

## Surveying the Relationship Between Emotional Divorce and Self-criticism Level of Married Women 25 to 35 Years Old in Isfahan

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### ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** *the objective of this survey was to review the relationship between emotional divorce and self-criticism levels of married women 25 to 35 years old in Isfahan.*

**Method:** *This survey is applied research according to its goal and application. The statistical universe of this research is involved in married women 25 to 35 years old in Isfahan that 50 people were presented in a cluster sampling method in this survey. The data collection tool was a questionnaire taken to women online. The questionnaires were involved in two self-criticism and emotional divorce types. Finally, descriptive and analytical results were done by SPSS software copy 26 version 2016.*

**Findings:** *Spearman's correlation rate between emotional divorce and self-criticism is reported at 0.325, and the positive and null hypothesis is rejected, and the researcher's assumption will be confirmed. There is a significant relationship between self-criticism and emotional divorce in married women 25 to 35 years old in Isfahan, and emotional divorce causes increasing self-criticism in married women 25 to 35 years old in Isfahan.*

**Result:** *It can be said that attachments between them would be failed by impairing the expectations and imagery of people after marriage, and this defeat leads to self-criticism thoughts, self-criticism, and negative soliloquy, and even it will increase it.*

**Keywords:** *emotional divorce, self-criticism, women, Isfahan.*

## **Introduction**

The family is one of the main pillars and institutions of each society and one of the most natural groups which can meet financial, emotional, evolutionary, and also spiritual needs. This social unit is human justice and the center of the most devotional relationship and interpersonal interactions. (Hosseini, 2003)

In the contemporary age, the family will be undergone through events such as revolutions, industrialization of communities, the feminist movement, and globalization of media. As a result, the strongest human connection in the family is threatened seriously, and there is much confusion in relationships. The consequences of these confusions in the family will be shown in the format of individual and family problems; one of which is marital exhaustion. Marital exhaustion is a gradual reduction of emotional attachment to the spouse that is accompanied by a sense of alienation, indifference of spouses to each other, and replacing negative senses instead of positive ones. In the frustrating marriage, one or both spouses have significant concerns regarding increasing destruction of the relationship and the antecedence towards emotional divorce, separation, and formal divorce addition to experiencing the dissociation due to spouse and reducing the mutual interests and relationship. One of the effective cases on decreasing marital quality and apathy of family and emotional divorce is self-criticism. Self-criticism is defined as an individual attitude toward high expectations and questioning our performance. Self-critical people underrate their efforts because of having high internal and external ideas of themselves, and then the vicious cycle of failure-aspiration will be occurred, which will be appeared as a result of disappointment and depression. (Koupala-Siblie, Zarof, Rasel, and Moscovitz, 2014)

emotional divorce is considered the first level of the divorce process, and it would be stated as a sign of declining marital relations. Formal divorce means emotional divorce hence formal and legal divorce is always emotional divorce. But emotional divorce is not just this and has hidden angles that its investigation and recognition require numerous and detailed studies. Qualitative and quantitative growth of this phenomenon in Iranian society is converted to one of the serious social issues so that nowadays it is not as infamous as in the past, and people considered it as an individual choice. Statistics show that divorce rate has been increasing over the last few years. This situation indicates major changes in family institution structure. It is worth mentioning available statistics only show formal divorce, yet no formal statistics are reported in the case of emotional divorce among spouses.

Recent researches indicate that increasing the rate of self-criticism is one of the effective reasons for depression and failure and cold marital relation and finally leads to divorce, especially in women. In recent years, the rate of divorce has increased significantly not only in developed countries but also in developing countries. (Sharma, 2011)

During recent determined research, one of the effective reasons is to increase self-criticism, which is affected on depression and failure and cold marital relation and finally emotional divorce, especially in women. Self-criticism is defined as an individual orientation for being idealistic and questioning himself/herself (Lanqua, Boudnerb, and ben-Xivenk, 2015). Self-criticism causes the person to consider his/ her performance and seems some unattainable criteria for himself/herself. So that it finally leads to avoiding social media. (James, Werblanken and Rimz, 2015)

Among common therapies to reduce self-criticism, treatment is based on compassion. People learn how do not to avoid their painful feelings and do not suppress them during treatment based on compassion, so they can know their experience in the first step and have compassionate to it. Then they would have a compassionate attitude to themselves that requires the adoption of an equivalent mental perspective which is called mindfulness. Mindfulness is an equivalent case of consciousness that requires full observation and acceptance of emotional and mental phenomena's arousal. When people are not aware of their own painful thoughts, they will never accept their experiences as they exist, and this denial would show to avoid bringing these thoughts to consciousness. In this treatment method, the relation of people with their self-criticism will be changed instead of focusing on changing it. To review conducted research regarding treatment

efficiency based on compassion will confirm the effects of this treatment method in reducing clients' self-criticism. In this regard, they found out that treatment based on compassion will increase acceptance and cordiality and will decrease anxiety, depression, self-criticism, failure, and shame. In research which is done on 75 university students suffering from chronic acne skin disorder for comparing the effects of treatment methods based on compassion and resistance, the results show that treatment based on compassion was effective in reducing self-criticism. Also, it is determined that compassion compared to optimistic interventions had a greater role in order to reduce self-criticism based on research which is done for comparing the effects of compassion and optimistic interventions on students' self-criticism. In recent years, the rate of divorce is significantly increased not only in developed countries but in developing countries. (Sharma, 2011) even in Iran, this trauma will appear more. Since those women are considered as an urgent force in the family, it seems they are responsible for any mistake. It is ratiocinated that women pass most of their time in the family and they are a more responsible duo to marriage and as a result divorce is a great failure to them comparing with men. (Huang, Kung, and Chaan, 2004) According to what has been said, current research studies the relation between emotional divorce and the self-criticism level of married women in Isfahan. The results of this research can be used for divorce consulting centers, couples therapy, and welfare organization.

### **The theoretical basis of research**

#### **Self-criticism**

One of the effective factors on reducing marital quality and family apathy and, finally, emotional divorce is self-criticism. During recent surveys, one of the effective factors on depression and failure and apathy of marital relations and finally emotional divorce, especially in women is to increase self-criticism. Self-criticism is defined as a person's tendency for having high expectations from themselves and questioning their own reactions (Lanqua, Budenberb, and Benn-xiung, 2015). Self-criticism is defined as a having high expectations from themselves and trying to advance. Self-criticized people are vulnerable when they face with a barrier to achieve their goals. Self-criticized people underrate their efforts because of their high internal and external ideals and then they always face with failure-expectations vicious-cycle which depression and disappointment will be appeared (Koupala-Siblie, Zarof, Rasel and Mosqwitz, 2014).

#### **The effects of self-criticism on mental health**

Self-criticism will be useful just when it prepares permission to acknowledge and assessment of failures and mistakes or to nurture humility and positive changes. But when critical tendencies to themselves prevent growth ability, it would be affected by probable damages to mental health and even on benefits of self-criticism. Usually, temporary self-confidence will seem as a natural part of life, but chronic self-criticism might be affected by nervous breakdowns such as depression, social anxiety, issues related to body form, or feelings of worthless. Tendency to blame themselves during the crisis can lead to failure feelings of depression. Those, who criticized themselves too much, might have disappointment and shame as a problem happens in their own life and take the blame. Tendencies to self-criticism can also be related to perfectionism, masochism, and other problems due to eating and food. In some cases, the tendency to self-criticism may cause shifting negative beliefs to others which can lead to negative feedback or criticism from outside and finally affects on interpersonal relations.

#### **The results of negative soliloquy**

Negative soliloquy can affect us in different and harmful ways. A large-scale study shows that rumination and self-blame due to negative events are related to increase mental problems. Those who involve in soliloquy are more stressed. Concentration on negative thoughts can lead to decreasing motivation and also having more learned helpless feelings. This kind of criticized soliloquy is related to depression.

## **Emotional divorce**

Emotional divorce is called apathy relations between spouses who lead to full apathy in relations. Weakness in emotional relations between spouses can lead to the apathy of their other relations like spiritual, physical, emotional, and verbal relationships. This problem causes a lack of kindness and love in the family. Emotional divorce is known as the first step of the divorce process and shows declining marital relation, which bitter sense of alienation will replace unity and intimacy. Perhaps spouses live as a social group beside each other forever, but the attraction of mutual trust has been collapsed. Formal statistics of divorce do not show the amount of failure of spouses in marital relations. In fact, there are larger scale and hidden statistics of emotional divorces besides formal divorce. It means silent life and hollow families that have apathetic life with each other but never apply for divorce formally. (Bokharaee, 2007)

## **Main transmission processes in divorce**

As Bel Yohanan believes (quoted from Bokharaee, 2007), if spouses decide to separate from each other, they should pass some main transmission processes in their life method and attitude. He differentiated six interference steps for separating spouses, and they had to pass them. All these processes might cause some stresses and difficulties which affect a spouse, their children, relatives, and friends:

## **Research history**

Mohammadi refers to this title as “divorce and woman’s contribution of marital relations” in his research on 2004; those women, especially housewives, spend their major time or whole time for their activities in their husband’s house. Until to continue marital relation, there would not be any problem, but whenever they faltered and presented divorce and separation, it would change in another case, and finally, its social consequences would be checked.

Bastani and others do one of the internal studies in this field by use of basic theory. The results of research show that 11 below cases are the most effective reasons in emotional divorce, which involved in lack of emotional needs supplement, man dismiss, communication problems, wrong choice of spouse, lack of empathy and camaraderie, violent behaviors, lack of spending time together, sexual dissatisfaction, distrust, man’s lack of sense of responsibility and man’s mental instability. (Bastani et al. 2011: 241-257)

Haddadi is studied the emotional divorce problem in Tehran by the qualitative method in research as a topic “sociological study to emotional divorce (a study with an approach of social constructivism) among women in Tehran.” He refers to a range of marital dissatisfaction which doesn’t lead to formal divorce, but it replaces a kind of harmonization. Findings show the women’s attitude changing to themselves and life philosophy and also a kind of unequal exchanges are considered in daily life which leads to forced feelings via instrumental rationality and not understanding the spouse. (Haddadi, 2000)

Charles et al. never know emotional divorce as a single factor phenomenon and show that impairing imaginations and expectations of people to each other will fail after the emotional bond between them and will result in emotional divorce. (Charles, 2011)

The results of abdolkabir and Bifolko’s survey (2011) shows that among Muslim women, divorced mothers are depressed more than non-divorced mothers and will experience more stressful events in their life.

The results of Berslaw et al.'s survey (2011) report positive relationships between divorce and the incidence of psychological disorders such as dedicated panic, basic depression, alcohol abuse, and physical problems.

## Research methodology

This is applied research according to objective and its use. , The statistical community of this research, is composed of married women 25 to 35 years old in Isfahan that 50 people among them were presented by cluster sampling method. Data collection tools were questionnaires which are taken to married women online. Questionnaires involved two types of questionnaires such as self-criticism and emotional divorce. Finally, descriptive and analytical results are done by SPSS software copy 26 version 2016.

**Self-criticism questionnaire:** Self-criticism is taken from the self-attack scale; assure which contains 22 articles (Gilbert, Clark, Hempel, Miles and Abrones 2004). Responding to any item on this scale is set in a range of five-point Likert-type scale (Completely disagree-0 to completely agree-4) and minimum, and the maximum score has fluctuated from 0 to 88. Questionnaire scoring is as completely to disagree, disagree, no idea, agree, completely agree. A score of completely disagree is 0, disagree is 1, no idea is 2, agree is 3, completely agree is 4. The minimum point is 0, and the maximum point is 88. Gilbert, Clack, Hempel, Miles, and Abrones have reported Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient is 90.0. Also, this questionnaire validity is reported by desirable professors.

**Questionnaire of emotional divorce:** The questionnaire of emotional divorce is taken from the book “why marriages succeed or fail” written by John Gottman. This questionnaire written in 2008 and contains some sentences about different aspects of life which may be a person would agree or disagree with it. This scale has 24 questions and should be answered by yes or no. Questionnaire scoring is as yes, no. the score of yes is 1, and the score of no is 0. However, the number of yes is more, the possibility of emotional divorce will be more. The minimum score is 0, and the maximum score is 24. Cronbach’s alpha for the reliability of the questionnaire is 83% in Mami and Askari’s survey. Also, the content validity of the questionnaire is reported by desirable professors.

## Results

### Demographic description

Table (1) shows variable descriptive findings of research participants’ education level involved in frequency and frequency percentage.

**Table (1) description of education variable**

education variable	frequency	Frequency percentage
diploma	8	16.16
Associate degree	44	88
Bachelor degree	26	52
Master degree	12	24
total	50	100

Table (2) shows variable descriptive findings of research participants’ age involved in number, average, standard deviation, the minimum score, and the maximum scores.

**Table (2) description of age variable**

variables	numbers	average	standard deviation	the minimum score	the maximum score
age	50	29.08	2.849	25	35

**Description of research variables**

Table (3) shows descriptive findings of research variables involved in number, average, standard deviation, the minimum score, and the maximum scores.

**Table (3) description of research variables**

variables	number	the minimum score	the maximum score	average	standard deviation
Emotional divorce	50	0	15	6.16	3.771
Self-criticism	50	30	66	40.90	6.332

**Checking normality default**

**Table (4) Shapiro-Vilek**

	data	grade of freedom	sig
Emotional divorce	0.948	50	0.028
Self-criticism	0.927	50	0.004

Table (4) shows the meaningful level of the Normality test Shapiro-Vilek. Based on obtained data, the meaningful level of both variables is less than 0.05 and has no normal default.

**Checking research theories**

There are meaningful and positive relations between self-criticism of married women 25 to 35 years old in Isfahan and divorce.

According to declining data normality default, spearman’s correlation test is used for checking coefficient and relation between emotional divorce and self-criticism.

**Table (5) spearman's correlation**

sig	Self-criticism	Emotional divorce	variables
0.021	0.325	1	Emotional divorce
0.021	1	0.325	Self-criticism

According to the table (5), the meaningful level is less than 0.05, as a result, the correlation between two variables is meaningful, and spearman's correlation coefficient between emotional divorce and self-criticism is positive, and 0.325 and the null assumption is rejected, and researcher's assumption is confirmed.

Emotional divorce causes increasing self-criticism in married women 25 to 35 years old in Isfahan. According to the positive correlation amount and 0.325 and the relation between emotional divorce and self-criticism in the table (5), the null assumption is rejected, and the researcher's assumption is confirmed.

There is a meaningful relation between self-criticism and emotional divorce among married women 25 to 35 years old in Isfahan. According to table (5) and meaningful level, which is less than 0.05. As a result, the correlation relationship between two variables is meaningful, and spearman's correlation amount between emotional divorce and self-criticism is reported as positive, and 0.325 and the null assumption is rejected, and the researcher's assumption is confirmed.

### **Discussion and conclusion**

The results show there is a meaningful and positive relation between self-criticism and divorce. According to obtained results, there is a positive and meaningful between self-criticism and divorce, and the first theory will be confirmed. To explain these findings, it can be said there is a positive relation according to correlation tables between self-criticism and divorce. The emotional bonds will fail by declining imaginations and expectations of people after marriage and also increasing the fear of negative assessment due to ability to have emotional relation and increasing anxiety amount, especially in women will lead to emotional divorce and finally formal divorce. Also, emotional divorce causes increased self-criticism in married women 25 to 35 years old in Isfahan. According to obtained results, emotional divorce causes increasing self-criticism in women, and the second assumption of research will be confirmed. In explaining this finding, we can say the emotional divorce will affect on self-criticism increasing among married women. One of the effective cases of depression and failure and apathy of marital relation and finally emotional divorce, especially in women, is to increase self-criticism. Self-criticism causes a person believes in not perfecting his/her performance and defines unattainable criteria for himself/herself. These results in alignment with findings of other researchers such as (Hosseini-Zahra, Bernschtein-Filip, H Brenshtein- Marsei, Segalen-Martin, John Gottman, khosro Rashid, Fazlollah Hasan vand, Safdar Nabizadeh, Abedeh Rashti) based on married women involved in emotional divorce involved in self-criticism more than others.

There is a meaningful relation between self-criticism and emotional divorce among married women 25 to 35 years in Isfahan. There is a meaningful relation, according to obtained results, between self-criticism and emotional divorce. To explain this finding, we can say emotional bonds will be failed by declining spouse's imaginations and expectations from each other after marriage, and this failure leads to self-criticism thoughts, self-criticism, and negative soliloquy with themselves or increases it. These results show meaningful relation with researcher's findings such as (Dortaj, Fariborz; Delavar, Ali; Navabinezhad,

Shokouh; Mardanirad, Mozghan) based on this fact; women will involve in self-criticism to the same extent they experience emotional divorce. Emotional divorce is one of the reasons for self-criticism, especially in women. People facing failures and not satisfying their expectations in marital relations will involve emotional divorce and then self-criticism, and for this reason, they try to find the reason for failure in themselves.

There is a meaningful relation between self-criticism and emotional divorce, according to obtained results. It can be said emotional bonds will be failed by declining spouses' expectations and imaginations from each other after marriage, and this failure leads to self-criticism thoughts, self-criticism, and negative soliloquy. It would be recommended to be paid attention to raising a child in families according to high statistics of divorce in-country and existence of different problems in marital life and the other effective factors on self-criticism, and emotional divorce will be studied in next researches. We can refer to the limitation of this research which was people's bias in answering questions because of studying family problems.

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