



Comparing Control Locus and Quality of Life in Couples with High and Low Marital Satisfaction

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ABSTRACT: This study was aimed at comparing locus of control and quality of life in couples with high and low marital satisfaction. It was a descriptive and causal-comparative study. Therefore, 30 couples with high and 30 couples with low marital satisfaction were chosen in aimed sampling method. The two Locus of Control and Quality of Life questionnaires were used for collecting the data. Multi-variable variance analysis was applied for testing the research hypotheses. The results indicated a significantly lower score average in couples with high marital satisfaction rather than those with low marital satisfaction for locus of control variable. Life satisfaction was also significantly higher in couples with high marital satisfaction rather than those with low marital satisfaction. The findings are discussed regarding previous research findings, finally.

Key Words: Locus of Control, Life Satisfaction, Marital Satisfaction

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INTRODUCTION

Marital Satisfaction is referred to as a conceptual evaluation of the general nature of marriage reflecting the realization level of one's expectations in marital life [1]. Numerous effective factors on marital satisfaction have been identified in various studies such as social support, attachment styles, and appositive and self-efficacy styles [2]. The role of personality variables such as control nucleus has been mentioned in recent studies. Obtaining and maintaining control have been among notable and discussed areas in recent psychology. There is an increasing tendency towards the way people elaborate on their behaving reasons in psychology. Numerous books and articles have been written on control construct, and different constructs have been studied in this regard [3]. However, the control construct has been studied specially in Rotter's social learning theory [4]. According to Rotter, people with internal locus of control have control over events and feel control over their life, while people with external locus of control believe that external factors such as chance and destiny are determiners of their life and its events.

The locus of control has been associated with gender and education in different studies [6, 7]. According to these studies, internality was positively associated with being male and highly educated. It was also associated with satisfying interpersonal relations [8]. However, few studies have been conducted on the association of locus of control with marital satisfaction. According to Rose [9], although marriage is strongly effective on feeling of control, the association between marriage and locus of control is widely neglected in studies. Myers [10] has reported that the highest marital satisfaction and the lowest marital conflict occurred between couples with more feeling of control over their marital events. On the other hand, externality is associated with negative guidelines of conflict resolution, low commitment to mutual relations, lower marital satisfaction, and higher verbal and physical aggression [10].

The quality of life is another effective variable on marital satisfaction. It is one of the most fundamental concepts in positivist psychology. The belief that scientific, medical, and technologic developments can only improve the life has changed to the belief that individual, familial, social, and community welfare results from a mixture of these developments with individual values and perceptions from welfare and environmental conditions, as primary sources of tendency towards the quality of life [11].

The quality of life is a conceptual general notion and researchers have paid attention to various aspects of it through different theories and approaches [12, 13]. However, they could not present a unified meaning and definition for it. The thought that the quality of life deals with people's relation to their everyday life exists generally at their mental background. There is no consensus yet on the quality of life and its constructing features, but the common idea among the researchers was the multidimensionality of this notion, in a way that each researcher has recounted the constructing layers of the quality of life from his own perspective, and tried to define it through defining different layers. The quality of life refers to the amount of life satisfaction, the

existential state of an individual in life welfare and satisfaction determined on one hand from the external facts or objective factors of life or on the other hand with the internal perception or the personal evaluation of an individual from his own life factors and realities [12].

The quality of life is determined based on individual happiness and life satisfaction, and general welfare is determined by the environment including requirements, wishes, and other tangible and intangible factors [14].

The quality of life is composed of two general notions with clear basic domains. The first one is understanding the quality of life, which results in life satisfaction, and the second one is the quality of life in social environment and the quality of environment [15]. The quality of life is when people enjoy their life facilities [12]. The quality of life is a real element including spiritual equipment of life determined by healthy, life environment, law, work capital, family, etc. The positive association of the quality of life and marital satisfaction is referred to in various studies. The researcher wants to answer whether there is a significant difference between locus of control and quality of life in couples with high and low marital satisfaction considering whatever presented and the results of performed studies.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The method in this study is causal-comparative. The causal-comparative research usually refers to studies where the researcher studies the possible causes of its happening regarding the dependent variable. In other words, this research type looks back and tries to discover the possible cause through the caused. The statistical population included couples in Bandar Abbas, Iran. The aimed sampling method was used because the method was causal-comparative. Therefore, 100 couples were tested using Enrich's Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire. Two 30-member groups were indicated as one with high and the other with low marital satisfaction based on responder scores. They were then asked to answer the research questionnaires. Although these couples were selected randomly first, regarding the research purpose, the couples with the mentioned index for dividing couples to those with high and low marital satisfaction were studied in the second sampling step. The Locus of Control scale by Rotter containing 29 items for testing an individual's expectations and perception on locus of control. Each item has two statements to be selected. Six items are neutral to hide the test intention from the tested. The 23 key items of this scale test the individual beliefs and ideas on the nature of the world. The scale scores range from 0-32 the high score indicates externality while the low score indicates internality [1]. Franklin performed factor analysis on scores of 100 high school students and found that all items are significantly associate with the test as a whole. The average reliability coefficient has been 0.70 in many studies in composition and Cuder Richardson methods. Researchers such as Biabangard and Movaffagh have evaluated and confirmed the content validity of this scale. They also obtained the 0.39 validity using coincidence validity (i.e. internal and external control scale by Noriki and Strickland) [1]. The scale reliability was calculated 0.71 using Ch.'s Alpha in this study.

The Quality of Life questionnaire was translated and standardized by Nejat et al. [2] as a 26-item form in four areas of physical health, mental health, social relations, and environmental health in Iran. The response scale in this research was in Lickert's five-point spectrum where scores range from 26 to 130 [2]. The mentioned questionnaire was performed for 1167 people in order to obtain the denotative validity for distinguishing the score average difference between patients with chronic diseases and the healthy people. The validity was reported to be at a proper level. The reliability was reported with intercluster correlation in the following areas: physical health (0.77), mental health (0.77), social relations (-.75), and environmental health (0.84). The reliability amounts for these subscales were calculated from 0.74-0.78 using Ch.'s Alpha here. Average and standard deviation calculations were used as descriptive and Manova's multi-variable analysis was used as inferential methods to analyze the data.

RESULTS

As mentioned above, average and standard deviation of the studied variables were calculated in descriptive statistics part for couples with high and low marital satisfaction. The results are presented in table 1.

Table 1. Average and standard deviation of the studied variables for couples with high and low marital satisfaction.

Family Type	Variables	Average	SD
High Marital Satisfaction	Locus of Control	10.93	2.71
	Quality of Life	86.96	20.18
Low Marital Satisfaction	Locus of Control	14.43	3.81
	Quality of Life	68.13	19.95

As indicated in table 1, the Average and standard deviation of locus of control in couples with high marital satisfaction were 10.93 and 2.71, and 14.43 and 3.81 in couples with low marital satisfaction. The Average and standard deviation of quality of life variable in couples with high marital satisfaction were 86.96 and 20.18, and 68.13 and 19.95 in couples with low marital satisfaction. The multivariable variance analysis was used to test

the research hypotheses. The Levin's Test was used before data analysis to check the variance homogeneity in variables. Table 2 shows the results of the variance homogeneity in dependent variables of the research.

Table 2. Levin's test the variance homogeneity in variables.

Variable	F	Freedom Degree 1	Freedom Degree 2	Significance level
Locus of Control	1.07	1	58	0.26
Quality of Life	1.77	1	58	0.13

As seen in table 2, the Levin test is not significant for any variables; therefore, the variance homogeneity hypothesis is confirmed. The results of Manova test are presented in table 3.

Table 3. A summary of multi-variable variance analysis results on dependent variable scores.

Trace	Test	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Significance level	Trace size
Group	Pillai's Trace	0.35	15.69	2	57	0.0001	0.36
	Wilks' Lambda	0.64	15.69	2	57	0.0001	0.36
	Hotelling's Trace	0.55	15.69	2	57	0.0001	0.36
	Roy's Largest Root	0.55	15.69	2	57	0.0001	0.36

The data in table 3 indicates a significant difference at least from one dependent variable respect between these two groups. The one-way variance analyses in Manova's context were performed on the dependent variables in order to study this difference further. The results of this analysis are presented in table 4. Table 4 indicates the results of one-way variance analysis in Manova's context to compare the variable scores in both groups.

Table 4. The results of one-way variance analysis in Manova's context on dependent variable scores.

Trace	Dependent Variable	Chi2 Sum	Freedom Degree	Chi2 Average	F	Significance Level	Trace Size
Group	Locus of Control	183.75	1	183.75	16.77	0.001	0.23
	Quality of Life	5320.41	1	5320.41	13.20	0.01	0.19

The results in table 4 indicate that one-way variance analyses are ($F = 16.77$ and $p = 0.001$) in locus of control variable, and ($F = 13.20$ and $p = 0.01$) in quality of life variable. We should just compare the average in both groups with high and low marital satisfaction from the mentioned dependent variables respect to understand this difference.

The data in Table 1 indicated a significantly lower score average in couples with high marital satisfaction than those with low marital satisfaction for locus of control variable. Marital satisfaction scores average of quality of life variable was also significantly higher in couples with high marital satisfaction than in couples with low marital satisfaction. Therefore, all study hypotheses are confirmed.

DISCUSSION

This study was aimed at comparing locus of control and quality of life in couples with high and low marital satisfaction. The research results showed a significantly lower score average in couples with high marital satisfaction than those with low marital satisfaction for locus of control variable. In other words, the locus of control of couples with low marital satisfaction is external compared with couples with high marital satisfaction. The obtained finding is in line with Nurmi et al. [7] and Myers [10] research results. The obtained finding can be elaborated regarding Rotter's theory. The internalers are those having control over their life events. This feeling of control can result in marital satisfaction. On the other hand, the lack of control on life events causes a lower marital satisfaction in couples.

Another finding of this research indicated that the life satisfaction was significantly high in couples with high marital satisfaction than those with low marital satisfaction. This finding was in line with VanKamp et al. [12] and Westaway [15] research results. According to these researchers, the quality of life is when people enjoy their life facilities. It is obvious that couples with high marital satisfaction have a higher quality of life, also. It seems that there is a mutual association between marital satisfaction and the quality of life. High marital satisfaction can increase the quality of life, and high quality of life enhances marital satisfaction. The research results indicated generally that the internal locus of control and high quality of life are associated with marital satisfaction.

This research had some limitations in addition to these findings. Applying paper and pen questionnaires based on verbal reports of the tested participants was one of these limitations which may blemish the validity of the findings. Applying methods such as interviews in addition to questionnaires are suggested for future studies. The limitation of sample to Bandar Abbas couples is another one, which may decrease generalizability of the findings. It is suggested that researchers perform this study on other samples in other cities in the future. Studying the association of locus of control with the quality of life and variables such as marital betrayal and marital conflict can be proper subjects for future research. The findings of this research can be helpful for family counselors and psychologists in consultation with couples.

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