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Predicting family resilience based on family communication patterns and marital commitment with the mediation of differentiation

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Abstract

Aim: The present study was conducted with the aim of investigating the relationship between marital commitment and family communication patterns with family resilience through the mediation of self-differentiation. **Method:** the current research is descriptive of the correlation type; For this purpose, a random sample of 296 people was selected from the statistical population of married men and women in Shahrak (from West Azarbaijan province). In this research, in order to collect data from McCubbin et al.'s family resilience questionnaire (1986), Koerner and Fitzpatrick's family communication patterns questionnaire (2002), Stanley and Markman's marital commitment questionnaire (1992), Drake's self-differentiation questionnaire (2011) was used. The data obtained from the research were analyzed with SPSS-23 and AMOS-23 software. **Results:** The results showed that there was no relationship between self-differentiation and family resilience, so self-differentiation is not a mediator between the relationship between communication patterns and marital commitment with resilience. The Pearson correlation results showed that between the communication pattern of dialogue orientation and resilience, there is a direct and meaningful relationship at the 0.05 level, and between the communication pattern of conformity orientation, there is an indirect and significant relationship at the 0.05 level, and between marital commitment and family resilience. There was a significant and direct relationship at the 0.01 level. **Conclusion:** The results of structural equation modeling showed that marital commitment and family communication patterns can predict family resilience.

Keywords: Family communication patterns, marital commitment, family resilience, self-differentiation.

Introduction

Family resilience is a concept with broad and deep roots, from the development of the concept of individual resilience to the hypotheses of general systems theory, including family systems theory and related therapeutic models, as well as studies of family stress and coping. Integrating these roots into a comprehensive theory is incomplete (Marovic, Liebenberg, & Frick, 2020). The resilience of the family in a systemic view, including the evidence of the review research by Benjis and Megzhik (2009) under the name of key factors protecting the resilience of the family, pays attention to many individual, family and social factors. Family factors include marital commitment and family communication patterns, and individual factors include distinctiveness. Even in the happiest of marriages, people sometimes face stressful situations or problems, and yet, their relationships can remain stable. In this situation, it is thought that determining which resources provide relational resilience can be a guide to strengthen a marital relationship (Idogan and Dincer, 2020). Marital commitment is one of the important characteristics of successful and long-term marriages (Taghiyar & Pahlavanzadeh, 2019). Marital commitment means how much couples value their marital relationship and how motivated they are to maintain and continue their marriage (Amato, 2008).

This research considers family factors to achieve the appropriate model; communication patterns and marital commitment and individual factors; To place differentiation as a mediator in the process of solidarity and prediction of family resilience. In other words, the researcher seeks to answer this question: Is it appropriate to develop a family resilience model based on family communication patterns and marital commitment with the mediation of differentiation?

Method

the current research is descriptive of the correlation type; For this purpose, a random sample of 296 people was selected from the statistical population of married men and women in Shahrtakab (from West Azarbaijan province). In this research, in order to collect data from McCubbin et al.'s family resilience questionnaire (1986), Koerner and Fitzpatrick's family communication patterns questionnaire (2002), Stanley and Markman's marital commitment questionnaire (1992), Drake's self-differentiation questionnaire (2011) was used. The data obtained from the research were analyzed with SPSS-23 and AMOS-23 software.

Results

Comparative fit index ($CFI=0.928$) and root mean square error of approximation $RMSEA=0.945$ were obtained. This index is one of the main indices of model fit in the analysis of structural equation modeling, which estimates the degree of badness of the fitted model compared to the saturated model, and a low value of this index indicates a good fit of the model. In recent years, values below 0.06 (Chu and Bentler, 1995) or even values below 0.07 and in the strictest case, the range between 0 and 0.05 have been considered as the acceptance range of a good model fit. Values above 0.1 indicate poor model fit. The fitted chi-square value is ($CMIN/DF=3.90$), which is a good indicator for deciding on the fit of the model. The smaller the value of this index, it can be concluded that the covariance structure of the model is not significantly different from the observed covariance structure. The goodness of fit index (GFI) is also higher than 0.9 in the modified models, which indicates a good fit of the model. In general, there is enough evidence in the model to make

a decision about the fit of the model, and it can be said that marital commitment and family communication patterns can predict family resilience. According to Figure 6, the path coefficients show that family communication patterns with a path coefficient of 0.83 and marital commitment with a path coefficient of 0.55 at a significance level of 0.01 can predict family resilience.

Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to predict family resilience based on family communication patterns and marital commitment with the mediation of differentiation. In general, this research's findings showed a relationship between family communication patterns and marital commitment with family resilience. But their differentiation cannot play a mediating role in these relationships. The results showed that due to the lack of relationship between self-differentiation and family resilience, the mediating role of self-differentiation between the relationship between family communication patterns and marital commitment with family resilience cannot be investigated. Nevertheless, the structural model for predicting family resilience based on marital commitment and family communication patterns had an acceptable fit with the data. And it can be said that family communication patterns and marital commitment are able to predict family resilience.

Regarding the relationship between family communication patterns and resilience, the Pearson correlation results showed that communication orientation has a positive relationship and conformity orientation has a negative relationship with family resilience. Walsh (2003) introduces three effective areas in the main family processes that reduce the stress and vulnerability of the family in difficult and risky situations, which include family beliefs, organization, and communication/problem-solving processes (Nilforoshan 2019). According to this theory, communication processes and the type of family communication patterns are effective in family resilience. Communication processes help to clarify and specify critical situations and express family emotions so that they can solve the problem together. Of course, cultural norms in the field of expressing sensitive information and expressing feelings are very different.

Then, the family's communication patterns are said to be a free and comfortable space for members to participate in discussions on various topics. Families that are high in this dimension, family members communicate freely and frequently with other family members without restrictions, but in the conformity dimension, family members put pressure on each other to unify their opinions, values and views. Convincing members to have a single view of issues reduces the resilience of the members, and the lack of freedom and being influenced by others reduces the resilience of the family.

In explaining the relationship between marital commitment and family integrity, it can be said that marital commitment is the extent to which people have a long-term view of their marriage and sacrifice for their relationship. Therefore, the family's resilience increases to maintain the family structure and maintain the family's interests. In Walsh's (2003) family resilience system, the family's belief system strongly influences the family's view of the crisis, the suffering that family members endure, and the choice of multiple options in response to the crisis. The process and approach to the crisis is organized by the family's beliefs, and in critical situations, it gets help from meaning, hope, optimistic view and relying on spirituality (Nilfroshan, 2019).

Cultural factors and ethnic characteristics of the sample population can be mentioned in explaining the lack of relationship between family differentiation and

resilience. This research was associated with the epidemic of the Covid-19 virus, which limited the access to the sample population. Some variables, such as questionnaires being time-consuming, lack of certainty of disclosure of the information obtained from the research, etc., affected the results of this research. In Takab city of West Azarbaijan province and in the limited sample, there was no favourable view towards cooperation in research.

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