

CHARACTERISTICS OF SPOUSAL INTIMACY WITH DIFFERENT DEGREES OF SATISFACTION IN MARRIAGE*

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Abstract

The problem of interpersonal interaction between spouses has been and remains a serious problem in research to date. The article presents the results of the study of the peculiarities of the manifestation of the ability to intimacy of interpersonal relations of spouses and their satisfaction with marriage. The total sample consisted of 250 married couples. The results of the comparative analysis of gender peculiarities of intimacy ability characteristics and their differences depending on the degree of satisfaction with marriage are discussed. It was revealed that the structure of the ability to intimate interpersonal relations in men and women has qualitative differences: men are more favorable in getting out of internal conflicts, feel their own strength and confidence, sexually more free from prejudice; women in their ability to establish intimate relations surpass men in the parameters relating to the emotional sphere and the sphere of interpersonal communication: more responsive to the feelings of others; open in communication; less often than men feel awkward among acquaintances, and in love with others. The conclusion is made about the need for further research on the peculiarities of the manifestation of the ability to intimacy and its role in marital life.

Key words: *Intimacy, Closeness, Relationships, Marital satisfaction.*

1. Introduction

Since time immemorial, mankind has been thinking about the issues of happiness, inner well-being, satisfaction with life, comfortable existence in the world. Given the fact that we are social beings, these states depend largely on the relationships that people build with others, and especially in the family sphere. Despite cultural and individual differences, the family is still the main source of joy and happiness, and married life, as the foundation and beginning of the family, has a strong influence also on all other relationships that are established throughout life.

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Given this reality, the problem of interpersonal interaction between spouses has been and remains a serious research problem to date.

A couple is a contradictory, two-dimensional socio-human structure in which partners satisfy, complement and support each other, stimulate the process of individual and common realization both biologically, socially and psychologically through each other. Thus, at least two tendencies can occur in a couple: one characterized by stability, consonance, equilibrium, harmony and pleasure of conjugal interaction, and the second tendency: dissonant, unstable, disharmonious, in which short-term “pleasures”, such as sexual discharge, are possible. In the first case, we can talk about a married couple as an emotional union of two persons determined by mental, emotional, moral, intellectual factors (Dragoman, 2019).

2. The theoretical framework

Understanding and mutual understanding by spouses of each other is an important factor in the stability of marital relations (Dey, Ghosh, 2016). To create a favorable situation of mutual understanding between spouses, the following conditions are necessary: closeness of opinions and coincidence of assessments and self-assessments, as well as coincidence of partner’s assessments and self-assessments with the existing self-image of each. Spouses adjust their patterns of behavior in accordance with the behavior of the partner (Lewis, Yoneda, 2021), over time begin to show more and more similar types and forms of behavior, due to which their own marital identity is created, manifested in interaction with both the outside world and the inner experiences of each.

In the past, the family was united, to a greater extent, by some formal factors, such as traditions, public opinion, cultural and religious prescriptions, provisions of the law, etc. At present, a new family structure is being formed in which the key factor of unity is personal relations with each other – the degree of mutual understanding, relations of affection, desire and aspiration to participate in the life of the other, respect, loyalty and love. It is these manifestations that contribute to the formation of stability in relationships and the creation of a strong family. This order of things is possible in couples in which both are capable of deep personal interaction, ready for close intimate relationships.

The word intimacy comes from the Latin *intimus*, meaning “the innermost” or “the most profound” (Sexual Encyclopedia). Intimacy is defined as a relationship in which two loving people closely interact and freely share their feelings, thoughts and plans.

Intimacy in a relationship brings many joys, but it would be wrong to perceive it as an unchanging state. Intimacy can vary in intensity and the nature of the relationship (love, friendship, family, etc.), but in any case intimacy is a time-varying process. On the one hand, this is because one’s own assessments of what one gets out of a relationship affect each partner’s expectation and hope. If a person feels that a relationship is not living up to expectations or has turned out to be one-sided, they are likely to cut off contact or begin to consider starting another. On the other hand, close relationships absorb a great deal of time and emotional energy, which affects the process of getting to know oneself (Filipoiu, 2017). In cases where both partners

consider their relationship to be equal and balanced, however, they are very happy and stay together for a long time (Nuta, 2006).

Mitrofan (Mitrofan, Vasile, 2012) states that marriage is an interpersonal process of perfection, maturation, realization, awareness, impulses, self-discovery through mutual recognition. It is an experience understood from within the experience. It is the discovery of one's own path, a unique chance, a potential realized in reality.

All this, as well as a number of differences in the understanding of success – failure of marriage, allow us to conclude that the processes occurring in the family require close attention. Thus, any research, including ours, related to the study of family and marriage is relevant, since the knowledge obtained can enrich both the fundamental theoretical ideas of scientists and the methodological tools of practitioners engaged in the optimization of family and marital relations. In the course of our research, this problem was studied from the point of view of the peculiarities of intimacy between spouses and their satisfaction with marriage, which was the *purpose of the study*.

As a *hypothesis of the study*, we put forward the assumption that the structure of the ability to intimate interpersonal relationships in men and women has qualitative differences and is related to the level of satisfaction with marriage.

3. Methods and experimental group

To assess the degree of satisfaction with marriage, we used the test-questionnaire developed by V. V. Stolin, T. L. Romanova, G. P. Butenko (Raigorodskii, 2022). According to the sum of the scores obtained, satisfaction with marriage was assessed from complete and significant dissatisfaction to significant and almost complete satisfaction.

The Intimacy Potential Quotient (IPQ) questionnaire by American sexologists G. Allen, C. Martin was used to investigate the ability for intimate relationships. The Russian translation of this questionnaire was made by O.F. Potemkina (Potemkina, 2003). The methodology determines the intimacy quotient, the feeling of confidence or insecurity, and can also predict the character with which a person is most compatible sexually and socially – the most important aspects of interpersonal relationships. Parameters measured: mood and psychosomatics; independence; sensory perception; penetration versus sympathy, empathy; self-determination and self-esteem; Child-Parent-Adult; playfulness; behavior; playfulness and creativity; neighborliness; love as a need and sexual behavior.

The study was conducted in the city of Chisinau during the period from May 2022 – April 2023. The study involved married couples with marriage experience from 1 year to 30 years ($M_{br.experience}=12,7$ years), aged from 23 to 60 years ($M=37,08$ years). A total of 250 married couples participated in the study.

4. Discussion of results

To present and analyze the results of the study in this article, we have distinguished 2 groups: satisfied and dissatisfied with marriage. Of the total number

of respondents, 79 people (15.8%) are undefined, rather transient and were excluded from further analysis. 232 people (46.4% of the total number) are not satisfied with their marriage relationship, of which 139 men (58.6%) and 93 women (41.4%), and 189 (37.8% of the total number) – evaluate their marriage quite satisfactory: 72 men (38%) and 117 women (62%).

Following the objectives of our study, we analyzed the results of the study of the ability to intimacy by comparing the indicators of men and women, and then analyzed the data in terms of their satisfaction with marriage.

The results of gender features of the structure of the ability to establish intimacy in interpersonal relationships are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Results of the study of the ability to establish intimacy in men and women

	sex	N	Mean	SD	Mean error
Mood and Psychosomatics	M	211	6,1706	,55144	,03796
	F	210	6,9476	,45054	,03109
Independence	M	211	9,4171	1,42311	,09797
	F	210	8,5857	,77939	,05378
Sensory Perception	M	211	7,7915	,88593	,06099
	F	210	8,4000	,93931	,06482
Empathy	M	211	6,5118	1,12275	,07729
	F	210	6,9143	,99390	,06859
Self-esteem	M	211	2,7867	,41059	,02827
	F	210	2,2857	,62199	,04292
Child-Parent-Adult	M	211	6,5592	1,46711	,10100
	F	210	7,0714	1,27157	,08775
Playfulness	M	211	1,9100	,80264	,05526
	F	210	2,7429	,67105	,04631
Behavior	M	211	7,4597	,94215	,06486
	F	210	7,6000	,78381	,05409
Creativity	M	211	3,8294	,95083	,06546
	F	210	5,2095	1,55102	,10703
Neighborliness	M	211	4,7583	,93267	,06421
	F	210	5,5286	,50038	,03453
Love	M	211	5,9242	1,74682	,12026
	F	210	8,5952	,89815	,06198
Sexual Behavior	M	211	12,474	2,2282	,1534
	F	210	11,362	2,8808	,1988

A t-test for unrelated samples was used to identify differences in intimacy parameters between men and women (Table 2).

Table 2. Independent samples t-test for gender

	Lavigne's equality of variance criterion		t-test for equality of means			
	F-value	p	t-value	p-value	Mean difference	SE
Mood and Psychosomatics	2,681	0,102	-15,827	0,00	-0,777	0,04909
Independence	166,857	0,00	7,429	0,00	0,83135	0,11191
Sensory Perception	1,654	0,199	-6,838	0,00	-0,60853	0,08899
Empathy	9,935	0,002	-3,893	0,00	-0,40244	0,10337
Self-esteem	56,412	0,00	9,758	0,00	0,50102	0,05135
Child-Parent-Adult	5,134	0,024	-3,827	0,00	-0,51219	0,13384
Playfulness	24,253	0,00	-11,548	0,00	-0,8329	0,07212
Behavior	13,375	0,00	-1,66	0,098	-0,14028	0,08449
Creativity	69,916	0,00	-11,013	0,00	-1,38014	0,12532
Neighborliness	25,967	0,00	-10,552	0,00	-0,77028	0,073
Love	67,303	0,00	-19,716	0,00	-2,67107	0,13548
Sexual Behavior	19,2	0,00	4,431	0,00	1,112	0,2509

Men compared to women are more independent ($t=7.429$, $p=0.00$), come out of internal conflicts favorably, feel their own strength and confidence in their ability to cope with life circumstances, and have a higher level of self-esteem ($t=9.758$, $p=0.00$). Men's sexual position is more free from prejudice than women's ($t=4.431$, $p=0.00$), they use sex creatively not only for their own pleasure, which contributes to the intimacy of a mature love affair. In our view, this is because women need more than sex, they need intimacy. While men are fully focused on the pleasure of orgasm, women want tenderness as well.

Women are more open and sincere in their communication ($t=-11.548$, at $p=0.00$), without resorting to a contrived appearance or certain protective roles, which can hinder intimacy in relationships. Sociable people are usually people with creativity. Women use their imagination not only to come up with new ideas, but also to change the confluence of circumstances and their moods ($t=-11.013$, at $p=0.00$). They explore, seeking novelty and uniqueness. Over the years, this ability to communicate does not go away, but rather modernizes and becomes more mature. Communication renews relationships and helps develop intimacy (Gadassi *et al.*, 2016). Openness in communication probably contributes to minimizing difficulties when meeting other people: women feel awkward among acquaintances less often than men and do not try to avoid meetings with strangers ($t=-10.552$, $p=0.00$). For women, love is a need as such, so they seek and strive for its satisfaction more than men ($t=-19.716$, at $p=0.00$).

Let us further examine the characteristics of intimacy ability characteristics of men and women with different degrees of marital satisfaction (descriptive statistics in Table 3).

Table 3. Results of the study of the ability to establish intimacy in men with different satisfaction with marriage

	Marital satisfaction	N	Mean	SD	Mean error
Mood and Psychosomatics	satisfied	139	6,0000	,00000	,00000
	dissatisfied	72	6,5000	,85580	,10086
Independence	satisfied	139	8,9424	1,51691	,12866
	dissatisfied	72	10,3333	,47471	,05595
Sensory Perception	satisfied	139	7,5755	,49605	,04207
	dissatisfied	72	8,2083	1,25527	,14794
Empathy	satisfied	139	6,5036	,87951	,07460
	dissatisfied	72	6,5278	1,49150	,17577
Self-esteem	satisfied	139	2,7986	,40253	,03414
	dissatisfied	72	2,7639	,42767	,05040
Child-Parent-Adult	satisfied	139	5,8849	1,34638	,11420
	dissatisfied	72	7,8611	,48369	,05700
Playfulness	satisfied	139	1,5827	,57608	,04886
	dissatisfied	72	2,5417	,80382	,09473
Behavior	satisfied	139	7,4317	,80802	,06854
	dissatisfied	72	7,5139	1,16272	,13703
Creativity	satisfied	139	4,9065	,80660	,06842
	dissatisfied	72	4,4722	1,08734	,12814
Neighborliness	satisfied	139	3,8201	1,00182	,08497
	dissatisfied	72	3,8472	,85018	,10019
Love	satisfied	139	5,2014	1,00851	,08554
	dissatisfied	72	7,3194	2,01282	,23721
Sexual Behavior	satisfied	139	11,3381	1,82794	,15504
	dissatisfied	72	14,6667	,88811	,10466

A t-test for unrelated samples was used to establish a significant difference in the parameters of intimacy ability between men satisfied and dissatisfied with their marital relationship (Table 4).

Table 4. Differences on intimacy parameters in men dissatisfied and satisfied with their marriages

Indicators	Lavigne's equality of variance criterion		t-test for equality of means			
	<i>F</i> -value	<i>p</i>	<i>t</i> -value	<i>p</i> -value	Mean difference	SE
Mood and Psychosomatics	413,636	0,00	-6,904	0,00	-0,5	0,07243
Independence	119,674	0,00	-7,583	0,00	-1,39089	0,18343
Sensory Perception	327,372	0,00	-5,217	0,00	-0,63279	0,12129
Empathy	177,371	0,00	-0,148	0,883	-0,02418	0,16341
Self-esteem	1,301	0,255	0,581	0,562	0,03467	0,05971
Child-Parent-Adult	286,592	0,00	-12,047	0,00	-1,97622	0,16404
Playfulness	10,029	0,002	-9,972	0,00	-0,95893	0,09616
Behavior	28,575	0,00	-0,6	0,549	-0,08223	0,13701
Creativity	0,052	0,819	-0,196	0,845	-0,02708	0,13838
Neighborliness	30,873	0,00	3,28	0,001	0,43425	0,13238
Love	114,605	0,00	-10,193	0,00	-2,11801	0,20779
Sexual Behavior	61,615	0,00	-14,574	0,00	-3,32854	0,22839

Marriage satisfied men are better able to cope with stress ($t=-7.583$, at $p=0.00$), they actively fight conflicts, deal with their negative emotions ($t=-6.904$, at $p=0.00$), interact with other people and experience satisfaction from their environment. Marriage satisfied men show greater ability to feel and respond to the feelings of another person ($t=-5.217$, at $p=0.00$), they differ from men dissatisfied with marriage in that they are alien to suppression, as reality itself stimulates them. In the structure of men satisfied with marriage, more often prevails Adult ($t=-12.047$, at $p=0.00$), which helps to comprehend emotional conflicts and better cope with them, men dissatisfied with marriage are under the control of the Parent, who makes parental and societal demands, which probably prevents the establishment of close and intimate relationships. In our view, this is because it is the structural component of the Adult that dictates prudent and rational behavior, which consists of choosing the middle ground between immediate desire and advance calculation of benefits. Ideally, when the Adult, thanks to its feelings and rationality, dominates the person over the other elements that make up his personality, but still giving credit to the other elements (Ian, Venn, 2017).

Men who are satisfied with marriage are more open and sincere in communication ($t=-9.972$, $p=0.00$), while men who are dissatisfied with marriage are more likely to resort to pretense or certain protective roles. Roles are not

conducive to communication, and without communication there can be no intimacy. Marriage-satisfied men are more reverent about love, want to love and be loved ($t=10,193$, $p=0,00$), more freely show themselves in sex ($t=-14,574$, $p=0,00$), use sex not only to get sexual satisfaction, but also to increase the intimacy of the love affair. From the analysis of psychological literature (Leleu, 2016; Navolan *et al.*, 2020; Nuta, 2006) we know that psychophysiological and, in particular, sexual incompatibility can lead to the breakdown of marriage.

The picture is somewhat different for women (descriptive statistics in Table 5).

Table 5. Results of the study of the ability to establish intimacy in women with different marital satisfaction

	Marital satisfaction	N	Mean	SD	Mean error
Mood and Psychosomatics	satisfied	93	7,1183	,32469	,03367
	dissatisfied	117	6,8120	,49010	,04531
Independence	satisfied	93	8,3011	,71907	,07456
	dissatisfied	117	8,8120	,75352	,06966
Sensory Perception	satisfied	93	8,4516	1,01635	,10539
	dissatisfied	117	8,3590	,87554	,08094
Empathy	satisfied	93	6,9677	,83992	,08710
	dissatisfied	117	6,8718	1,10281	,10195
Self-esteem	satisfied	93	2,1075	,71418	,07406
	dissatisfied	117	2,4274	,49682	,04593
Child-Parent-Adult	satisfied	93	6,3333	1,39357	,14451
	dissatisfied	117	7,6581	,76747	,07095
Playfulness	satisfied	93	3,0000	,00000	,00000
	dissatisfied	117	2,5385	,84627	,07824
Behavior	satisfied	93	7,1505	,35954	,03728
	dissatisfied	117	7,9573	,84479	,07810
Creativity	satisfied	93	5,8495	,35954	,03728
	dissatisfied	117	5,2735	,44767	,04139
Neighborliness	satisfied	93	4,1075	1,40235	,14542
	dissatisfied	117	6,0855	1,01347	,09370
Love	satisfied	93	7,9355	,35528	,03684
	dissatisfied	117	9,1197	,85261	,07882
Sexual Behavior	satisfied	93	8,4839	1,50804	,15638
	dissatisfied	117	13,6496	1,10887	,10251

In the group of women, we found statistically significant differences in 6 out of 12 characteristics of the ability to establish intimate interpersonal relationships (Table 6).

Table 6. Differences in the parameters of intimacy in women dissatisfied and satisfied with marriage

Indicators	Lavigne's equality of variance criterion		t-test for equality of means			
	<i>F</i> -value	<i>p</i>	<i>t</i> -value	<i>p</i> - value	Mean difference	SE
Mood and Psychosomatics	17,419	0,00	5,189	0,00	0,30631	0,05904
Independence	1,654	0,2	-4,98	0,00	-0,51089	0,10259
Sensory Perception	9,081	0,003	0,709	0,479	0,09264	0,13065
Empathy	19,63	0,00	0,694	0,488	0,09595	0,13825
Self-esteem	2,596	0,109	-3,82	0,00	-0,31982	0,08373
Child-Parent-Adult	161,647	0,00	-8,751	0,00	-1,32479	0,15139
Playfulness	225,586	0,00	5,257	0,00	0,46154	0,0878
Behavior	10,878	0,001	-8,607	0,00	-0,80673	0,09373
Creativity	2,821	0,095	-11,854	0,00	-1,97794	0,16686
Neighborliness	20,438	0,00	10,087	0,00	0,57596	0,0571
Love	150,256	0,00	-12,551	0,00	-1,18417	0,09435
Sexual Behavior	90,475	0,00	-28,589	0,00	-5,1657	0,18069

Women who are dissatisfied with their marital relations more clearly express their inability to express emotions, to accept certain demands and conflicts as inevitable, ($t=5.189$, at $p=0.00$), and in contacts with other people act more like actresses, changing the manner of their behavior and adjusting to the mood of the interlocutor ($t=5.257$, at $p=0.00$). Women dissatisfied with marriage have not fully resolved their conflict of "adult child", more often consider the past as a happier time of life, try to achieve a sense of strength and confidence from other (external) sources - drink, medication, astrology, faith, perhaps sympathetic friends. A spouse can also be such a support; women would like a spouse to encourage and comfort them, help them solve problems, protect them, make them laugh in dark moments, and give them courage when they feel they cannot cope ($t=-8.751$, $p=0.00$). In all probability, this is what women who are dissatisfied with their marital relationship do not find.

Women who are satisfied with their marriages have a higher degree of creative approach to life, to circumstances ($t=-11.854$, at $p=0.00$), they explore, seek novelty and uniqueness, are more capable of entertaining relaxation and pleasant intimate encounters, more relaxed in sexual relationships ($t=-28.589$, at $p=0.00$), enjoy sexual intimacy, which certainly enhances the intimacy of a mature love affair ($t=-12.551$, at $p=0.00$).

Thus, our assumption that gender features of intimacy ability characteristics are conditioned by the level of satisfaction with marriage was partially confirmed.

Our study revealed that men who are satisfied with their marital relationships are satisfied with their sexual relationships. In our opinion, this is due to the fact that men attach great importance to sex, by the state of their sexual activity men evaluate both others and themselves. In many couples, the emotional background of relationships deteriorates because there is no mutual and simultaneous desire for sexual intimacy. Especially men suffer from this due to the peculiarities of their physiology (Milad *et al.*, 2014).

Sexual satisfaction defines the feeling of having a partner who is sensitive to needs and thus causes increased satisfaction in the relationship. Women are more likely than men to perceive sexual intercourse as a reflection of relationship quality and view sexuality from a more emotional, interpersonal perspective, whereas men tend to focus on satisfying sexual needs. In a study using daily diaries, Birnbaum and colleagues found that in women (but not men), positive feelings experienced during sexual activity were associated with reports the following day of greater relationship improvement. behaviors associated with improved relationship quality and, to a lesser extent, relationship-destroying behaviors (Birnbaum *et al.*, 2006).

Perceived partner responsiveness may represent a mechanism involved in the link between sexual and marital satisfaction, a link mediated by changes in perceptions of the partner seen as attentive, considerate, and sensitive to needs. Sexual satisfaction promotes intimacy, feelings of closeness and security.

Satisfaction of men in marriage depends on the ability to behave prudently, to treat life rationally and on the ability to compromise, because the more a man is under the control of a restrictive, censoring *Parent*, or in the power of an unreliable in communication, striving for satisfaction of the *Child*, the less he is able to take responsibility, to live life "here and now", to understand, penetrate and accept the other person (Filippova, 2023).

It is also worth noting that the more constrained and emotionally closed men are, the lower their marital satisfaction. A well-developed affective self-control has always been considered as necessary for a "real man" as physical strength and "strong feelings" such as anger (Linchenko, 2022; Levant, 1996; Pleck, 1995). In some cultures, including ours, there is a stereotype related to expectations about men and the expression of their emotions. So-called "strong feelings", "tough emotions" help to maintain a dominant position in relation to the partner, but create distance between them, while the expression of emotionality leads to the exposure of a certain degree of vulnerability, interpreted as weakness. In this regard, men may find it more difficult to show vulnerability and express their emotions because of social expectations or stereotypes about masculinity. In our opinion, this inability to adequately express their own feelings leads to emotional stiffness, does not contribute to the establishment of close, intimate interpersonal relationships, which ultimately affects the satisfaction of marital relations. The strength and stability of marital relations, of course, depends on the extent to which the spouses in the process of family life manage to maintain mutual respect, in the ability to develop acceptable styles of communication, techniques for resolving and preventing conflicts and disagreements.

Marital satisfaction is also influenced by men's ability to deal with stress and their negative emotions: the more effective are the ways of coping with stress or reducing tension, the better developed men's ability to clearly define goals, prioritize and correctly use available resources, the more satisfactory they evaluate their marital relationships. The ability to put oneself in the other's place, to sincerely share any feelings of the partner was also significant for men satisfied with their marriages.

Women's marital satisfaction is strongly influenced by parameters related to emotionality, openness and sensuality. Less empathic individuals tend to be preoccupied with their own needs, emotions or feelings; in partner relationships this affects mutual empathy and interferes with mutual understanding. Researchers in this field emphasize the fact that when empathy is exercised in one direction, it is less effective. In mutual empathic experiences, it is possible to find an enhancement of people's average empathic abilities, which leads to better communication and mutual understanding. Women who are satisfied with marriage perceive human relationships subtly, they are sensitive to their nuances. Men have a stronger aspiration to achieve goals, the need for success, while women are more focused on relationships with others.

In addition, a woman's satisfaction in marriage is influenced by her sense of self-confidence and level of self-esteem. Based on Maslow's ideas (Maslow, 2022), it can be noted that if the need for belonging and love is not realized (i.e., there will be no satisfaction with marriage), the possibility of realizing the higher needs in self-esteem, self-actualization practically does not exist. Thus, satisfaction from achieved successes, pride, self-esteem contribute to the establishment and strengthening of a closer, sincere and trusting relationship.

So, there is a difference between men and women: for men, sexual relations, rationality and the ability to cope with stress and negative emotions are more significant; for women, responsiveness, openness in communication, independence and self-respect are characteristic. In our opinion, characteristic differences at the initial stages of socialization of men and women cause subsequent differences in their ability to intimate relationships. In our society, girls are usually taught to show feelings, while boys are broadcasted that feelings should be hidden, one should not show signs of weakness or fear. In addition, in childhood, girls are more often caressed than boys, which can cause, arising in adulthood, sex differences in attitudes toward intimacy, in the ability to express their emotions and sensitive to the feelings of others. Moreover, the competitive, aggressive behavior of boys, which is generally encouraged in our society, does not correspond well to the development of the capacity for intimacy, whereas the nurturing and sensitivity promoted in girls is conducive to intimate relationships.

However, we note that both men and women who are satisfied with their marriages have higher rates of intimacy ability, the ability to understand and share the feelings of the other. This means that men and women equally need intimacy. Recall that the word "intimate" in Latin means "most inner". It means the possibility and necessity to share the deepest feelings, thoughts, the innermost secrets of one's soul, one's true self. Everyone feels, at least sometimes, the need to be completely

honest, to talk about everything that has accumulated in the soul, to be truly yourself, and to find understanding in another person. The need to be understood in that part of one's personality, which is most often closed from others, is inherent in people regardless of their gender. Both men and women need reliability for such frankness - they want to be sure of the support of the marriage partner. This support can be provided by listening, sympathizing, encouraging, comforting, i.e. in the conditions of deep intimacy of the relationship.

5. Conclusion

The structure of the ability to intimate interpersonal relations in men and women has qualitative differences. Men, compared to women, are more favorable in getting out of internal conflicts, feel their own strength and confidence in their ability to cope with life circumstances; men's sexual position is more free from prejudice. Women in their ability to establish intimate relations surpass men in the parameters relating to the emotional sphere and the sphere of interpersonal communication: women are more responsive to the feelings of others; more open and sincere in communication; less often men feel awkward among acquaintances, as well as for women love is a need, as such, so they seek and strive for its satisfaction more than men.

Men who are satisfied with their marital relationship are able to cope with stress; they are more sensual and responsive; Adult prevails in the structure; they are more open and sincere in communication; they are more reverent about love, and they are more free in sex.

Women who are satisfied with marital relations show a greater degree of independence from external factors and enjoy life "here and now"; they have a higher degree of creativity in life and show themselves more freely in sexual relations.

The study of the peculiarities of intimacy ability and its role in marital life seems to be a promising direction that requires further research on a larger sample, which will allow to divide it into subgroups and conduct a comparative analysis on samples of spouses: with different length of marriage; with diverse representation by level of education, professional employment; with and without children; by the level of consistency of life values, etc. Studies of the consistency of intimacy parameters in couples with the same and different levels of satisfaction with marriage are interesting. It should also be noted that the dynamics of marital relations, of course, is determined by cultural, ethnic, religious peculiarities of attitudes to the family, the roles of men and women, intimacy and intimate life. This makes it necessary to study both the dynamics of intimacy formation and marital satisfaction and the factors affecting them.

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