

RESEARCH ARTICLE

# A Comparison of the Shared Activities With the Spouse Between Men and Women: Similarities and Differences

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**Abstract:** Given the importance of joint activities in couples' relationships and the involved gender differences, this article aims to investigate shared activities with the spouse in different aspects of everyday life and their determinants in married men and women in Tehran, the capital of Iran. Through multi-stage cluster sampling, 1,736 samples were selected from 50 districts of Tehran. A cross-sectional survey was conducted with a questionnaire instrument. Five dimensions (social contacts, spending time outdoors, spending time indoors, talking with the spouse, and money spending) were extracted from factor analysis. The results indicate that the majority of men and women have joint activities in everyday life. Compared to men, women gain more marital happiness from joint activities, but they reported fewer in some dimensions. The spousal similarity is one of the major determinants of the shared activities with the spouse, both in men and women. Education is among the factors that increase and income difference between the factors that decrease have more effective in women than men. Spousal similarity and gender attitudes have the highest share in explaining shared activities while the share of components related to life cycle is lower. Traditional gender attitudes as a reducing factor have the greatest impact on men. In general, we can say despite the similarities, shared activities with the spouse are not the same for men and women in different aspects. The explanatory power of the model is greater for women than men. It is influenced by various factors, and the impact of these factors is not the same for both sexes.

**Keywords:** shared activities with the spouse, joint activities, separate activities, gender differences

In the wake of economic and social changes of recent decades, the family has also experienced changes in its structure, function, and different dimensions. Divorce and its increasing rate have negatively affected individuals and the society. Reduced fertility and value changes are other changes in the family that have challenged this enduring social

institution. The emergence of these changes has raised the possibility of individualism in the family and questioned family's continuity and stability. Although, with the emergence of the nuclear family, the possibility of manifestation of intimacy and close relationships between spouses has been provided more than before, and these relationships get more

significant with the passage of time, nowadays some evidence suggests that couples have problems and inconsistencies in establishing effective and satisfactory relationships.

There are different and sometimes contradictory results in the studies on the relationships of couples. Some studies suggested that an emphasis on individual autonomy, privacy, and self-fulfillment is increasingly developing in the relationships between couples (AzadArmaki & Saei, 2012; Bumpass, 1990; Lesthaeghe & Meekers, 1987; Modiri & Mahdavi, 2015; Mohammad et al., 2007) while others suggested that extreme individualism in relations between spouses is not dominant (AzadArmaki, Modiri, & Vakili, 2010; Kalmijn & Bernasco, 2001; White, 1983).

Among the topics through which individualism or collectivism among couples can be estimated are the shared activities with the spouse in everyday life. The association between joint activities and marital satisfaction has been frequently tested and approved (Booth, Johnson, White, & Edwards, 1984; Hill, 1988; Kim & Stiff, 1991; Modiri & Mahdavi, 2015; Reissman, Aron, & Bergen, 1993; Rogers & Amato, 1997; Simpson & England, 1981). Effective communication between family members is very important, and individualism in couples' relationships can lead to instability of the family and social system (AzadArmaki et al., 2010; Kalmijn & Bernasco, 2001; White, 1983). In addition, while there are several studies on marriage and divorce, but there has been less attention to the quantity and quality of spouses' relationships. Therefore, it is important to consider the relationships between couples more than before. The results of such research can offer solutions to marital stability and be used in social policymaking. It can provide a context to understand social realities and prevent hasty judgments. Awareness of social realities in this field prevents negative consequences and limits extreme judgments; modifies the concerns of the public, authorities, and social planners; and guides extremist views.

It is assumed that joint activities leads to enjoyable marital interaction, and provides chances for a stable married life in men and women. However, some studies have shown gender differences in shared activities with spouse and their determinants (Modiri, 2015; Kalmijn & Bernasco,

2001; Sadeghi & Malekipour, 2013; Knowles, 2004; Vogler, Lyonette, & Wiggins, 2008). The dichotomy in research findings and lack of adequate research on the relationships between couples with gender perspectives raise two fundamental questions: How is the shared activities with the spouse in different aspects of everyday life in men and women? What are the similarities and differences between women and men regarding the determinants of shared activities with the spouse?

## Theories and Background

Shared activities with the spouse have been more explained by the exchange theory, cultural capital, and new home economics theories.

### *Exchange Theory*

The underlying assumption of the exchange theory is that people avoid costly behaviors and, in seeking reward in relationships, they choose interactions with maximum benefit or minimum loss. Knowles (2004) believed that, even in leisure times, the costs and rewards that may be incurred by the joint leisure time are considered by spouses. Costs include money and time spent, and rewards can be personal pleasure, values, or issues related to values. He wrote that since there is a direct relationship between outcomes and satisfaction if the reward is greater than the costs, marital satisfaction as an outcome of the joint activities will increase. Comparing the alternative could be responsible for selecting the separate, rather than joint activities. Cost and reward can also be applied to children. As older children want more independence, spouses will spend more time together (Knowles, 2004).

### *Theory of Cultural Capital*

According to Bourdieu (1986), habitus and, consequently, cultural capital control and guide human behavior and action. Habitus is in the center of human cultural capital surrounded by social notions which are guided by cultural capital. In other words, according to Bourdieu's theory of practice, human cultural capital is the guide of his notions and actions. Culture; personality; and social, economic, and cultural environment of individuals influence their thinking and are involved in the formation of or changes in their notions (Monadi, 2006).

### *New Home Economics Theories*

According to the new home economics theories, the economy increases special marital capital and decreases the chance of marital dissolution. Economists emphasize the important role of the job as a cohesive factor in marriages through increasing economic benefit (Hill, 1988).

Some previous studies have focused on the relationship of different dimensions of joint activities with marital happiness and have shown a positive correlation between these two variables (AzadArmaki et al., 2010; Becker & Lois, 2010; Britt, Grable, Goff, & White, 2008; Fein, 2009; Flood & Genadek, 2016; Monadi, 2006; Reissman et al., 1993; Knowles, 2004; White, 1983). Some others have expressed this correlation in terms of gender (Flood & Genadek, 2016; Knowles, 2004). Some studies have pointed to the level of shared activities between couples.

For instance, Kalmijn and Bernasco (2001) have reported that individualism is not dominant in the couple relations. Also, White (1983) reported the average interaction between couples to be 15.79 from a 0–20 scale which indicates a good level.

One of the determinants of the shared activities with the spouse is the role of children. Hill et al. (Modiri, 2015) have revealed that children have a dual role. On the one hand, they reduce couples spending time together, on the other hand, as marital capital, they help to prevent the dissolution of marriage. The dual role of children in marital stability has been reported by several other studies (Hill, 1988; Miller, 1976; Sadeghi & Malekipour, 2013; White, 1983). Also, some have suggested that children contribute to marital dissatisfaction by reducing shared times of couples and their companionship, while others have shown that children do not affect marital life (Kingston & Nock, 1987).

Becker and Lois (2010) have shown that similar couples in terms of education have a longer-term marital relationship; also, couples that have similar lifestyles are more flexible in marital life which prevents marriage dissolution.

Kalmijn and Bernasco (2001) examined 1,523 married and cohabiting couples in the Netherlands. They have tried to explain which couples have separated leisure time and why they have chosen this lifestyle. Kalmijn and Bernasco also revealed that life cycle factors are important determinants of separate lifestyle, whereas evidence for the role of values and

homogamy is modest. They did not find that spouses in dual-earner couples generally operate more separately than do other couples.

Miller (1976) suggested a u-shaped relationship between spouses in a way that at the beginning and final stages of marriage, the couples' relationship increases and in the mid-period of marriage it decreases. Hill (1988) has shown that differences between spouses are more visible at the beginning of marital life, but it fades with time.

Kingston and Nock (1987) and Miller (1976) showed a positive relationship between socioeconomic status and shared activities with the spouse. Bott (1955) revealed the relationship between joint activities and working conditions. Dardis, Soberon- Ferrer, and Patro (1994) have shown that the head of the family's salary and non-salary income are variables affecting leisure activities. Age is also an influential variable in a way that less active leisure can be seen in old age. Education has a positive effect on leisure time (Dardis et al., 1994). Hill (1988) also wrote that economists emphasize the important role of the job as a cohesive factor in marriages through increasing economic benefit.

Fein (2009), Allendorf and Ghimire (2013), Matthews, Kuller, Wing, Meilahn, and Plantinga (1996), and Perry-Jenkins, Repetti, and Crouter (2000) who pointed out how work-family conflicts can affect the quality and duration of the time couples spend together.

Some studies have also dealt with the expression of gender differences in shared activities with the spouse. Kalmijn and Bernasco (2001) examined different impacts of poor working conditions including long working hours and irregular work on women's and men's lifestyles. They showed that the working hours of married women leads to a separate lifestyle, but it is not the case with their spouses. Irregular working hours does not affect men's lifestyle, but it affects women's. However, in general, dual-earner couples do not necessarily lead to separate lifestyle Vogler et al. (2008) has shown that women are more willing to aggregate the family's income towards shared spending. Knowles (Knowles, 2004) has disclosed that women's marital happiness from joint activities is more than men's. Sadeghi and Malekipour (2013) pointed out the difference in the meaning of distance from the viewpoint of men and women and stated that women perceive lack of communication and lack of empathy

as distance while, to men, distance is lack of physical closeness and sex. They also reported the dual role of children and the invert correlation between education and the duration of the marriage and direct correlation between traditional gender attitudes and distance.

As observed, there are differences and even contradictions in the results of the previous studies which can be attributed to cultural differences in various societies and the difference among various social groups. These results show the importance of studying social phenomena in different societies. Several studies had investigated shared activities with the spouse in limited dimensions, especially at leisure times, while shared activities with the spouse can be important in different aspects of everyday life. Also, since couples have been the unit of analysis in most studies, gender comparison has not been done. In this study, shared activities with the spouse in various aspects of everyday life will be examined in terms of gender. Thus, research hypotheses are as follows:

- Shared activities with the spouse are correlated with marital happiness in both men and women.
- The level of correlation between shared activities with spouse and marital happiness is different for men and women.

Also, according to the theories of exchange, new home economics and cultural capital, as well as previous researches, shared activities with the spouse is affected by a combination of factors which increase or decrease these activities in women and men. Accordingly, the 10 factors of income, education, gender attitudes, marital duration, having children, spousal similarity at the beginning of the marriage, agreement during the marriage, the difference in education, income difference, and work-family conflict are assumed to have a role and will be tested for each sex.

## Methods

The statistical population was married men and women in Tehran. According to the Statistical Center of Iran, Tehran's population in 2011 was 8,153,974 people living in 4,336 districts; among these 4,262,047 people were married (Statistical Center

of Iran, 2011). This study is a quantitative cross-sectional survey conducted using a questionnaire on the Likert scale. The sample size was considered to be 1,728 based on sampling error at 95% confidence level, a sampling error of 0.05 based on Cochran's formula and taking into account a design effect of two and adjustment factor of 0.25 for unresponsiveness. Taking into account the possible loss (approximately 0.15 according to the rate in families' census in Statistical Center of Iran), the sample size was raised to 2,000. The samples were married and in each household, the husband or wife was invited for the interview. The sampling method was the probability proportional to size sampling.

At first, married people from 22 areas of Tehran (4,262,047 people) were selected as the population and then, based on the population of each area, sample sizes for the area were determined. Also, the three age groups <40 years, 40–54 years, +55 years were considered so that the samples would be as much representative as possible. To obtain the samples in each area, based on the cultural, social, and economic differences between the areas of Tehran, and in order to select a representative sample, the population of Tehran (8,153,974) living at 4,336 districts was divided by 50 districts to obtain a selected distance of 163,079.48. The first district was selected randomly. Then the selection distance was added to the first district and the second and following districts were selected. Afterward, according to the population of each area and the selected districts as well as the population of each district, the number of samples in each district was determined. In this way, the distribution of selected districts practically provided the dispersion of the variables under study to a considerable degree.

Maps of the selected districts of each area were taken from the Statistical Center of Iran. For sampling, interviewers visited people at home in the selected sampling districts and collected data with the distribution of the final questionnaire, developed after testing of the preliminary questionnaire. Sampling was conducted with the collaboration of more than 10 interviewers in November and December of 2015 and January of 2016. Questionnaires were assessed by the project investigator, and invalid questionnaires or those with high nonresponse rate were excluded. Finally, 1,736 questionnaires were selected to be used in the final analysis.

In this study, face and construct validity were used. To obtain face validity, the questionnaire was revised by experts and faculty members of the National Population Studies and Comprehensive Management Institute. After initial testing and modification, the final questionnaire was prepared. Exploratory factor analysis was applied to obtain construct validity and Cronbach's alpha was used to check the reliability of the items.

### **Measures**

**Shared activities with spouse.** Nineteen items related to the shared activities with the spouse were entered during exploratory factor analysis. The five factors of spending time with social contacts, spending time outdoors, spending time indoors, talking with spouse, and money spending were extracted and the variable of shared activities with the spouse was created in five dimensions as follows:

- Spending time with social contacts: It was created by combining the four items of meeting with parents, meeting with siblings, meeting with relatives, and meeting with friends while considering factor loading of each item and Cronbach's alpha of 0.806.
- Spending time outdoors: It was created by combining the four items of going to restaurants, cinemas, theaters, and so forth; entertainment such as going to the park; shopping; and going to travel while considering factor loading of each item and Cronbach's alpha of 0.726.
- Spending time indoors: It was created by combining the four items of doing favorites at home, watching TV and satellite, listening to music, and spending time without specific activity while considering factor loading of each item and Cronbach's alpha of 0.818.
- Talking with spouse: It was created by combining the four items of talking about daily activities, talking about personal problems, talking about children, and talking about the problems of the paternal family while considering factor loading of each item and Cronbach's alpha of 0.770.
- Money spending: It was created by combining the following three items while considering factor loading of each item and Cronbach's

alpha of 0.812—money is spent jointly by spouse, the husband spends his income as he wants, and the wife spends her income as she wants.

**Gender attitudes.** It was created by combining the following seven items from the studies of Spence and Helmreich (1972); Swim, Aikin, Hall, and Hunter (1995); and Glick and Fiske (1996) on Likert scale while considering factor loading of each item and Cronbach's alpha of 0.887: it is acceptable for women to be supervisor at workplace (reverse); in case there is no financial need, women should not work outside the home; in general, men are better political leaders than women; college education is more suitable for men than women; the responsibility of women is housekeeping and child-rearing; husband must be the main decision-maker in the family; if wife's income is more than husband's, it is not good for their relationship.

**Spousal similarity.** Spousal similarity at the beginning of marriage and agreement during the marriage, taken from Kalmijn and Bernasco's (2001) survey, were asked.

- Spousal similarity at the beginning of marriage. It was created by combining the following five items on Likert scale while considering factor loading of each item and Cronbach's alpha of 0.841: At the time of marriage, to what extent were you similar to your spouse in terms of politics, religion, economy, socio-cultural aspects, and education?
- Agreement during marriage. It was created by combining the reverse of following four items on the Likert scale while considering factor loading of each item and Cronbach's alpha of 0.746: How much do you disagree with spouse regarding the relationship with your spouse's family, spouse's expectations, sexual, and religious issues?

**Work-family conflict.** It was created by combining the following three items from Kopelman, Greenhaus, and Connolly (1983) on the Likert scale while considering factor loading of each item and Cronbach's alpha of 0.917: I work so much that I can hardly find time to deal with family responsibilities; work pressure

causes me to ignore some household and family work; and I cancel some entertainment and family visits due to job responsibilities.

**Differences with the spouse in terms of education and income.** Difference in education and income was measured by subtracting the wife's education and income from the husband's.

*Education:* Level of education was measured at the 10 levels of illiterate, elementary, junior school, high school, diploma, associate degree, bachelor's, master's, general doctorate, Ph.D. (classification of levels of education and fields of study in Iran).

*Income:* It was measured at the five levels of below 750,000 (Iranian) tomans, 750,000–2,250,000 tomans, 2,250,000–3,750,000 tomans, 3,750,000–5,250,000 tomans, and higher than 5,250,000 tomans.

*Marital duration was measured by the scale and having children* was measured nominally.

## Results

Table 1 illustrates the percentage distribution of the items related to shared activities with the spouse in terms of gender.

As Table 1 shows, the level of shared activities with the spouse is not the same in various dimensions. Due to various factors, people may select shared activities in one dimension but choose distinct behaviors at another one. Most of the shared activities of both men and women include "spending time outdoors" and "social contacts" while the least of these activities include "spending time indoors" and "money spending." While visiting friends and discussing the issues of paternal family, many women and men prefer separate activities than joint ones. This table also shows that although the majority of married individuals have selected joint activities and extreme individualism among spouses is not dominant, as a significant percentage of individuals have chosen separate activities, it is important to identify factors affecting shared activities with the spouse.

Table 2 shows the descriptive indexes of research variables in terms of gender, gender differences in shared activities with the spouse, and mean difference tests.

As observed in Table 2, the mean of different aspects of shared activities with the spouse in men and women is higher than average. The table also shows that the mean of different dimensions of shared

activities with the spouse is mainly higher in men than in women. It is also observed that the variance of shared activities with the spouse is greater in women than in men. This table indicates that the mean spousal similarity at the beginning of the marriage, agreement during the marriage, and marital happiness are above average; and gender attitudes and work-family conflict is below average. Women are more egalitarian than men, and the variance in gender attitudes is lower in them. Table 2 also shows there are significant gender differences in four dimensions of social contacts, outdoor, indoor, and talking with the spouse.

Below, I will explain whether women are less willing towards shared activities with the spouse or it may have other reasons. Table 3 shows the correlation between shared activities with spouse and marital happiness in men and women.

As Table 3 shows, shared activities with the spouse has a direct and significant correlation with marital happiness. As observed in this table, the correlation is stronger in women than in men in all aspects, and shared activities with the spouse have a higher correlation with marital happiness among women. As observed in Tables 1 and 2, women's shared activities with the spouse have been reported to be less than men's. Women have reported less shared activities in various aspects while their shared activities are associated with higher marital happiness. This contradiction can be justified by explaining that shared activities with the spouse are more important for women and hence, they report any related flaws; also, it is possible that doing shared activities with the spouse is more difficult for women in some aspects.

As stated, the 10 factors of income, education, gender attitudes, marital duration, having children, spousal similarity at the beginning of the marriage, agreement during the marriage, the difference in education, income difference, and work-family conflict affect the shared activities with the spouse. Table 4 presents a stepwise multivariate analysis of the determinants of shared activities with the spouse for both sexes.

As seen in Table 4, the most influential factors on shared activities with the spouse of men and women are the spousal similarity and gender attitudes. Spousal similarity at the beginning of marriage and an agreement during the marriage can be associated with an increase in shared activities with the spouse.

**Table 1**  
*Percentage Distribution Items of Shared Activities With the Spouse in Terms of Gender*

Variables	Items	Men					Women					
		never	seldom	moderate	mostly	Always	never	seldom	moderate	mostly	Always	
		Separate activities					Joint activities					
		borderline	borderline	borderline	borderline	borderline	borderline	borderline	borderline	borderline	borderline	borderline
Social contacts	meeting with parents	1	3.4	10.7	28.9	56	4	8.4	13.5	33.6	40.5	
	meeting with siblings	0.7	2.9	8.6	30.4	57.4	4.4	8.1	14.1	23.5	49.9	
	meeting with relatives	1	3.4	6.5	25.6	63.5	4.9	7.2	12.7	19	56.2	
	meeting with friends	30.5	14.1	14.2	8.4	32.8	39.8	16.1	9.4	7.8	26.9	
Social contacts (grade-point average)	14.25		10	75.75		23.2		12.45	64.35			
Outdoor	going to restaurant, cinemas, theaters, etc.	1.3	1.8	6.2	21.6	69.1	4.5	3.1	5.2	12	75.2	
	entertainment such as going to the park, etc.	2.5	2.7	7.6	24.3	62.9	15.5	5	8	15.7	55.8	
Outdoor	shopping	1.8	8	23.8	39.5	26.9	6.6	7.5	10.5	40	35.4	
	travel	0.6	0.4	3	18.2	77.8	2.3	1.3	2.7	10.5	83.2	
Indoor	doing favorites at home	3.5	14	31.3	31.1	20.1	13.7	23.5	24	28.2	10.6	
	watching TV and Satellite	1	4.7	20.6	49.9	23.8	4.9	8.4	20.1	46.4	20.2	
Indoor	listening to music	6.2	18.7	26.4	31.8	16.9	15.2	26.7	17.7	28.9	11.5	
	Spending time without specific activity	2.6	10.9	30.8	29.2	26.4	8.3	18.7	18.5	29	25.4	
Talking with spouse	about daily activities	7.5	4.1	15.2	29.4	43.8	14.5	7.3	12.1	19.7	46.4	
	about personal problems	8.3	5.7	10.4	26.4	49.2	13.2	4.4	7.2	17.4	57.8	
Taking with spouse	about children's problems	4	1.1	4.2	29.1	61.6	11.4	2.2	5.7	16.5	64.2	
	about the problems of the paternal family	34.5	14.9	13.4	16.2	16.2	43.8	12.6	10.9	10.7	22	
Money spending	the wife spends her income as she wants	4.9	14	11.9	18.2	51	7.6	9.8	16.1	18.3	48.2	
	the husband spends his income as he wants	3.1	6.1	11.3	22.7	56.8	2.9	4.4	7	16	69.7	
Money spending	the wife spends her income as she wants	20.1	16.6	35	16.8	14.8	20.3	18.9	27.5	13.5	19.8	
	the husband spends his income as he wants	20.5	19.4	19.4	60.1	60.1	21.3	21.3	16.9	61.8	61.8	

**Table 2**  
*Descriptive Indexes of Research Variables in Terms of Gender and Mean Difference Test*

Variables	Mean	Men			Women				t test	
		Standard Deviation	Variance	Min.-Max	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance	Min.-Max		
Shared activities with the spouse	Spending time with social contacts	9.3283	2.22286	4.941	0-11.96	8.3870	2.94107	8.650	0-11.96	t =7.548 P value = .000
	Spending time outdoors	8.3882	1.41002	1.988	0.65-9.93	8.2077	1.89973	3.609	0-9.93	t = 2.255 P value = .024
	Spending time indoors	7.2135	2.30229	5.301	0-11.25	6.3013	2.53127	6.407	0-11.25	t = 7.861 P value = .000
	Talking with spouse	7.7466	2.50667	6.283	0-11.09	7.3450	3.06100	9.370	0-11.09	t = 2.998 P value = .0003
	Money spending	5.6267	1.42040	2.018	0-8.34	5.7294	1.52545	2.327	0-8.34	t = -1.453 P value = .146
Marital happiness		34.6058	6.08882	37.074	0-45.71	31.8181	7.86365	0-45.71		t = 8.284 P value = .000
Spousal similarity at the beginning of marriage		13.9740	2.69345	7.255	0-18.98	13.4269	2.90316	8.428	2.8-18.98	t = 4.073 P value = .000
Agreement during marriage		12.4368	2.42333	5.873	3.51-14.25	12.3190	2.41603	5.837	2.16-14.25	t = 1.014 P value = .311
Gender attitudes		10.9150	7.04189	49.588	0-26.36	8.4187	6.42077	41.226	0-26.36	t = 7.705 P value = .000
Work-family conflict		2.7143	2.94223	8.657	0-13.72	2.2946	1.22523	1.501	0-10.05	t = 3.840 P value = .000
N			844				892			

**Table 3**  
*Correlation Between Shared Activities With Spouse and Marital Happiness in Terms of Gender*

		Men		Women		
		Pearson	P value	Pearson	P value	
<b>Shared activities with the spouse</b>	Social contacts		0.232	0.000	0.511	0.000
	Outdoor		0.244	0.000	0.495	0.000
	Indoor	<b>Marital happiness</b>	0.420	0.000	0.499	0.000
	Talking with spouse		0.556	0.000	0.661	0.000
	Money spending		0.280	0.000	0.325	0.000



**Table 4***Stepwise Multivariate Analysis of the Determinants of Shared Activities With the Spouse in Terms of Gender*

	Men					Women				
	Social contacts	Outdoor	Indoor	Talking with spouse	Money spending	Social contacts	Outdoor	Indoor	Talking with spouse	Money spending
education				0.076		0.070	0.167		0.198	0.158
income			-0.248	-0.186			0.101		-0.099	
having children				0.125					0.109	
marital duration			0.067		0.071		-0.104	0.094		
gender attitudes	-0.324	-0.302	-0.223	-0.260	-0.141	-0.290		-0.106	-0.094	
Spousal similarities at the beginning of marriage	0.186	0.070	0.142	0.176		0.161	0.103	0.158	0.255	
agreement during marriage	0.144	0.193	0.077	0.139	0.188	0.315	0.375	0.320	0.301	0.311
education difference		-0.061								
income difference	0.093				-0.170		0.224	-0.117	-0.158	-0.123
work-family conflict	-0.094	-0.106		0.107					0.079	
F	61.415	46.618	21.717	21.117	20.063	92.124	52.247	43.403	40.292	45.480
P value	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
R	0.522	0.471	0.342	0.392	0.299	0.547	0.516	0.448	0.522	0.369
R Square	0.273	0.222	0.117	0.153	0.089	0.299	0.267	0.201	0.273	0.136
Adjusted R Square	0.268	0.217	0.112	0.146	0.085	0.296	0.262	0.196	0.266	0.133

Gender attitudes in both men and women decrease shared activities with the spouse. In other words, egalitarian gender attitudes in Iranian society is not associated with an increase in separate activities; rather, it increases shared activities with the spouse. In addition, traditional gender attitudes are the most influential factor for men in reducing shared activities with the spouse.

Also, as observed in the table, education has more impact on women than men in a way that educated women have more shared activities with the spouse. It can also be seen that income, which has a dual role in shared activities with the spouse, has less negative effects in women. However, there is positive impact of spousal homogeneity because income difference between spouses is associated with greater adverse effects for women.

Table 4 also shows that income and income difference, work-family conflict, and marriage duration have a dual effect on shared activities with the spouse. Although the increase in women's income has a positive effect on spending time indoors, high-income decreases "spending time indoors" for men and "talking with spouse" for both men and women. Moreover, if there is more income difference between spouses, there will be more of the joint activities with social contacts in men and "spend time indoors" in women (during which relationships have less depth and social control is higher), and this difference is also effective on those shared activities with spouse which have more depth and less social control, negatively affecting "money spending" in both sexes, "spending time indoors" and "talking with spouse" in women.

It can also be seen that “work-family conflict” has a more negative impact on shared activities with the spouse in men. On the other hand, this variable also has a dual role. It seems that “work-family conflict” creates a common space which spouses use to increase the shared activities with the spouse in the dimension of “talking with spouse.”

The dual role of duration of marriage in the shared activities with the spouse has also been disclosed. Longer marital duration reduces shared activities with the spouse in terms of “spending time outdoors” for women. It can also be seen that as the duration of marriage increases, “spending time indoors” will increase for both men and women. As observed, having children increases “talking with spouse” which provides grounds for more empathy between couples and strengthens family cohesion. As inferred from the table, shared activities with the spouse are less affected by the components associated with the life cycle (having children and duration of marriage).

In Table 4, it can also be observed that this model has the highest explanatory power for shared activities with the spouse in the variable “social contacts” and the least explanatory power in the “money spending” variable for both men and women. The explanatory power of the model in different aspects of shared activities is greater for women than men. Therefore, it can be stated that shared activities with the spouse in different aspects is not the same for men and women. It is influenced by various factors and the impact of these factors is not the same for both sexes.

## Discussion

There has been little research on the quantity and quality of spouses’ relationships during marriage in Iran. Since the correlation between shared activities with spouse and marital happiness has been confirmed by multiple studies, therefore, it is important to identify factors affecting shared activities with the spouse, especially with regard to gender. A review of the related literature has shown that studies have mainly focused on limited aspects of shared activities with the spouse, especially during leisure time. In this research, broader dimensions of shared activities with the spouse have been examined. The statistical population of this quantitative cross-sectional survey was all married people in Tehran whose data was collected using a questionnaire developed on the Likert scale. The

samples were randomly selected from 50 districts based on the population of each area and the related district. Finally, 1,736 questionnaires were used in the final data analysis. The results indicated that:

The majority of married individuals select joint activities with spouse and extreme individualism among spouses is not dominant. Though individualistic actions exist in some families, it is not a common finding. Similar results have been obtained by Booth et al. (1984) who reported couples’ interactions at the level of 15.79 on a 0-20 scale. Kalmijn and Bernasco (2001) also showed that individualism is not dominant in families in the Netherlands and that Dutch couples mainly choose joint lifestyle at leisure times.

I observed that the level of shared activities is not the same in various dimensions. Married individuals may select joint activities at one dimension but choose separate activities at another one. Most of the shared activities of both men and women include “spending time outdoors” and “social contacts” while the least of these activities include “spending time indoors” and “money spending.” It can be said that most of the shared activities with the spouse are associated with higher social control and lower costs. When the relationship becomes more intimate and the cost of the activity increases, the percentage of those who choose joint activities will decline. People show different behaviors with the spouse in the private sphere of the family and the public sphere of society. Women’s shared activities with the spouse have been reported to be less than men almost in all aspects. Many women and men prefer separate activities than joint ones while visiting friends and discussing the issues of paternal family. One can say that the profits and losses resulting from the shared activities encourage married individuals towards selecting different lifestyles in different aspects of daily life.

Shared activities with the spouse have a direct and significant correlation with marital happiness. This finding has been confirmed by many studies (Becker & Lois, 2010; Britt et al., 2008; Fein, 2009; Hill, 1988; Reissman et al., 1993; Knowles, 2004; White, 1983).

This correlation is stronger in women than men in many aspects, and shared activities among women has a higher correlation with marital happiness. Knowles (2004) had also shown that women get a more positive

feeling from joint activities. As observed previously, shared activities with the spouse in women has been reported to be less than men. Women have reported less shared activities in various aspects while their shared activities are associated with higher marital happiness. This contradiction can be justified by explaining that joint activities are more important for women and, hence, they report any related flaws. Also, it is possible that having joint activities is more difficult for women in some aspects.

If there is more spousal similarity at the beginning of marriage and more agreement during the marriage, there will be more joint activities for both sexes. Spousal similarity can be associated with joint activities. The lowest cost and greatest reward are associated with spousal similarity. A similar finding was reported by Kalmijn and Bernasco (2001), Becker and Lois (2010), Vogler et al. (2008), and Sadeghi and Malekipour (2013). This finding shows the importance of homogamy in mate selection. If couples are culturally and socio-economically more similar at the beginning of the marriage, they will have more joint activities and, therefore, a more stable family will be formed. Also, lack of disagreement in marital life has a positive effect on shared activities with the spouse. Therefore, reaching agreement on different issues provides grounds for a stable marital life. Exchange theory considers the calculation of profits and losses by social actors. Based on this theory, the lowest loss and highest profit are obtained when social actors are homogeneous.

Traditional gender attitudes in both sexes decrease shared activities with the spouse. In other words, egalitarian gender attitudes in Iranian society is not associated with an increase in separate lifestyle; it rather increases joint activities. In addition, traditional gender attitudes are the most influential factor in reducing joint activities of men. So we should not fear the emergence of egalitarian gender attitudes as they can be used to strengthen the family, especially when we see that the results for women, who advocate egalitarian gender attitudes more than men, is the same as men. Women with traditional gender attitudes have reported greater distinction in their daily life activities. In other words, people in Tehran have welcomed modern cultural changes, but they use these changes in a way that increases family cohesion and joint activities. Various studies have differently reported the impact of gender attitudes in the relations between

spouses. Assuming that traditional gender attitudes will lead to a separate lifestyle, Kalmijn and Bernasco (2001) concluded that this effect is weak. Also, Vogler et al. (2008) showed that individualism in relations between spouses is more common in the couples with egalitarian attitudes. Sadeghi and Malekipour (2013) has demonstrated that people with stronger traditional gender attitudes will experience a higher distance from their spouse.

Also, it was observed that education has more impact on women than men in a way that educated women have more shared activities with the spouse. Income, which has a dual role in shared activities with the spouse, has less negative effects in women. Thus, it can be concluded that improvements in women's socio-economic status lead to an increase in joint activities. Promotion of women's socio-economic status is not associated with distinctions in their activities. However, we can also see the positive impact of spousal similarity here because income difference between spouses is associated with greater adverse effects for women. The significant relationship of education with shared activities with spouse is consistent with Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital and the results of studies by many studies (Allendorf & Ghimire, 2013; Bott, 1955; Dardis et al., 1994; Fein, 2009; Hill, 1988; Kingston & Nock, 1987; Monadi, 2006; Miller, 1976; Reissman et al., 1993; Sadeghi & Malekipour, 2013).

Also, it was stated that income and income differences, work-family conflict and marital duration have a dual effect on shared activities with the spouse. Although the increase in women's income has a positive effect on spending time the outdoors, high-income decreases "spending time the indoors" for men and "talking with spouse" for both men and women. Moreover, if there is more income difference between the spouses, there will be more of the joint activities of "social contacts" in men and "spend time the outdoors" in women (during which relationships have less depth and social control is higher) and this difference is also effective on those shared activities which have more depth and less social control, negatively affecting "money spending" in both sexes, "spending time the outdoors" and "talking with spouse" in women. It seems that in the first two dimensions, the profits and losses resulting from the shared activities encourage couples towards doing joint activities and, in other

cases, it leads to separate activities. The positive impact of income on shared activities with spouse is consistent with the new home economics theories and the results of several studies (Allendorf & Ghimire, 2013; Bott, 1955; Dardis et al., 1994; Fein, 2009; Hill, 1988; Kingston & Nock, 1987; Miller, 1976; Reissman et al., 1993; Sadeghi & Malekipour, 2013). In addition, White (1983) has reported that couples' interaction is not related to income, but in this study, it was revealed that income has different impacts on lifestyle in different aspects.

The study showed that "work-family conflict" has a more negative impact on shared activities with the spouse in men. On the other hand, this variable also has a dual role. "Work-family conflict" creates a common physical and emotional space which spouses use to increase the joint activity of "talking with spouse." Kalmijn and Bernasco (2001) had also shown that the pressures of workplace decrease joint lifestyle of women. The dual impact of "marital duration" on shared activities with the spouse was also detected. Longer marital duration reduces shared activities with the spouse in terms of "spending time outdoors" for women. This finding can be explained by spreading social networks with peers in elderly women. We can also see that as the duration of marriage increases, "spending time indoors" will increase for both men and women. This finding indicates that shared activities with the spouse also depends on the situation. As the duration of marriage increases, couples necessarily spend more time at home together, probably because their physical capacity to stay away from home decreases. Kingston and Nock (1987), Kalmijn and Bernasco (2001), and Sadeqi and Malekipour (2013) have disclosed that shared activities with the spouse have a positive relationship with marital duration. Miller (1976) has suggested a u-shaped relationship between couples in a way that at the beginning and final stages of marriage, couples' relationship increases and it decreases in the mid-period of marriage. As observed, having children increases "talking with spouse" which provides grounds for more empathy between couples and strengthens family cohesion. Regarding the theory of exchange, Hill (1988), Kalmijn and Bernasco (2001), and Sadeghi and Malekipour (2013) also revealed that having children has a positive impact on shared activities with the spouse. White (1983) and Fein (2009) showed that having a dependent child is associated with a decrease in spending time together

while Kingston and Nock (1987) revealed that having children does not affect joint activities. Accordingly, it can be stated that shared activities with the spouse are less affected by the components associated with the life cycle (having children and marital duration).

## Conclusion

In general, I can say that extreme individualism is not dominant among spouses in Tehran. Shared activities with the spouse are observed more in individuals who are more similar to their spouse, in those who have egalitarian gender attitudes, and those with higher levels of education. Spousal similarity and gender attitudes have the highest share in explaining shared activities with spouse; the share of components related to life cycle is lower. The regression model has the highest explanatory power for shared activities with the spouse in the "social contacts" and the least explanatory power in the "money spending" for both sexes. The explanatory power of the model in different aspects of shared activities is greater for women than men. Therefore, it can be stated that shared activities with the spouse in different aspects is not the same for men and women. It is influenced by various factors and the impact of these factors is not the same for both sexes. The results of this study are consistent with the exchange theory and Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital.

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## Ethical Clearance

The study was approved by the institution.

## Conflict of interest

None.

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