The Relationship between Coping Strategies and Marital Conflict On Employed Women And Housewives And Compared These Two Groups

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Abstract
Introduction: The present study was conducted to determine the relationship between coping strategies with aspects of marital conflict on employed women and housewives and compared these two groups.
Method: Present study in term of method is descriptive-correlation. Statistical population of this research includes all employed married women and housewives of male employees of Iran Medical Sciences University with at least an associate degree that 200 people were selected among them by using random sampling method as the research sample. Data of research were collected by using inventory of marital conflicts (including seven aspects) and the short form of inventory of coping with stressful situations (CISS) of Endler and Parker and were analyzed by using Pearson correlation method and independent t test.
Findings: The results show that in housewives, through coping strategies, problem solving coping strategy has a significant negative relationship with increasing emotional reactions, increasing child support, reducing relation with relatives of his wife and friends and separating financial affairs from each other. Emotional coping strategy has a significant positive correlation with all subscales of marital conflicts. Avoidance strategy has a significant positive relationship with reducing partnership, reducing sexual relation and increasing child support and has negative and significant relationship with separating financial affairs from each other. Its relation with the other marital conflict subscales is not significant.
In employed women, problem solving coping strategy has a significant positive correlation only with separating financial affairs from each other and emotional coping strategy has a significant positive correlation with reducing sexual relations only. Avoidance coping strategy has a significant positive relationship with increasing personal relationship with its relatives and reducing relation with relatives of his wife and friends and has not a significant relationship with the other subscales of marital conflict. Also the mean of employed women in problem solving coping strategy and emotional coping strategy was more than mean of housewives significantly and there was no difference between employed women and housewives in avoidance coping strategy.
Conclusion: Because findings of the study showed a relationship between coping strategies and aspects of conflict and also were qualitative and quantitative differences in the use of coping strategies among employed women and housewives, these findings can be used to resolve conflicts between couples.

Key words: coping strategies, marital conflict, employed women and housewives

Introduction
Conflict outbreak in humans’ relationships with each other is common and inevitable in a way that we can name conflict as the most common phenomenon in humans’ relations. Conflict creates when a person’s action interfere with the other person’s actions. As two people close to each other, conflict potential
increases as well. In fact when the interactions between people increase and include more variable activities and subjects, conflict will be more. Conflict is a phenomenon that creates along with love in the marital relationship and it is inevitable for man and woman who is the product of different experiences. Conflict is as diverse needs and values of the parties that will appear with expressing negative emotions to each other and can provide a situation for clarification and interpretation expectations about the relation of person and life partner for each side of partners. Conflicts among couples provide them this possibility that test their dependency and their partner dependency and discover their depth of emotions toward each other and renew their attempts for creation of a satisfactory relation. So that conflict can help relation growth or damage it. This depends on the way of conflict solution (Taylor, Pellave, Sears, quoted by Saedian 2003).

Rice 1996 believes that constructive conflict differ from deconstructive ones. Descriptive conflicts are subjects where there are discussions of problems lead to more complete understanding for compromise, consensus or solve the problem, cause reduction of negative excitement, create respect and trust and causes that couples place near each other and understand each other. In fact parties are placed in a trust and friendship atmosphere where legitimate opposition is discussed and this needs totally negative responses. Deconstructive conflicts are conflicts that involve the person more than related problem and causes humiliate, insult or punishment. These conflicts are done in order to influencing and creating negative ideas toward the other person. Deconstructive conflicts are identified with the real connection and doubt and sometimes based on individual strategies cause menace and anxiety field. In these kinds of conflicts, discussions are very frizzy and finally lead to resentment and hostility towards the audience, loss of trust and cooperation. Marital conflicts also have different aspects such as cooperation, decreased sex, increased emotional reactions, increased child support, increase personal relationship with their relatives, loss of family relationship with his wife and friends and relatives separated Finance (Abdolmohammadi, 2006) and this research is done based on this aspects. Findings have shown that stressors are the reasons of tensions and conflicts among couples and alienation among them (Bodenmann 1997). Stress is a condition that will be created at the time of Conflict and dichotomy between person-environment interaction and meaningful (whether real or imaginary) between perceived personal resources and environmental demands (Sarafino, 1999). Stress can reduce the time of being together, time shared experiences, mutual emotional self-disclosure, being together, the kindness and satisfactory sexual relations and couples feel and affect marital relations through reduction in quality. In stressing situation positive behaviors such as active listening, interest and sympathy in couples will be decreased and on the other hand negative behaviors such as criticize, humiliate and disrespect, hostility and withdrawal will increase widely that each one of these are weak marital performance predictors and the high risk of divorce. Without ability and suitable facing skills with stress many marital relations will be damaged in way that disability in suitable facing with stress in couples is one of the basic reasons of high rate of divorce. In an experimental research results showed that learning to couple cope leads reduction of marital conflict (Bodenmann et al 2014). The results of different studies have shown that daily stress experience can be moderated by appropriate levels of personal fight against couple (Bardiozoni-Davaji BR et al, 2012). The methods of people cope with stressing situations are different and people show different reaction to stress (Taylor 1999). Endler and Parker 1990 divided coping strategies into three categories of problem solving coping strategy, emotional coping strategy and avoidance coping:

1- Problem solving coping strategy: it includes some solutions for solving, redefining with minimize the effects of a stressful situation.

- **Review mental pressure:** being aware of created tension and its social reasons.
- **Structure:** collecting data about stressing mental factor, checking resources and available facilities and planning for using them.
- **Social skills:** Assertiveness, intimacy, a close relationship with others and self-revelation

2- Emotional coping strategy: it checks controlling emotion reactions of mental factors and includes solutions in order to self-employed, informed speculations or other activities for influencing rules. Defense mechanisms like denial is one of emotion oriented solutions.

Moose and Billing divided emotion-oriented solutions into three categories:

- **Setting moods and emotions:** direct attempts for emotion control have been created from problem by a shrewdly reactionary impulse, experiencing and working with a person’s emotions, creating pride
and not being upset to deal with the problem, dealing with uncertainty by a refusal to take immediate actions.

- **Admission resigning from problem**: waiting for escaping problem, error expectation, accept the situation as it is, and this subject acceptance that we can’t change situation and surrendering to fate.

- **The emotional drain**: verbal expressions for stress relief, crying, smoking, overeating, the employment of impulsive actions

3 - **Avoidance coping strategy**: avoidance coping is done in order to avoid stressing situation with activities and cognitive changes. These solutions can be done by lack of attention to the situation or problem or by switching to a lack of attention to the issue or the community as a means to relieve stress. About marital satisfaction and couples relations, research findings have shown that styles of Problem solving coping strategy has positive relationship with marital satisfaction and emotion oriented styles and avoidance one have negative relationship with sexual satisfaction (Besharat et al, 2006). Researches also confirmed satisfaction and dissatisfaction couples respectively based on styles of problem solving coping strategy and emotional coping strategy. Tompson And Gilbert 1998 quoted by Besharat 2006 have shown that using inefficient coping style has relationship with using a constant style with less marital satisfaction and using efficient coping styles have relationship with using several styles with more marital satisfaction. Bodenmann researches (1997 and 2000) Bodenmann and Sina 1999 also have shown that stress and coping are important predictors for marital performance, negative changing close relationship, negative changing of close relationship and increase of divorce possibility.

Results of a research showed that using couple coping strategy lead to reduce anxiety, depression and conflict in men with prostate cancer and their wives (Regan et al 2013). Results of a study shows that more inclined to couple empathy level, associated with increasing couple level coping strategy. Couple empathy is associated with relationship satisfaction (Levesque 2014). Also, studies have shown that parents can have a positive impact on children when in their conflicts use constructively behaviors such as conflict solving, reasoning, problem-solving skills (Goodman et al 1999). In other words, great conflict is not harmful, if couples can manage conflict in a positive way and have the ability to solve them (Siffert & Schwarz 2010). As it mentioned, interpersonal conflicts, as well as social relations, are comprehensive and wide and experiencing different levels of conflict, disagreement and resentment in a couple interaction is obvious and unavoidable (Cummings et al 2008, Steuber 2005). Thus conflicts as one of the major issues in family and marital relationships has attracted the attention of many researchers and what is important is coping with conflict (Kwan 2004). If conflicts are managed effectively, prevent static and stagnation of communication and create positive and effective skills in accordance with stressful events in couples. Even learning this adaptive approach can make Pearson more resistant in the face of stressful life events (Don Hamm 2008) but if the conflict is poorly managed caused destruction of married life and leaves harmful effects on physical and emotional health of couples (Mahoney 2006).

And can cause a range of emotional and behavioral problems in children that exposed to parental conflict (Hindman 2002). A research showed that female satisfaction related with commitment and couple coping (Landis et al 2014). Thus, due to importance of this subject and lack of comprehensive research, the present study was designed and the following hypotheses were tested.

- There is a relationship between coping strategies and aspects of marital conflict.
- There is difference between coping strategies of employed women and housewives.

**Methodology**

Present study in term of goal was fundamental-application and in term of method was descriptive-correlation. Statistical population of this research includes all employed married women and housewives of male employees of Iran Medical Sciences University with at least an associate degree that 200 people were selected among them by using random sampling method as the research sample. In order to data collecting for research the purpose of this process was explained to employed married women and housewives of male employees of Iran Medical Sciences University at first and after their consent, were given inventory of marital conflict and inventory of coping strategies to them. After gathering 200 completed questionnaires, data were analyzed by using Pearson’s correlation and independent t-test.
Research tools

Data collection tool, was inventory of marital conflict of Sanaee and Barati and inventory of coping with stressful situations (CISS) developed by Endler and Parker.

Inventory of marital conflict built in 1996 by Sanaee and Barati and contains 42 questions and measures 7 aspects of marital conflict:
A. reducing partnership
B. reducing sexual relation
C. increasing emotional reactions
D. increasing child support
E. increasing personal relationship with its relatives
F. reducing relation with relatives of his wife and friends
G. separating financial affairs from each other

Questions of this inventory are 5-point and each item is rated from 1 to 5. In this tool, more score means more conflict and less score means less conflict and better relation. Cronbach’s alpha for all inventory of marital conflict is 0.53 and for 7 subscales of that re as below:
Reducing partnership 0.30, reducing sexual relation 0.50, increasing emotional reactions 0.73, increasing child support 0.60, increasing personal relationship with its relatives 0.64, reducing relation with relatives of his wife and friends 0.64, separating financial affairs from each other 0.51 (Sanaee 2009)

The inventory of coping with stressful situations (CISS) developed by Endler and Parker at 1990 and translated by Akbarzadeh (1997, quoting from HajatBeigi 2000) and includes 48 items which answers has been determined in Likert method from never (1) to always (5). This inventory covers three main fields of coping strategies:
- Problem solving coping strategy or active dealing with the issuein order to manage and resolve that.
- Emotional coping strategy or focus on emotional responses to the issue.
- Avoidance coping strategy or escape the issue.

Reliability of the coping styles to stress questionnaire in students group obtained from Cronbach’s alpha which in problem solving coping strategy for boys was 0.92 and for girls was 0.90, in emotional coping strategy for boys was 0.82 and for girls was 0.85, in avoidance for boys was 0.85 and for girls was 0.82 (FotovatAhmadi 2012). Reliability coefficient of questionnaire with stressful situations from Cronbach’s alpha in Ghoreish’s research obtained at a high level (81.33). (HajatBeigi 2000)

Research findings

In this research 200 people of housewives and employed women were studied. 113 people of participants in the study were employed and 87 people were housewives. In terms of educational status, 61 people (%30.5) were associated, 32 people (%16) were upper associate, 65 people were bachelor, 32 people (%16) were masters and 10 people (%0.5) were PHD. Average age of employed women was 37.07±6.47 and for housewives was 36.55±6.69, maximum age was 52 and minimum age was 23.

Table 1: Correlation coefficient of coping strategies and marital conflict subscales in housewives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Reducing Partnership</th>
<th>Reducing sexual relation</th>
<th>Increasing emotional reactions</th>
<th>Child support</th>
<th>Personal relationship with its relatives</th>
<th>Reducing relation with relatives of his wife and friends</th>
<th>Reducing financial affairs from each other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Problem solving strategy</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.134</td>
<td>-0.60**</td>
<td>-0.57**</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>-0.68**</td>
<td>-0.53**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional coping strategy</td>
<td>0.42**</td>
<td>0.37**</td>
<td>0.67**</td>
<td>0.60**</td>
<td>0.32**</td>
<td>0.64**</td>
<td>0.41**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoidance strategy</td>
<td>0.50**</td>
<td>0.47**</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.40**</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>-0.17</td>
<td>-0.25**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As it can be seen in Table 1, problem solving coping strategy has a significant negative correlation with increasing emotional reactions, increasing child support, reducing relation with relatives of his wife and friends and separating financial affairs from each other. But its relation with reducing partnership, sexual relation and increasing personal relationship is not significant. Emotional coping strategy has a significant positive relationship with all subscales of marital conflict. Avoidance coping strategy has a significant positive relationship with reducing partnership, reducing sexual relation and increasing child support. But its relation with separating financial affairs from each other is negative and significant. Its relation with the other marital conflict subscales is not significant.

Table 2: Correlation coefficient of coping strategies and marital conflict subscales in employed women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Reducing</th>
<th>Reducing</th>
<th>Increasing</th>
<th>Child</th>
<th>Personal</th>
<th>Reducing</th>
<th>Separate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Partnership</td>
<td>sexual reactions</td>
<td>emotional reactions</td>
<td>support</td>
<td>relationship with relatives of his wife and friends</td>
<td>financial affairs from each other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem solving strategy</td>
<td>-0.16</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional coping strategy</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td><strong>0.23</strong></td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoidance coping strategy</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.35**</td>
<td>0.35**</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As it can be seen in Table 2, problem solving coping strategy has a significant positive correlation with separating financial affairs from each other aspect and its relationship with other subscales of marital conflict is not significant. Emotional coping strategy has a significant positive relationship with reducing sexual and its relationship with other subscales of marital conflict is not significant. Avoidance coping strategy has a significant positive relationship with increasing personal relationship with its relatives and reducing relation with relatives of his wife and friends and its relationship with other subscales of marital conflict is not significant.

Table 3: Results of independent t-test to compare two groups in coping strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean differences</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Degree of freedom</th>
<th>Significant level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Problem solving coping</td>
<td>Employed women</td>
<td>11.26</td>
<td>7.416</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strategy</td>
<td>Housewives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional coping strategy</td>
<td>Employed women</td>
<td>8.33</td>
<td>7.872</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Housewives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoidance coping strategy</td>
<td>Employed women</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>1.555</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>0.122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Housewives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results of Table 3 show that, employed women's average is above than housewives' average in problem solving coping strategy and emotional coping strategy significantly. There is no difference between employed women and housewives in avoidance coping strategy.
Conclusion
The first hypothesis testing showed that in employed women, problem solving coping strategy has a significant positive correlation with separating financial affairs from each other aspect but in housewives, problem solving coping strategy has a significant negative relationship with increasing emotional reactions, increasing child support, reducing relation with relatives of his wife and friends and separating financial affairs from each other. But its relationship was not significant with reducing partnership, sexual relation and increasing personal relationship with its relatives. As noted above, problem solving coping strategy includes constructive measures of pearson in stressful situations and tries to remove or change the source of stress (Ghazanfari and Ghadampour 2008). So that, in housewives whatever problem solving coping strategy is more used, marital conflicts decreases but this relation was not observed in employed women and increase the use of this strategy leads to increasing marital conflicts in separating financial affairs from each other aspect. Possible explanations for this phenomenon is that housewives because of more involvement in house chores, gain the ability to manage and operate on the environment gradually and these skills are part of problem solving coping strategy. Because of that they use this strategy at home more and better. But conversely, employed women may not have opportunity to develop and strengthen this coping style because they involved with affairs office and due to financial independence lead to marital conflicts in the field of financial affairs. Another finding was that in employed women, problem solving coping strategy has a significant positive correlation with reducing sexual. In housewives emotional coping strategy has a positive relationship with all seven subscales of marital conflicts. It seems that employed women who use emotional coping strategy have more conflict in their sexual relations with his wife than other conflict aspects but housewives who use emotional coping strategy, experience more conflict in all aspects. In emotional coping strategy, pearson escapes the stressful issue by away from it and looking for emotional support and transfer of coping responsibilities to others (Momeni and Shahbazi rad 2011). Results of this research confirm this relation. It means that with increasing use of emotional coping strategy especially in housewives more conflict was observed. In employed women this relation was weaker perhaps for this reason that in employed women other factors adjusted the relationship between coping strategies and marital conflicts. Also the results showed that in employed women, avoidance strategy has a significant positive correlation with personal relationship with its relatives and reducing relation with relatives of his wife and friends and in housewives avoidance strategy has a significant positive correlation with reducing partnership, reducing sexual and increasing child support and has a significant negative relationship with separating financial affairs from each other and have not any significant relationship with the other subscales of marital conflicts. In avoidant coping style, pearson escapes the stressful issue by away from it and looking for emotional support and transfer of coping responsibilities to others (Momeni and Shahbazi rad 2012). As the results show, the use of methods such as avoidance methods, escape - avoid can reduce intimacy and increase conflict and tension between couple (Rostami 2013, Kevin Smith 1991). (Baisun 2009) also in a research showed that there is a significant positive relationship between stress and avoidance conflict resolution style. In present study increased marital conflicts by increasing the score of coping strategy and there was no differences between employed women and housewives. It seems that this strategy is inappropriate and will have a similar effect in all groups and is with negative consequences such as marital conflicts. Investigation the second hypothesis showed that employed women use higher than housewives from problem solving coping strategy and emotion strategy significantly but there was no difference between employed women and housewives in avoidance coping strategy. Although a lot of research about coping strategies has been done but most of present studies about relationship between coping strategies and marital satisfaction, are chronic diseases and health (Carver 1981, Carver et al 1993, Estratez, Perry Mond and Minens 2000) of course, if consider satisfaction and consistency of most people, the consequence of reducing conflict. The findings of this study can be considered with Moos and Billings 1981 and Taylor 1991 which expressed problem solving coping strategy has positive correlation with compatibility Index. In general it can be said that marital conflict can be a great role in reducing social welfare and increasing mental disorders in married people, thus identification the factors that are influencing on this conflict is important. This research with the aim of taking a step in this
direction show that there is a relationship between coping strategies with marital conflicts and problem solving coping strategy more effective to reduce marital conflict. Also this relation in housewives is stronger than employed women. Results of this research can be used in educational programs of promoting coping methods of couples.

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