Ilam University of Medical Sciences

Journal of Basic Research in Medical Sciences

Online ISSN: 2383-0972
Print ISSN: 2383-0506

Homepage: https://jbrms.medilam.ac.ir

Prediction of marital boredom based on emotional and social maturity

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Article Info

Article type:
Research Article

Article history:
Received: 3 June 2021
Revised: 15 August 2021
Accepted: 4 October 2021
Published online: 24 June 2023

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The present study aimed to explain the prediction of marital boredom based on emotional and social maturity among married people in Shiraz.

Materials and Methods: In this descriptive and correlational study, 362 married people (270 females and 92 males) who have married for ten years were selected by convenience sampling method. The instruments used in this research included Paynes's Marital Boredom Self-Report Scale, Yashvir and Bhargava's Emotional Maturity Scale (EMS), and Rao's Social Maturity Scale (RSMS). In addition to descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, and correlation matrix), inferential statistics (structural equation model) were used to analyze the data of the aforementioned scales collected from the sample population by AMOS software.

Results: Research findings demonstrated that emotional maturity predicts marital boredom significantly ($P < 0.01$, $\beta = -0.69$), but social maturity is not a significant predictor for marital boredom ($P < 0.01$, $\beta = -0.09$). The model was modified by considering the output modification indicators of Amos software. Overall, the results of this analysis showed that the final model was well fitted.

Conclusion: Results of this research showed that the emotional maturity could predict marital boredom significantly, but social maturity is not a significant predictor for marital boredom.

Keywords: Marital boredom, Emotional maturity, Social maturity

How to cite this article: Ali Cheshmeh Alaei M, Samani S, Sohrabi N, Baghouli B. Prediction of marital boredom based on emotional and social maturity. J Bas Res Med Sci. 2023; 10(1):15-24.

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Introduction

Family formation and marital relationships initiate with marriage. Marriage is mainly attributed to love and affection, having a partner in life, satisfying emotional and psychological expectations, and increasing happiness and contentment (1). Couples enter a relationship with many dreams and expectations when they begin an intimate relationship and once these dreams and expectations are substituted by punishment and stressful experiences and incompatibility, the marital relationship is damaged and eventually leads to boredom (2). Nowadays, marital conflicts, boredom, and then the collapse of marital

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relationships is a major problem that negatively affects individuals, families, and society, and its characteristic feature is frustration and anger towards the spouse and married life (3). Marital boredom, which the therapists are frequently dealing with, is a problem found in 50% of couples (4) and its damage not only has psychological and physical effect on the society but also individuals. Many studies were conducted on research literature on the consequences of boredom, it is found that boredom is correlated with many negative variables such as depression (5), stress, and low level of life satisfaction (6). The physical and emotional problems such as fatigue, lack of sleep, loss of appetite, headache, digestive problems, anxiety, frustration and lack of self-esteem, hypersensitivity, and crying are often seen in people with boredom syndrome (7).

In various studies, numerous causes and factors are considered to be effective in the incidence of marital boredom, the most important of which are intrapersonal factors and personality traits, lack of emotional intimacy, ineffective resolution of conflicts (3). It also seems that the variable of emotional maturity is an impact factor on marital boredom, because the results of various studies shown that many emotional disorders such as anxiety, depression, and marital incompatibility are more common in individuals who are not fully developed emotionally, and therefore, are impotent and unable in dealing with everyday life issues, so that the lack of proper emotional maturity can predict the marital boredom in the family up to 46% (8). Other research results indicate that the variable of emotional maturity is significantly related with all marital variables including spouse perception and acceptance, marital relationship, conflict resolution, financial management, free time, sexual relations, relationships with children and relatives and friends, and religious orientation (9). Emotional maturity is also considered a major predictor for the level of success and adaptability of individuals in life (10), so that those with less emotional maturity have less control over their emotions and may respond to stressful situations only through emotional discharge and incompatible behaviors. Accordingly, the successful marriage not only requires physical maturity, but also emotional maturity with emotional preparations as one of the necessary conditions to meet it. In fact, although some individuals have reached physical maturity, they could never reach emotional maturity (11). Emotional maturity is defined as the ability of individuals to manage their emotions as well as to evaluate the emotional states of others in interpersonal relationships to make appropriate decisions and actions (12). The seven components of intimacy, empathy, assertiveness, psychological stability, independence, psychological balance, and capability of meeting emotional considerations are proposed as complete definition of emotional maturity (9). An individual who has reached emotional maturity has a certain philosophy of life, and in accordance to which, the permanent life crises could be prevented. Such people rely on their current progress and not on their past, no matter how magnificent it was, and look at things like sexual affairs, love, marriage, and parenting with enlightenment, and such individuals could control their feelings and emotions (13).

One of the most critical characteristics of emotional maturity is stress tolerance, and there is a relationship between emotional maturity and social maturity, i.e., acceptance by others (14). Social maturity is a construct composed of various skills, including control over emotions¸ self-knowledge, spending free time with family and friends, facing life goals, and pursuing activities. Social maturity is achieved through obtaining traits that all included the ability of establishing good relationships and expressing sincere friendships with others. A person with social maturity can adapt to the social rules and values of the living environment and follow the views

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and demands of the group to meet the group and social needs (15). Those who do not have proper emotional and social maturity are unable to express and manage their emotions, which increases dissatisfaction followed by marital boredom. The symptoms of a couple's dissatisfaction sometimes reach a level that result in one of the most difficult events in a person's life, i.e. divorce. The divorce and dissatisfaction not only endanger the foundation of the family, but is also considered a serious threat to society (16). Increasing marital conflicts in the modern world for various reasons as well as the risk of isolation and its negative effect on the mental health of couples made the counselors and family therapists, in particular, provide theories and plans for assisting couples to avoid conflict and divorce. Thus, this research predicts marital boredom based on emotional maturity and social maturity to provide an appropriate platform to increase the existing knowledge. Accordingly, the conceptual model of the research is shown in Figure 1.

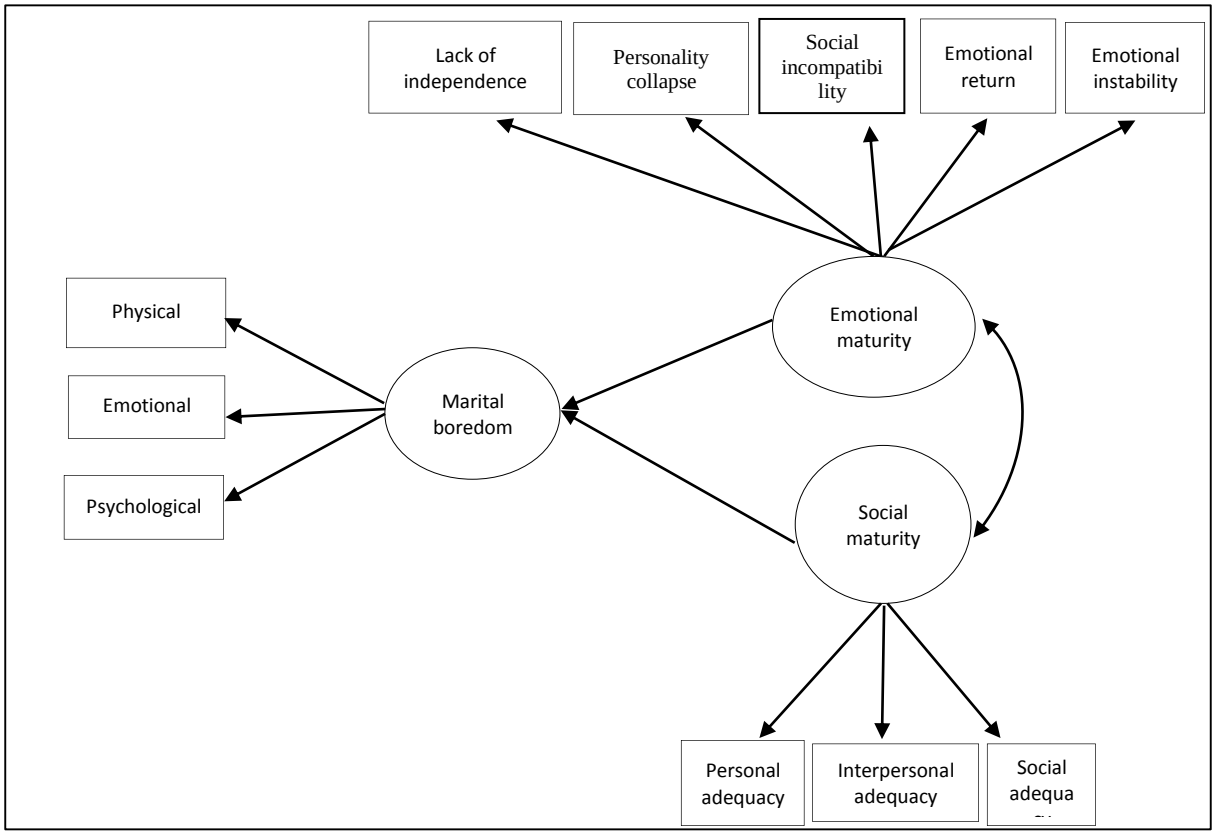


Figure 1. Conceptual model of marital boredom based on emotional and social maturity.

Materials and Methods

This study was a correlational study, in which the hypothetical relationships between the variables of the research model were investigated using the structural equation modeling method. The statistical population of this study included all married people in Shiraz who were in the first 10-year period of married life. The sample of this study included 362 married people who were married for at last 10 years were selected by convenience sampling method. Of these, 270 were women and 92 were men, 220 of whom were married for 1-5 years and 142 were married for 5-10 years.

The Research tools in the current study were as follow:

Self-reported Marital Boredom Scale: This scale was developed by Pines (1996) to measure the level of marital boredom between couples (25). This questionnaire consists of 21 items that included three

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main components of physical fatigue (such as fatigue, weakness, sleep disorder), emotional exhaustion (such as depression, frustration, being trapped), and mental exhaustion (feelings of worthlessness, frustration, anger towards spouse). The response spectrum is based on the Likert scale, where level 1 represents the lack of experience of the phrase and level 7 represents the great experience of the phrase. It should be noted that larger numbers represent a higher level of boredom and vice versa. The validity and reliability of assessing the validity coefficient of the marital boredom scale showed that there is an internal consistency between the variables in the range of 0.84 to 0.90, which is confirmed by negative correlations with positive communication characteristics, including positive opinion about relationship, quality of conversation, sense of security, self-fulfillment, sense of purpose, emotional attraction towards a spouse, and quality of sexual relationship (17). The test-retest reliability coefficient was 0.89 for one month, 0.76 for two months, and 0.66 for four months. Internal consistency for most subjects was measured with a constant alpha coefficient ranging from 0.91 to 0.93. In Iran, Navidi (2005) reported that Cronbach's alpha of this questionnaire is 0.86, indicating the favorable validity of the questionnaire. In the present research, the internal consistency method was used to investigate the validity and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to investigate the reliability. The correlation of each of the subscales with the total scale score was investigated to calculate the internal consistency. The physical, emotional, and psychological correlation with the total scale score was 0.85, 0.96, and 0.96, respectively, indicating the favorable internal consistency of this scale. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.78 for physical dimension, 0.88 for emotional dimension, 0.88 for psychological dimension, and 0.94 for the total scale score.

Emotional Maturity Questionnaire: This item was developed by Yashvir Singh and Mahesh Bhargava in 1991. The test makers have prepared a list of 5 general factors of emotional immaturity, including 1. Emotional instability, 2. Emotional return, 3. Social incompatibility, 4. Personality collapse, 5. Lack of independence. The response spectrum is based on the Likert scale and the measuring scale of the instrument varies from never to too much.

The validity of this scale against external criteria, ie "Gaha" adaptability inventory, is determined by Sinha and Singh for college students. The torque correlation between the total scores in 21 items of Gaha and the emotional maturity scale was 0.67 (18). The reliability was measured by test-retest on students, which included males and females aged 20-24. The time interval between these two tests was six months and the torque correlation between these two performances was 0.75 (19).

In this research, the internal consistency method was used to investigate the validity, and Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to investigate the reliability. The correlation of each of the subscales with the total scale score was investigated to calculate the internal consistency. The correlation of emotional instability, emotional return, emotional incompatibility, personality collapse, lack of independence with the total scale score was 0.79, 0.86, 0.76, 0.86, and 0.63, respectively, which represents the favorable internal consistency. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.66 for emotional instability, 0.74 for emotional return, 0.61 for social incompatibility, 0.78 for personality collapse, 0.50 for lack of independence, and 0.88 for total scale score.

Social Maturity Scale: Rao's Social Maturity Scale (RSMS) consists of 90 items, which is group administered in regular classroom situations and includes three dimensions below: 1. Personal adequacy (job orientation, self-leadership, stress tolerance), 2. Interpersonal adequacy (communication, reasonable trust,

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cooperation), 3. Social adequacy (social commitment, social tolerance, preparation for a change). Of 90 items of Rao's Social Maturity Questionnaire (RSMS), 23 items were positive and 67 items were negative. There are categories such as totally agree 4, agree 3, disagree 2, and totally disagree 1 in the positive items, and on the contrary, totally agree 4, agree 3, disagree 2, and totally disagree 4 in the negative items .

The validity coefficient of retesting the social maturity questionnaire is 0.79 and the validity coefficient of adequacy is 0.89, interpersonal adequacy is 0.73, and social adequacy is 0.70 (20). The validity coefficient of this scale was calculated to be 0.53 by the retest method in a time interval of 2 weeks on a group of 250 people. The validity coefficient was also calculated by the internal consistency of items and Cronbach's alpha of 0.83 was obtained .

In the present study, the internal consistency method was used to investigate the validity, and Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to investigate the reliability. The correlation of each of the subscales with the total scale score was investigated to calculate the internal consistency. Correlation of personal adequacy, social adequacy, and interpersonal adequacy was obtained with the total scale score of 0.83, 0.83, and 0.77, respectively, indicating the favorable internal consistency of this scale. Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.83 was also obtained for personal adequacy, 0.71 for social adequacy, 0.79 for interpersonal adequacy, and 0.80 for total scale score. Before model testing, first, the outlier data were excluded and then the modeling hypotheses of structural equations, including normality, linearity, and lack of multicollinearity were investigated. The hypothesis of normality was studied by skewness and kurtosis indices of observed variables. The values of skewness and kurtosis of all observed variables were lower than 2, indicating that the distribution of none of the observed variables is significantly different from a normal distribution. Multivariate normality was also examined by the Mardia coefficient in Amos software and the multivariate normality hypothesis was confirmed. The scatter plot matrices of the variables as well as residues were studied and the results indicate the linear relationship between observed variables of research and also the scores of the predicted dependent variable and predictor errors. Additionally, the multicollinearity of the predictor variables was also investigated by tolerance statistics and variance inflation factor.

Results

Results demonstrated that the tolerance value was above 0.10 and the value of variance inflation factor was below 10, which did not indicate the multicollinearity between the variables. Before addressing the findings of the research model test, some descriptive indices (such as mean and standard deviation) (Table 1) as well as the zero-order correlation matrix were calculated between research variables (Table 2). This table shows the zero-order correlation matrix between the dimensions of the research variables with their significance levels. According to the table, the dimension of emotional maturity and its total score is positively and significantly related to marital boredom and is negatively and significantly correlated with the social maturity and total score of this variable. Moreover, the social maturity and its total score has a negative and significant correlation with marital boredom and its total score. Generally, the correlation matrix results of the research variables provide the possibility of the structural equation modeling. Structural equation modeling was used to investigate the research model. In this model, emotional maturity and social maturity were included as exogenous variables and the marital boredom was included as endogenous variable, and the effect of emotional and social maturity on marital boredom was studied. Figure 2 shows the model of this research.

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Table 1. Descriptive findings of emotional and social maturity and marital boredom.

Variables		Mean ± SD	Minimum score	Maximum score
Emotional maturity	Emotional instability	29.70 ± 5.98	13	44
	Emotional return	38.10 ± 6.38	17	50
	Social incompatibility	36.61 ± 4.56	23	45
	Personality collapse	41.03 ± 5.76	25	50
	Lack of independence	27.30 ± 3.41	16	35
	Emotional maturity (total score)	172.75 ± 20.50	124	216
Social maturity				
	Social adequacy	69.63 ± 5.65	53	85
	Interpersonal adequacy	73.22 ± 6.14	57	89
	Personal adequacy	75.82 ± 6.34	60	92
	Social maturity (total score)	218.68 ± 14.79	183	260
Marital boredom				
	Physical	12.25 ± 4.85	4	26
	Emotional	22.02 ± 8.47	7	47
	Psychological	24.70 ± 9.36	8	52
	Marital boredom (total score)	58.98 ± 21.34	19	121

Table 2. Relationship of emotional and social maturity with marital boredom.

Variable	Emotional instability	Emotional return	Social incompatibilit	Personality collapse	Lack of independence	Emotional maturity	Personal adequacy	Interpersonal adequacy	Social adequacy	Social maturity	Physical	Emotional	Psychological	Marital boredom
Emotional instability	1													
Emotional return	0.6	1												
Social incompatibility	0.4	0.5	1											
Personality collapse	0.5	0.6	0.6	1										
Lack of independence	0.2	0.4	0.5	0.5	1									
Emotional maturity	0.7	0.9	0.7	0.8	0.6	1								
Personal adequacy	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.5	1							
Interpersonal adequacy	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4	0. 6	1						
Social adequacy	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.5	1					
Social maturity	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.83	0.8	0.8	1				
Physical	0.5	0.5	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.5	-0.2	-0.2	-0.1	+0.2	1			
Emotional	-0.6	-0.5	-0.3	-0.4	-0.2	-0.5	-0.2	-0.2	-0.2	-0.3	0.8	1		
Psychological	-0.5	-0.5	-0.4	-0.5	-0.2	-0.6	-0.3	-0.3	-0.2	-0.3	0.7	0.9	1	
Marital boredom	-0.6	-0.5	-0.3	-0.5	-0.2	-0.6	-0.2	-0.2	-0.2	-0.3	0.8	0.9	0.9	1

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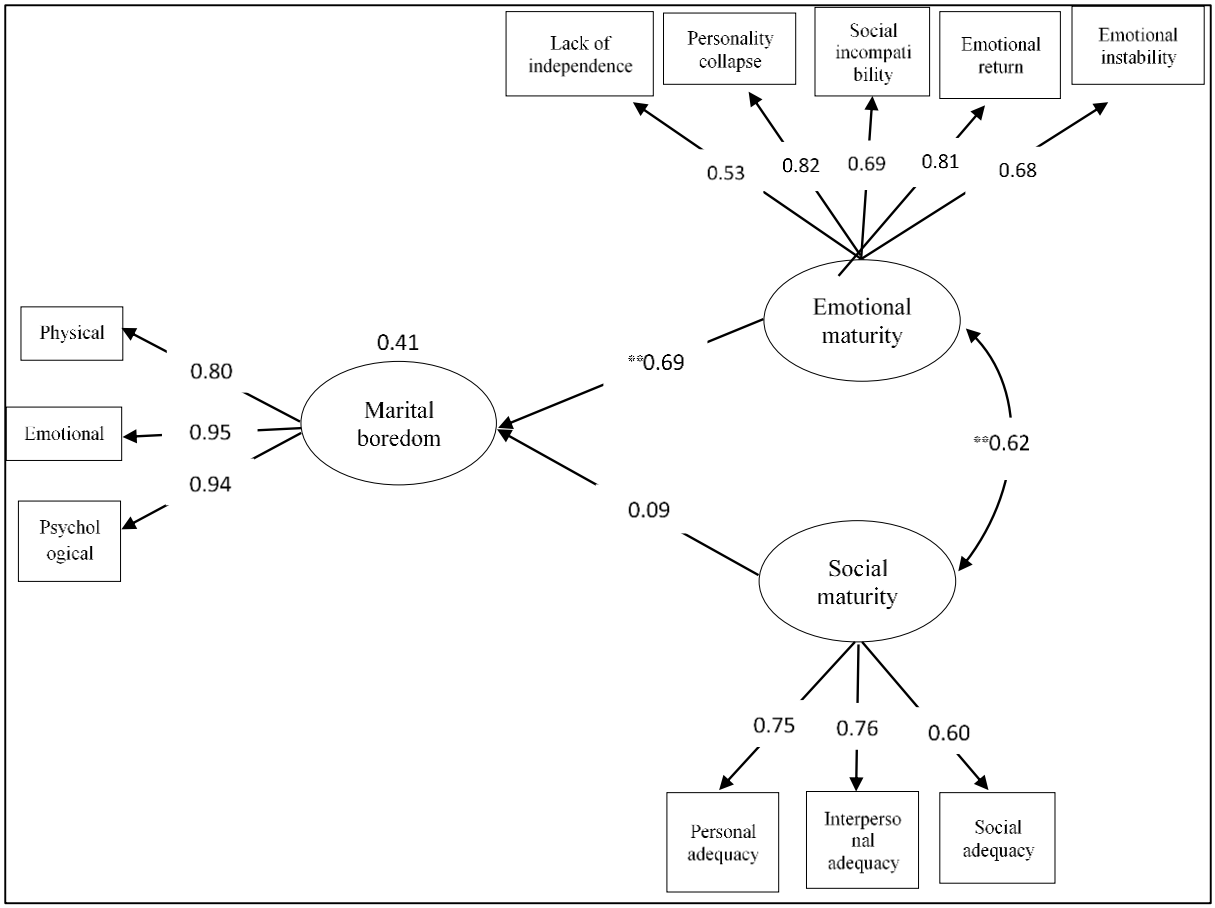


Figure 2. Conceptual model of marital boredom based on emotional and social maturity. Results of the structural model, such as the direct coefficients of the research variables, are given in Table 3.

Table 3. Examining direct effects of emotional and social maturity to marital boredom.

Path	Direct effect	Explained variance
From emotional maturity to marital boredom	-0.69	0.01
From social maturity to marital boredom	0.09	0.41

As the results given in Table 3 show, the emotional maturity negatively and significantly predicts marital boredom ($P < 0.01$, $\beta = -0.69$), but the social maturity is not a significant predictor of marital boredom. This model was modified after calculating the model by taking into account the output correction indices of Amos software. The model was fitted with eight indices. In the first index, the ratio of chi-square to degree of freedom was regarded as the study criteria. Results of this analysis generally showed that the final model is well fitted.

Discussion

This research aims to predict marital boredom based on emotional maturity and social maturity and its results showed that emotional maturity is negatively and significantly affects marital boredom. This finding is consistent with the results of research conducted by Falahati and Mohammadi (21), Nazarpour et al. (22), Mohammad Sharoni et al. (23), Pamuk (24), Nin Diaseri (25). A review of previous research reveals that most of the research on the relationship between emotional maturity and social maturity and depression has been done separately and there has been no research that accurately and coherently examines these variables as a model. The structure of the present study provides valid models for psychological interventions to increase emotional maturity and reduce marital frustration (22). In fact, people with

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emotional stability could properly manage their emotional life and tolerate stress and are also indifferent to some stimulants that make them emotional. These people could adjust emotions, intimacy, empathy, mental stability, independence, as well as appropriate emotional intimacy with romantic behaviors, emotional support, feelings of spouse and empathy, appropriate response, intimacy and participation, companionship, and emotional attachment, all of which prevent the feeling of frustration and boredom (24). Additionally, an emotionally developed person had the potential to resist the delay in meeting needs and had a higher endurance in frustrations and shortcomings in the couple's life and could have long-term planning and revise their expectations and demands. Given the growing characteristic of independence, those with emotional maturity could resist inducing thoughts of others in married life and have a better understanding of others' attitudes and behaviors instead of accepting them. Such a person reaches a level of emotional maturity that could find more complex solutions to daily emotional problems and use the developed feelings for problem-solving and prevent any interference of others in his/her marital relationship (26).

On the contrary, those who have not reached emotional maturity always need affection and attention, hide their weak points, are not open to criticism, are jealous, are not forgiving, are not emotionally stable, and complain (27). The most important characteristics of people who have not reached emotional maturity included anger, restlessness, anxiety, stress, strong dependence on family, unnecessary doubts, lack of self-confidence and trust in others, incorrect prejudice about others, lack of correct judgment about life, inability to accept responsibility, haste, and rashness of actions, loss of opportunity in life, secrecy, rivalry, selfishness, self-centeredness, projection, stubbornness, indifference to problems of others. Since marital boredom is the definitive and intensified form of stress, thus, neurotic couples are prone to boredom (27).

One of the limitations of the present study was that the part of the sampling was done at the same time as the epidemic and outbreak of COVID-19 in the country. The stress caused by this event could be one of the cases out of control in the present study, to control the adverse effects of this event, the researcher postponed the sampling for several months so that the community and of course the couple in the face of this ominous phenomenon to achieve relative stability and be less effective in research results.

Conclusion

Consequently, this study indicated that emotional maturity could negatively and significantly predict marital boredom, but social maturity is not significantly predicting marital boredom.

Acknowledgments

This article has been derived from a PhD thesis (Cod number: ETHICS-2107-1014) at Islamic Azad University-Marvdasht Branch. We would like to thank the cooperation of all the research centers and units.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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