Predicting Wife Abuse Acceptance according to Gender Stereotypes in Violated Women

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Abstract-- *The purpose of the study was to predict wife abuse acceptance among the women based on the gender stereotypes variable in violated women. Accordingly, the population was the women admitted to legal medicine organization during one year (2017-2018), of whom 380 women were selected for inclusion in the study using convenience sampling. They were evaluated using wife abuse questionnaire by Ghahari et al. (2006) and couples gender stereotypes by Amri (2007). Data were examined using simple regression. Graphical and systematic analysis methods were used to analyze the data. The results showed that gender stereotypes can predict wife abuse. Thus, this variable can have a significant role in wife abuse acceptance among women, and women with this scale may be more vulnerable to harm.*

Keywords--*wife abuse, gender stereotypes, violated women*

I INTRODUCTION

The proper role of the family in society depends on the quality of the marriage between the married couple, i.e. husband and wife. In other words, one of the vital aspects of a marital system is the satisfaction and support that spouses feel and experience in their relationship and by transmitting it to children that they form the constructive or destructive system in the family, which will be the base of the future community (Amani, 2012). Gender-based violence is considered as one of the most important public health problems and a major vulnerability concerning women's health (especially in some underdeveloped countries) (Bishwajit et al., 2017). Wife abuse or domestic violence (DV), as a process of malfunctioning in the family, is a covert harm and a serious threat to mental health of women. Wife abuse is a phenomenon happening in the private environment of the family, but has different dimensions and aspects that will definitely cause various harms at the community level. Indeed, not just women but all family members can be considered as the victims of this type of violence (Shirazi, 2009). Thus, DV involves any violent behavior practiced by the husband against wife. This kind of violence involves physical, emotional and sexual misconduct applied to exercise authority, power and consolidation of power over women leading to many deaths of women in the world (Shayan et al., 2017). Wife abuse not only undermines the mental health and the emotional-psychological balance of the husband and wife, but also affects the children. Children raised in the families whose parents have been involved in misconducts, in adulthood, when they use violence with their children, they use the same aggressive patterns their parents used (Paterson et al., 1982). Moreover, studies show that children seeing their mothers being beaten have low self-esteem and a lot of disappointment in terms of

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psychological experience consistent with symptoms of self-regulatory disorders (Donald G., 2011). In Iran, there is no accurate statistics on wife abuse, but according to a survey conducted by a sample of married women in Tehran, 9.87% of them suffered from mental wife abuse and 47.9% from physical wife abuse. Wife abuse rate among the men using drugs is higher than that of non-drug-using husbands. Moreover, wife abuse among the husbands with a history of mental illness is more than normal healthy husbands and the rate of physical and psychological wife abuse among the complaining women is more than the normal ones (Moghimi, 2014).

Prevention of wife abuse or its treatment needs identifying the factors effective in its formation, and without knowing the causes, one cannot adopt a therapeutic approach in this regard either in the victim or the violent side. Among the factors affecting the acceptance of wife abuse are the characteristics of women as the one harmed, among which gender stereotypes can be cited. Gender stereotypes are a set of beliefs about what it means to be male and female, and these gender stereotypes include information about physical appearance, attitudes, interests, psychological traits, social relationships, and occupations (Golumberg and Fayesh, 2003). Elizabeth Greman (2005) considers gender stereotypes as the common cultural structures of society that describe the qualities that men and women are known for. Germen argues that intra-group stereotypes and prejudices affect the perception and appreciation of individuals from others (Sadat Hosseini, 2012). Hang et al. (2003) believe that sexual stereotypes are a kind of mental perception of what a man or a woman should be. According to gender stereotypes, women and men in the community have specific characteristics, specific behaviors, and specific mental states, and ultimately have the ability to perform tasks differently. On the other hand, stereotyping assigns features and abilities to women, with no signs among men, and on the other hand, attributes the ability and qualities to which women do not have (Ezazi, 2001). This imposes a lot of social pressure on women, where jobs, professions, and education are of secondary importance. In the social state, stereotypes create some problems for women. For instance, gender is crucial in planning for teaching girls and boys. The idea that men and women have different intellectual abilities justifies very different behavior with the girl and the boy in the educational institution (Bastani, 2008).

Shayan et al. (2014) examined the relationship between wife abuse and mental health in women suffering wife abuse admitted to Shiraz legal medicine organization. The results showed that more than 50% of the violated women suffered general health disorder in all aspects, with the greatest impact on depression and anxiety. In other words, violence from any type is a predictor of general health disorder. Ghasemi (2013), who examined the factors affecting violence against women in the family, showed that patriarchal attitude, experience and observation of violence, the traditional social system, and lack of sources of power have a significant effect on violence against women and there was a significant relationship between violence against women of different ages. Cowack et al. (2018) examined the relationship between wife abuse and the risk of suicide in women over the age of 18. The results showed that women experiencing high wife abuse tended to suicide at a moderate level and showed a significant relationship between them. The study by Ozkan et al. (2016), entitled domestic violence against Women in Turkey (systematic review), showed that the highest prevalence of DV was verbal violence followed by physical, emotional, economic and sexual violence.

The study examined prediction of wife abuse admission based on gender stereotypes in violated women admitted to the legal medicine organization and prosecutorial authorities of Mashhad.

II Methodology

The study was descriptive of causal-comparative and correlation type and applied in terms of the applicability of the results. The population of the study was the women admitted to legal medicine organization and prosecutors. Cochran formula was used to determine the sample size for an unknown population. The convenience sampling method was used that included the women admitted to family prosecutors with a wife abuse complaint during the six months from March 20, 2018 to August 23, 2018. Inclusion criteria included the women of at least 18 years of age, women who had been admitted to at least one organization of the society for at least one case of wife abuse, with at least 3 years of marital life and not taking any steps to divorce with permanent marriage and a willingness to participate in the study. The research tools were informed consent form, demographic questionnaire, wife abuse questionnaire by Ghahari, and couples gender stereotypes questionnaire. The consent form of the informed participation in the study was designed by the researcher to allow the subjects to become familiar with the nature, purpose, method and other related issues before deciding whether to participate in the study. The personal information questionnaire consisted of information like age, number of children, level of education, and duration of marriage.

Wife abuse questionnaire by Ghahari et al. (2006) has 44 items, 20 of which include mental abuse, 10 physical abuse and 14 cases of sexual abuse. Each item is scored with 4-option Likert scale (never, sometimes, often, and always). Ghahari et al. developed the tool based on the diagnostic criteria proposed in the psychiatric and clinical psychology departments of the Tehran Psychiatric Institute and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the whole questionnaire was 0.92 with the test retest coefficient of 0.94.

Couples gender stereotypes questionnaire evaluates the level of couples' thinking based on gender stereotypes. This questionnaire was compiled and standardized by Amri (2007) that has 14 item and evaluates the subjects belief in those items in a scale from storngly agree to strongly disagree. The scoring of this test is based on the Likert spectrum and each item is assigned a score of 0 to 4. The minimum score for this test is 0 and its maximum is 56. Amri (2007) tested the reliability of this test by Cronbach's alpha and reported 0.82 coefficients. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient in this study was 0.79.

The implementation method was through a questionnaire selected from the sample of the target population. After explaining the study, the subjects were selected and their co-operation was carried out. Individual questionnaires were conducted for each individual. In order to encourage more subjects to cooperate more honestly and more seriously, they were told that they could write a name or number call the test results and their interpretation can be informed. To conduct this research, a questionnaire was given to the subjects. In order to observe ethical principles and to engage the subjects, before conducting the research, the participants were provided with the information test on the subject and purpose of the research, as long as the results of the research were not effective, and after ensuring that their information was confidential and will not be analyzed individually and they could leave the study whenever they wished so, a written consent was taken. A total of 380 questionnaires

were given to the subjects during the period from March 2018 to September 2018 and analyzed. SPSS was used to analyze the data. To analyze the demographic characteristics of the sample, descriptive statistics parameters including frequency tables, mean, standard deviation, variance, minimum and maximum, and with regard to inferential statistics, regression analysis and Pearson correlation test were used to test the hypotheses of the research.

Ethical considerations of the study included preserving the secrets and information of the subject and focusing on the principle of secrecy, the diligence in the accuracy of the data collected, the accuracy and precision of data analysis, not mentioning the subject name and using the identification code, receiving written consent for participation and the possibility of withdrawal of the subject when wished so.

III Results

The purpose of the study was to determine the role of gender stereotypes in the prediction of wife absue. In doing so, data was collected from 380 subjects. The frequency of participants by age, marriage duration, number of children and educational level is presented in Table (1). As reported in Table (1), most subjects (46.3%) were in the age group 26-35 and the lowest (0.8%) were in the age group 56-65, most of the participants (68.2%) were married for 1-10 years, most of the participants (59.7%) had 1 to 2 children, and most of them (44.7%) had a high school diploma.

Table 1: Frequency of the participants by age, duration of marriage, number of children and educational level

Variable		Frequency	Percent
Age	15-25	83	21.8
	26-35	176	46.3
	36-45	97	25.5
	46-55	21	5.5
	56-65	3	0.8
Marriage duration	1-10	259	68.2
	11-20	94	24.7
	21-30	18	4.7
	31-40	9	2.4
	Total	380	100%
Number of children	0	101	26.6
	1-2	227	59.7

	3-4	50	13.2
	5-6	2	0.5
	Total	380	100%
Education	illiterate	8	2.1
	Elementary	52	13.7
	Diploma	170	44.7
	Bachelor	135	35.5
	MA	15	3.9
	Total	380	100%

After examining the participants' frequency, the participants were classified according to age, education, number of children and duration of marriage. Mean, standard deviation, variance, minimum and maximum score in wife abuse and gender beliefs were reported in Table 2. As reported in Table (2), mean and standard deviation of wife absue were (113.44 ± 27.99) and gender beliefs (35.7 ± 12.68).

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of the variables

Variable	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD	Variance
Wife abuse	58	166	113.44	27.99	783.73
Emotional aspect	24	78	54.89	14.14	199.88
Gender aspect	14	79	27.36	10.11	102.23
Physical aspect	10	40	24.51	7.56	57.12
Gender beliefs	13	53	35.7	12.68	160.84

Pearson correlation test was used to determine the correlation between wife abuse variables and gender beliefs, and the results were reported in Table (3).

Table 3: Correlation matrix of the variables

Variable	Wife abuse	Emotional aspect	Physical aspect	Gender aspect	Gender beliefs
Wife abuse	1				
Emotional aspect	0.38**	1			
Gender aspect	0.31**	0.72**	1		
Physical aspect	0.21**	0.29**	0.27**	1	
Gender beliefs	0.41**	-0.005	-0.003	-0.16**	1

* $p<0.05$ ** $p<0.01$

Simple linear regression test was used to test the hypothesis (gender beliefs can predict wife abuse significantly). Before the implementation of the regression statistical test, its presumptions were obtained. After proving the normal distribution of the variables (normality), Kolmogorov-Smirnov test along Kurtosis and Skewness were used for the sample size, given the high population size, and the results were reported in Table (4). As observed in Table (4), Kolmogorov-Smirnov test significance is more than 0.05 and Kurtosis and Skewness are in the range ± 2, so the distribution of all variables is normal. Levene's test was used to determine the variance homogeneity, and the results were reported in Table (4). The significance level of Levene's test for all variables is greater than 0.05; therefore, the variance of variables is equal at all levels.

Table 4: Normal distribution analysis of the variables and homogeneity of the variances

Test	Variable	Skewness	Kurtosis	K-S	DF	P
Normal distribution of variables	Wife absue	-0.04	-0.09	0.34	379	>0.05
	Gender stereotypes	0.33	-0.22	0.84	379	>0.05
Homogeneity of variances	**Variable**	**DF1**	**DF2**	**F**	**P**	-
	Wife absue	4	375	1.55	0.19	-
	Gender stereotypes	4	375	1.39	0.24	-

Simple linear regression test was used to test the hypothesis (gender beliefs can significantly predict wife absue). The dispersion diagram of two variables shows that these two variables are linearly and directly related to each other Chart (1). The accuracy of the prediction of the dependent variable through the regression equation ($y = 0.904X + 81.182$) shows that due to the dispersion of some points from the regression line, the prediction of the regression equation is evaluated to be weak.
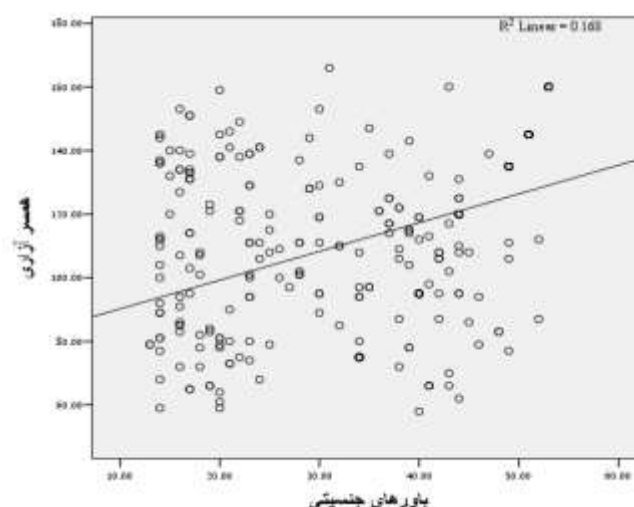

Chart 1: The relationship of gender beliefs with wife absue and regression line

The results of the test showed that gender beliefs predict 17% of the variance of wife abuse which is weak but statistically significant (R2 = 0.17, β = 0.41, P = 0.000). Moreover, analyzing the mean squares in Table 5 shows a significant difference between the mean regression squares of the residuals (F 1.378 = 76.8, P = 0.000).

Table 5: Analysis of regression model squares of the role of gender beliefs in predicting wife abuse

Changes source	Sum of squares	DF	Mean squares	F	P
Regression	49769.38	1	49769.38	76.08	0.000
Residuals	247262.34	378	654.13		
Total	297031.73	379			

IV Discussion and Conclusion

According to the results of the study, most subjects (46.3%) were in the age group 26-35 years, most participants (68.2%) were married or 1-10 years, most of the participants (59.7%) had 1 to 2 children, and most of the participants (44.7%) had a high school diploma. The mean and standard deviation of wife abuse were (113.44 ± 27.99) and gender beliefs (35.7 ± 12.68). Pearson correlation test was used to determine the correlation between wife abuse variables and gender beliefs.

Simple linear regression test was used to test the hypothesis (gender beliefs can significantly predict wife absue). The variables dispersion diagram shows that these two variables are linearly and directly related to each other. The results of the test showed that gender beliefs predict 17% of the variance of wife abuse which is weak but statistically significant (R2 = 0.17, β = 0.41, P = 0.000). Thus, it can be somewhat predict wife abuse among women. According to Bem's Gender Schema Theory (1985), the nature of the existence of a schema tends to categorize information based on specific classes in individuals. Hence, one can state that schemas make us categorize our behaviors and attitudes in classes related to gender. The social influence theory also states that the peripheral gender norms culture can be defined as behaviors within a group that encourages members to do certain principles in certain categories, which perceive inappropriate gender roles in individuals that are basically based on the culture of any society traditionally defined in advance. For instance, where men are expected to be breadwinners and women housewives and care for children, and who is commanders and who is the follower are defined in the previous frameworks of culture, showing social influence among individuals. Empirical studies on individual risk factors show that men are more likely to commit violent acts against their wives with more traditional and unfair thinking of more gendered and stereotyped roles (Martha Molova, 2017). Women who live according to gender stereotypes in the society have actually accepted an implicit agreement to live in a safe framework and less pressure is imposed on them from the society. For instance, the women who accept (men are more aggressive and powerful than women), accept the violence of their spouses, and in reality, they will not oppose the beliefs of the community or behave in a way that does not improve the situation because they have accepted that man's nature is typically aggressive and nervous.

Thus, the results of the current study show that gender stereotypes can predict wife abuse in women. Hence, this variable can play an important role in accepting wife abuse among women, and the women with this scale may

be more vulnerable to harm. The present study shows that the most prevalent cause of maltreatment is emotional and sexual dimensions. An interview with these people also showed that sexual harassment in these women has a very high prevalence due to lack of legal support, as long as it is a way to grapple with women and threatens them to endure other forms of violence. Fear of more violence, lack of family support and loss of children are among the issues making women unable to take legal action despite the great abuses. The study also showed that high prevalence of wife absue among women admitted to legal medicine organization in addition to physical injuries and serious injuries can also affect the mental health of these individuals. Finally, one can state that the actual maltreatment being injured in these people causes irreparable harm to them. Thus, considering the role of this variable in wife abuse, one can state that it can be used to prevent this problem in intervention and treatment, and even premarital counseling.

V Limitations

1. The subjects concerns about the presentation of their personal information, so as to show their identity and information on sexual and marital issues.

2. The sample was women admitted to Mashhad legal medicine organization that limits the generalization of results, so care should be taken in generalizing the results to other populations.

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