Original Article

IEEPJ Vol. 4, No. 2, 2022, 277-289

http://ieepj.hormozgan.ac.ir/

Iranian Evolutionary and Educational Psychology Journal

IEEPJ

Relationship between Sex Roles and Marital Instability: The Moderating Role of Orientation in the Sexual Relationship among Women

Parisa Zamanian[1]*, Ali Zadehmohammadi[2], Leili Panaghi[3]

1. Master of Family Clinical Psychology, Family Research Institute, Shahid Beheshti University, Tehran, Iran

2. Associate Professor, Clinical Psychology, Family Research Institute, Shahid Beheshti University, Iran

3. Ph.D. in Social Medicine, Associate Professor, Family Research Institute, Shahid Beheshti University, Tehran, Iran

* Corresponding author's Email: Parisa.zamanian90@gmail.com

Abstract: This study aimed to determine the relationship between sex roles and marital instability and the moderating role played by orientation in women's sexual relationship. This correlational study is conducted on women living in Tehran. Additionally, 150 people were selected by convenience sampling from different parts of Tehran, who completed questionnaires on marital instability, sex roles and orientation in a sexual relationship. The results showed that orientation in a sexual relationship, except for communal orientation in the role of femininity in women, has a moderating role between sex roles and marital instability. In all cases, greater communal orientation in a sexual relationship reduces the instability of marriage in women. Also, a higher exchange orientation in a sexual relationship increases the instability of marriage in women. Additionally, greater demand in a sexual relationship, except when masculinity is high in women, heightens marital instability in women. In women with higher levels of communal exchange and demand orientation in a sexual relationship, increased sex roles (masculinity or femininity) reduce instability, and in women with lower levels of demand and exchange in sex, increased sex roles (masculinity or femininity) do not change the degree of marital instability. Based on this, the findings of this study can be used to monitor and increase the stability of marriage in Iranian society.

Keywords: Marital instability, Sex roles, Communal orientation in a sexual relationship, Demand orientation in a sexual relationship, Exchange orientation in a sexual relationship, women

Introduction

Marriage is usually known as an important tradition in all societies (Madathil & Benshoff, 2008). Considering this relationship as a permanent close relation, the presence of conflicts that are formed due to the couple's demand is natural (Epstein & Baucom, 1989) and resolving them has become a priority in the couples' relationship (Siffert & Schwarz, 2011) which affects people's mental health in today's society (Waite, Luo, & Lewin, 2009). In fact, marital instability occurs when one or both spouses think about divorce or separation, or act like a separate person (Booth, Johnson, White, & Edwards, 1985).

In general, sexual, behavioral, familial, religious, social, and financial factors (Maciver & Dimkpa, 2012), sexual satisfaction, recurrent conflicts (Jackson, 2014) as well as sex roles (Ahmadi, Fatehi zade, Bahrami, Etemadi, & shahmoradi, 2014) are leading couples towards the instability of marriage. The sex roles include behaviors, attitudes, and personal characteristics that are appropriate or common for the social role of men or women in society due to the media, school, religion, peer community, and

Article information: Received: 2022/02/13 | Accepted: 2022/05/11 | Published: 2022/06/01. https://doi.org/10.52547/ieepj.4.2.277

[Downloaded from ieepj.hormozgan.ac.ir on 2026-10-12]

[DOR: 20.1001.1.25884395.2022.4.2.8.0]

[DOI: 10.52547/ieepj.4.2.277]

family education especially in the early years of life (Yu & Lee, 2013) and are known as masculinity and femininity (S. L. Bem, 1981).

S. L. Bem (1981) defines four types of sex roles: first, the role of masculinity, which has characteristics such as independence, leadership, and domination; second, the role of femininity, which has characteristics such as sensitivity, kindness, and gentleness; third bisexuality with both masculine and feminine characteristics, and the last type is non-sex roles with traits such as trustworthiness and conscientiousness that are not gender specific.

Sex roles are critical factors in marriage conflicts

Women play a demanding role due to their desire for intimacy. On the other hand, men take a withdrawn role due to their needs and tendencies (Ahmadi et al., 2014).

Women with higher education, salary, and outside participation tend to independency, which can change their sex roles (Lehrer & Son, 2017). The growing entrance of women to the workplace with equal jobs to men's decreases job segregation, which supports hypothesis that the presence of both sexes in the workplace increases divorce rates hypothesis. This hypothesis states that divorce risk is higher for women working in male dominated occupations McKinnish (2020). On the other hand, conflicts that cause instability in marriage arise from differences and discrimination in marriage roles. Importantly, gender stereotypes that attribute certain traits to men and women cause these conflicts according to the marriage roles' demand (Safiri & Zare, 2007). Booth et al. (1985) have shown that women's employment reduces marriage satisfaction, but this is due to a mismatch between couples' attitudes toward women's employment.

Another important factor that affects the quality of marriage is the sexual behavior that is formed in the context of sex roles. Sexual behavior refers to a combination of concepts, attitudes, experiences, activities, feelings, and related thoughts. The differences between men and women in sexual behavior are largely determined by sex roles and cultural variables. For example, women do not usually talk about their orientation in a sexual relationship or dissatisfaction in Iranian culture. In fact, they are faced with a stereotype that a "good woman" does not talk about her sexual behavior. Sex roles' schemas are formed in girls from an early age and women are passively planned for their gender destiny(Khamsehei, 2007). Indeed, as long as Iranian women define themselves based on misconceptions of gender stereotypes and society's culture, they cannot express a true self-sexual desire (Asadi, Fathabadi, & Mohammad Sharifi, 2014).

Clark and Mills (1979) proposed the theory of orientation in a relationship. In fact, individuals' attitudes in relationships are either exchange or communal. In the exchange orientation, the individuals focus on the profit and loss of the relationship and expect to receive at least what they give. However, in a communal orientation that is more common in family members, one person is concerned about the well-being of others and has a positive attitude toward the relationship, and wants to increase shared rewards. People with exchange orientation in a sexual relationship do not feel responsible for their spouse's sexual satisfaction and sex when they benefit or expect the opposite in the future, but people

[Downloaded from ieepj.hormozgan.ac.ir on 2026-10-12]
[DOR: 20.1001.1.25884395.2022.4.2.8.0]
[DOI: 10.52547/ieepj.4.2.277]

with communal orientation feel responsible for their spouse's sexual satisfaction and want to meet their sexual partner' needs(Heidari, Zalpour, & Molaii, 2011).

Heidari et al. (2011) mention a third factor called expectation, in which a person expects his wife to fulfill all his sexual needs, but he does not pay attention to his partner's needs. As mentioned, the orientation in a sexual relationship is an important factor in sexual satisfaction, and previous research has highlighted the impact of sexual dissatisfaction in divorce and other issues in a relationship such as infidelity and mental complications (Hurlbert & Whittaker, 1991). According to Abbasi Asl and Nazari (2015) studies, sexual dissatisfaction has a significant effect on marital instability , so it is necessary to study the relationship between orientation in a sexual relationship and marital instability . To the best of our knowledge there has been no study on this issue. Notably, the level of this satisfaction has experienced a falling trend for at least 10 years in relevant studies, so that 55% of Americans and 40-45% of people in Australia, England, Germany and Switzerland have divorced after the birth of their first child (Hahlweg & Richter, 2010).

According to the Iranian Registration Organization, the number of registered marriages has decreased by about 8% (51,000 cases) compared to the year 1395, while the number of divorces has reached about 175,000, which is the highest number recorded in the history of Iran. One of the reasons for this increment is the change in sex roles as an important factor in marriage satisfaction (Jarallahi, 1993). According to the Statistics Center of Iran (2009), these changes are growing due to the media induction and higher education of women (Rahimi Ahmadabadi et al., 2016).

On the other hand, most research on the instability of marriage focuses on its consequences or is based on easily available indicators such as divorce and separation(S. L. Bem, 1981), while the Iranian research by Keyhan and Saber (2016), Maaref, Khalili, Hejazi, and Golamali Lavasani (2015) was conducted on the relationship between sex roles and marriage satisfaction. There has been no research has on the relationship between sex roles and marital instability in Iran. Therefore, this research can be useful for Iranian society. On the other hand, the used tools in previous research did not address the effective emotional and cognitive factors of sex and only address the objective aspects and apparent satisfaction of these relationships. The present study reveals cognitive and emotional factors in sexual relationships. Heidari et al. (2011) have also focused on orientation in a sexual relationship according to Iranian culture but did not assess the effect of this variable on marital instability . Also, there were no studies on the examination of the relationship between sex roles or orientation in sexual relationships and marriage satisfaction separately. As mentioned before, the need for research on the influence of the sex roles and orientation in the sexual relationship on marital instability is felt especially in Iran society. Therefore, this study was conducted on the moderating role of orientation in a sexual relationship in the relationship between sex roles and marital instability.

Material and Methods

This is a descriptive-analytical, correlation study which aimed to investigate the relationship between different types of sex roles and orientation in a sexual relationship with marital instability as well as

[Downloaded from ieepj.hormozgan.ac.ir on 2026-10-12]

[DOR: 20.1001.1.25884395.2022.4.2.8.0]
[DOI: 10.52547/ieepj.4.2.277]

the effect of sex roles on sexual orientation. The statistical population comprised of married men living in Tehran during 2018-2019. Out of this population, individuals were selected based on the available sampling regarding the variable of the study.

To select a more appropriate sample, after obtaining the participants' consent to participate in the research, questionnaires were distributed to the married participants. Importantly, the questionnaire link was sent online to the married participants. Regarding ethical considerations, the subjects were assured that these questions are purely research-oriented and do not require writing a first and last name. The instruments used in this study included a demographic information form, marital instability questionnaire, Sex roles questionnaire, and Orientation in sexual relationship, presented as follows.

D. Bem (1974) questionnaire was used to measure the variable of sex roles. Pedhazur and Tetenbaum (1979) have shown in their research that dividing people into these four groups in the Bem questionnaire is incorrect. Therefore, femininity and masculinity scores have been used in this research without considering the four subscales. In Khamsehei (2007) study, the reliability rate for the Masculine subscale was 0.90, for the Feminine subscale was 0.93, for the Androgynous subscale was 0.93 and for the undifferentiated subscale was s 0.89. The internal validity for the Stanford sample has been reported as follows Masculine, 0.86, for Feminine, 0.8, for undifferentiated, 0.75 and for Androgynous, 0.85 (Khamsehei, 2007). The reliability of this questionnaire in the present study with Cronbach's alpha method is Obtained 0.87.

Sexual orientation was measured by the sexual orientation scale. Hughes and Snell (1990) presented the sexual relationship scale (SRS). This scale has 24 items and includes two subscales of exchange orientation and communal orientation. Internal consistency has been reported as 0.78 for the communal subscale and 0.67 for the exchange subscale (Hughes & Snell, 1990). The Persian version of this scale, which was translated by Heidari et al. (2011), has 17 items and three subscales: communal, exchange, and expectation. In the study of Heidari et al. (2011), the validity of this scale was reported as 0.81 to 0.90 and its reliability as 0.92 to 0.96. The reliability of this questionnaire in the present study with Cronbach's alpha method is Obtained 0.89.

Marital instability was measured by the Marital Instability Index. Booth et al. (1985) developed the Marital Instability Index (MII) with 22-items. The first 14 questions are to measure the susceptibility to divorce and the next 8 questions are the attractions and barriers to divorce. The reliability of this scale is reported as 0.93 and it has good validity. This scale was implemented for the first time in Iran by Yaripour (1979) on 50 couples and its reliability coefficient was reported at 0.70 (Khamsehei, 2007). The reliability of this questionnaire in the present study with Cronbach's alpha method is Obtained 0.85.

Research data was collected from February 2018 to March 2019 by referring to different areas of Tehran, including area 5 (Kourosh Food Court, Samarkand Commercial Complex and Prophets Hospital), area 9 (Mehrabad Airport), area 16 (Railway Square), area 22 (around Chitgar Lake). Data analysis in the present study was done with SPSS-22 software.

Results

The first question of the research examined the moderating role of communal orientation in the relationship between the role of femininity and marital instability in women, which was not significant. The second research question examined the moderating role of communal orientation in

[Downloaded from ieepj.hormozgan.ac.ir on 2026-10-12]

[DOR: 20.1001.1.25884395.2022.4.2.8.0]
[DOI: 10.52547/ieepj.4.2.277]

the relationship between the role of masculinity and marital instability. The results of hierarchical regression are presented in Table 1:

Table 1. The results of regression coefficient communal orientation in sexual relationship and the role of masculinity in women

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	Constant	-.013	.086		-.146	.884
	Masculinity role Z score	-.186	.081	-.183	-2.302	.023
2	Constant	.012	.088		.141	.888
	Masculinity role Z score	-.179	.081	-.176	-2.216	.028
	Communal Z score	-.121	.084	-.114	-1.439	.152
3	Constant	.017	.088		.194	.847
	Masculinity role Z score	-.181	.081	-.178	-2.235	.027
	Communal Z score	-.149	.097	-.141	-1.538	.126
	Interaction score	-.047	.080	-.054	-.586	.558

In the first step, hierarchical regression of the independent variable (role of masculinity) was entered into the equation. In this case, the obtained regression coefficient was significant ($P < 0.05$, $B = -0.186$), i.e., the role of masculinity can be a good predictor of marital instability in women. In the second step, the independent variable and the moderating variable (the role of masculinity and communal orientation) are entered into the equation, in which case the regression coefficient is not significant ($P > 0.05$, $B = -0.121$), i.e., communal in sexual orientation cannot predict the instability of marriage in women as a separate factor. In the third step, the interaction of independent and moderating variables is entered, in which case the regression coefficient is significant ($P < 0.05$, $B = -0.041$). In other words, communal orientation in sex in the relationship between the role of masculinity and marital instability has a moderating role in women. Increasing the role of masculinity reduces the instability of marriage in women when the communal orientation is low or high. Another question of the study was the moderating role of orientation in the sexual relationship in the relationship between the role of femininity and instability of marriage in women. To answer this question, the following table was obtained using hierarchical regression are presented in Table 2:

Table 2. The results and regression coefficient of exchange orientation in sexual relationship and the role of femininity in women

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p
		B	Std. error	Beta		
1	Constant	.080	.086		.936	.351
	femininity role Z score	-.156	.095	-.132	-1.644	.102
2	Constant	.095	.084		1.127	.261
	femininity role Z score	-.144	.093	-.121	-1.543	.125
	Exchange Z score	.237	.083	.224	2.853	.005
3	Constant	.105	.083		1.270	.206
	femininity role Z score	-.226	.098	-.190	-2.306	.022
	Exchange Z score	.307	.087	.290	3.534	.001
	Interaction score	-.216	.091	-.208	-2.377	.019

In the first step, hierarchical regression of the independent variable (femininity role) is entered into the equation. In this case, the obtained regression coefficient was not significant ($P > 0.05$, $B = -0.156$),

[Downloaded from ieepj.hormozgan.ac.ir on 2026-10-12]

[DOR: 20.1001.1.25884395.2022.4.2.8.0]
[DOI: 10.52547/ieepj.4.2.277]

i.e., the role of femininity cannot be a good predictor of marital instability in women as a separate factor. In the second step, the independent variable and the moderating variable (role of femininity and exchange orientation) are entered into the equation, in which case the regression coefficient is significant (P < 0.05, B = 0.237), i.e., the exchange orientation in sex can predict the instability of marriage in women. In the third step, the interaction of independent and moderating variables is entered, where the regression coefficient is significant (P < 0.05, B = −0.216). To elaborate, the orientation of the exchange in the relationship between the role of femininity and marital instability has a moderating role in women. Notably, when the exchange orientation is low, the degree of the instability of marriage does not change with stronger or weaker role of femininity. However, the greater role of femininity mitigates the instability of marriage when the exchange orientation is high in women. Another question of the study was the moderating role of orientation in the sexual relationship in the relationship between the role of femininity and instability of marriage in women. To answer this question, the following table was obtained using hierarchical regression are presented in Table 3:

Table 3. Results and regression coefficient of exchange orientation in sex and the role of masculinity in women

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	Constant	-.013	.086		-.146	.884
	Masculinity role Z score	-.186	.081	-.183	-2.302	.023
2	Constant	.010	.085		.120	.905
	Masculinity role Z score	-.166	.080	-.163	-2.091	.038
	Exchange Z score	.227	.083	.215	2.747	.007
3	Constant	-.003	.085		-.039	.969
	Masculinity role Z score	-.168	.079	-.165	-2.129	.035
	Exchange Z score	.183	.086	.173	2.128	.035
	Interaction score	-.143	.083	-.139	-1.715	.088

In the first step, hierarchical regression of the independent variable (role of masculinity) is entered into the equation. In this case, the obtained regression coefficient is significant (P < 0.05, B = −0.186), i.e., the role of masculinity can be a good predictor of the instability of marital in women as a single factor. In the second step, the independent variable and the moderating variable (the role of masculinity and exchange orientation) are fed into the equation, where the regression coefficient is significant (P < 0.05, B = −0.166); that is, exchange orientation in sex can predict the instability of marriage in women. In the third step, the interaction of independent and moderating variables is entered, and the regression coefficient is found significant (P < 0.05, B = −0.143). In other words, the exchange orientation in sex in the relationship between the role of masculinity and marital instability has a moderating role in women. To clarify, when the exchange orientation is low, the rate of marital instability does not change stronger or weaker role of masculinity, but when the exchange orientation is high in women, increasing the role of masculinity reduces the instability of marriage.

[Downloaded from ieepj.hormozgan.ac.ir on 2026-10-12]
[DOR: 20.1001.1.25884395.2022.4.2.8.0]
[DOI: 10.52547/ieepj.4.2.277]

The next research question examined the moderating role of expectation orientation in the relationship between the role of femininity and marital instability in women. Hierarchical regression findings are presented in Table 4:

Table 4. Results and regression coefficient of sex orientation demand and the role of femininity in women

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p
		B	Std. error	Beta		
1	Constant	.080	.086		.936	.351
	femininity role Z score	-.156	.095	-.132	-1.644	.102
2	Constant	.071	.086		.830	.408
	femininity role Z score	-.162	.095	-.137	-1.708	.090
	Demand Z score	.117	.092	.102	1.271	.206
3	Constant	.076	.085		.898	.370
	femininity role Z score	-.156	.094	-.131	-1.650	.101
	Demand Z score	.189	.098	.165	1.927	.056
	Interaction score	-.224	.113	-.169	-1.984	.049

In the first step, hierarchical regression of the independent variable (role of femininity) is entered into the equation. Accordingly, the obtained regression coefficient is not significant ($P > 0.05$, $B = -0.156$), i.e., that is, the role of femininity cannot alone be a good predictor of marital instability. In the second step, the independent variable and the moderating variable (role of femininity and demand orientation) are fed into the equation, in which case the regression coefficient is not significant ($P < 0.05$, $B = 0.117$), i.e., demand orientation in sex cannot predict the instability of marriage in women. In the third step, the interaction of independent and moderating variables is entered, and the regression coefficient is found significant ($P < 0.05$, $B = -0.224$). To shed light on the issue, the exchange orientation in sex in the relationship between the role of femininity and marital instability has a moderating role in women. As an elucidation, when the demand is low, increasing or decreasing the role of femininity does not alter the instability of marriage, but when the orientation of demand is high in women, increasing the role of femininity lessens the instability of marriage. Another question of the study was the role of moderating the orientation of orientation in the sexual relationship in the relationship between the role of masculinity and marital instability in women. To answer this question, the following table was drawn based on hierarchical regression presented in Table 5:

Table 5. Results and regression coefficient of demand in orientation in the sexual relationship and the role of masculinity in women

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	Constant	-.013	.086		-.146	.884
	Masculinity role Z score	-.186	.081	-.183	-2.302	.023
2	Constant	-.022	.087		-.250	.803
	Masculinity role Z score	-.185	.081	-.182	-2.292	.023
	Demand Z score	.107	.091	.093	1.172	.243
3	Constant	-.022	.086		-.255	.799
	Masculinity role Z score	-.174	.080	-.170	-2.172	.031
	Demand Z score	.067	.092	.058	.732	.465
	Interaction score	-.195	.085	-.182	-2.281	.024

[Downloaded from ieepj.hormozgan.ac.ir on 2026-10-12]
[DOR: 20.1001.1.25884395.2022.4.2.8.0]
[DOI: 10.52547/ieepj.4.2.277]

In the first step, hierarchical regression of the independent variable (role of masculinity) is entered into the equation. In this case, the obtained regression coefficient is significant ($P < 0.05$, $B = -0.186$). Alternatively stated, the role of masculinity can only be a good predictor of the instability of marriage in women. In the second step, the independent variable and the moderating variable (the role of masculinity and demand orientation) are fed into the equation, where the regression coefficient is not significant ($P < 0.05$, $B = 0.107$). In other words, demand orientation in sex cannot predict the instability of marriage in women. In the third step, the interaction of independent and moderating variables is entered, in which case the regression coefficient is significant ($P < 0.05$, $B = -0.195$). To put it differently, the orientation of sexual demand in the relationship between the role of masculinity and marital instability has a moderating role in women. When the demand is low, increasing or decreasing the role of masculinity does not change the instability of marriage, but when the orientation of demand is high in women, increasing the role of masculinity reduces the instability of marriage.

Discussion

This study aimed to determine the moderating role of orientation in the sexual relationship between sex roles and marital instability. The first question of the study examined the moderating role of communal orientation in the sexual relationship concerning the role of femininity with marital instability in women. According to the findings of this study, there was no significant relationship between the sex roles of femininity and instability of marriage, and the results are in line with the research by Keyhan and Saber (2016), Maaref et al. (2015),). However, this finding is inconsistent with the research of Garcia-Retamero and López-Zafra (2006), Rey (2014), and the research by Hughes and Snell (1990), because they did not arrive at a significant relationship between communal orientation in the sexual relationship and marital instability in women. The lack of relationship between sex roles (femininity in this study) and instability of marriage in women can be explained by the fact that women's higher satisfaction depends on their partners' role than on their role (Keyhan & Saber, 2016; Maaref et al., 2015); also, communal orientation in the sexual

The second question of the study examined the moderating role of communal orientation in sex with reference to the role of masculinity with marital instability in women. According to the results, stronger communal orientation in sex will reduce the instability of marriage regardless of the role of masculinity in women. Of note, with both higher sex roles of masculinity and the communal orientation, the lowest rate of marital instability is observed in women. The findings of this study in terms of the role of masculinity in women and their relationship in the instability of marriage are in line with the research by Garcia-Retamero and López-Zafra (2006), Khamsehei (2007) Nevertheless, communal orientation in sex in women cannot predict the instability of marriage alone and is inconsistent with the research of Hughes and Snell (1990). It seems that by strengthening the masculine gender attitude with lower gender stereotypes in women, the women can express their sexual desires more easily and gain more satisfaction from their relationship (Khamsehei, 2007). It seems that by strengthening the masculine gender attitude with lower gender stereotypes in women,

[Downloaded from ieepj.hormozgan.ac.ir on 2026-10-12]
[DOR: 20.1001.1.25884395.2022.4.2.8.0]
[DOI: 10.52547/ieepj.4.2.277]

the women can express their sexual desires more easily and gain more satisfaction from their relationship (Heidari et al., 2011). Thus, it can be said that women try to establish a more pleasant relationship for themselves and their husbands by increasing the masculine gender attitude in a highly communal orientation by meeting their own and their partner's needs. As a result, a more satisfying relationship can be achieved with lower instability of their marriage. Also, the lower masculinity role in low communal orientation shows the highest instability. This can be explained by the fact that reducing the role of masculinity in women with low communal orientation heightens dependence, obedience, and rejection of the needs of the spouse, which finally leads to a reduction in marital satisfaction and more instability.

The results of the third question showed the moderating role of exchange orientation in sex regarding the role of femininity with marital instability in women. According to the results, with weaker role of femininity in women and higher exchange orientation in sex, the highest rate of marital instability occurs, but with stronger femininity role, the rate of marital instability in the exchange orientation in sex remains constant. It is in line with the research by Keyhan and Saber (2016), and Maaref et al. (2015). Yet, this finding is inconsistent with the studies conducted by Garcia-Retamero and López-Zafra (2006) and Rey (2014). and those by Hughes and Snell (1990) where there was a significant relationship between orientation in the sexual relationship and sexual instability in women. In addition,Heidari et al. (2011) demonstrated that Iranian women do not typically talk about or express their sexual attitudes. To explain, it can be said that with an increasing role of femininity women strengthen the interpersonal aspects of the marital relationship than the physical aspects, and when these characteristics increase in women who have a profiteering relationship, the instability of marriage reduces and they try to meet their spouse's needs. Furthermore, the lower role of femininity and the high exchange orientation shows the highest degree of instability in women. They have a transactional attitude toward the relationship and do not have an innate desire to meet the needs of their spouse, which increases the instability of marriage in them.

According to the results, when the role of masculinity in women is low, a higher exchange orientation in the sexual relationship shows more instability of marriage than a lower exchange orientation. Also, when the role of masculinity in women is high, the same instability can be observed in high and low exchange orientation in sex, which is consistent with the research of Khamsehei (2007) and Garcia-Retamero and López-Zafra (2006).

On the other hand, the findings of this study are inconsistent with the research of Hughes and Snell (1990) in that there was a significant relationship between exchange orientation in sex and marital instability in women. To explain the reduction rate of marital instability in women with a stronger masculinity role in the high exchange orientation, and the same level of marital instability in the high and low exchange orientation in sex, it can be said that the instability of marriage is reduced in women who have a high exchange orientation in sex, and masculine characteristics such as independence, self-reliance, defending one's beliefs, courage, leadership and easy expression of sexual needs. Also, the highest instability of marriage in the low masculinity role and the high exchange orientation in the

[Downloaded from ieepj.hormozgan.ac.ir on 2026-10-12]

[DOR: 20.1001.1.25884395.2022.4.2.8.0]
[DOI: 10.52547/ieepj.4.2.277]

sexual relationship in women can be explained by weaker characteristics such as leadership and easy expression of needs and feelings in women with a transactional attitude to the relationship, which deprives them of controlling the sexual relationship.

According to the results, when the role of femininity in women is low, the orientation of high demand in sex shows the instability of marriage more than the low orientation demand; and when femininity is high in women, the high and low demand orientations in sex show the same instability of marriage. It should be noted that in this study, the role of femininity in women was not significantly related to marital instability and the findings of this study are in line with the research of Keyhan and Saber (2016), and Maaref et al. (2015). Yet, this finding is inconsistent with the research by Garcia-Retamero and López-Zafra (2006) and Rey (2014). On the other hand, no research was found on the relationship between the demand of orientation in sexual relationships and the instability of marriage. To explain equal marital instability in women with a high degree of femininity and a high or low demand orientation in sex, it can be said that when a woman with a demand of orientation in a sexual relationship and prioritization of their own sexual needs (Heidari et al., 2011). Focuses on the emotional relationship than the physical aspects, and reduces her strict demands, which affects her satisfaction in the relationship and the instability of the marriage.

Also, to explain the highest rate of marital instability in women with weaker femininity role regarding the high demand, it can be stated that when sympathy and emotionality are reduced in women who have high sexual demand, they ignore the needs of their spouse, which elevates the instability of the marriage.

According to the results, when the role of masculinity in women is low, the high demand orientation in sex shows more instability of marriage than the low demand orientation in sex. In addition, when the role of masculinity in women is high in the high demand orientation, there is less instability in marriage than in low-demand sex. The findings of this study agree with those by Garcia-Retamero and López-Zafra (2006) and Rey (2014) who revealed a relationship between the sex roles of masculinity in women and marital instability. There has been no research on the orientation of demand in the sexual relationship and marital satisfaction. It was found in this research that increasing the sex roles of masculinity in orienting high demand in sex, the instability of marriage in women decreases. To explain, these women express their demands more freely and they achieve greater sexual satisfaction and, consequently, marital instability decreases. Also, it was revealed that by reducing the role of masculinity concerning high demand in sex, the highest rate of marital instability is observed in women, because the reduction of characteristics such as leadership, independence and the easy expression of needs in women who have high demand in sex increase the instability of marriage in them.

Overall, the results of the analysis showed that orientation in the sexual relationship in women in some cases had a moderating role concerning sex roles and marital instability. In general, in all the measured cases of communal orientation in a sexual relationship, its increment has reduced the instability of marriage. Thus, increasing the desire to meet the needs of the husband and creating happiness in a

[Downloaded from ieepj.hormozgan.ac.ir on 2026-10-12]
[DOR: 20.1001.1.25884395.2022.4.2.8.0]
[DOI: 10.52547/ieepj.4.2.277]

sexual relationship in women reduces the instability of marriage. It can indicate the importance of masculinity role in women. In fact, marital instability decreases with increasing traits such as decision-making power, self-reliance, and self-expression in the high or less communal orientation in women's sexuality. In addition, in all measured cases, the exchange orientation has a direct positive relationship with the instability of marriage. Thus, sharpening people's concern about what they give and receive in sex, and the lack of an innate desire to meet the needs of the spouse, in general, increase the instability of marriage. In women with a low exchange orientation, increasing sex roles have no effect on the instability of their marriage, but in women with a high exchange orientation, increasing sex roles (femininity or masculinity) reduces the instability of marriage.

In addition to the obtained findings, the current research has some limitations, that most important of which is the accessible sampling method that was used to select the sample. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to other samples with certainty. Interested researchers are suggested to repeat this study in other samples. Also, according to the research findings and the role of sexual relationship orientations, it is suggested that couples with marital problems be given training about these orientations and their effect on marital relationships.

Conflict of interest: The authors state no conflict of interest in the study.

Financial sponsor: The authors acknowledge that they have not received any financial support for all stages of the study, writing and publication of the paper.

Acknowledgements: The researchers wish to thank all the individuals who participated in the study.

References

Abbasi Asl, M., & Nazari, A. M. (2015). *Relationship between sexual satisfaction, marital intimacy and attachment styles with marital instability of married women*. Paper presented at the The first comprehensive international conference of psychology, educational sciences and social sciences, Tehran.

Ahmadi, A., Fatehi zade, M., Bahrami, F., Etemadi, O., & shahmoradi, s. (2014). The Relationship between Gender Stereotypes, Sense of Power, and Demographic Variables with the Cycle of Demand-Withdrawal Marital Communication. *Journal of Applied Sociology*, *25*(1), 101-110.

Asadi, E., Fathabadi, J., & Mohammad Sharifi, F. (2014). The Relationship between Couple Burnout, Sexual Assertiveness, and Sexual Dysfunctional Beliefs in Married Women. *Family Counseling and Psychotherapy*, *3*(4), 661-692.

Bem, D. (1974). On predicting some of the people some of the time: The search for cross-situational consistencies in behavior. *Psychological review*, *81*(6), 506-520.

[Downloaded from ieepj.hormozgan.ac.ir on 2026-10-12]

[DOR: 20.1001.1.25884395.2022.4.2.8.0]

[DOI: 10.52547/ieepj.4.2.277]

Bem, S. L. (1981). Gender schema theory: A cognitive account of sex typing. *Psychological review, 88*(4), 354-364.

Booth, A., Johnson, D. R., White, L. K., & Edwards, J. N. (1985). Predicting divorce and permanent separation. *Journal of Family Issues, 6*(3), 331-346.

Clark, M. S., & Mills, J. (1979). Interpersonal attraction in exchange and communal relationships. *Journal of personality and social psychology, 37*(1), 12-24.

Epstein, N., & Baucom, D. H. (1989). Cognitive-behavioral marital therapy. In *Comprehensive handbook of cognitive therapy* (pp. 491-513): Springer.

Garcia-Retamero, R., & López-Zafra, E. (2006). Prejudice against women in male-congenial environments: Perceptions of gender role congruity in leadership. *Sex roles, 55*(1), 51-61.

Hahlweg, K., & Richter, D. (2010). Prevention of marital instability and distress. Results of an 11-year longitudinal follow-up study. *Behaviour Research and Therapy, 48*(5), 377-383.

Heidari, M., Zalpour, K., & Molaii, A. (2011). Psychometric examination of the sexual relationship scale (SRS). *JOURNAL OF FAMILY RESEARCH, 6*(24), 511-525.

Hughes, T. G., & Snell, W. E. (1990). Communal and exchange approaches to sexual relations. *Annals of Sex Research, 3*(2), 149-163.

Hurlbert, D. F., & Whittaker, K. E. (1991). The role of masturbation in marital and sexual satisfaction: A comparative study of female masturbators and nonmasturbators. *Journal of Sex Education and Therapy, 17*(4), 272-282.

Jackson, A. (2014). *Associations among marital satisfaction, sexual satisfaction, conflict frequency, and divorce risk from 1980 to 2000.* (PhD), Auburn University, Albama.

Jarallahi, O. (1993). History of female employment in Iran. *Social Sciences, 2*(3.4), 249-267.

Keyhan, F., & Saber, S. (2016). Predicting Marital Satisfaction Based on Gender Beliefs and Thinking Styles of Married Women in Tehran. *SALĀMAT-I IJTIMĀĪ (Community Health), 3*(3), 200-210.

Khamsehei, A. (2007). Study on the sexual behavior and gender role stereotypes of the married college students in iran: Comparing sexual behavior of female and male students in the family. *JOURNAL OF FAMILY RESEARCH, 2*(8), 327-339.

Lehrer, E. L., & Son, Y. J. (2017). Women's age at first marriage and marital instability in the United States: Differences by race and ethnicity. *Demographic Research, 37*, 229-250.

Maaref, M., Khalili, S., Hejazi, E., & Golamali Lavasani, M. (2015). The relationship between identity style, gender role and marital satisfaction in married couples. *JOURNAL OF PSYCHOLOGY, 18*(4 (72)), 365-380.

Maciver, J., & Dimkpa, D. (2012). Factors influencing marital stability. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences, 3*(1), 437-437.

Madathil, J., & Benshoff, J. M. (2008). Importance of marital characteristics and marital satisfaction: A comparison of Asian Indians in arranged marriages and Americans in marriages of choice. *The Family Journal, 16*(3), 222-230.

[Downloaded from ieepj.hormozgan.ac.ir on 2026-10-12]

[DOR: 20.1001.1.25884395.2022.4.2.8.0]

[DOI: 10.52547/ieepj.4.2.277]

McKinnish, T. (2020). Marriage and Labor Market Outcomes. In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Economics and Finance.*

Pedhazur, E. J., & Tetenbaum, T. J. (1979). Bem Sex Role Inventory: A theoretical and methodological critique. *Journal of personality and social psychology, 37*(6), 996.

Rahimi Ahmadabadi, S., Hejazi, A., Attaran, H., Rahimi, A., Kohestani, L., Karashki, H., & Aghamohammadian Sharbaf, H. (2016). Comparison of Stress, Anxiety, Depression & Sexual Role in Subjects Involved Gender Dysphoria with Normal Subjects. *Iranian Journal of Forensic Medicine, 22*(1), 67-75.

Rey, J. M. (2014). Changing gender roles in popular culture: Dialogue in Star Trek episodes from 1966 to 1993. In *Variation in English: Multi-dimensional studies* (pp. 139-156): Routledge.

Safiri, K., & Zare, Z. (2007). The relationship between gender stereotypes and marriage role conflict in young couples. *JOURNAL OF HUMAN SCIENCES*(53 (SPECIAL ISSUE ON SOCIOLOGY)), 177-200.

Siffert, A., & Schwarz, B. (2011). Spouses' demand and withdrawal during marital conflict in relation to their subjective well-being. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 28*(2), 262-277.

Waite, L. J., Luo, Y., & Lewin, A. C. (2009). Marital happiness and marital stability: Consequences for psychological well-being. *Social Science Research, 38*(1), 201-212.

Yu, W. h., & Lee, P. l. (2013). Decomposing gender beliefs: Cross-national differences in attitudes toward maternal employment and gender equality at home. *Sociological Inquiry, 83*(4), 591-621.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 4.0 International License

[Downloaded from ieepj.hormozgan.ac.ir on 2026-10-12]

[DOR: 20.1001.1.25884395.2022.4.2.8.0]

[DOI: 10.52547/ieepj.4.2.277]