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## **A STUDY ON THE FACTORS AFFECTING THE COUPLES UNFAITHFULNESS AND FAMILY DISPERSION IN IRAN**

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### **ABSTRACT**

As one of the most respected humanistic entities, family is considered as the basis of social life and apart from the duty of having and growing children which result in the continuance and survival of the mankind, several other duties, inter alia, economic activities, education and socializing the person shall also be fulfilled by the family. Family is a certain mediator which plays an important role in transferring the norms and cultural legacy of the society prior to one's direct relationship with the social institutes, organizations and groups. Whereas the fundamental basis of a good and successful family is based on love and intimacy, therefore, unfaithfulness of the couple is from amongst one of the most important threats against the family existence. Mainly, when one of the parties commits unfaithfulness and cheating, then the existed trust is lost and reestablishing the same is quite difficult. Therefore, considering the importance of keeping healthy family, studying the aspects and factors affecting this phenomenon as one of the factors of family dispersion is of certain importance, while in this study the reasons and causes of the same have been studied in the social, economic and mental aspects. The method of this study is surveying and with the questionnaire means. The statistical society includes 1,300 of unfaithful couples while 100 people have been chosen by using quota sampling method, of whom 67 and 33 were men and women, respectively and the relevant results have been analyzed using SPSS software. The study findings indicated that there is meaningful relationship among the variables of variety-seeking, failure to satisfy sexual needs, religious beliefs, term of marriage, spouse's level of education and manner of marriage with the couples' unfaithfulness with 95% certainty. On the other hand, it was known that one of the variables of income, stubbornness, number of children, age, gender and profession on the intensity of couples' unfaithfulness. Therefore, the most important factors in couples' unfaithfulness and family dispersion include variety-seeking, failure to satisfy sexual needs, religious beliefs while all the three cases are totally understandable and acceptable considering the changes of modern families caused by industrialization.

**Keywords:** *Family, Couples' Unfaithfulness, Variety-Seeking, Sentimental Relationship*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Family is a fundamental and divine entity which has extensive aspects, purposes and objectives in both present and future in the religious, humanistic, progress, civilization, culture, intellectual, society, and economy fields. One of the main pillars of a healthy and happy family is faithfulness and hearted love and intimacy existed between the couple, while unfaithfulness in the family threatens such valuable entity. Generally, couples' unfaithfulness means that each of the couples has sentimental relationship with a person from the other gender hidden and without the consent of his/her spouse. This is one of the main reasons of divorce and collapse of the marriages (Parvinian 2004). Unfaithfulness may have no competitor concerning devastation of marriage relationships, while the following sentences express and indicate this issue and sentimental and sexual unfaithfulness and cheating have been mentioned from amongst the most important cause of divorce among the different cultures (Pourmoghadas 1998). Sadness, mental pains, depression, anger and feel of being insulted are from amongst the sentimental experiences of a person subjected to unfaithfulness (Shirdel, 2006). Whereas the unfaithfulness consequences are quite destructive, it may presume that the occurrence of the same is rare. Although sexual affair may be considered as an action committed often hidden, but the experimental estimations on making love during the marriage term includes a certain domain of 30~60% of men and 20~50% of women. The estimations on the potential of a combination in which at least one member of a married couple has an affair during his/her term of marriage is between 40

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and 70%; estimation of unfaithfulness during the first year of marriage is far less than that (roughly 5%) (Khedmatgozar, 2008). A conservative interpretation of such findings indicates that although perhaps half of all the married couples remain as single-spouse, but the other half experience unfaithfulness during their marriage. Therefore, a key theoretical and practical issue is that that who is unfaithful and who remains faithful in marriage. Is usually anybody who marries may remain faithful or shall definitely be unfaithful? Which social, cultural and mental causes may affect such issue? The effect of which is more? All such questions have made researching in this regard as mandatory. Several factors are affecting the occurrence of this issue which requires studying, while it has been tried in this study that the social, economic, cultural and mental factors are studied.

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF STUDY**

In this study it has been tried that the study hypotheses are clarified by using the differential opportunity theory of Robert Merton, male behavior resulted from a certain social structural pressures which make people to commit mal behavior (Merton, 1908). According to Merton, new industrial societies emphasize on the financial achievements in life, visualizes in the form of accumulation of wealth and academic education as the most important objectives of the purposes of one's life and esteem criteria. Achieving these social acceptable objectives also requires acceptable tools as well, while for sure it is out of the collective access of the social people, i.e. the society has been made in a certain way that the lower classes have less opportunities to achieve their dreams. Eventually, as these objectives have been converted into the main targets of all people lives (poor and rich), then the one who has no access to the legitimate means takes benefit from illegal means to achieve the same under the society's pressure. Merton believes that the gap between the objectives and means results in mal behavior. Those married people whose needs are not met in their families, cannot meet their sexual and sentimental needs due to variety-seeking, sexual coldness of spouse, high age different between the couple, mental and religion weakness, compulsive marriage and stubbornness or feud. Therefore, under the pressure of the society, which does not allow them to have relationships with two people from the other gender simultaneously obviously, meet their sexual and sentimental needs in hidden and mal behavior .

However, Merton emphasizes that the reaction of all people with respect to the imposed social pressures are not similar due to lack of access to legitimate opportunities to meet the purposes, and all the lower class people do not commit mal behavior to achieve the acceptable social objectives and anybody conforms him/herself with the environment in a certain manner. According to him, a certain group of lower class people are innovative and take benefit from illegal means in their disordered compatibility with the environment (which is the main subject of pressure theory). Also a certain group of radicals and revolutionists have confronted against the social existing unachievable legitimate means and introduce new purposes and means to change the social structure. On the other hand, a certain group has no choice but to abandon such social existing unachievable legitimate means and depart from the society. These three groups of innovators, radicals and departing have chosen mal behavior and breaking norms in compatibility with the environment and society which has limited their access to the socially accepted and legitimate means (Erikson, 1992).

Those married people who fails to meet their sentimental and sexual needs in their families, or take benefit from illegal means and methods to acquire the sentiment and love of others and meeting their sexual needs due to their over passion for such issues and variety-seeking face the fact that the social pressure hinders them from having relationship with two people of the other gender simultaneously clearly and therefore they meet their needs through hidden actions and mal behavior.

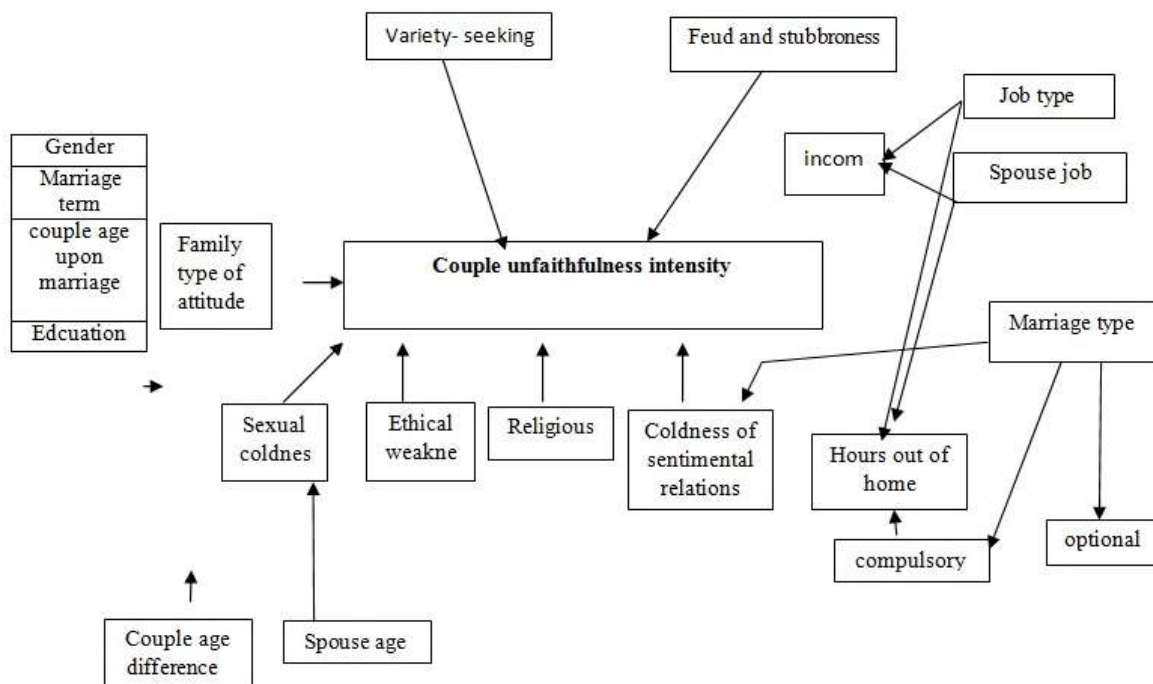
#### **Study hypotheses**

1. There is a relationship between the religious beliefs and unfaithfulness intensity of the spouse,
2. There is a relationship between the not satisfying the sexual needs and unfaithfulness intensity of the spouse,
3. There is a relationship between the couple age difference and unfaithfulness intensity of the spouse,
4. There is a relationship between the variety-seeking and unfaithfulness intensity of the spouse,

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5. There is a relationship between the term of marriage and unfaithfulness intensity of the spouse,
6. There is a relationship between stubbornness and unfaithfulness intensity of the spouse,
7. There is a relationship between the marriage age and unfaithfulness intensity of the spouse,
8. There is a relationship between the ethical weaknesses and unfaithfulness intensity of the spouse,
9. There is a relationship between the action of those responding the divorce and unfaithfulness intensity of the spouse,
10. There is a relationship between the manner of marriage and unfaithfulness intensity of the spouse.

**Study model:**



**STUDY METHOD**

In this study, first of all by using the documentary and library method we collected the information and achieve the relevant hypotheses and variables. The method of this study is surveying and with the questionnaire means. The statistical society includes 1,300 of unfaithful couples while 100 people have been chosen by using quota sampling method, of whom 67 and 33 were men and women, respectively, among whom the questionnaires have been distributed .

The variability of the study means have been measured by using Cronbach’s Alpha factor and all the variables (couples’ unfaithfulness, level of education, variety-seeking, marriage age and people social classes, etc.) have been studied and corrected with an alpha more than 60% and validity by using the opinion of the questionnaire questions specialists and after removing the problems in a 10-people group, the same were tested and the validity was studied and the problems were removed and the final questionnaire has been compiled. In order to analyze the data, spss software was used and the descriptive and inferential statistics have been analyzed.

**STUDY FINDINGS**

-Distribution of the respondents in terms of gender indicates that 63% and 37% of them have been men and women, respectively, of whom, 26 people (26%) did not have children, 28% had one child and 36 had two children and 10% of the total respondents had more than two children .

-The frequency of studied people in terms of education indicates that 40% had high school diploma, 33% had associate’s and bachelor’s degrees, 20% had lower than high school diploma, and 7% had degrees higher than bachelor’s degree .

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-The distribution of frequency and percentage of the population under study in terms of type of profession of the respondents indicate that the highest ratio of people (36.4%) are unemployed, 33 employees and 30 were also unemployed .

-The distribution of frequency and percentage of the population under study in terms of level of income of the respondents indicate that 33% had an income bigger than 600,000 Toomans, 31% between 300,000 and 600,000 Toomans, 14% less than 300,000 Toomans and 22 people expressed that they have no income .

-The distribution of frequency and percentage of the population under study in terms of type of profession of the respondents' spouses indicate that 56% had unemployed spouse, 26% and 18% had self employed and employee spouses, respectively .

-The distribution of frequency and percentage of the population under study in terms of level of income of the respondents' spouses indicate that 53% expressed that their spouse has no income, 19% had an income bigger than 600,000 Toomans, 19% between 300,000 and 600,000 Toomans, 9% less than 300,000 Toomans and 22 people.

-The distribution of frequency and percentage of the population under study in terms of type of type relation out of marriage indicate that 73% stated that they had both sentimental and sexual relations. 9 and 18 people had only sentimental and sexual relations, respectively .

- The distribution of frequency and percentage of the population under study in terms of type of marriage indicate that 77% stated that their marriage has been optional and nobody has put them under pressure for marriage, while 23 people stated that they were pressurized to marry .

-The distribution of frequency and percentage of the population under study in terms of action of respondents to divorce indicate that 34% stated that they acted for divorce and 66% said that they had no action for divorce .

-The distribution of frequency and percentage of the population under study in terms of referring to psychologist and psychiatrist indicate that 34% stated that they referred to them, while 66% stated that they did not .

-The distribution of frequency and percentage of the population under study in terms of cause of referring to psychologist and psychiatrist indicate 7 people did not mention the reason, 11 due to depression, 3 due to schizophrenia, 9 people due to marriage problems and also 6 people due to neural diseases

- have referred to psychiatrist.

**Results of studying the hypotheses**

**Hypothesis No. 1:** it seems that there is meaningful relationship between religious beliefs and intensity of unfaithfulness to the spouse.

**Table 1- The relationship between religious beliefs and intensity of unfaithfulness to the spouse**

Variable	R	Meaningful level
Religious beliefs	- 0.196	0.050

Table 1- indicates the relationship between religious beliefs and intensity of unfaithfulness to their spouse. R Pierson value (-0.196) indicates that there is a weak relation between the two variables. The correlation factor sign indicates that through increasing religious beliefs, the unfaithfulness intensity has decreased. Considering the meaningfulness level (0.50) with 95% certainty there is relation between religious beliefs and people level of intensity and the abovementioned hypothesis is approved.

**Hypothesis No. 2:** it seems that there is meaningful relationship between non satisfying the sexual needs and intensity of unfaithfulness to the spouse.

**Table 2- The relationship between non satisfying the needs and intensity of unfaithfulness to the spouse**

Variable	R	Meaningful level
Non satisfying the needs	0.253	0.015

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Table 2- indicates the relationship between non satisfying the needs and intensity of unfaithfulness to their spouse. R Pierson value (0.253) indicates that there is a weak relation between the two variables. The correlation factor sign indicates that through increasing non satisfying the needs, the unfaithfulness intensity has decreased. Considering the meaningfulness level (0.15) with 95% certainty there is relation between non satisfaction of sexual beliefs and people level of intensity and the abovementioned hypothesis is approved.

**Hypothesis No. 3:** it seems that there is meaningful relationship between couple age difference and intensity of unfaithfulness to the spouse.

**Table 3- The relationship between couple age difference and intensity of unfaithfulness to the spouse**

Variable	R	Meaningful level
couple age difference	- 0.011	0.911

Table 3- indicates the relationship between couple age difference and intensity of unfaithfulness to their spouse. R Pierson value (- 0.011) indicates that there is a weak relation between the two variables. The correlation factor sign indicates that through increasing age difference, the unfaithfulness intensity has decreased. Considering the meaningfulness level (0.911) with 99% certainty there is no relation between couple age difference and people level of intensity and the abovementioned hypothesis is rejected.

**Hypothesis No. 4:** it seems that there is meaningful relationship between variety-seeking and intensity of unfaithfulness to the spouse.

**Table 4- The relationship between variety-seeking and intensity of unfaithfulness to the spouse**

Variable	R	Meaningful level
variety-seeking	0.342	0.001

Table 4- indicates the relationship between variety-seeking and intensity of unfaithfulness to their spouse. R Pierson value (0.342) indicates that there is a weak relation between the two variables. The correlation factor sign indicates that through increasing variety-seeking, the unfaithfulness intensity has decreased. Considering the meaningfulness level (0.001) with 99% certainty there is relation between variety-seeking and people level of intensity and the abovementioned hypothesis is approved.

**Hypothesis No. 5:** it seems that there is meaningful relationship between marriage term and intensity of unfaithfulness to the spouse.

**Table 5- The relationship between marriage term and intensity of unfaithfulness to the spouse**

Variable	R	Meaningful level
marriage term	- 0.275	0.006

Table 5 indicates the relationship between marriage term and intensity of unfaithfulness to their spouse. R Pierson value (- 0.275) indicates that there is a weak relation between the two variables. The correlation factor sign indicates that through increasing marriage term, the unfaithfulness intensity has decreased. Considering the meaningfulness level (0.006) with 99% certainty there is relation between variety-seeking and people level of intensity and the abovementioned hypothesis is approved.

**Hypothesis No. 6:** it seems that there is meaningful relationship between stubbornness and intensity of unfaithfulness to the spouse.

**Table 6- The relationship between stubbornness and intensity of unfaithfulness to the spouse**

Variable	R	Meaningful level
Stubbornness	0.085	0.426

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Table 3- indicates the relationship between stubbornness and intensity of unfaithfulness to their spouse. R Pierson value (0.085) indicates that there is a weak relation between the two variables. The correlation factor sign indicates that through increasing stubbornness and feud of people, the unfaithfulness intensity has decreased. Considering the meaningfulness level (0.426) with 95% certainty there is no relation between stubbornness and people level of intensity and the abovementioned hypothesis is rejected.

**Hypothesis No. 7:** it seems that there is meaningful relationship between marriage age and intensity of unfaithfulness to the spouse.

**Table 7- The relationship between marriage age and intensity of unfaithfulness to the spouse**

Variable	R	Meaningful level
Marriage age	0.065	0.525

Table 7 indicates the relationship between marriage age and intensity of unfaithfulness to their spouse. R Pierson value (0.525) indicates that there is no relation between the two variables and the abovementioned hypothesis is rejected.

**Hypothesis No. 8:** it seems that there is meaningful relationship between ethical weakness and intensity of unfaithfulness to the spouse.

**Table 8- The relationship between ethical weakness and intensity of unfaithfulness to the spouse**

Variable	R	Meaningful level
ethical weakness	0.148	0.161

Table 8 indicates the relationship between ethical weakness and intensity of unfaithfulness to their spouse. R Pierson value (0.148) indicates that there is a weak relation between the two variables. The correlation factor sign indicates that through increasing ethical weakness and lack of ethical dependency of respondents, the unfaithfulness intensity has decreased. Considering the meaningfulness level (0.161) with 95% certainty there is no relation between ethical weakness and people level of intensity and the abovementioned hypothesis is rejected

**Hypothesis No. 9:** it seems that there is meaningful relationship between acting for divorce and intensity of unfaithfulness to the spouse.

**Table 9- The relationship between acting for divorce and intensity of unfaithfulness to the spouse**

Variable	Frequency	Average	St. Dev.	T	Meaningful level
Yes	34	29.5	7.67	0.781	0.474
No	66	28.4	6.95		

Table 9 indicates the relationship between acting for divorce and intensity of unfaithfulness to their spouse. Level of averages indicates that the unfaithfulness intensity among those acting for divorce (29.5) is more than those who have not acted for divorce (28.4). The difference indicated between the two averages based on the T test with a value of 0.718 and meaningful level of Sig=0.474 indicates that with 95% certainty, there is no relation between ethical weakness and people level of intensity and the abovementioned hypothesis is rejected.

**Hypothesis No. 10:** it seems that there is meaningful relationship between manner of marriage and intensity of unfaithfulness to the spouse.

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**Table 10- The relationship between manner of marriage and intensity of unfaithfulness to the spouse**

Variable	Frequency	Average	St. Dev.	T	Meaningful level
Yes	23	33.7	7.06	4.09	0.000
No	77	27.3	6.55		

Table 10 indicates the relationship between manner of marriage and intensity of unfaithfulness to their spouse. Level of averages indicates that the unfaithfulness intensity among those had compulsory marriage (33.7) is more than those who had not (27.3). The difference indicated between the two averages based on the T test with a value of 4.09 and meaningful level of Sig=0.000 indicates that with 99% certainty, there is a relation between manner of marriage and people level of intensity and the abovementioned hypothesis is approved.

**Multi regression analysis in step-by-step method**

The step by step regression equation (intensity of unfaithfulness to spouse); the tables 28 and 29 use this equation to clarify the dependent variable (intensity of unfaithfulness to spouse); Regarding multi regression step by step method the predicting variables are entered into the equation based on their importance in clarifying the dependent variable. In this equation, three variables of variety-seeking, marriage term and stubbornness have remained in the equation. In multi regression step by step method, the variables are entered into the equation until they do not help predicting. As it may be seen, such variables have finally managed to clarify 43.9% of the dependent variable changes.

**Table 11: Main elements of multi variable analysis in step by step method from the first to the third stage to predict the dependent variable (intensity of unfaithfulness to spouse)**

Stage	Variable name	R	R2	Added value to R2	Standard error
First	Variety-seeking	0.495	0.245	-	6.80
Second	Marriage term	0.581	0.337	0.092	6.42
Third	Feud and stubbornness	0.662	0.439	0.102	5.96

The R2 value for the variety-seeking variable in stage one is 0.245. This value indicates that through entering into the regression equation in each of the stages, some percentages of the dependent changes have been clarified. In the second stage and through entering the marriage term variable, 0.09 has been added to the clarification value. By entering the feud and stubbornness variable in the third stage to the equation, 0.1 has been added to the clarification value and the model has managed to eventually clarify roughly 44% of the dependent variable changes.

**Table 12: Elements of the variables inside the equation to predict the dependent variable (intensity of unfaithfulness to spouse)**

Variable	B	Beta	T value	Meaningful level
First	Variety-seeking	0.495	0.245	-
Second	Marriage term	0.581	0.337	0.092
Third	Feud and stubbornness	0.662	0.439	0.102

$$a = 8.69 \quad , \quad R^2.Ad = 0.411, F = 15.64, Sig = 0.000, R = 0.66, R^2 = 0.439$$

Considering the regression factor value in table 18, it is demonstrated that the variety-seeking and feud have a direct and positive relation with dependent variable, while the marriage term has a negative relation. The T value and meaningful level of the multi variable equation indicate that the relation of all the three variables with the certainty interval of  $p < 0.01$  is meaningful in 99% level .

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Therefore, based on the results, the multi variable regression equation resulted to predict the dependent variable

is:  $Y = a + b_1(X_1) + b_2(X_2) + b_3(X_3)$

Where:

Y= a dependent variable which is eventually predicted by the variables inside the equation

a= width from the origin

b= non standard regression factor

X= dependent variables inserted into the regression equation

Therefore, the final form of the equation shall be as per the following:

$Y = 8.7 + 0.74(X_1) - 0.48(X_2) + 0.41(X_3)$

**Table 13- Elements of the variables exited in the 3rd stage**

Variable	Partial correlation	T value	Meaningful level
Religious beliefs	- 0.13	- 1.01	0.317
Non satisfying the sexual needs	0.05	0.34	0.733
Age difference	-0.16	-1.21	0.231
No. of children	-0.05	-0.41	0.681
Marriage age	-0.2	-1.61	0.112
Spouse marriage age	-0.25	-1.99	0.051
Ethical weakness	0.23	1.84	0.070

**DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

In this study completed in surveying manner and by taking benefit from a questionnaire with 126 different questions in the various fields (age, gender, class, education, profession, income, religious beliefs, sexual satisfaction, age difference, marriage age, ethical weakness, variety-seeking, stubbornness, method of marriage, couple age difference upon marriage, etc.) we may conclude that first of all there is no relationship between contextual variables such as gender, age, education, profession, acting for divorce, ethical weakness, age of spouse marriage and number of children and couple age difference and intensity of unfaithfulness of people, while there is a meaningful relationship among the variables of variety-seeking, non satisfaction of sexual needs, religious beliefs, term of marriage, method of marriage and level of spouse education our hypothesis has been approved concerning the latter variables. Therefore, the most important factors in couples' unfaithfulness include variety-seeking, religious beliefs and non satisfaction of sexual needs while all the three cases are totally understandable and acceptable considering the changes of modern families caused by industrialization. Regarding the variety-seeking, effect of TV and other media, travelling and immigration options, increase population and extending the cities, variability of people in terms of appearance and taste and even weakness of religious beliefs may be included from amongst the reasons on variety-seeking.

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