

PREDICTION OF SEXUAL VARIETY SEEKING BASED ON PERSONALITY CHARACTERISTICS, SEXUAL BELIEFS AND GENDER AMONG MARRIED INDIVIDUALS

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of the present study was to predict sexual variety seeking (SVS) in terms of personality characteristics, sexual beliefs and gender among married individuals. The research method was based on the correlation-descriptive type of study. The statistical population included all married female and male students of Roudehen Azad University that they were taken up by the random cluster method. 148 people completed the NEO personality questionnaire, sexual beliefs questionnaire and sexual variety questionnaire. The related data was analyzed through the use of the multi-regression method. The Results showed that male sexual beliefs regarding to their open experiences can act as a positive predictor of sexual variety. Gender can also be a positive predictor of sexual variety, so that the males demonstrate a higher level of sexual variety seeking than females.

Keywords: Personality Characteristics, Sexual Beliefs, Sexual Variety Seeking

INTRODUCTION

Many studies have shown the importance of commitment in daily life; such commitment is a reflection of the psychological attachment towards the spouse or partner that leads to relationship management and an enhancement of the quality of life (Stafford and Canary, 1991). Stafford (2003) emphasizes the importance of love and loyalty when it comes to establishing a suitable relationship between spouses and sexual partners. A lack of commitment between couples can lead to sexual variety.

ArefNazari *et al.*, (2011) explained sexual variety in terms of three dimensions of behavior, morality and intimacy issues. Variety-seeking behavior is a reflection of person's attitude toward sexual act or sexual contact with a person who is not his/her partner or spouse. Moral sexual variety represents the personal standards for sexual issues, and attempts to respond this question: is there ethical approach for sexual behavior? And intimate sexual variety is a person's attempt to find an appropriate source for secure attachment.

Sexual variety can occur in two forms extra dyadic relationship and infidelity. Extra dyadic behavior is violation of relational rules of monogamy and exclusivity without their partner's prior consent. Infidelity is defined as severe relational transgressions in which one or both partners perform communicate with two or more partners simultaneously. In this case, two forms of infidelity may happen: emotional infidelity and sexual infidelity (Drigotas *et al.*, 1999) Emotional infidelity refers to becoming emotionally involved with someone other than one's partner (Roscoe *et al.*, 1988). Behaviors such as flirting, dating, spending time together and falling in love with someone outside the primary relationship are identified as acts of emotional infidelity (Babin and Dindia, 2005). Sexual infidelity, as its name suggests, refers to engaging in sexual activities with someone other than one's partner. Behaviors that constitute sexual infidelity range from kissing to sexual intercourse, including behaviors such as sexual touching and oral sex (Feldman & Cauffman, 2000; Roscoe *et al.*, 1988).

Researchers have pointed to a range of factors that represent sexual variety and infidelity such as personality traits, age, gender, personal beliefs and marital dissatisfaction, for example Nasrollahi *et al.*, (2011) reported a significant relationship between extraversion and conscientiousness traits with sexual variety. However, they did not report any significant relationship between openness to experience, agreeableness and neuroticism in this regard. Gordon *et al.*, (1984) also showed that there is no

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relationship between neuroticism and sexual varieties, whereas there is a positive relationship between extraversion and sexual variety. Kelley *et al.*, (1983), in their model of influences on close relationships, postulated that events within such relationships are determined by factors related to the person (P), the other (O) and the environment (E). They claimed extra dyadic experience is likely related to individual differences (e.g. certain attitudes and personality traits, as investigated in the current study), differences between relationships (e.g. level of commitment and relationship satisfaction) and differences in environmental conditions (e.g. opportunities for undetected ED involvement and attractiveness of potential ED partners). Hanson (1987) concluded that freedom in terms of sexual relations and the number of dates can predict a man's involvement in multiple relationships, while females, sexual freedom and nontraditional gender attitudes positively predict extra dyadic relationships and religious adherence can negatively predict extra dyadic relationships. In general, extra dyadic relations can lead to the dishonesty and deception with regard to the existing sex partner (Wiederman and Huard, 1999). Rafaatmah *et al.*, (2011) studied the relationship between sexual variety and marital satisfaction in Iranian couples and concluded that there is no significant relationship between sexual variety and marital satisfaction. In addition they suggested that the sexual variety of males is higher than that of females. Schwartz and Ruttier (1998) showed that there are several factors regarding couples' infidelity as follows: Emotional incompatibility with spouse, boredom, sexual incompatibility and anger against spouse or sexual partner, tendency towards ending the marriage or relationship, and flattery. They mention that males have a higher tendency towards sexual variety compared with females. Females seek only the potential for emotional relationship. Females believe that betrayal to partner is a function of emotional dissatisfaction them. Buss and Smith (1993) in their theory which they entitled the sexual strategies theory (SST) stated that men and women possess both long term and short term mating; Long-term mating is typically marked by extended courtship, heavy investment, the emotion of love, and the dedication of resources to the mating relationship and having a new baby. Another strategy within this repertoire is short-term mating, defined as a fleeting sexual encounter such as a one-night stand. Between the ends of this temporal continuum are brief affairs, prolonged romances, and other intermediate-term relationships. Select any one of these strategies depends on factors such as opportunity, personal mate value, sex ratio in the relevant mating pool, parental influences, regnant cultural norms, and other features of social and personal context. Men's short term strategy differentially rooted in the desire for sexual variety such that men should show evidence of preferring "larger numbers of sexual partners over time than women" (Schmitt *et al.*, 2001). Kim and Drolet (2003) showed that there are some different hypotheses regarding sexual variety in various cultures.

The sexual variety of males and females may come from their sexual beliefs. Sandra Bem, in the Gender Schema Theory explain how individuals become gendered in society, and how sex-linked characteristics are maintained and transmitted to other members of a culture (Bem, 1981) Based on Bem's Gender Schema theory, sexual identity happens when children can make pictures semantically, including the whole male and female concepts transferred into gender and their own self-concept. Children begin to recognize that gender is a key feature for the definition and understanding of everyone. They can stabilize the recognition and personal perceptions about what they have learned in relation to gender (Barren *et al.*, 2010). The gender roles can be considered as the reflection of some expectations of a community about feminine or masculine behavior (Zibaieenezhad, 2009). Based on Bem's model, regarding the gender role, everyone can have three types of personality - female, male and androgenic. In fact, parents transfer their own apparent or hidden sexual beliefs into their children; and these roles may come with some sexual stereotypes without making any fair judgments (Witt, 2000). Often traits such as leadership power, intelligence, merit, courage and brevity have been established for males, and the features of simplicity, obedience, inability, and passivity can be established within females (Ifegbesan, 2010). These beliefs regarding sexual roles have been referred to as sexual stereotypes in many traditional communities. Indeed, the stereotypical and sexual imaginations include the cultural beliefs about the sexual roles that should be established. These stereotypes do not show the realities, but they have to introduce the beliefs and common attitudes about the special behaviours of males or females thinking, thereby inducing the

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determined cultural stereotyping (Zohrevand, 2003). The theory of planned behaviour (TPB) states that sexual beliefs can influence behaviour and the intentions of people (Ajzen, 1991). The concentration of an intention is a general readiness towards a special behaviour; in other words, personal behaviour can be influenced by personal motivation, social support and perceived controlling behaviour (Ifegbesan, 2010). People having non-stereotypical sexual beliefs make a kind of balance between female and male features according to Zohrehvand (2003). Hansen (1987) mentions that non-traditional and non-stereotypical sexual beliefs have a positive relationship with sexual variety. According to the above-mentioned statements, the main question of the study is whether or not sexual beliefs, personality and gender traits can predict the extent of sexual variety?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research is a correlation-descriptive type of study. The statistical population included all married females and males students' at Roudehen Azad University. Participants were taken up by the random cluster method. Participants completed three questionnaires relating to NEO sexual beliefs and sexual variety in this study. The data was also analyzed using the multi-regression statistical analysis method.

Instrument

Questionnaire with Regard to Five NEO Personality Factors

This questionnaire includes 60 items that have been established based on the factor analysis that was undertaken in 1986. 12 questions that had the highest factorial load were taken up in this study. In the research conducted by Mollazadeh (2002) test-retest reliability coefficients were obtained during 37 days in relation to 76 people as 0.83, 0.78, 0.73, 0.79, 0.85, respectively for neurosis, extroversion, opening, adaptation, agreement and conscientiousness. The estimation of the internal assimilation using Cronbach's alpha was obtained as follows: 0.86, 0.83, 0.74, 0.76, 0.87 and 0.83 for the whole test. It should be mentioned that only three scales of neurosis, extroversion and conscientiousness have been investigated in this study.

Sexual Beliefs Scale

Bem's questionnaire includes 60 items used to carry out the analysis of three factors regarding female, male and androgenic traits. In scoring the features, Bem used a five-point Likert scale. Bem has reported the coefficient of reliability in terms of the female dimensions was 0.8 and 0.86 for the male dimension in using the tools related to gender beliefs. Zohrehvand (2003) obtained a coefficient of reliability of 0.81 with regard to the sexual beliefs questionnaire. In this research, the coefficient of reliability with regard to the questionnaire has been reported by the use of Cronbach alpha as being 0.88.

Sexual Variety Scale

The related questionnaire was designed by ArefNazari *et al.*, (2011). This includes 45 questions ranging from five Likert domains as follows: I completely agree to I completely disagree along with three subscales: sexual variety (26 questions), moral tendency (investigation of personal morality in sexual relations (10 questions) and seeking intimacy (A study of sexuality where the goal is to create a loving relationship) 9 questions. Factor analysis to assess the validity of the subscales with regard to intimacy seeking 13-19 percent of the total variance. The subscale of moral tendency made up 23.47% of the total variance and the subscale of behavior in terms of variety of sexual affairs (a combination of sexual behavior and sexual partners) made up 11.15% of the total variance. In addition, the total reliability of the test in terms of internal consistency method was 0.94 and for the moral tendency subscale it was 0.83. A sexual variety subscale of 0.84 and a seeking intimacy subscale of 0.70 were reported respectively.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The ratio of males in the sample group of the study was reported to be 45% compared to 55% females. The skewness and kurtosis indices of the above table showed that the distribution of the sample group scores (except for sexual beliefs) tended towards the normal distribution in both groups and in the total group of the sample cases.

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Table 1: Summary of the related variables in terms of statistical indices by gender separation and total group of the sample

Gender	Elements	Mean	Deviation	skewness	kurtosis
Men (n= 67)	Extroversion	29.74	6.46	-0.605	-0.224
	Neuroticism	18.79	7.36	0.494	1.104
	Openness	27.43	5.85	-0.203	0.628
	Sexual beliefs	130.40	20.04	-2.341	6.540
	Sexual variety	81.49	33.10	0.879	2.347
Women (n= 81)	Extroversion	27.40	7.00	0.364	-0.182
	Neuroticism	20.74	6.44	0.502	-0.021
	Openness	26.98	4.92	-0.142	0.712
	Sexual beliefs	144.77	20.54	0.334	7.543
	Sexual variety	59.24	25.81	1.002	1.286
Total of sample group (n= 148)	Extroversion	28.46	6.84	-0.475	0.242
	Neuroticism	19.85	6.92	0.425	0.557
	Openness	27.18	5.35	-0.155	-0.083
	Sexual beliefs	138.27	21.48	-0.666	6.840
	Sexual variety	69.31	31.27	1.005	2.023

Table 2: Prediction of the sexual variety based on gender and personality characteristics

Predictor variables	B	B	Sig	T
Constant	53.253		2.321**	0.022
Extroversion	0.181	0.039	0.453	0.651
Neuroticism	-0.012	-0.003	-0.032	0.974
Openness	1.314	0.225	2.661**	0.009
Feminine gender beliefs	-0.111	-0.127	-1.282	0.202
Masculine gender beliefs	1.478	0.262	2.814**	0.006
Androgenic gender beliefs	-0.143	-0.167	-1.535	0.127
Gender	-21.500	0.001	-4.319**	-0.342

$R = 0.391$, $R^2 = 0.153$ Adj, $R^2 = 0.123$, $p < 0.0$

$F = 5.133$, $p < 0.01$

In order to predict sexual variety seeking (SVS) based on predictor variables, the above table shows that 12.03% of the variance in terms of sexual variety seeking is explained by the predictor variables. Openness to experience and masculinity gender indicates a significantly positive relationship with sexual variety seeking. In addition, gender beliefs can significantly predict SVS so the men had more SVS than women.

Discussion

The results of the present study showed that the sexual variety of men is higher than that of women, and that gender can also predict the degree of sexual variety. In addition, the openness and masculine gender beliefs make a significant contribution to the prediction of sexual variety in men. However, neuroticism and extroversion did not have a significant role to play in predicting the degree of sexual variety. The results of the present study coincided with the results of Baron *et al.*, (2010) and Nasrollahi *et al.*, (2011). They concluded that there is not a relationship between sexual variety and neuroticism. In the explanation of openness and sexual variety, it can be stated that such individuals are very curious, and desire to have diverse experiences. To this extent, they prefer to engage in new and diverse activities, maybe tired of their long-term partners, may prefer to experience new sexual partners in a search for sexual variety. Based on the results of the present study, masculinity sexual beliefs could predict the degree of sexual variety. Masculinity sexual beliefs are the stereotypical beliefs that represent the common attitudes towards the special behavior in terms of cultural issues in relation to males.

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Although there is a degree of similarity about the ways in which males and females think about issues and their sexual affairs, it may be said that in men sexual tendencies are considered as a symbol of power.

According to Iranian cultural issues about having more than one sexual partner for men, it may be that the attitude towards having more sexual partners may come from the same cultural reflection. The results of the present study indicate that the sexual variety of men is higher than that of women and is in agreement with the results of Schmitt *et al.*, (2001) and ArefNazari *et al.*, (2011). Of course, the sexual variety of men can be rooted in cultural values. Moreover, men have a higher tendency towards sexual variety and masturbation when compared to women (Baumeister & Mendoza, 2011). It seems that the difference between men and women regarding sexual variety comes from cultural issues rather than biological features. In the sexual strategies theory (SST), it is stated that men and women have evolved from a complex process in terms of the sexual relations approaches (Buss and Schmitt, 1993). Of course; one cannot ignore the contribution of biological factors. But it can be said that the contribution of cultural factors in terms of the explanation of sexual variety seeking among Iranian men is more than the contribution of biological factors.

Conclusion

In this study the degree of sexual variety has been predicted based on trait relating to gender roles, personality and the gender of married people. Due to the significant contribution of openness to experience and masculinity gender beliefs in explanation of the sexual variety, it can be stated that personal, cultural and biological factors can commonly play a key role in emotional and sexual infidelity, but cultural factors plays the most important role.

According to the significance of masculinity beliefs in terms of extra dyadic relationships, it is suggested the psychologists and researchers be aware of the role of parents in this field, to prevent any stereotypes emerging when it comes to dealing with boys, and they are trying to emphasize roughly the androgenic traits. In addition, the cultural foundation seems to be very important in relation to the disadvantages of having more sexual relations. Unfortunately, the possibility of controlling some variables such as religious attitudes, education levels, mental health and socioeconomic levels of all the participants could not be undertaken; thus, it is suggested that other researchers should investigate the above-mentioned variables regarding sexual variety.

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