

Development and validation of perceived sexual resentment scale for women (PSRS-W)

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Abstract

Objective: To develop a valid and reliable scale to assess perceived sexual resentment among married women.

Method: The cross-sectional validation study was conducted from September 2018 to July 2019 at the International Islamic University, Islamabad, Pakistan, and had three phases. Phase I comprised initial generation/selection of items regarding sexual resentment among married women. Phase II comprised pilot testing of the perceived sexual resentment scale for women items before applying the scale on the actual sample. Phase III determined convergent validity by estimating correlation of the newly developed scale with the Sexual Coercion in Intimate Relationship Scale, and its divergent validity by finding correlation with the Satisfaction with Life Scale. Data was analysed using SPSS 23.

Results: The pilot study, done on 20 married women, established the internal consistency of the newly developed scale ($\alpha=0.82$). Overall, three factors emerged following factor analysis. The scale had 29 items and reliability analysis of the entire scale indicated adequate internal consistency ($\alpha=0.93$). The convergent validity of the scale and the Sexual Coercion in Intimate Relationship Scale was positive ($p<0.001$), and the correlation with the Satisfaction with Life Scale was negative ($p<0.01$), indicating that the newly-developed instrument had a good convergent and divergent validity.

Conclusion: The Perceived Sexual Resentment Scale for Women was found to be a precise and concise 29-item self-reporting tool developed to assess sexual dislikes and displeasures among married women.

Keywords: Sexual resentment, Sexual dislike, Coercion, Married, Women. (JPMA 71: 1793; 2021)

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Introduction

Seeking a vigorous, enjoyable, satisfactory and pleasing sexual life is an integral part of romantic relationships. Sexual satisfaction is a critical requirement to a contented and faithful relationship. Somatic and psychological elements of health are notably interrelated with sexual satisfaction. Relationship quality among married couples largely depends upon sexual satisfaction.¹ An agreeable and pleasing sexual bond has beneficial result on consequent sexual encounters and fortifies the relationship. Sexual satisfaction is also linked to satisfaction in other aspects of a relationship. Research related to sexual satisfaction is sparse, but the regularity of sexual intercourse, the variety of sexual actions, and the desire to have sex are known to influence sexual satisfaction in long-term relationships.² The frequently discussed element in relation to sexual contentment is communication between the partners. Increased sexual contentment has been documented by married people who communicate more with regard to both sexual and asexual facets of their association or relationship.³ There is

evidence suggesting a robust positive relationship between marital satisfaction and sexual satisfaction. Such research highlights that the regularity of sexual intercourse is associated with greater sexual satisfaction.² Consequently, sexual satisfaction is positively linked to quality of life in marriage. Research revealed that satisfaction in sexual life is linked strongly and significantly to marital satisfaction.⁴

However, literature suggests some interesting gender differences regarding sexual perceptions and experiences between men and women. For example, males and females vary significantly in their sexual desires on account of relationship and emotional facets. Females experience more hurtful emotions and psychological distress during sexual encounters compared to males.^{5,6} Moreover, females who feel powerless in communicating their sexual desires to their partners are sexually less satisfied and feel sexual resentment.^{2,7}

Additionally, females and males are incredibly dissimilar in desires and nature of their sexual actions and behaviour. In contrast to the males, the females are not simply or easily sexually evoked due to changes in the reproductive organs that often do not assist internal experience of elation.⁸

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Previous research reported that compared to females, sexual drives and thoughts are experienced more often by male partners. It is also revealed that whilst in a marital relationship, males generally interact more forcefully and self-confidently in sexual acts. In addition, in contrast to females, sexual activity is mainly initiated by male partners.⁹ Generally, males are more interested in several sexual partners and erotic materials, such as sex toys, pornography, nudity, magazines and so on.⁸

Each and every societal system is detained in position to a few degrees by power or the threat of power/force, as stated by the Social Control Theory.¹⁰ This is more appropriate in diplomatic, religious and societal domains. More societal, individual and cost-effective resources one has, the more persuasively the menace/threat of power can be utilised. A person is more likely to be treated with force if he or she has little resources, predominantly if they seem to be fighting for self-possessed familial resources. Such social control holds specific relevance in the domain of sexual relationship between a man and a woman. For example, sexual forcefulness is applied to maintain male domination and is utilised as a means to keep the female apprehensive and subjugated. Consequently, women are more likely to perceive resentment in sexual relationships when they are viewed as sexual possessions by men. In particular, in Eastern cultures, men generally uphold their force and privilege through the use of power and threat while executing acts of sexual activity.¹¹ It is also assumed that sex is considered more significant to men's actions like touching and impassioned kissing, whereas hugging is considered to be more appropriate for women sexual lives as it is still objectionable for women to take relationship lead or become assertive.^{12,13} Furthermore, it is also noticeable that gender variations related to sexuality are a possible source of conflicts and disputes among married individuals whether male or female.¹⁴ A close association was observed between sexual dissatisfaction and marital separation, and uniform with societal problems, for instance, social offence, sexual attack, unfaithfulness and psychological issues.¹⁵ A study said 15.2% to 50.4% females were discontented with sexual life, and 50% of marital separations were caused by sexual resentment and discontentment.¹⁶

Besides, the context where such marital relationships are maintained also needs to be considered. Predominantly, Pakistan culture is collectivistic, with a major focus on the well-being of society and family harmony, rather than on individual freedom. In Pakistan, marriage is viewed in terms of fusing or uniting families. The focus is not only on two persons, but broad emphasis is placed on societal obligations.¹⁷ Conformity and adherences to traditional

values are mainly expected from females. In common with other Eastern cultures, Pakistani females are trained to subordinate their individual aspirations and interests relative to the family's interest. They are also taught to repress their desires, particularly with regard to matrimonial choices. Pakistani females are overly controlled by traditional values that impose submission to the opposite gender, especially to their spouse.¹⁸ Expression of desires or wishes in front of the spouse is considered against societal and family values. Mostly, women do not talk about their sexual issues because of the associated stigma of shaming. It is not shocking that sexual satisfaction within the wedlock is under-reported in the country due to married women's self-blame and feeling of shame and the lack of support from her parents in case of conflict with the spouse.¹⁹ Non-consensual sex is predominantly common in Pakistan. Research reported that 77.1% to 98% married women in Pakistan experience non-consensual sex.²⁰ Women feel resentment, less secure and less satisfied about their sexual life. Moreover, during pregnancy 51% women become a victim of non-consensual sex. Sexual intercourse in the absence of condom is associated with unwanted pregnancies.²¹⁻²³ The reported cause of women genital injuries often results from non-consensual vaginal intercourse.^{20,24,25} In general, they are at greater risk of physical, sexual and mental distress by their spouse due to their heightened sense of superiority and consideration as the head of the family and the household.¹⁹

Majority of the research on sexual resentment has been conducted in the West.^{1,2,5} Moreover, most of the questionnaires about sexual satisfaction develop from the perspective of Western theorists. Instruments developed in the West measure one's attitude to their own sexual activity, like the Sexual Satisfaction Questionnaire (SSQ),²⁶ level of sexual distress and sexual satisfaction, like the Sexual Satisfaction Scale for Women (SSS-W),²⁷ sexuality-based depression, self-esteem and pre-occupation, like the Sexuality Scale (SS)²⁸ to name a few.²⁹ Culturally, Pakistan is different from Western countries. However, no previous instrument measuring the coercion or feelings of resentment women are likely to experience in a controlled and patriarchal social structure. However, in recent times there is an increased sensitivity among women to be treated equally and gently in matters related to their sexual relationship within the marriage.³⁰

The current study was planned to develop a valid and reliable scale to assess perceived sexual resentment among married women in Pakistan.

Materials and Methods

The cross-sectional validation study was conducted from September 2018 to July 2019 at the International Islamic

University (IIU), Islamabad, Pakistan. After approval from the institutional review board of the IIU Department of Psychology, it was carried out in three phases. Phase I comprised initial selection of items related to the feelings of resentment related to sexual activities among married woman. Initially, 92 items were generated after reviewing relevant indigenous and international literature, books and theoretical models, more specifically the Social Control Theory.^{12,13} The items were evaluated further by subject experts in order to establish face and content validity of the scale. Based upon expert opinions, 11(12%) of the items were discarded. Out of the remaining 81(88%) items, 21(26%) were reverse-phrased. Phase II comprised pilot-testing of the scale on a small sample of married women to test for any item difficulty that may require modification. This sample was drawn from married women living in the cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. The responses were rated on a 6-point scales from 1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree. After adjustments were made on the basis of the pilot study, the main validating study was conducted in which factor analysis was done in line with literature.³¹ Besides, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was 0.91, which affirmed the adequacy of the sample for factor analysis.³² The sample for the main study was raised using purposive sampling technique from among working and non-working married women living in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. aged 18-40 years Those included were women who had been married only once and had received education till at least the intermediate level. Widows and divorced women or women suffering from any psychiatric illness, medical ailment or having neurological problems were excluded. The participants were approached at their home or in an office setting where they were most comfortable in responding to the survey. Informed consent was taken from all the subjects and they could withdraw at any time during the survey if they felt distressed or uncomfortable.

Phase III comprised the process of establishing reliability and validity of the newly-designed Perceived Sexual Resentment Scale for Women (PSRS-W). Convergent validity was established by testing its relationship with the Sexual Coercion in Intimate Relationship Scale (SCIRC), and convergent validity was established by testing its association with the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SLS) along with the findings of the main study done in phase II. Higher scores on the newly developed were indicative of higher sexual resentment, and lower score were indicative of less sexual resentment among the married woman. SCIRS³³ comprises 34 questions measuring intellectual and behavioural strategies or plans of sexual intimidation on a 6-point Likert scale, with scores ranging from 34 to 170.

SLS is a short 5-item Likert scale for the measurement of life satisfaction with a score range of 5-35.³⁴

After screening, data without missing values and partial information was analysed using SPSS 23 for normality checking. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was done using principal axis factoring, while Cronbach's alpha coefficient and correlation analyses were also done. $P < 0.05$ was considered significant.

Results

Of the 200 married women in the main phase II study, 100(50%) each were working and non-working. The overall mean age was 25.40 ± 1.06 years. Among the working women, 40(40%) were members of university faculty, while 20(20%) each were bankers, working in the corporate sector and with non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Among the non-working women, 50(50%) were enrolled from out-patient settings of hospitals and clinics, 30(30%) were married students, and 10(10%) each were enrolled from salons and gyms. Overall, 53(26.5%) women had low socio-economic status (SES), 84(42.0%) middle and 63(31.5%) had higher SES. Regarding education, 27(13.5%) women had done intermediate, 68(34.0%) bachelors, 57(28.5%) masters, and 48(24.0%) had studies even higher.

After factor analysis, on 81 items, and 29(36%) were retained after a robust analysis showing $KMO = 0.91$ ($p < 0.001$). The Scree plot showed point of inflexions at 4 factors, and the curve began to tail off at 4, which meant that three factors could be justifiably retained. Eigen values also suggested extracting three values (Figure).

Direct oblimin method provided three-factor solutions for 29 items with cumulative variance of 51.70%, 5.00%, 3.61%, and cumulative percentage of 51.70%, 56.71% and 60.33% respectively. The total variance accounted for by the three factors was 63.87%. Alpha coefficient of 81

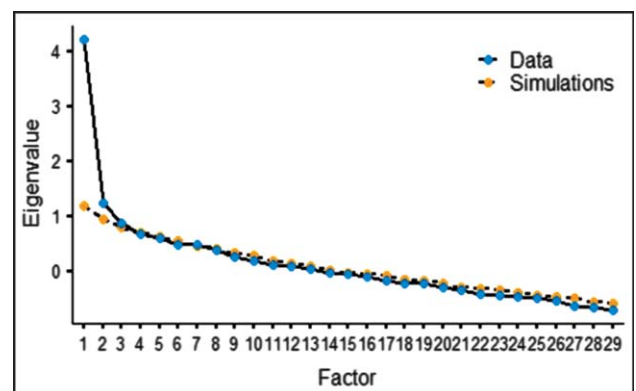


Figure: Scree plot for factor extraction.

Table-1: Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with factor loadings of the Perceived Sexual Resentment Scale for Women (PSRS-W).

Items	Factor I	Factor II	Factor III
	Unwanted sexual conduct	Lack of control on sexual desires	Non-consensual sex
10. My husband forces me to have anal sex.	0.91	-	-
9. I often found pictures of naked women in his cell phone.	0.88	-	-
7. My husband even wishes to have sex when I am on my periods.	0.86	-	-
27. I think that there should be counselling before marriage.	0.76	-	-
8. My husband often watches porn videos while having sex with me.	0.75	-	-
29. I often think that the behaviour of my husband needs counselling.	0.72	-	-
23. During sex, my husband physically assaults me.	0.69	-	-
22. It is difficult for me to say no when my husband wants to have sex with me.	0.67	-	-
28. I wish to take divorce due to hurtful feelings I experience often after sex.	0.64	-	-
11. During periods, he often performs oral sex with me.	0.61	-	-
12. It seems like an obligation to have sex with my husband.	0.61	-	-
3. My husband finds difficulty in controlling his sexual desires.	0.52	-	-
6. My husband argues continuously during sex.	0.48	-	-
21. My husband is sexually stronger than I am.	0.48	-	-
5. I feel sick during sex.	0.47	-	-
26. I feel scared when me and my husband are alone in the room.	0.46	-	-
25. I feel immense body ache during sex.	-	0.30	-
24. I often found my husband watching pornography sites.	0.34	-	-
2. My husband sexual appetite has disturbed our relationship.	-	0.90	-
1. My husband often loses his control during sex.	-	0.88	-
4. My husband gets quite aggressive during sex.	-	0.34	-
17. My husband usually doesn't take my consent before sex.	-	-	0.90
16. I feel irritated during sex.	-	-	0.87
15. Despite my ill health my husband still insists to have sex.	-	-	0.74
18. My husband threatens me if I do not allow him to have sex with me.	-	-	0.74
14. My husband often takes sex tablets before having sex.	-	-	0.70
19. When my husband forces me to have sex, I feel like killing myself.	-	-	0.47
13. My husband forces me to take sex tablets.	-	-	0.46
20. I experienced torn muscles of private parts after having sex with husband.	-	-	0.43

Factor loadings of items <0.3 have been repressed. For the purpose of factor analysis, items were not reverse-coded.

Table-2: Item total correlation for the Perceived Sexual Resentment Scale for Women (PSRS-W).

Item No	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Item No	Corrected Item-Total Correlation
1	.51**	16	.74**
2	.51**	17	.72**
3	.78**	18	.71**
4	.47**	19	.72**
5	.79**	20	.71**
6	.73**	21	.71**
7	.73**	22	.82**
8	.67**	23	.79**
9	.78**	24	.74**
10	.75**	25	.71**
11	.71**	26	.69**
12	.68**	27	.78**
13	.67**	28	.72**
14	.70**	29	.77**
15	.74**		

Note: **p<.01.

items was 0.82, and for 29 items it was 0.93. The mean value of the scale was 66.48±26.81. The standardised value of skewness was 1.13 (p>0.05) and the value of kurtosis was 2.63 (p>0.05), while the scale ranged 29-174.

The pattern matrix loadings were noted (Table-1). Factor 1 was labelled as 'unwanted sexual conduct' and contained 17 items; factor 2 contained 4 items and was labelled as 'lack of control on sexual desires'; and factor 3 contained 8 items and was labelled as 'non-consensual sex'. Factor one had alpha reliability of 0.90, factor 2 0.78 and factor 3 0.92, indicating higher internal consistency and acceptable reliability of the scale and its subscales. Factors 1, 2 and 3 had a mean value of 38.94±17.11, 9.22±3.93 and 18.31±7.88 respectively. The value of skewness for factor 1 was 1.9, for factor 2 it was 1.5 and for factor 3 it was 1.8, while the value of kurtosis was 2.4 for factor 1, 2.2 for factor 2, and 2.6 for factor 3. Factor 1 ranged 21-93, factor 2 ranged 4-23 and factor 3 ranged 8-44.

Item total correlation for PSRS-W ranged from 0.47 to 0.82

Table-3: Correlation coefficient of the Perceived Sexual Resentment scale for Women (PSRS-W) with the Sexual Coercion in Intimate Relationship (SCIR) scale, and the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) (n=200).

Scales	1	2	3
1 Perceived Sexual Resentment scale for women (PSRS-W)	-	.79***	-.30**
2 Sexual Coercion in Intimate Relationship scale (SCIR)		-	-.24**
3 Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)			-

p<.001; p<.01; p<.05.

which indicated that all items demonstrated adequate intensity of relationship with the entire scale (p<9.01) (Table-2).

The PSRS-W scale and the SCIRS were highly and positively correlated (r=0.79; p<0.001), depicting good convergence validity. The PSRS-W and SLS were negatively correlated (r=-0.30; p<0.01), depicting good divergence validity (Table-3).

Discussion

A salient part of the current study was measuring the perception of women regarding their discomfort or displeasure in marital sexual relationships. There are a number of instruments being used to measure sexual behaviour or activities among married couples.²⁶⁻²⁹ However, due to cultural sensitivities, there is scarcity of culturally-appropriate scales in the context of Pakistan.

The current findings indicated that the newly-designed PSRS-W scale was a reliable and valid measure for assessing sexual resentment among married woman in Pakistan. The convergent and divergent validity also confirmed the construct validity of the newly-developed scale.

Overall, items related to each of the factor were formulated to measure sexual dislikes and displeasure. Factor 1 'unwanted sexual conduct' included atypical sexual activities performed by husband or spouse.³⁵ For example, items included in factor 1 of PSRS-W were: "My husband forces me to have an anal sex"; "During sex, my husband physically assaults me"; "I feel scared when me and my husband are alone in the room"; "It seems like an obligation to have sex with my husband" etc. Additionally, factor 2 'lack of control on sexual desires' indicated that disparity in sexual activities by one partner occurs when one spouse frequently desires to have sex in comparison to the other,³⁶ such as, "My husband often loses his control during sex", and "My husband's sexual appetite has disturbed our relationship". Factor 3 'non-consensual sex' included engagement in sexual activities without consent.³⁷ Items include in this factor were, "My husband usually doesn't take my consent before sex", and "My

husband forces me to take sex tablets". Moreover, all the factors in the present study were positively correlated with each other (p<0.01), and all the items on each factor were best representative of sexual activities and issues. That is why a composite score of overall scale was taken, ranging 29-174. Higher scores were indicative of sexual resentment, and lower score were indicative of sexual contentment. Similarly, item-total correlation for PSRS-W ranged 0.47-0.82, showing that all items demonstrated an adequate intensity of relationship with the scale (p<0.01).

The PSRS-W scale is one of the pioneering attempts towards addressing feelings of discomfort experienced by married women. The current study's sample was only limited to educated women for ease and accessibility which is a limitation. A larger sample size with representation of women from rural areas is recommended for future studies to assess negative sexual experiences of women more widely.

Future studies should also go for confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), reliability and validity analyses. Testing associations between the newly-developed sexual resentment scale and the indicators of mental health among married women should also be undertaken so that appropriate intervention and prevention strategies may be employed.

Conclusion

The PSRS-WI was found to be a precise, concise, self-reporting tool to assess sexual resentment among married women.

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Conflict of Interest: None.

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