

## The Mediation Roles of Alexithymia and Corona Anxiety in the Relationship between Resilience and Marital Conflicts during Quarantine

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### Abstract

This study aimed to the mediation role of alexithymia and corona anxiety in the relationship between resilience and marital conflicts during quarantine. The design of the study is correlation through path analysis modeling. Among all student couples of Imam Khomeini International University in Qazvin in 2020, a sample of 100 volunteered couples were selected. Data were collected using Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire (Sanaei-Zakir), Toronto Alexithymia Questionnaire, Corona Anxiety Scale (Alipour, et al.) and Connor and Davidson Resilience Questionnaire and analyzed using structural equation model. Findings showed that alexithymia and corona anxiety played mediation roles between marital conflicts and resilience. Therefore, it can be concluded that by promoting resilience, the ability to deal with anxiety and emotion regulation increases, and consequently, problems such as marital conflicts decrease. The suggestion from these findings, should be to use the resilience promotion programs to deal with anxiety and related problems.

**Keywords:** Alexithymia, anxiety, corona, marital conflict, resilience

### Introduction

The serious outbreak of the coronavirus and keeping people/individuals in the quarantine, along with social and economic effects, had caused many psychological effects (World Health Organization, 2020). The unknown and undetected nature of the corona virus, the immediate reporting of mortality and morbidity rate, and concerns about the future and being in quarantine can all lead to increased anxiety (Banerjee, 2020). Consequently, this psychological crisis and anxiety can manifest itself in various dimensions and threaten the mental health of society. Unfortunately, the marital relationship, as the most prominent intimate relationship in which one is in, can immediately receive the effects of anxiety and its consequences. It is predictable that anxious couples become agitated quickly, and feelings of inability to control over the situation and making decisions can drift the relationship to

various conflicts. Therefore, one of the negative effects of quarantine and one of the consequences of anxiety is the increased marital conflicts between couples. One of the characteristics associated with adaptive conflict resolution styles is resilience. Bradley and Hojjat (2017) in their study on resilience and marital satisfaction displayed the direct effect of resilience on marital satisfaction. Another factor that can affect marital satisfaction and conflict in interpersonal relationships is Alexithymia. Conflict in interpersonal relationships of individuals with Alexithymia is seen more compared to other individuals and also satisfaction with marital relationships is less in these individuals (Pérusse, et al., 2012). Based on this, the main hypothesis of the study: was Corona anxiety and Alexithymia play mediating roles in the relationship between resilience and marital conflicts of couples.

## Method

A correlation method was applied in the design of this study, using path analysis modeling. All student couples of Imam Khomeini International University of Qazvin graduating in the second semester of the year 2019-2020 were considered as the study population and by voluntary sampling, 100 couples were selected as the sample. The closure of universities and educational centers due to the spread of coronavirus and lack of in-person access to participants, the sample group was invited to cooperate in online groups in cyberspace. Inclusion criteria were no drug abuse and its addiction, no use of psychotropic drugs and participants' consent to participate in the study. In order to analyze the research data, AMOS24 software was used. In this study, the following scales were used:

**Marital Conflict Scale (MCQ):** The Marital Conflict Scale (Sanaei Zakir, 2000) is a 54-item scale that has been developed to measure marital conflict. Cronbach's alpha coefficient of this scale in Goodarzi, et al., (2018) research has been reported equal to 0.71 and the construct validity of this scale with the marital satisfaction index scale reported 0.71 The internal reliability of this scale was 0.82 based on the present study sample using Cronbach's alpha method.

**Toronto alexithymia Scale (TAS-20):** This scale was developed by Taylor in 1986 and consists of 20 items on which answers are scored on a 5-point Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. In Besharat, et al., (2014) Cronbach's alpha of the Persian version of this scale was calculated to be 0.85, which shows an acceptable internal reliability of the scale. The total internal reliability of this test was assessed based on the present research sample using Cronbach's alpha of 0.86.

**Corona Anxiety Scale (CDAS):** This scale was designed by Alipour, et al., (2020) to measure coronary anxiety in Iran and has 18 items. The psychometric properties of this scale have also been evaluated and reported as desirable by Alipour, et al., (2020). The total internal reliability of this test was 0.92 based on the present research sample using Cronbach's alpha method.

**Connor and Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC):** The Connor & Davidson (2003) Resilience Scale was used to measure resilience. This scale has 25 items and has been standardized in the Iranian sample. It shows an acceptable validity and reliability. The reliability of this scale has been calculated by Cronbach's alpha method of 0.91 (Bitarfan, et al., 2017). The total internal reliability of this test was 0.88 based on the present research sample using Cronbach's alpha method.

## Results

The sample were consisted of 50% male and 50% female students. In addition, in terms of age, 24.6% of the sample was 18 to 25 years old, 69.8% of the sample was 26 to 35 years old and 5.6% was 35 to 40 years old. The path analysis was used to test the hypotheses. Fit indicators generally indicated the fit of the research model. The results showed that the relationship between emotional distress and marital conflicts was equal to ( $t = 5.12$  and  $\beta = 0.63$ ), the relationship between coronary anxiety and marital conflicts was equal to ( $t = 4.86$  and  $\beta = 0.51$ ), The relationship between resilience and Alexithymia was equal to ( $t = -4.37$  and  $\beta = -0.45$ ) and the relationship between resilience and coronary anxiety was equal to ( $t = -4.39$  and  $\beta = -0.47$ ). The Sobel test was used to examine the mediating role of emotional distress and coronary anxiety in research variables. The results of the table below show that the resilience has a significant indirect effect on emotional marital conflict due to Alexithymia and anxiety caused by corona, thus the hypothesis of the research is confirmed with 95% confidence ( $p < 0.05$ ).

Table 1. Coefficients and Significance of Indirect Effects of Financing on Marital Conflicts

The dependent variable	independent variable	Type of effect	Non-standardized coefficient	Standardized coefficient	Sobel	sig
marital conflicts	Resilience	Mediated by alexithymia	-0.84	-0.32	2.94	0.001
marital conflicts	Resilience	Mediated by corona anxiety	-0.87	-0.24	2.53	0.001

## Discussion and Conclusion

The results of the present study showed that in the developed model, Alexithymia and corona anxiety played mediating roles between marital conflicts and resilience. This finding is consistent with the findings of Bradley and Hojjat (2017) and Banerjee (2020). By promoting resilience, people can resist and overcome stressors as well as the factors that cause anxiety and Increasing resilience and reducing anxiety can reduce marital conflict. One of the limitations of this study was that the participants in the study were student couples and the generalization of the results to all couples should be done with caution. It is recommended that further researches associated with the subject of this research should be conducted in non-student couples and the possible differences between those studies and the findings of the present study should be considered.

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## **Acknowledgments**

The authors of this article would like to thank all those who contributed to this research.

## **Funding**

The present study was not sponsored and was conducted independently.