




The Power Structure in Family and Women's Sexual Satisfaction

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ABSTRACT

Sexual satisfaction is one of the most influential factors in marital satisfaction and stability of married life. This study tried to explore the relationship between the family's power structure and its dimensions with women's sexual satisfaction. The population consisted of all married women residing in Tabriz. A sample of 400 women was selected using Cochran's formula and multi-stage cluster sampling. A standard questionnaire was used to collect data, and SPSS software was used to analyze the data. The descriptive results showed that the mean score of sexual satisfaction among the participants was 244.40 (average), and the mean score of the power structure in the family was 42.5 (average). Regarding sexual satisfaction, the mean score of sexual expression was 23.13 (relatively low), the mean score of sexual participation was 35.40 (relatively high), the mean score of sexual excitement was 22.45 (relatively low), the mean score of sexual desire was 25.02 (relatively high), the mean score of sexual fulfillment was 41.02 (relatively high), the mean score of sexual attitude was 52.46 (high), and the mean score of sexual awareness was 52.94 (relatively high). Regarding power structure, the mean score of the dimension of participation in decision-making was 9.54 (relatively low), the mean score of persuasion was 17.67 (average), and the mean score of power symmetry was 15.33 (average). The results of the Pearson correlation test revealed a positive and statistically significant relationship between power structure in the family and sexual satisfaction among women. Moreover, there exists a significant relationship between all dimensions of the power structure in the family and sexual satisfaction. It can also be argued that strengthening the democratic and participatory structure of families would enhance all dimensions of women's sexual satisfaction. According to the study, it is recommended that society a cooperative and democratic power structure be institutionalized within the family in order to enhance women's sexual satisfaction.

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Introduction

Family is the smallest and the most significant institution, which consists of husband, wife, and children. The form, type, and boundaries of relationships between family members constitute the structure of the family (Garrousi, 2009). The satisfaction of spouses is a crucial aspect of married life, which in turn influences many of its other aspects. Marriage should be based on a satisfying relationship so that partners can meet their emotional and psychological needs, feel psychologically secure, and fulfill their sexual needs in a peaceful environment (Farajnia, 2013).

Regulating sexual relationships is a fundamental function of the family unit. That is, marriage and family formation serve as primary avenues for the interaction and sexual relationships between men and women. In such a state, that family, marriage, and sexual relations are in harmony with one another. Marriage is viewed as a comprehensive union that encompasses emotional relationships, sexual relationships, and economic relationships between spouses. This relationship is authorized by Sharia and law, and the commitment made between the couples is a key issue in this multifaceted relationship. Sexual relationship is such a significant, powerful, and determining factor that it affects married life emotionally and physically (Heidari, 2010).

Social sciences researchers have always focused on satisfactory marital relationships and their determinants. Sexual issues, including sexual satisfaction, are the main determining factors in marital compatibility and satisfaction, but in some countries, women hold the belief that explicitly discussing their sexual concerns is not socially acceptable. Women are expected to demonstrate respect towards their spouses and family by not talking in public. The patriarchal and collaborative nature of decision-making left no space for research on the sexual satisfaction of marital relations among women (Bilal et al., 2020).

Sexual satisfaction has been defined from the "positive affect" perspective as the degree to which a person is satisfied with his/her sexual relationship (Sprecher & Cate, 2004) and an emotional response that results from subjective evaluation of positive and negative aspects of sexual relationship (Lowrance & Byers, 1995). Additionally, sexual expectations have always served as the foundation for sexual satisfaction. This can be defined as the degree to which a person's sexual activity meets his expectations (Delamater, 1991). Similar to numerous other definitions of life satisfaction, these definitions view satisfaction as a mental and subjective issue. Thus, the ultimate decision rests within the person and is influenced by a set of unique experiences (McClelland, 2010). Sexual satisfaction is a highly personal feeling that is closely tied to one's personal previous sexual acts, current expectations, and future ambitions. It is a significant factor in sexual health and satisfaction. Moreover, experiencing a satisfying sexual life is considered by some to be the foundation of having a happy marriage and family, as well as a key component of healthy life (Zegeye et al., 2019).

Sexual dissatisfaction, on the other hand, is one of the primary causes of divorce and relationship problems, as well as one of the primary factors affecting women's health. Sexual dissatisfaction is more prevalent among women than men on a global scale. 15% to 50% of women are dissatisfied with their sexual activities, and 50% of divorces are caused by sexual dissatisfaction (Zegeye et al., 2019). Numerous studies have demonstrated that sexual issues are among couples' most significant issues. Moreover, numerous studies have demonstrated that sexual satisfaction is essential for maintaining an intimate relationship, making it the primary factor determining the success or failure of a couple's relationship (Masoumi et al., 2017). Other studies have demonstrated that some couples have sexual problems but avoid discussing it because they view it as forbidden. This issue causes unresolved problems and conflicts between couples and has a negative impact on intimacy and life satisfaction (Masoumi et al., 2017). Significantly more research has been conducted over the past three decades on the factors that predict and contribute to sexual satisfaction or the subjective sense of happiness from sexual experiences and relationships. Importantly, research has distinguished sexual satisfaction from sexual distress, which refers to negative emotions such as worry, frustration, or anxiety associated with sexual experiences and



has been a diagnostic criterion for clinically significant sexual dysfunction. In addition, numerous studies have demonstrated that sexual satisfaction has positive effects on mental, relational, and physical health, enhances sexual performance, reduces depression, and protects the quality of life from health-related concerns (Frei Hart et al., 2020). Quinn-Nilas (2019) demonstrated that relationship satisfaction increases linearly in long-term, stable marriages between middle-aged Americans while sexual satisfaction decreases linearly. According to their path analysis, all changes in relationship satisfaction and sexual satisfaction are closely related.

They discovered that both relationship satisfaction and sexual satisfaction evolve over time. Half of the participants in Zegeye et al.'s (2019) study reported moderate sexual satisfaction, while only .39 percent reported the highest level of sexual satisfaction. Such factors as low self-esteem, a lack of social responsibility, poor sexual performance, a lack of prior knowledge about sexuality, and the stigmatization of sexual conversation are closely related to sexual satisfaction. Velten et al. (2017) demonstrated that sexual performance, sexual distress, frequency of sexual activity, sexual desire discrepancy, sexual initiative, sexual dialogue, sociosexual orientation, masturbation, and life satisfaction are all significantly related to sexual satisfaction. However, there is no significant correlation between age and the length of a relationship, and sexual satisfaction. However, there is no significant correlation between age and the length of a relationship, and sexual satisfaction. Carcedo, et al. (2020) discovered that women without a romantic partner experience greater sexual satisfaction and mental health issues. In addition, there is a correlation between higher levels of sexual satisfaction and lower levels of anxiety and depression in young adults. These findings are more pronounced in people who are in a relationship. This study stressed the significance of sexual satisfaction as a protective factor against mental health disorders, particularly in the context of a romantic relationship. Hyde & Delamater (2006) demonstrated that partners' communication factors significantly correlate with their sexual satisfaction. Bilal et al. (2020) demonstrated that sexual satisfaction significantly impacts the relationship between marital and life satisfaction among married women. Without a satisfying sexual life, married women cannot experience marital and life

satisfaction. Shah Siyah, et al. (2009) found a significant correlation between marital commitment, the duration of the marriage, and sexual satisfaction. Lee (2016) also demonstrated a correlation between sexual satisfaction and relationship satisfaction, affection, commitment to a romantic partner, and relationship stability. In a study of individuals seeking divorce, 32% of women and 30% of men cited sexual problems as the cause. Consequently, a number of longitudinal studies have demonstrated that couples who report lower levels of sexual satisfaction are more likely to separate or dissolve their relationship (Lee, 2016).

The main idea is that a variety of variables influence sexual satisfaction, as numerous factors have been suggested by various studies. The family power structure is another essential social factor that can influence sexual satisfaction. Power is an essential social variable that must be considered when analyzing any social structure, institution, or even interpersonal relationship. The nature of power relationships in life can be studied, and the family is no exception. How power is distributed and exercised in life affects the development and growth of personality, socialization, self-esteem, cohesion, satisfaction, alienation, loneliness, and marital satisfaction (Bakhshipour et al., 2017). Family power structure refers to the patterns of power dynamics within the family. Most researchers divide decision-making patterns into four categories based on the type of relationship between the husband and wife in the family, including the husband and wife's joint efforts to solve their problems, their independent space, the dominance of the woman, and the dominance of the man. Litel et al. (1996) demonstrated that power-sharing between husband and wife is associated with the maximum level of satisfaction, whereas female dominance in a couple relationship would be associated with a lower level of satisfaction than partnership and male dominance. Some scholars, such as Abbou (1993) and Isvan (1991), identify family decision-making as a criterion of family power. Others view the manner of exercising power as the most important criterion. When examining the power structure in the family, Wiggins (1994) and Blood (1969) paid particular attention to the degree of participation of the husband and wife as well as the aspect of power symmetry, and they hold that the best decisions should be bilateral and symmetrical (Mahdavi & Khosrowshahi, 2003).



Lack of imbalance and equality of power within the family diminishes the value of equality in a relationship and makes one partner, male or female, feel less important, leading to dissatisfaction. The distinction in the couple's relative power influences the couple's life satisfaction. The balance of power over decisions has varied effects on couples. For both men and women, power equality improves relationship satisfaction. To examine power in the family, Isvan focuses on the following dimensions: decision-making power in deciding whether or not to have children, decision-making power in social affairs, decision-making power regarding economic affairs, and independence in the family. Before a few decades, the predominant family structure in Iran was the extended family based on tradition and religion, with the father as the head. In the power hierarchy, a husband or father occupies the apex of the pyramid. With the modernization of Iran, this form of family relationship power shifted. Numerous documents demonstrate that women's education, employment, and income outside the household can alter their status (Barani et al., 2016).

Today, there has been a shift in the power dynamics within the family unit. The concept of power structure within the family refers to the established patterns of power dynamics that govern familial relationships. Researchers have categorized decision-making patterns in families into four distinct situations based on the nature of the relationship between the husband and wife. These include joint problem-solving efforts, independent decision-making domains for each spouse, female sovereignty, and male sovereignty. Little et al.'s (1996) research demonstrated that the degree of power-sharing between spouses is positively correlated with relationship satisfaction. Gray-Little et al. (1996) found that power-sharing between husband and wife is associated with the highest level of satisfaction, while female dominance in a couple relationship is associated with less satisfaction than in a cooperative relationship and male dominance. Scholars such as Abboutt (1993) and Isvan (1991) have explored decision-making within the family as an indicator of power dynamics.

Several scholars have posited that the way of exercising power constitutes the primary criterion. Scholars, including Wiggins (1994) & Blood (1969),

have given particular consideration to the degree of participation of both spouses and the concept of power symmetry when analyzing the formation of power dynamics within the family unit. According to Mahdavi and Khosrowshahi (2003), it is believed that optimal decisions should possess bilateral and symmetrical attributes. The distribution of power within the family and the decision-making patterns, such as male or female dominance, are critical factors that determine the power structure in the family. The power distribution issue within the family, the degree to which each partner possesses it, and the decision-making patterns employed (e.g., male or female dominance) are key factors that shape the power dynamics within the family unit. A spectrum can be identified based on the decision-making process within families. Collaborative decision-making is observed on one end of the spectrum, where decision-making power is equally distributed between men and women. On the other end, decision-making power is unequally dominated by either the husband or wife in certain families (Katebi, 2013). The inequality and equality of power within the family diminish the value of equality in a relationship and cause one of the spouses, male or female, to feel less significant than the other, leading to dissatisfaction. In fact, the difference in power between the partners affects the couple's life satisfaction. The distribution of the power to make decisions influences men and women differently. Equal power results in increased relationship satisfaction for women. This is also true for men, and this balance of power impacts women's sexual satisfaction by increasing their life satisfaction. According to the theory of power, a couple's satisfaction and dissatisfaction are influenced by how much each spouse contributes to joint decisions; as a result, persons in relationships who believe that the power (each individual's contribution to decision-making) is unfairly distributed feel unsatisfied.

Various societal transformations have resulted in alterations in family and marital relationships. Historically, families have had a diverse range of gender role models. Traditionally, men were assigned to perform tasks outside the home, while women were responsible for domestic duties. The current economic challenges and shifting societal values related to family roles have prompted a need for increased financial stability, leading women to express greater interest in pursuing personal growth and development beyond domestic responsibilities. This increased their visibility in scientific



communities and the labor market (Bahmani et al., 2011). Litel et al. (1996) demonstrated that power distribution between husband and wife results in the highest degree of satisfaction, whereas female dominance in their relationship results in a lower level of satisfaction than in cooperative relationships and male dominance. However, social norms heavily influence one or both parents' desire for power in decision-making, the resources available to each parent, and their level of problem understanding (Khakpour et al., 2014). In situations where one partner perceives an imbalance in the distribution of responsibilities within the relationship, they may experience a sense of indebtedness to their spouse and perceive their own performance as inadequate. In such circumstances, the individual endeavors to restore their diminished power. According to Davoudi, et al. (2018), if there is a sense of the unequal distribution of responsibilities, it is unlikely that a relationship will be sustainable and thriving. The relationship between power dynamics within a family unit and levels of satisfaction with marriage has been examined by certain scholars. The study conducted by Aida and Falbo (1991) provided empirical evidence to support the proposition that spousal satisfaction is positively correlated with equality in power dynamics between husbands and wives.

Tiffani & Kisler (2008) discovered that the association between sexual satisfaction and the balance of sexual rewards and costs was stronger in females than in males. The study conducted by Michael & Marka (2010) centered on the topics of marital satisfaction and power dynamics within a relationship. The study demonstrated a positive correlation between marital satisfaction and sexual desire, with the added factor of marital power moderating this relationship so that marital satisfaction is more strongly associated with sexual desire among those who view themselves as having less power in their relationship.

The findings show a strong association between marital satisfaction and sexual desire, but there is no evidence of a moderating role for various forms of marital power.

The quality of a husband and wife's relationship improves if they can pay attention to one another, respond to each other's feelings effectively,

comprehend one another's feelings, and accept that they might influence one another's emotions. If couples fail to understand one another, the fundamental capabilities required for a successful relationship will prove to be inadequate. The concept of power balance within a couple pertains to the extent to which each partner prioritizes and attends to the relationship and their perceived ability to communicate their needs and have them met. Social gender processes are related to power differences in couple relationships (Davoudi et al., 2019). The wives' perception of their position of authority within the family has a significant impact on their relationships and interactions with their spouses. The superior position of husbands and the inferiority of wives, which confers power to men and subordination to women, is one of the most significant factors causing problems for women in every area of life, particularly in the communication and interaction between couples (Mirhosseini, et al., 2021).

The idea of sexual satisfaction is a complex and multifaceted construct that is subject to the influence of various factors, including the socio-cultural context of a given society, as well as individual and psychological considerations (Mirhashemi et al., 2020). The attitudes of couples towards themselves, love, intimacy, and their close relationship are influenced and directed by cultural values and norms. Cultural values that endorse patriarchy and non-democratic familial dynamics may influence intimate relationships between couples. The impact of socio-cultural values on couples is reflected in their expectations, perceptions, and attitudes toward their marital and sexual relationship. According to Mohsenzadeh (2014), the degree of satisfaction in a relationship and sexual satisfaction are largely influenced by the impressions and perceptions of the couples involved.

In light of the issues above, the necessity of conducting such research stems from the fact that patterns such as the division of responsibilities, the division of advantages and power in the family, and husband-wife relationships have been changing, resulting in dissatisfaction in marital relationships. Communication, conflict, acceptance, and commitment all impact romantic relationships (Fallis et al., 2016; Whiting, 2008). Since dissatisfaction in one part of a couple's relationship readily spreads to other parts, it is generally true that identifying and understanding the causes of dissatisfaction will reduce



other dissatisfactions and solve other problems in life. This issue is now so important that it must be investigated. Although sexual satisfaction is typically investigated in psychological studies, sociological factors influence it indirectly; these include the impact of the Internet, satellite television, images of women's bodies, trust in the spouse, and family power structure.

A review of the research on sexual satisfaction reveals that some studies have examined the effects of modernization on relationships, gender, education, and income on sexual satisfaction (Latfizadeh, 2018; Besharat, 2016). The absence of sound theory hampers sexual satisfaction. Researchers differentiate between those who define sexual satisfaction as a subjective feeling towards sexual relationships and those who view objective indicators of sexual satisfaction, such as the occurrence of orgasm, as indicators of sexual satisfaction. In Iran, the lack of research on sexual relationships and sexual satisfaction is more pronounced due to socio-cultural factors than in other nations. Despite recent efforts to increase the number of studies, there is no research on the relationship between family power structure and sexual satisfaction. This study sought to determine whether family power structure influences the sexual satisfaction of wives.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant relationship between the power structure in the family and the level of women's sexual satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2: There is a significant relationship between cooperative decision-making in the family and women's sexual satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3: There is a significant relationship between power symmetry in the family and women's sexual satisfaction.

Hypothesis 4: There is a significant relationship between the husband's persuasion and women's sexual satisfaction

Methods

Study Design and participants.

The present investigation employed an applied and survey-based methodology, utilizing questionnaires as the primary instrument for data collection during the initial 6 months of 2019. The sample size of 384 married

women was determined using Cochran's formula from a population of 739,445 married women in Tabriz, as reported by the 2016 census. A total of 400 participants were ultimately selected to prevent potential issues and asked to complete the questionnaires.

The study employed a multi-stage cluster sampling method. A cluster of ten districts in Tabriz was identified, and a random selection of regions was made within each cluster. Subsequently, a random sampling of individuals was conducted.

$$n = \frac{Nt^2Pq}{Nd^2+t^2pq} = \frac{739445 \times (1.96)^2 \times .5 \times .5}{739445 \times (.05)^2 + (1.96)^2 \times .5 \times .5} = 384$$

Table 1: Number of allocated samples according to the 10 regions at Tabriz in 2018

| Regions | Female population by region | Number of samples |
|-----------|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Region 1 | 103141 | 54 |
| Region 2 | 84649 | 44 |
| Region 3 | 121365 | 66 |
| Region 4 | 157024 | 85 |
| Region 5 | 45705 | 28 |
| Region 6 | 45994 | 28 |
| Region 7 | 70813 | 37 |
| Region 8 | 14600 | 7 |
| Region 9 | 143 | 1 |
| Region 10 | 96011 | 50 |
| Total | 739445 | 400 |

The dependent variable, namely sexual satisfaction, was measured using the Marital Sexual Function Scale. The scale assesses sexual satisfaction across seven distinct dimensions.

Sexual partnership: According to this component, the purpose of having sex is to be concerned with the well-being and satisfaction of the partner, and while the individual may consider the rewards and costs, he considers assisting the other party in satisfying their needs to be more rewarding than costly. **Sexual expression:** the social skill of displaying and expressing sexual behaviors in sexual contexts.

Furthermore, since the definition of expression in the *Dehkhoda* dictionary is revealing, expressing, and displaying, one can define the sexual expression



as the capacity to disclose and express sexual desires and needs to the partner. Sexual excitement and sexual feeling: Golman uses the term excitement to refer to a feeling, thought, and its psychological and biological state, as well as the tendencies and desires to act based on it; therefore, in this study, the component is used to examine the ability to identify and direct sexual excitement and feelings. Sexual desire: incorporates mental activity to generate sexual motivation. It is referred to as the desire for sexual goals or performance, and it compels a person to interact with another person in order to satisfy their need. Sexual realization is the experience of intense sexual pleasure, which is the rhythmic contractions of the genital organs' muscles and the release of sexual tension, as well as attaining what is expected and gaining satisfaction from sex. Sexual attitude: beliefs regarding sexual roles and activities. Sexual attitude is an optimistic or pessimistic way of interpreting sexual events and communication. Sexual awareness: an individual's knowledge and awareness of sexual activity, as well as his or her capacity for performing sexual acts and knowing about gender-specific bodily functions and behaviors (Farajnia, 2014).

In addition to the seven scores associated with the components, a total score between 60 and 300 was calculated for each issue. A high score on this scale indicates that each woman is sexually satisfied. 6 indicates total agreement, 5 indicates agreement, 4 indicates partial agreement, 3 indicates disagreement, 2 indicates disagreement, and 1 indicates complete disagreement.

The questionnaire's validity was evaluated by a panel of experts. Cronbach's alpha was used to measure and validate the items' internal consistency. Cronbach's alpha measures .95 for sexual satisfaction and .89 for each component of sexual participation, .90 for sexual expression, .87 for sexual excitement and feeling, .87 for sexual desire, .85 for sexual attitude, .91 for sexual fulfillment, and .93 for sexual awareness. In addition, the opinions of supervisors and advisors were used to confirm the questionnaire's validity in this study. In this manner, the questionnaire was given to professors and advisors as experts for review prior to its implementation, and their feedback was incorporated into the final questionnaire.

12 questions from Sabouri & Mahdavi's (2009) questionnaire that are divided into three categories (the degree of symmetry of relationships in the family, the extent of the husband's persuasion and the wife's acceptance of it, and the area of decision-making and action of each couple) were used to assess the power structure in families. The scale used to rate the responses was the Likert scale, with 6 denoting complete agreement, 5 agreement, 4 agreement, 3 disagreement, 2 disagreement, and 1 disagreement. Cronbach's alpha value of the family's power structure was .71 for the husband's persuasiveness, .62 for the family's symmetry of power, and .77 for the decision-making process. Supervisors' and advisors' opinions were used to gauge the validity of a questionnaire on the power structure in families. The questionnaire was given to supervisors and advisers after it had been prepared and before it had been finalized in order to incorporate their feedback.

The descriptive statistics section used important metrics like mean and standard deviation for data analysis. The variables were tested using regression, Pearson's correlation coefficient, and one-way analysis of variance.

Results

The data analysis results are discussed in two parts: descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. The descriptive results indicate that the average age of the examined sample is 35 years old. 44.2% of the participants have an average age between 31 and 40, 39.5% of them have an average age between 20 and 30, 13.0% have an average age between 41 and 50, and 3.2% have an average age between 51 and 60. The majority of participants are between the

Table 2. Descriptive statistics on sexual satisfaction index, power structure in the family and related dimension

| variable | Min | Mean | Max | Standard Deviation | Skewness | kurtosis |
|----------------------|-----|--------|-----|--------------------|----------|----------|
| Sexual satisfaction | 127 | 244.40 | 340 | 4.11 | -.10 | -.43 |
| Sexual partnership | 14 | 35.40 | 48 | 7.86 | -.67 | -.05 |
| Sexual assertiveness | 13 | 32.13 | 48 | 9.09 | -.19 | -.81 |
| Sexual excitement | 9 | 22.45 | 36 | 6.09 | .26 | -.62 |



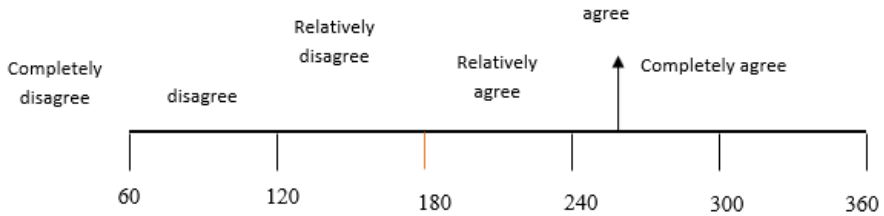
| | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|----|-------|----|-------|------|------|
| Sexual desire | 12 | 25.02 | 36 | 5.68 | -.09 | -.46 |
| Sexual realization | 15 | 41.02 | 60 | 10.46 | -.53 | -.07 |
| Sexual attitude | 32 | 52.46 | 66 | 9.05 | -.43 | -.57 |
| Sexual awareness | 31 | 52.94 | 66 | .40 | -.31 | -.43 |
| Power Structure | 18 | 42.50 | 68 | 10.01 | .20 | -.48 |
| Participation in decision making | 4 | 9.54 | 24 | 4.29 | .54 | -.17 |
| Persuasion | 5 | 17.67 | 30 | 4.54 | -.14 | -.26 |
| Symmetry of power | 6 | 15.33 | 24 | 3.18 | .25 | -.01 |

ages of 31 and 40. Regarding education, 36.5% (146 participants) of participants hold a bachelor's degree. Then, those with a master's degree are the most frequent, with 23.8% (95 participants). The lowest frequency of illiterate respondents is 1% (4 participants). The greatest frequency based on the responses of the women surveyed about their current jobs is housekeeping at 43.5% (167 participants), followed by private employment at 21.5% (84 participants).

Table 2 displays the mean and standard deviation of the family power structure, sexual satisfaction, and their respective components. According to the data in the table, the mean power structure reveals a symmetrical power structure within the family. In the family, the level of persuasion and power symmetry is relatively high, whereas the level of power sharing is relatively low. All aspects of women's sexual satisfaction are relatively high.

According to Table 2 and Appendix 1, the mean sexual satisfaction of married women was 244.40 out of 360 (67 out of 100). It can be posited that the women exhibit a satisfactory level of sexual satisfaction, ranging from moderate to high.

Appendix 1. Average of sexual satisfaction among married women



According to Table 3, 44.04% of Tabriz women report high sexual satisfaction, 34.96% report average sexual satisfaction, and 22.01% report low sexual satisfaction. Considering the variables' multimode nominal, ordinal, and interval nature, Pearson's correlation coefficient test and one-way analysis of variance were used to test the hypotheses. The results of the one-way analysis of variance are presented in Table 3. It demonstrates that the average level of sexual satisfaction among women varies by educational level, age category, and type of employment. Therefore, the higher the education level, the greater the sexual satisfaction. The highest average level of sexual satisfaction belongs to participants with doctoral degrees, while the lowest average level of sexual satisfaction belongs to women with little or no formal education

In addition, women with government employment demonstrated high sexual satisfaction. In contrast, the average score for sexual satisfaction among retired women was the lowest.

The results of the correlation coefficient test are displayed in Table 4. The results indicate a positive and statistically significant correlation between power structure and sexual satisfaction. Furthermore, a positive and statistically significant relationship exists between family power structure dimensions and women's sexual satisfaction.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics on women's sexual satisfaction

| variables | High | | Medium | | Low | | Total | |
|----------------------|--------|---------|--------|---------|--------|---------|--------|---------|
| | number | percent | number | percent | number | percent | number | percent |
| Sexual satisfactor | 223 | 55.26 | 120 | 29.41 | 57 | 15.33 | 400 | 100.0 |
| Sexual partnership | 155 | 38.68 | 152 | 35.40 | 93 | 25.51 | 400 | 100.0 |
| Sexual assertiveness | 134 | 32.51 | 188 | 47.21 | 78 | 20.20 | 400 | 100.0 |



| | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|-----|-------|-----|-------|-----|-------|-----|-------|
| Sexual excitement | 142 | 35.50 | 166 | 41.33 | 92 | 23.13 | 400 | 100.0 |
| Sexual desire | 182 | 45.50 | 159 | 39.59 | 59 | 14.88 | 400 | 100.0 |
| Sexual realization | 123 | 29.49 | 93 | 23.13 | 184 | 41.0 | 400 | 100.0 |
| Sexual attitude | 245 | 71.35 | 114 | 28.71 | 41 | 14.04 | 400 | 100.0 |
| Sexual awareness | 172 | 44.04 | 142 | 34.96 | 87 | 22.01 | 400 | 100.0 |

The relationship between the persuasion dimension of the power structure and sexual satisfaction was significant, while the relationship between the decision-making dimension and sexual satisfaction was below average. Stepwise multiple regression analysis was employed to assess the influence of each dimension of power structure on sexual satisfaction.

Table 4. Results of sex satisfaction analysis of variance test according to some contextual variables

| variable | Sexual satisfaction | Mean | Degree of freedom | F | <i>p-value</i> |
|------------|---------------------|-------|-------------------|--------|----------------|
| Education | illiterate | 13.00 | 391 | 12.001 | .000 |
| | Elementary | 20.56 | | | |
| | Junior | 21.93 | | | |
| | Diploma | 24.85 | | | |
| | Post- diploma | 23.14 | | | |
| | Bachelor | 24.22 | | | |
| | Master | 25.06 | | | |
| | PhD | 30.27 | | | |
| Employment | Private job | 24.32 | 393 | 6.66 | .000 |
| | State job | 28.77 | | | |
| | Free job | 23.31 | | | |
| | Housewife | 23.93 | | | |
| | Retired | 22.56 | | | |
| | Student | 25.95 | | | |
| Age group | 30-20 | 25.26 | 395 | 5.31 | .001 |
| | 40-31 | 24.29 | | | |
| | 50-41 | 23.22 | | | |
| | 60-51 | 21.32 | | | |

According to Table 5, the calculated F value is statistically significant (*p-value* = .000).

Table 5. Pearson correlation coefficient results between family power structure and sexual satisfaction

| variables | | Sexual satisfaction | Sexual partnership | Sexual assertiveness | Sexual excitement | Sexual desire | Sexual realization | Sexual attitude | Sexual awareness |
|----------------------------------|----------------|---------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|---------------|--------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Power Structure | r | .49 | .38 | .50 | .41 | .40 | .42 | .31 | .27 |
| | <i>p-value</i> | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| Participation in decision making | r | .54 | .47 | .50 | .44 | .41 | .52 | .36 | .23 |
| | <i>p-value</i> | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| Persuasion | r | .38 | .24 | .40 | .40 | .34 | .31 | .07 | .29 |
| | <i>p-value</i> | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .14 | .000 |
| Symmetry of power | r | .57 | .44 | .56 | .51 | .46 | .51 | .31 | .32 |
| | <i>p-value</i> | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 |

Table 6. Results of regression test

| variables | Beta | T | <i>p-value</i> | Analyse of variance | | Model summary | | |
|------------------|--------------------------------|------|----------------|---------------------|----------------|---------------|---------------------------|------|
| | | | | F | <i>p-value</i> | R Square | | |
| Variable entered | Persuasion by the Husband | .398 | 7.55 | .000 | 96.8 | .000 | Adjusted R Square | .349 |
| | Balance of Power in the Family | .260 | 4.93 | .000 | | | Std.Error of the Estimate | .345 |
| Variable Removed | Participation decision making | .095 | 1.89 | .706 | | | Durbin-Watson | 1.71 |

Additionally, the dimensions of power symmetry within the family and the level of persuasion exerted by the husband account for approximately 34% of the variance in sexual satisfaction. The table presented indicates that the variables of persuasion by husband, with a beta coefficient of .398, and power symmetry in family, with a beta coefficient of .260, account for the greatest amount of variance in sexual satisfaction (Table 6).



Discussion and conclusion

Numerous research studies have centered on the concept of sexual satisfaction, delving into and verifying the influence of diverse factors on the attainment of sexual satisfaction. Each of the research studies centered on distinct variables. The present study aimed to investigate the correlation between family power dynamics and female sexual satisfaction. The statistical analysis indicates that there exists a significant positive correlation between the variables, according to the results of the hypothesis testing. The study suggests a positive correlation between the degree to which a family structure adopts a participatory decision-making approach that values mutual respect and reasonable freedom and the level of sexual satisfaction experienced by women under investigation. The presence of a positive correlation between the power structure within a family, specifically the level of family democracy, and sexual satisfaction is suggested by the positive nature of the relationship. The findings suggest a correlation between variations in the degree of family democratic practices and variations in the level of sexual satisfaction among the female participants under investigation. The findings obtained from the analysis of hypothesis 2 indicate a statistically significant association between the variable "power symmetry" within family structures and the various dimensions of female sexual satisfaction. It can be posited that conjoint decision-making within the family unit, coupled with the husband's attentiveness to his wife's viewpoints, results in a significant rise in sexual participation, expression, excitement, desire, realization, attitude, and awareness. Furthermore, the statistical significance of the correlation between the family power dynamics and the indicator of sexual satisfaction, with a *p-value* of .000, suggests that one of the factors influencing women's sexual satisfaction is the level of attention that a husband devotes to his wife.

Greater attention given to a wife may result in increased levels of relaxation and satisfaction within the context of a sexual relationship. The results of testing hypothesis 3 indicate a positive and statistically significant relationship between the husband's persuasion and sexual satisfaction. In other words, all aspects of women's sexual satisfaction improve if unilateral decisions decrease

and spouses speak and express their opinions rationally (rather than coercively) with their wife's consent.

The results of testing hypothesis 3 (i.e., a positive and significant relationship between practical participatory decision-making and sexual satisfaction and its dimensions) demonstrated that men's work in the home, assistance with housework, and shared decisions increase women's sexual satisfaction across all dimensions.

In general, one-sided relationships decline as couples' involvement in decision-making increases and are replaced by interaction and exchange. The type of power in the family has an impact on how couples interact and relate, and one-way power hinders couples from understanding each other's actions and words as well as their needs and feelings. Due to the circumstances, they have grown distant from one another over time, and both of them—especially the wife—experience marital and sexual dissatisfaction. Couples' connection, intimate relationships, and level of life and marriage satisfaction rise as family decision-making cooperation does. Women feel more sexually pleased in personal relationships. Furthermore, a healthy power structure within the family boosts women's agreement and confidence, which in turn contributes to their satisfaction. In most families, a two-way power dynamic produces close connections between couples. All other relationships in life, including sexual relationships—one of the most crucial issues—are influenced by intimate connections. Nonetheless, in cases where the husband unilaterally makes decisions without considering his wife's needs and perspectives, there is a significant likelihood of relational frigidity and emotional detachment between the partners. The circumstances at hand may lead to a sense of dissatisfaction with life in general, as well as impact intimate and spousal relationships.

According to Giddens, a noteworthy characteristic of a well-functioning and enduring family unit is the equilibrium in its power dynamics, where both the husband and wife share equal power. The disruption of power balance within a familial unit, whether originating from external or internal sources, may result in increased dissatisfaction among partners across multiple areas, such as emotional and sexual relationships. In families where management is based on shared ideas and patriarchal or feminist tendencies are avoided and



where freedom of expression and democratic decision-making are practiced, relational dissatisfactions are likely to decrease. Women's satisfaction is positively correlated with the degree of symmetrical power structure in the family, the level of women's participation in decision-making, and the extent of their consultation and involvement. Additionally, women's satisfaction is positively associated with the level of persuasive power.

According to a review of previous research on this subject, no study has directly examined the relationship between family power structure and sexual satisfaction. The majority of related research has examined the relationship between family power structure and marital or life satisfaction. As sexual satisfaction is one of the main components of marital satisfaction, it can be said that the power structure within the family influences both marital satisfaction and sexual satisfaction. This study's findings are consistent with those of other studies. Nayebi et al. (2021) reached the conclusion that power inequality in families has a negative relationship with an equal affective relationship. Thus, the more unequal a family is, the more emotionally distant the wife is from her spouse. The issue will impact the emotional and sexual contentment of the wife. Now, everyone expects to be treated equitably and equally in society and the home. This expectation should be felt more than anywhere else in a couple's emotional relationship. The unequal distribution of gender power in families contrasts with the expected equality of the modern era and the equality of emotional relationships (Nayebi et al., 2021). Khakpour et al. (2014) investigated the effect of family power structure on marital satisfaction and concluded that power structure can predict marital compatibility. In addition, they concluded that marital compatibility increases when the family's power structure is cooperative. Researchers believe that families with a symmetrical power structure will have high quality and stability as a result of emotions, empathy, and closeness (Khakpour et al., 2014). Participatory relationship activities among couples improve the qualities of marriage and relationships in two ways: a) they create common interests and experiences between husband and wife, and b) they promote marital intimacy by eliminating power imbalances. Intimacy and a positive emotional relationship between couples with equal power will result in emotional and sexual satisfaction for both partners. Modiri (2017) asserts that

the level of marital vitality is related to the extent to which families share economic concerns. Thus, when individuals experience a low level of marital vitality, the husband is likely in charge of the family's financial management and expenses. Pina & Bengston (1995) also reported that there is a positive and significant correlation between domestic division and women's psychological health. Dividing housework makes the partner feel supported. When a wife believes that the division of housework is unequal, she perceives a lack of support from her husband. The spouse's lack of support and understanding causes less satisfaction with marriage and depression in the wife; This issue itself leads to reduced emotional and sexual satisfaction in women. The husband's cooperation in housework implies love and connection. His help in housework generates an emotional experience of supporting the marriage, and this feeling affects the woman in her marital interactions and relationships and promotes higher marital satisfaction (Soleymani et al., 2015). Rezapour et al. (2019) focused on women's lived experience of homemaking lifestyle and claimed that society has been changing from a traditional state to a modern state, and the indicators of modernity, such as involvement and progression, are increasing among women. Women understand and interpret housework according to their personal and social experiences. Their responsibility and religious modeling play a crucial role in accepting the role of the housewife and internalizing its norms. Women's satisfaction and dissatisfaction with housekeeping are influenced by their marital satisfaction, and the power structure index in the family plays an important role in their submission to husbands in helping them with household affairs. Many studies and theories have proved that wives' employment, financial independence, and the kind of gender attitudes are among the most important factors that impact couples' relationships in the family. Women's employment influences decision-making (distribution of power) and division of work at home. Women's employment and their financial power have challenged the power relations within the family.

Normative changes in attitudes and expectations of the role of husband and wife in families have pushed couples' relationships towards cooperation and equality (Mehdzadeh et al., 2017). One of Shahmoradi et al.'s (2014) hypotheses was the demand-withdrawal cycle. Thus, power perception has a significant relationship with the demand-withdrawal cycle. A partner who



feels less powerful in the relationship is more likely to engage in demand-oriented behavior, whereas a partner who feels more powerful tends to recede. The more a person experiences love, intimacy, and trust in their partner, the more likely they are to refer to their partner and request affection. Experiencing a sense of power serves as the fundamental basis for the absence of any perceived need. The person who has a higher sense of power feels superior and perceives his position as such that he does not need to ask his/her spouse for affection. Thus, the increasing distance between husband and wife progressively cooled their relationship (Shahmoradi et al., 2014). Some wives' reluctance to respond to the questions constituted a limitation of this study. Since this study was limited to ten Tabriz districts and socio-cultural and economic differences exist between different parts of the city, the researchers are cautious about generalizing their findings. Additionally, the study was carried out on a female population, and it has been observed that women tend to exhibit more conservative tendencies than men. The aforementioned matter could have impacted their inclination to withhold their authentic viewpoint, creating potential bias in the research.

In order to foster a more democratic family structure, there must be an increase in the involvement of wives in family affairs and decision-making. Additionally, it is crucial that men recognize and acknowledge the significance of their wives' contributions to the decision-making process. The incorporation of education and mass media is crucial in promoting a more democratic family structure. The findings of the study suggest that pre-marriage training courses should place greater emphasis on instructing individuals about the significance of power distribution and balance within the family unit.

Ethical Considerations

Authors' contribution: Each of the authors has participated in all stages of the research.

Conflict of interest: There is no conflict between the interests of this project and the interests of individuals or organizations.

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