviation variable from sexual esteem, sexual consciousness and sexual satisfaction is statistically significant and these variables do explain a percentage of variances of the ideal deviation variable. In other words, this result shows that the regression coefficients are significant and there is enough evidence to confirm the research hypothesis. To put this differently, the sexual esteem, sexual consciousness and sexual satisfaction variables have a statistically significant relationship with ideal deviation.



**Table 1: Results of the multiple regression analysis of the behavior of the ideal deviation variable from sexual esteem, sexual consciousness and sexual satisfaction**

Criterion variable	Predictor	Unstandardized coefficients		Standard coefficients	t	Sig
		B	Unstandardized error coefficient			
Marital satisfaction	Fixed effect	23.826	0.960		24.829	0.000
	Sexual esteem	0.145	0.031	0.299	4.675	0.000
	Sexual consciousness	-0.379	0.049	-0.502	-7.803	0.000
	Sexual satisfaction	-0.107	0.015	-0.438	-7.042	0.000
1	R	0.682		R	0.465	

Given the value of R in Table 11, it can be concluded that the sexual esteem, sexual consciousness and sexual satisfaction variables in the proposed model explain about 46.5% of the variances of the ideal deviation variable. The value of beta in the proposed model shows how much of the variances of the predictor variables have been explained by the criterion variable. According to the standard beta coefficients, the most important role in terms of explaining the ideal deviation variable is played by the sexual satisfaction variable; meaning that each unit of change in the variance of sexual satisfaction causes a change equal to -0.438 of a unit in the variance of the communication score. The sexual esteem and sexual consciousness variables also play significant roles in explaining -0.502 and 0.299 of the variance of the ideal deviation variable, respectively.

## Conclusion

In reviewing the research hypothesis indicating that sexual esteem, sexual consciousness and sexual satisfaction are predictors of the marital satisfaction variable, the results obtained from the regression analysis showed that the regression of the marital satisfaction variable from the sexual esteem, sexual consciousness and sexual satisfaction variables is statistically significant and these variables explain a percentage of the variance of the marital satisfaction variable. In previous studies, the relationship between sexual esteem and marital satisfaction is positive and this relationship has been confirmed in the present study. Moreover, a negative relationship was obtained between sexual consciousness and marital satisfaction. In previous studies, the relationship between sexual satisfaction and marital satisfaction is positive and this relationship has been confirmed in the present study. The results obtained from the regression analysis showed that the regression of the communication variable from the sexual esteem, sexual consciousness and sexual satisfaction variables is statistically significant and these variables explain a percentage of the variance of the communication variable. The results obtained from the regression analysis showed that the regression of the conflict resolution variable from the sexual esteem, sexual consciousness and sexual satisfaction variables is statistically significant and these variables explain a percentage of the variance of the conflict resolution variable. Furthermore, results obtained

from the regression analysis showed that the regression of the ideal deviation variable from the sexual esteem, sexual consciousness and sexual satisfaction variables is statistically significant and these variables explain a percentage of the variance of the ideal deviation variable.

## Discussion and investigation

In the research conducted by Zarbakhsh, Taghavi Dinani and Rahmani (2013), it was concluded that there is a positive and significant relationship between sexual self-esteem and all of its components (skill, attractiveness, control, moral judgment and adaptiveness) and marital satisfaction. In the research conducted by Taghavi, Dinani, Zarbakhsh, Samkhanian et al. (2010), it was concluded that there is an obvious and positive relationship between different aspects of sexual self-esteem (skill, attractiveness, control, and moral judgment) and marital satisfaction. In the research conducted by Taghizadeh and Kalhori (2015), it was concluded that there is a significant relationship between marital satisfaction, self-esteem, sexual satisfaction and economic condition. In the research conducted by Ziaee, Janati, Mobasheri et al. (2014), it was concluded that there is a significant relationship between sexual satisfaction and marital satisfaction. Therefore, as the level of sexual satisfaction increases, the level of marital satisfaction also increases. In the research conducted by Rahmani, Marghati Khoiyi, Sadeghi et al. (2011), it was concluded that there is a significant relationship between

marital satisfaction and sexual satisfaction. Bakhshayesh and Mortazavi (2009) have shown that there is a positive relationship between sexual satisfaction and marital satisfaction. In the research conducted by Ayub and Iqbal (2012), it was concluded that there are some factors that play a role in marital satisfaction, namely: communications, spouses' education level, sexual satisfaction, income, mutual understanding, relationship rules and compromise. Litzinger and Coop Gordon (2005) conducted a study and showed that communication and sexual satisfaction predict marital satisfaction. Byers (2005) conducted research and found that individuals who are sexually satisfied are more satisfied with their marriage as well. Given the research findings, it can be concluded that sexual self-esteem is a factor that plays an important role in the improvement and success of people in their marriage and also, high levels of sexual satisfaction increase individuals' marital satisfaction. Higher levels of sexual consciousness, on the other hand, reduce their marital satisfaction.

Marital satisfaction is related to a number of variables. Evaluating sexual issues in couple therapy seems to be essential and these variables must be seriously considered in therapeutic interventions.

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