



The Role of Marital Burnout and Early Maladaptive Schemas in Marital Satisfaction between Young Couples

Arghavan Kebritchi¹, Shahram Mohammadkhani^{2*}

¹ M.Sc. Department of Psychology & Educational Sciences Faculty, Kharazmi University, Tehran, Iran

² Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology & Educational Sciences Faculty, Kharazmi University, Tehran, Iran

*Corresponding Email: sh.mohamadkhany@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Given the fundamental role of the family structure and the importance of proper marriages in modern society as well as the important role of childhood and its effect on marital relations in adulthood, this study aimed to investigate the role of burnout, early maladaptive schemas and style in marital satisfaction among young couples. This study is a correlation (multiple regressions) and descriptive research. The sample consisted of 100 couples (100 females and 100 males, couples) aged 20 to 35 years with a high school diploma or higher education who were randomly chosen from student couples of Tehran and Karaj Kharazmi university or other couples out of university which filled out four questionnaires. Following questionnaires were used as research tools: Pines' Couple Burnout Measure (CBM), Enrich's Marital Satisfaction (Enrich), Yang's early maladaptive schemas (EMSQ-R). [6][8]. Results showed that there were three interactive relationships among these variables, so that all three variables were investigated and separately explained concerning marital satisfaction. There was a significant negative correlation between marital burnout and all other subscales and marital satisfaction, and a significant positive correlation between marital burnout and all maladaptive schemas except emotional deprivation schema.

Keywords: Marital Burnout, Early Maladaptive Schemas, Marital Satisfaction

INTRODUCTION

Marriage has been treated as the most important and supreme social tradition to access emotional and safety needs among adults. Marriage is a human, complicated, subtle and dynamic relationship with specific features. If the family has a healthy environment with intimate relationships, it will lead to growth and advancement of its members, which this advancement is required for marriage [1]. Hence, marriage is one of the most important experiences affecting the person's life [2]. Optimal and healthy quality of factors that shape is the personality of person from the beginning years of childhood in first social environment, family, would lead to adaptive behavior of the person in life [3]. Today, people consider some factors including love, satisfying mental and emotional needs, increase in happiness and satisfaction as reasons for marriage. In other words, romantic attractions and unsatisfied needs of persons have become the base for marriage and spouse selection due to socio-economic changes [4]. However, love is the most common reason for marriage [5]. Falling in love is a prominent and powerful experience but a reason more than love is required for a successful marriage [6]. One of basic and real problems is that many of marital relationships in today's community is totally based on love; hence, love sometimes is not enough to satisfy the various demands of life [7]. If romantic expectations are not met, frustration is attributed to spouse directly leading to reduced love and commitments; in this case, burnout will be substituent of love [8].

Marital burnout is one of fundamental reasons for marital disorders and reduced intimacy. In this case, a sense is formed among couples in which, they choose a person for their life expecting him or her to change their life and satisfy their unmet needs of childhood while all of these needs are not satisfied after marriage because the husband or wife might suffer from childhood harms; therefore, they will be depressed feeling disappointment and marital

burnout. Noosrom & Wongwat (2010) consider burnout as a multistage process that gradually emerges. These stages consist of physical exhaustion, emotional exhaustion, mental exhaustion, depersonalization, and loss of personal performance. Various researches conducted in field of marital burnout indicate that there is a significant relationship between marital burnout and irrational beliefs (Balver, 2006; Adibrad & Adibrad, 2005; Ameri, 2010), between positive attitude toward marital burnout (Nilez, 2003; Lee, 2008; Calf, 2003), and documented patterns of couples (Sharifi, Karsooli, Shildeh, 2011).

Khodabakhsi, Adibrad and Sedghpoor (2010) conducted a study and compared the relationship between irrational beliefs and marital burnout among women who demanded for divorce and who tended to continue their marital life. Khodabakhshi states that there is difference between these women in terms of the relation between marital burnout and irrational beliefs (Khodabakhshi, Adibrad, Sedghpoor, 2010). The other study conducted by Nazanin Shadabi (2011) entitled "effectiveness of teaching communicational imaging on marital burnout among women", in which the effects of childhood on latest relationships was studied to find improvement solution and create love again. It was found in this study that early years of childhood affect personality of an adult person and this can impact on the marital life. Rafael and Yang [9] concluded that attachment schemas, incompetency, emotional deprivation and obedience are some schemas affecting the interpersonal relationships by their cognitive system leading parties of a relationship toward disappointment and prevention from involvement in a relationship during time. Emotional inhibition schema leads to positive correlation in marital satisfaction prediction and it seems that short-term emotional suppression can have positive implications in a relationship.

Many of problematic interactions between persons and mental pressure caused by burnout are in fact recreated scenes occurred many years ago in relations with early personalities in life. If we are still involved in our initial relationships of life, we will not be able to completely live in our present life. We are always influence by early interactions between our parents and hear their voices through our inside voices and these voices can effect on our life [10]. It is vital to perceive the reasons for spouse selection and attraction between couples in order to find a solution for burnout [11].

Early maladaptive schema is one of factors affecting mental health and quality of social relationships. According to the model designed by Yang (1996), early maladaptive schemas are formed during early relationships between parents and children during first years of life so that they might lead to self-harm patterns in different scopes particularly in interpersonal relationships. Existence of schemas in person would make the person vulnerable to mental disorders such as depression and anxiety. At the early years of youth, first and middle years of third decades of life, the relationships with opposite sex are more important and young people look for intimacy and close relationships with a specific person (Sadock, Kaplan, Sadock, 2004). These deep and inclusive patterns are strongly inefficient; they are about self and relationships with others, which are formed against the mentioned schemas [12]. If painful experiences associated with childhood become chronic, the fundamental needs of children including being accepted and supported, sense of belonging, autonomy, suitable limitations, respect and protection are not satisfied. Early maladaptive schemas are rooted in failed basic emotional needs. Yang believes that 11 options out of 18 options are directly associated with intimate relationships and spouse selection. He called this process as schema alchemy [13].

Another study was conducted by Rahil Azadbakht (2010) in this field under the title of "the relationship between early maladaptive schemas and marital satisfaction among married couples in Sari Province" in which, sample size consisted of 201 20-50 years old married women that were chosen using multi-stage random sampling method from women working in organizations and Institutions supported by Social Security Insurance in Sari, Iran. Results obtained from study indicated that there is a negative significant between early maladaptive schemas and married women and early maladaptive schemas can predict marital dissatisfaction. Also, among 5 scopes of early maladaptive schemas, there is a negative significant relation between the first scope (abandonment and alienation) and marital satisfaction while there is not any significant relation between other scopes and marital satisfaction.

Ghorbani (2010) conducted a study entitled "the relationship between early maladaptive schemas and marital satisfaction" in which, sample size consisted of employees of Region 11 Municipality in Tehran. Results obtained from this study showed that there is a significant relation between early maladaptive schemas and marital satisfaction; hence early maladaptive schemas can predict marital satisfaction. On the other hand, this study indicated that schemas including Social isolation, Alienation/ Shame, Emotional deprivation, Mistrust/ Misbehaving, Self-control/ Insufficient self-discipline have negative relationship with marital satisfaction. It was found in another study that early maladaptive schemas particularly scopes including abandonment, mistrust/ Abuse, Defectiveness, Being hated, and Emotional deprivation are significant predictors of divorce, communicational adaptation, and marital satisfaction (Yoosefi et al, 2010).

Marital satisfaction is an important factor in life that brings calmness between couples in life and family; hence, children are well trained due to satisfaction and calmness of their parents and this can have positive implications for society. Marital dissatisfaction causes many problems and conflicts between couples leading to divorce; hence, negative implication of this factor is obvious [14]. Lack of a correct conclusion implies that marital satisfaction is not simply achievable also marital satisfaction is a process formed during marital life [15].

Couples should remember that burnout is a common reaction of couples with romantic expectations to stressful situations; in this case, couples give the useless effort of changing each other and try to change the conditions. Although burnout is an undesirable experience, it is possible to overcome it. Couples who suffer from burnout can cope with it and learn to have a better and deeper romantic relationship [16]. The importance of study on early maladaptive schemas will be more considerable if it focuses on marital relationships and tries either to improve mental health of couples particularly during early stages of life, because marital relationships can lead to happiness or to pain in family and community. This kind of relationship enables couples to discuss their problems and solve them. When intimate relationship is stopped then love changes to anger and discomfort; therefore, conflicts, repetitive criticisms, silence, lack of emotional involvement, and unsolved problems will increase (Yang & Yang, 1998). In conclusion, each of the mentioned factors can increase divorce rate in current world; hence, marital maladjustments, divorced families together with effects of these problems on family members have led to concern about finding a solution. Majority of people marry but more than 50 percent of them get divorce after three years [17].

Accordingly, study of the relationship between these variables and their effects on marital problems among young couples can provide a proper solution to protect marriage and create a more joyful life. On the other hand, specialized contributions and consultations can help couples to have better performance in their marital life. Hence, the important role of childhood and its effect on marital burnout is undeniable. Also, increased divorce rate is a considerable alarm in this field. Therefore, the mutual relationship between marital burnout and early maladaptive schemas and its effect on marital satisfaction among young couples was studied in this paper because of limited research literature in study on these variables.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research plan of this study is descriptive-correlational. To study research hypotheses, statistical indexes including Pearson correlation and Stepwise multiple regression were applied. In this regard, none of research variables is manipulated and they are only measured and examined to find the correlation between them emphasizing on prediction of one variable based on another variable [18]. The objective of this study was choose 100 couples (100 female and 100 male) randomly with age average of 20-35 years old with academic education degree and medium income level. This study was conducted on students of Karaj and Tehran Khazarmi University beside couples out of the university. 3 questionnaires were filed out by participants.

Research Instruments

Marital Burnout Questionnaire

This scale was designed by Pines [8]. Successful translated versions of this questionnaire have been applied in intercultural studies in Norway, Hungary, Mexico, Spain, Portugal, Finland, and Israel [19]. This questionnaire consists of 20 items including three main parts of somatic burnout (fatigue, lethargy, and sleep disorders), emotional burnout (depression, despair, and feeling trapped), and psychological burnout (feelings of worthlessness, frustration, and anger toward one's spouse). The entire items are scored on a seven-point scale: scale 1 indicates not having experienced the situation referred to at all, and scale 7 indicates having experienced the situation frequently. It takes 15-20 minutes to fill out this questionnaire [20]. Responding to this questionnaire is done through LIKERT scale. An evaluation of the reliability of CBM showed that the internal homogeneity of the items ranged from 0.84 to 0.90. Enrich's Marital Satisfaction Scale was used to test validity of CBM a correlation between these two questionnaires obtained to -0.40 at $P < 0.001$ level, which is significant (Amollazadeh, 2010).

Yang's Early Maladaptive Schemas Questionnaire Short Form

This 75-items questionnaire was designed by Yang (1999) to evaluate 15 early maladaptive schemas. These schemas include abandonment, instability, mistrust, misbehaving, social isolation alienation, defectiveness shame, emotional deprivation, dependence, incompetency, vulnerability to disease, undeveloped self-subjugation, enmeshment, entitlement, grandiosity, insufficient self-discipline, obedience, self-sacrifice, emotional inhibition, unrelenting standards, and hyper criticalness. These schemas are classified to 5 general scopes as follows: 1. Abandonment and rejection scope 2. Self-discipline and disordered performance 3. Relaying on others' scope 4. Disordered limitations scope 5. Hyper alerting and inhibition. Each item is scored based on 6-point scale (1 for complete incorrect and 6 for completely correct). In this questionnaire, all 5 items measure one schema. The schema will be inefficient if the

mean of each subscale is more than 25 (Closko & Wishar, 2003 quoted from Yang, 1995). According to psychometric review on this questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha of subscales was reported in domain of 0.83-0.96 and validity coefficient of test and retest of this questionnaire estimated to 0/5-0/82 and factor analysis was completely coordinated with schemas obtained from Yang's model [21].

ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale

Short form (47-items) of marital satisfaction questionnaire was used to collect data in this study. This questionnaire was designed by Fowers and Olsen [22]. This questionnaire consists of some field in couples' relationships and can describe potential problems of couples or determine their strength points. Original version of this questionnaire includes 115 items. Reliability coefficient of test obtained to 0.92, which is a suitable coefficient. Sharifnia (2001) obtained validity of this questionnaire to 92% using couple adjustment inventory. Olson reported reliability of this questionnaire equal to 92% and Soleimanian estimated this coefficient to 93% using Cronbach's alpha method. Reliability coefficient of test was obtained to 0.9 in study conducted by Soleimanian. Items of questionnaire are set based on 5-point Likert scale from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1). This questionnaire measures 10 dimensions including marital satisfaction, personality issues, marital relationships, conflict resolution, financial management, leisure activities, sexual relationship, relationship with children, family and friends, religious orientation. Scoring method of this questionnaire is as follows: scores of person in all 47 items are added together forming raw score then this score is standardized to interpret it.

RESULTS

Table 1. Mean and standard deviation of maladaptive schemas and marital satisfaction

	Variables	Mean	Standard deviation
Schemas	Emotional. deprivation	7.03	2.33
	Abandonment. instability	6.62	1.84
	Mistrust. misbehaving	8.53	2.13
	social isolation. alienation	7.23	2.37
	Defectiveness. shame	5.47	2.37
	Failure	6.87	2.69
	Dependence. incompetency	7.08	2.32
	Vulnerability to disease	6.11	2.30
	undeveloped self-subjugation/ enmeshment	9.89	2.49
	obedience	6.09	2.65
	self-sacrifice	6.36	2.22
	emotional inhibition	9.23	2.11
	unrelenting standards/ hyper criticalness	6.85	2.46
	entitlement grandiosity	6.38	2.04
self-control insufficient self-discipline	7.61	2.30	
Marital Satisfaction	personality issues	17.11	4.47
	marital relationships	17.23	4.96
	conflict resolution	16.37	4.38
	financial management	18.14	3.89
	leisure activities	17.76	3.63
	sexual relationship	17.94	3.85
	marriage and children	16.70	3.07
	family and friends	17.40	3.48
	religious orientation	19.20	4.18
	total score of marital satisfaction	157.86	27.76
Marital burnout	marital burnout	37.75	19.63

To test research hypotheses, statistical indexes including Pearson correlation and stepwise multiple regressions were employed and the obtained results are presented in following tables.

Table 2. Correlation matrix of maladaptive schemas, marital burnout, and marital satisfaction

Variables	Personality issues	marital relationships	Conflict resolution	financial management	leisure activities	sexual relationship	marriage and children	family and friends	religious orientation	Marital Satisfaction
Emotional deprivation	0.37**	-0.40**	0.35**	0.28**	-0.15*	-0.11	-0.19**	-0.40**	-0.38**	-0.39**
Abandonment instability	-0.12	-0.18**	-0.15*	-0.13	-0.004	-0.02	-0.21**	-0.21**	-0.15*	-0.16*
Mistrust misbehaving	0.26**	-0.29**	-0.27**	-0.21**	-0.05	-0.03	-0.18**	-0.30**	-0.14*	-0.25**
Social isolation alienation	-0.23**	-0.27**	-0.315**	-0.27**	-0.08	-0.04	-0.16*	-0.35**	-0.22**	-0.28**
Defectiveness shame	-0.30**	-0.40**	-0.37**	-0.33**	-0.14*	-0.15*	-0.25**	-0.34**	-0.40**	-0.39**
Failure	-0.30**	-0.42**	-0.43**	-0.33**	-0.14*	-0.19**	-0.24**	-0.39**	-0.37**	-0.41**
Dependence incompetency	-0.48**	-0.53**	-0.55**	-0.39**	-0.38**	-0.27**	-0.23**	-0.55**	-0.45**	-0.57**
Vulnerability to disease	-0.37**	-0.46**	-0.43**	-0.37**	-0.21**	-0.19**	-0.22**	-0.44**	-0.47**	-0.46**
Undeveloped self-subjugation enmeshment	-0.15*	-0.25**	-0.23**	-0.27**	-0.27**	-0.27**	-0.11	-0.16**	-0.24**	-0.28**
Obedience	-0.46**	-0.53**	-0.56**	-0.45**	-0.34**	-0.33**	-0.34**	-0.54**	-0.55**	-0.60**
Self-sacrifice	-0.35**	-0.37**	-0.40**	-0.28**	-0.11	-0.13	-0.15*	-0.30**	-0.33**	-0.36**
Emotional inhibition	-0.04	-0.001	-0.024	-0.13	-0.17*	-0.21**	-0.13	-0.04	-0.08	-0.10**
Unrelenting standards hyper criticalness	-0.27**	-0.41**	-0.43**	-0.37**	-0.16*	-0.21**	**0-0.2	-0.40**	-0.38**	-0.42**
Entitlement grandiosity	-0.25**	-0.27**	-0.35**	-0.25**	-0.31**	-0.53**	-0.32**	-0.34**	-0.38**	-0.39**
Self-control insufficient self-discipline	-0.35**	-0.37**	8**3-0.	-0.26**	-0.20**	-0.18**	-0.21**	-0.39**	-0.29**	-0.39**
Marital burnout	-0.60**	-0.68**	-0.70.**	-0.53**	-0.48**	-0.47**	-0.22**	-0.52**	-0.50**	-0.70**

**Significance at 0.01 level; *Significance at 0.05 level

Determining the share of maladaptive schemas and marital burnout in predicting marital satisfaction

Table 3. Stepwise regression analysis to predict marital satisfaction using maladaptive schemas and marital burnout

Step	Predictor	R	R ²	F	Significance of F	B	Beta	t	Significance
1	marital burnout	0.697	0.485	186.82	0.001	-0.98	-0.697	-13.67	0.001
2	marital burnout	0.734	0.539	115.24	0.001	-0.74	-0.527	-8.79	0.001
	obedience					-3	-0.287	-4.79	0.001
3	marital burnout	0.744	0.533	80.82	0.001	-0.67	-0.474	-7.52	0.001
	obedience					-2.35	-0.224	-3.47	0.001
	Dependence incompetency					-1.88	-0.157	-2.46	0.001
4	marital burnout	0.755	0.570	64.75	0.001	-0.65	-0.457	-7.34	0.001
	obedience					-2.20	-210	-3.30	0.001
	Dependence incompetency					-2.40	-201	-2.11	0.002
	emotional inhibition					-1.79	-0.136	-2.82	0.005
5	marital burnout	0.762	0.580	53.65	0.001	-0.65	-0.459	-7.44	0.001
	obedience					-1.87	-0.179	-2.76	0.006
	Dependence incompetency					-2.01	-0.168	-2.56	0.011
	emotional inhibition					-1.92	-0.146	-3.03	0.003
	emotional deprivation					-1.36	-0.115	-2.13	0.034

Beta: standardized regression coefficient Beta: Non-standardized regression coefficient

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The obtained results showed that marital burnout, except schema of emotional inhibition, is positively and significantly related to other maladaptive schemas. In significant relationship between schema of emotional deprivation and marital burnout, people believe that their natural emotional needs are not satisfied enough by important people of life. One of important dimensions of marital burnout is lack of perceived support and sympathy by spouse. In fact, people, who suffer from marital burnout, experience some derivations in their marital relationships; hence, such experiences change their satisfaction with marital relationship and reduce their satisfaction. Regarding the significant relation between schema of abandonment/ instability and marital burnout, the person has an instable and unreal perception of being supported and relationship with others in this schema. Patients diagnosed with this schema assume that important persons in their life are going to leave them; therefore, they always expect to be left alone [23]. Hence, sense of abandonment is a feeling that shows itself in marital burnout.

In case of the significant relation between schema of mistrust/ misbehaving and marital burnout, the person assumes in this schema that other people are annoying, abuser, hurting, fraudulent, liar, and dishonest and hurt him or her at the first chance they get [24]. This belief has been approved by theorists of marital burnout and they express that burnout can lead to the sense of mental and emotional separation between these patients [25]. Regarding the significant relation between social isolation/ alienation and marital burnout, the person has this mental experience in this schema that he/she is different with other people not belonging to a group or category. In fact, this feeling might be an implication caused by marital burnout and depersonalization. Depersonalization in people not only leads to interpersonal and personal life dissatisfaction but also leads to depression (Yang, 2009). In case of the significant relation between defectiveness/ shame and marital burnout, persons with this schema believe that they are humble, bad and worthless and people do not like them; hence, such patients experience a sense of aggression, worthless, and annoying inside them [26]. Being sensitive to people's word about the deficit of person and cognitive distortion of that word regarding sense of shame prepares the field for marital burnout; therefore, person is not able to significantly make a relationship with her/his spouse.

Regarding the significant relation between failure and marital burnout, the person believes in this schema that will be inevitably failed in different fields of life and is not able to be as competent as peers are [27]. The defective and correlational relation obtained from the results of this research is a point that can be mentioned in case of the relationship between this schema and marital burnout. In case of the significant relation between schema of dependence/ incompetency and marital burnout, persons in this schema feel inability to accept their daily responsibilities without help of others. This schema indicates itself as the sense of passiveness and distress and this is one of personality characteristics of people who suffer from marital burnout in their life [28]. Regarding the significant relation between schema of undeveloped self-subjugation/ enmeshment and marital burnout, persons with this schema sometimes have extraordinary emotional involvement making close relationship with others without any privacy, therefore, persons feel emptiness, purposelessness and without identity (Shadab, 2002) facing burnout in marital relationship. In case of significant relation between obedience and marital burnout, people tend to satisfy the needs of others without attention to their needs; they do it to keep their emotional relationship and prevent from punishment (Yang, 2007). Therefore, the person feels mental burnout after a while leading to dissatisfaction with interpersonal relationship. Regarding the significant relation between schema of self-sacrifice and marital burnout, the persons voluntary tends to satisfy needs of others in this schema even if his/her needs remain unmet. Some reasons for such behavior include prevention from any kind of disappointment and pain in others and avoidance of sin (Yang, 2007) and such self-sacrifice gradually leads to mental burnout, disappointment in interpersonal relationship and marital dissatisfaction. Regarding the significant relation between unrelenting standards/ hyper criticalness and marital burnout, the basic belief in this schema is that the person should try to access flexible initialized standards in his/her behavior and performance to prevent from being blamed by others. Most of the time, such persons feel that are under pressure with basic problems in gaining joy, calmness, self-confidence, and satisfaction in interpersonal relationships (Farrell & khoan, 2009) and it can lead to boredom with what is experiencing every day.

According to the significant relation between entitlement/ grandiosity schema and marital burnout, the person with such schema believes that he/she is at the higher position than others are and should receive specific rights. Such persons don not respect rules and rights of other people [29, 30]. There is no sympathy between these persons and such interaction will make separation besides aggressive and harming relationship between couples; hence, there would a high dissatisfaction between them [31]. According to the significant relation between self-control/ insufficient self-discipline and marital burnout, persons with this schema are not able to control themselves efficiently and it is difficult for them to tolerate failure in personal objectives and express their emotions extremely with an impulsive behavior if they fail (Yang, 2007). This schema considers one of basic field for marital burnout, inability to bear failure, because every relationship is full of failures and couples with high marital satisfaction can

bear this condition without willingness to satisfy their needs rapidly (Huston, 2009). In case of the insignificant relation between emotional inhibition and marital satisfaction, persons with this schema limit their feelings, relationships and spontaneous behaviors to avoid non-approval of others, sense of shame or lost control (Yang, 2007).

Also, it was determined in multi-variable regression that from predictor variables including maladaptive schemas and marital burnout, five variables of marital burnout and schemas including obedience, dependence/ incompetency, emotional inhibition, and emotional deprivation entered into regression model respectively and each of them has a significant share in predicting dependent variables (marital satisfaction). Regarding the obtained results, some studies can be mentioned in this field such as Huston (2009) in which, high marital burnout predict marital dissatisfaction and study conducted by Rafael and Yang (2011) in which, schemas including dependence/ incompetency, emotional deprivation, and obedience can effect on interpersonal relationship using their cognitive system also can direct a relationship toward disappointment and prevention from involvement in a relationship during passage of time. Emotional inhibition schema has a positive correlation in predicting marital satisfaction. Seemingly, emotional inhibition in short term consists of positive results for a relationship; however, theorists of emotion-based couple therapy [32] indicate that emotional suppression is apparently positive but has destructive implications for a marital relationship. This approach tends to determine negative effects of this kind of interaction considering passive aggressive approach.

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