

## Original research

**Investigating the Causal Effect of Men's Attachment Styles on Spouses' Marital Burnout with Emphasis on the Mediating Role of Primary Maladaptive schemas**

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**Abstract**

**Introduction:** The present study aimed to investigate the causal effect of men's attachment styles on spouses' marital burnout, emphasizing the mediating role of primary incompatible schemas in couples referring to counseling clinics in Tehran.

**Research method:** The descriptive research method was a correlational type. The research population included all couples who referred to psychological and counseling clinics in six and seven districts of Tehran in 1402-1400. According to Cochran's formula, the sample size consisted of 186 couples (186 men and 186 women) who were purposefully selected from Raha Counseling Center, Mehr Taban Counseling Center, Nawan Counseling Center, and Rwannema Counseling Center. To collect data, Pines' Marital Exhaustion Scale, Collins and Reed's Attachment, and Young's Schema Questionnaire were used. Pearson's correlation coefficient test and multivariate regression with the simultaneous entry method and structural equation modeling were used, and the results were analyzed with SPSS\_28 and Amos\_26 software.

**Findings:** The results showed that the total effect of ambivalent attachment style ( $\beta=0.160$ ,  $P=0.019$ ) and avoidant attachment style of men ( $\beta=0.196$ ,  $P=0.007$ ) on the marital exhaustion of their wives is positive and the effect The whole secure attachment style of men has a negative and significant effect on the marital exhaustion of their wives ( $\beta = -0.157$ ,  $P = 0.041$ ). Also, the effect of men's initial incompatible schemas on spouses' marital burnout was positive and significant ( $\beta=0.359$ ,  $P=0.001$ ). Also, the indirect effect of ambivalent attachment style ( $\beta=0.096$ ,  $P=0.001$ ) and avoidant attachment ( $\beta=0.196$ ,  $P=0.035$ ) of men on marital exhaustion of positive spouses, and the indirect effect of secure attachment style. They have a negative and significant effect on the marital exhaustion of their spouses ( $P = 0.028$ ,  $\beta = -0.073$ ).

**Conclusion:** According to the results of this research, it can be said that men's primary maladaptive schemas positively mediate the effect of their ambivalent and avoidant attachment styles on their

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wives' marital burnout, and the effect of secure attachment style on their wives' marital burnout is negatively and significantly mediated.

**Keywords:** Attachment Styles, Emotional Divorce, Incompatible Schemas, Marriage, Marital Exhaustion, Marital Exhaustion, Schema

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### Introduction:

The family is the most fundamental part of society and the primary unit in human interactions, which enables the repetition of generations and the connection of the individual to the larger society (1). Therefore, achieving a healthy society depends on the health of the family and the realization of a healthy family is conditional on its people enjoying mental health and having a favorable relationship with each other (2); However, several factors may cause conflict in this relationship and threaten the couple's relationship, among the factors that threaten married life, marital exhaustion can be mentioned (3).

When couples fail to communicate with each other; In this case, mutual intimacy and mutual commitment are broken and marital exhaustion is created (4) and a set of irrational and unrealistic expectations, transition from emotions, carelessness and inattention of couples towards each other and each other's needs, not expressing feelings and needs to each other and the ups and downs of life cause marital exhaustion (5).

Kaiser (6) defines marital burnout as the lack of emotional attachment, which has three stages: frustration and disappointment; This stage includes the disillusionment of the relationship that the worn-out person ruminates about his wife in complete silence, the feeling between disappointment, exhaustion, anger and hatred; This stage is accompanied by a sense of hatred and it is difficult to ignore the mistakes of the spouse, discouragement and indifference; Emotional and physical distancing is characteristic of the last stage of the process of marital exhaustion (7).

Marital burnout is a painful state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion, and it occurs when, despite all the couple's efforts, their relationship does not and will not give meaning to their lives. This phenomenon is gradual and rarely happens suddenly. Love and intimacy gradually erode, and along with it comes general exhaustion (8). As stated, marital burnout is a gradual decrease in emotional attachment (9), so one of the factors that may play a role in the attachment of couples is attachment styles (10), attachment styles as one of the personal factors that affect harmony and disharmony. Marital effects enumerated. Attachment is a stable emotional bond between two people so that one of the parties tries to maintain the proximity to the attachment concept and acts in a way to make sure that the relationship

continues. Attachment behavior is activated when a person has feelings such as fear, sadness, and illness, and forces a person to seek or stay close to a familiar person (11).

In attachment theory, it is emphasized that parents' relationships during childhood form attachment styles and influence a person's view of himself, others, and the way interpersonal relationships are organized (12). Insecure attachment experiences during childhood play a decisive role in traumas during adulthood (13). Three attachment styles, secure, avoidant, and ambivalent, have been described in childhood and have also been confirmed in adulthood. People with a secure attachment style are comfortable in establishing intimate relationships, show a desire to receive support from others, have a positive image of themselves, and have positive expectations and expectations from others. People with an avoidant attachment style are considered emotionally cold and suspicious. They find it difficult to trust and rely on others and feel worried when others become too close to them. People with an ambivalent attachment style see themselves as misunderstood and lacking in self-confidence, and worry that others will abandon them or not truly love them (14).

Studies based on developmental pathology also emphasize the relationship between early negative educational and family experiences and the problems of adults in performing developmental tasks and psychological problems, and faulty marital networks (15).

Unfavorable internal working models are thought to gradually form self-injurious emotional and cognitive patterns, which are referred to as "primary maladaptive schemas" (16). Primary maladaptive schemas arise due to the failure to satisfy the basic emotional and emotional needs of childhood, such as secure attachment, self-management, freedom in expressing healthy needs and emotions, spontaneity, and realistic limitations. Also, schemas operate in the deepest layers of the cognitive level, usually outside the level of awareness, and make a person psychologically vulnerable to the creation of disturbances and psychological problems such as dysfunctional marital relationships (17).

The review of the research background shows that regarding the relationship between each of the variables of this research, few studies have been conducted and their findings are inconsistent, for example, Sorkhabi, Abdulmaleki et al. (18) in their study concluded that the secure attachment style with Marital burnout has a significant positive relationship and avoidant and anxious-ambivalent attachment styles have a significant negative relationship with marital burnout; While Karimi, Karimi, and Dehghan (19) reported that secure attachment style and avoidant attachment style are unable to predict marital burnout. Also, regarding the relationship between attachment styles and primary maladaptive schemas, the findings of the conducted studies are inconsistent. For example, the results of Garvand's study (20) indicate that secure attachment style has a significant negative relationship with primary maladaptive schemas, and avoidant and anxious-ambivalent attachment styles have a significant positive relationship with primary maladaptive schemas, while Ebrahimi, Makund Hosseini and Tabatabai (21) It was found that there is a negative correlation between avoidant attachment style and early maladaptive schemas.

Some other research evidence also shows that early maladaptive schemas may be able to mediate the relationship between attachment styles and marital burnout. For example, in their study, Rahimian, Qamari, Babakhani, and Jafari (22) concluded that early maladaptive

schemas play a mediating role concerning attachment styles and marital conflicts among couples facing divorce. Also, in another study, the mediating role of primary maladaptive schemas in the relationship between attachment styles and marital intimacy was confirmed, and it was reported that the indirect paths of insecure attachment styles through primary maladaptive schemas with marital intimacy are also significant (23).

In addition, the research evaluation also shows that the mediating role of primary maladaptive schemas in the relationship between attachment styles and marital exhaustion has not been investigated. Also, in most similar studies, only one gender (mostly married women) has been evaluated, while in the present study, couples referring to counseling clinics in Tehran have been measured. Therefore, the purpose of the current research was to investigate the causal effect of men's attachment styles on spouses' marital burnout, emphasizing the mediating role of primary maladaptive schemas in couples referring to counseling clinics in Tehran.

### **Research method:**

The descriptive research method was a correlational type. The statistical population in this research included all the couples who referred to psychology and counseling clinics in the 6th and 7th districts of Tehran, from which 120 couples were selected by purposive sampling. The criteria for entering the research are: couples referring to clinics in Tehran and interest, and consent to participate in the research and non-participation in psychotherapy sessions. Also, in this research, to consider ethical considerations, each participant was assigned a code, and the participants could use a pseudonym to participate in the research; the private information of the participants in the research, which was not in line with the purpose of the research, was not received from the participants. It should be noted that all the ethical considerations of the research were observed, including that the couples participating in the research were assured that all research information would remain confidential with the researcher, and this information would be used only for research evaluation. The data obtained from the research were analyzed using SPSS version 26 and the statistical method of regression analysis.

The research tool was the **primary maladaptive schemas questionnaire (YSQ-SF)**: to measure primary maladaptive schemas from Yang (2005) 75-question questionnaire with a 6-point Likert response scale (completely false = 1 to completely true) = 6) and 15 subscales including emotional deprivation, rejection/mistreatment, mistrust/mistreatment, social isolation, defect/shame, failure, dependence/incompetence, vulnerability to harm, entanglement/trapping, information, self-sacrifice, emotional inhibition, stubborn criteria, entitlement, self-restraint and insufficient self-discipline were used. The total Cronbach's alpha for the present test in Bech et al.'s research (24) was reported as 0.96 and for the subscales above 0.80. In Ghayathi's research (25), the concurrent validity of the questionnaire with the scale of ineffective attitudes was reported as 0.65. In Ghayathi's research (25), its Cronbach's alpha in the subscales was reported between 0.60 and 0.90, and its total Cronbach's alpha was 0.94. Also, the Cronbach's alpha of this questionnaire in the present study was 0.86 for the whole questionnaire and between 0.78 and 0.82 for the subscales.

Attachment Questionnaire (RAAS): Collins and Reid's attachment questionnaire (1990) consists of 18 items that are marked on a 5-point scale (Likert type) from 1 = does not match my characteristics at all, to completely matches my characteristics = 5 is measured. It has 3 subscales named: dependence (D), closeness (C), and anxiety (A) (26) anxiety subscale (A) corresponds to anxious-ambivalent attachment, and the closeness subscale (C) is a bipolar dimension. This contrasts the basis of safe and avoidant descriptions; Therefore, closeness is compatible with secure attachment, and the subscale of attachment (D) can be almost the opposite of avoidant attachment. Collins and Reed (26) showed that the subscales of closeness, dependence, and anxiety remained stable at a time interval of 2 months and even during 8 months; The validity of the questionnaire through content validity is 0.85 and regarding the reliability of the adult attachment scale, Collins and Reid reported Cronbach's alpha of 0.82 for the secure attachment subscale, 0.80 for avoidant attachment, and 0.83 for anxious attachment. On the other hand, in Pakdaman's research (27), the validity of the test was evaluated using appropriate retesting. Considering that Cronbach's alpha values are equal to or more than 0.80 in all cases, the test has high validity. Construct validity was measured using divergent validity. The results showed that the correlation coefficient between subscales A and C, A and D, at the significance level of 0.001 is -0.313 and -0.336, respectively, and the correlation coefficient between subscales C and D at the significance level is 0.14. 0.246 was obtained.

Fall Marital Burnout: To check the level of marital burnout, different people are asked to answer a 21-item questionnaire that includes the three main components of physical exhaustion (for example, feeling tired, lethargic, and having sleep disorders), emotional exhaustion (feeling depressed, hopeless), being trapped), and psychological exhaustion (such as feelings of worthlessness, frustration and anger towards the spouse). All these items are answered on a seven-point scale. Respondents must indicate how often they have experienced each of these items in their marital relationship (from 1 = never, 4 = sometimes, to 7 = always). The degree of burnout is calculated by determining the average of the answers. The scoring of 4 items is also done in reverse, and a higher score of the subject in this scale is a sign of more exhaustion. Grade 4 represents the state of exhaustion. With grade 3, there is a risk of burnout. Grade 5 indicates a crisis. A score of more than five indicates the need for immediate help. A score of 2 or less indicates a good relationship (28). The construct validity of this questionnaire in Pines and Nunes' research was favorable, and Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients of the subscales were reported as 0.84 to 0.90 by Pines and Nunes (28). In examining the psychometric properties of this questionnaire, Rakhshani, Shahabizadeh, and Alizadeh (29) found the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of this scale to be 0.81 and the reliability through Cronbach's alpha to be 0.77.

### Findings:

186 couples participated in the present study. The mean and standard deviation of men's ages were 37.29 and 6.42 years, respectively, and women's ages were 33.95 and 5.70 years, respectively. The level of education of 13 men (7 percent) is below diploma, 58 men (31.2 percent) have a diploma, 12 men (8 percent) have a master's degree, 54 men (29 percent)

have a bachelor's degree, and 32 men (17.2 percent) have a master's degree. And 17 people (9.1 percent) were Ph.D. Also, the level of education of 18 (9.7 percent) of the women participating in the research was below a diploma, 52 (28 percent) had a diploma, 9 (4.8 percent) had a post-graduate degree, 59 (31.7 percent) had a bachelor's degree, 37 19.9 percent had a master's degree and 11 (5.9 percent) had a doctorate. It should be noted that the average duration of marriage among couples was 10.21 and 6.27, respectively, and 91 couples (48.9 percent) had no children, 55 couples (29.6 percent) had one child, 29 couples (15.6 percent) had two children, and 11 couples (5.9%) had more than two children. Table 1 shows the mean, standard deviation, and correlation coefficients between attachment styles and initial maladaptive schemas of men and marital burnout of their wives.

**Table 1:** Average, standard deviation, and correlation coefficients between research variables

Research variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Attachment - safe	-										
2. attachment-avoidance	-	-									
	0.18*										
3. Attachment - ambivalent	-0.11	0.30*	-								
		*									
4. Schema - cutting/rejection	-	0.30*	0.27*	-							
	0.17*	*	*								
5. Schema-self-management and impaired performance	-	0.21*	0.25*	0.52*	-						
	0.16*	*	*	*							
6. Schema - reorientation	-	0.25*	0.33*	0.54*	0.52*	-					
	0.25*	*	*	*	*						
	*										
7. Scheme - listen to the bell	-	0.25*	0.28*	0.65*	0.60*	0.69*	-				
	0.23*	*	*	*	*	*					
	*										
8. Schema - Disturbed constraints	-	0.21*	0.26*	0.43*	0.42*	0.55*	0.68*	-			
	0.28*	*	*	*	*	*	*				
	*										
9. Marital exhaustion - physical exhaustion	-0.12	0.03	0.21*	0.13	0.16*	0.11	0.06	0.10	-		



10. Marital exhaustion - emotional collapse	-0.14	0.21*	0.08	0.18*	0.21*	.19**	0.25*	0.16	0.77*	-
		*			*		*	*	*	
11. Marital burnout - mental collapse	-0.13	0.19*	0.17*	0.16*	0.31*	0.15*	0.23*	0.29	0.68*	0.79*
		*			*			*	*	*
Mean	17.17	15.02	15.75	70.93	65.24	29.49	28.07	29.7	28.29	30.56
								3		1
SD	3.45	3.79	3.28	12.06	10.69	7.07	5.98	5.45	5.99	7.96
										6.25

\*P &lt; .05, \*\*P &lt; .01

Table 1 shows that the direction of correlation between the variables was in line with the expectations and the theories of the research field. In the following, Table 2 shows the skewness and kurtosis of the variables and the values of the variance inflation factor (VIF) and the tolerance coefficient of the predictor variables.

**Table 2:** Assumptions of normality of data distribution and collinearity

variable	Normality of distribution		Collinearity	
	crookedness		tolerance	
		Elongation	coefficient	Variance inflation
Attachment - safe	-0.68	0.76	0.91	1.09
Attachment-avoidance	-0.47	0.90	0.85	1.18
Attachment - ambivalent	-0.54	1.03	0.83	1.20
Schema - cut/exclusion	-0.50	-0.63	0.53	1.90
Schema-self-regulation and impaired functioning	-0.68	-0.55	0.60	1.68
Schema - reorientation	-0.39	-0.60	0.47	2.14
Scheme - ear to bell	-0.17	-0.82	0.31	3.20
Schema - Disrupted Constraints	-0.12	-0.23	0.53	1.87
Marital exhaustion - physical exhaustion	-0.43	-0.53		
Marital burnout - emotional collapse	-0.59	-1.02		
Marital burnout - mental collapse	-0.36	-0.75		

Table 2 shows that the skewness and skewness values of all variables are in the range of  $\pm 2$ . This finding indicates that the assumption of normality of univariate data distribution among the data is valid. Also, because the tolerance coefficient values of the predictor variables were greater than 0.1 and the variance inflation factor values of each of them were smaller than 10, it can be said that the assumption of collinearity was also established among the research data. In this research, to determine whether or not the assumption of normality of multivariate distribution is established, the analysis of information related to the "Mahalanobis interval" was used. The values of skewness and kurtosis of the information related to the Mahalanobis distance were obtained as 1.03 and 0.72, respectively, which

indicates that the assumption of normality of multivariate data distribution among the data is valid.

As mentioned earlier, the data of the current research were analyzed using the structural equation modeling method. Two variables, primary incompatible schemas and marital burnout, were present and formed the measurement model of the research. The fit of the measurement model was evaluated using confirmatory factor analysis, AMOS 26.0 software, and maximum likelihood (ML) estimation. Table 3 shows the fit indices of the measurement model and the structural model of the research.

**Table 3:** Fit indices of the measurement model and structural model

Fitness indicators	Measurement model	Structural model	cut point
chi square	40.29	77.14	-
df of the model	19	37	-
df / X <sup>2</sup>	2.12	2.09	Less than 3
GFI	0.930	0.932	< 0.90
AGFI	0.867	0.879	<0.850
CFI	0.954	0.962	< 0.90
RMSEA	0.078	0.077	> 0.08

Table 3 shows that the fit indices obtained from the confirmatory factor analysis support the acceptable fit of the measurement model with the collected data. In the measurement model, the largest factor load was related to the indicator of emotional exhaustion ( $\beta=0.960$ ), and the smallest factor load was related to self-management and impaired performance ( $\beta=0.652$ ). Thus, considering that the factor loadings of all indicators were greater than 0.32, it can be said that all of them had the necessary power to measure the variables of the present study.

Following the assessment of the fit of the measurement model, in the second step, the fit indices of the structural model were estimated and evaluated. In the structural model, it was assumed that men's attachment styles affect their wives' marital exhaustion, both directly and through the mediation of their initial maladaptive schemas. Table 3 shows that the fit indices obtained from the analysis of the acceptable fit of the structural model with the collected data ( $df/ X^2=2.09$ ,  $CFI=0.962$ ,  $GFI=0.932$ ,  $AGFI=0.879$ , and  $AGFI=0.077$  ( $RMSEA = 0$ )) support. Table 4 shows the path coefficients in the structural model.

**Table 4:** Total, direct, and indirect path coefficients between the research variables in the structural model

effect	path	b	S.E	$\beta$	p
direct effect	Attachment ambivalence-incompatible schemas	1.382	0.427	0.267	0.001
	Avoidant attachment-	0.856	0.412	0.191	0.038



	maladaptive schemas				
	Secure attachment- Discordant schemas	-0.996	0.432	-0.202	0.022
	Incompatible schemas -Marital burnout	0.106	0.030	0.359	0.001
	Attachment ambivalence - Marital burnout	0.095	0.137	0.064	0.486
	Avoidant attachment- Marital burnout	0.162	0.111	0.127	0.153
	Secure attachment- Marital burnout	-0.119	0.110	-0.084	0.318
	Attachment ambivalence - Marital burnout	0.142	0.057	0.096	0.001
	Avoidant attachment- Marital burnout	0.088	0.037	0.069	0.035
	Secure attachment- Marital burnout	-0.102	0.048	-0.073	0.028
	Attachment ambivalence - Marital burnout	0.237	0.103	0.160	0.019
Indirect effect	Avoidant attachment- Marital burnout	0.250	0.091	0.196	0.007
	Secure attachment- Marital burnout	-0.221	0.106	-0.157	0.041
total effect	Attachment ambivalence - Marital burnout				
	Avoidant attachment- Marital burnout				

Table 4 shows that the total effect of ambivalent attachment style ( $\beta=0.160$ ,  $P=0.019$ ) and avoidant attachment style of men ( $\beta=0.196$ ,  $P=0.007$ ) on the marital exhaustion of their wives is positive, and the total effect of men's secure attachment style has a negative and significant effect on their wives' marital burnout ( $p=0.041$ ,  $\beta=0.157$ ). Also, the effect of men's initial incompatible schemas on spouses' marital burnout ( $\beta=0.359$ ,  $P=0.001$ ) was positive and significant. The results of Table 4 show that the indirect effect of ambivalent attachment style ( $\beta=0.096$ ,  $P=0.001$ ) and avoidant attachment ( $\beta=0.196$ ,  $P=0.035$ ) of men on spouses' marital burnout is positive, and the negative effect the direct effect of their secure attachment style on their spouses' marital burnout ( $P=0.028$ ,  $\beta=0.073$ ) is negative and significant. Based on this, the results of the present study showed that men's primary maladaptive schemas mediate the effect of their ambivalent and avoidant attachment styles on their wives' marital burnout

in a positive way and the effect of secure attachment style on their wives' marital burnout in a negative and significant way.

### **Discussion and Conclusion:**

The results of the research showed that men's primary maladaptive schemas mediate the effect of their ambivalent and avoidant attachment styles on their wives' marital exhaustion in a positive way and the effect of secure attachment style on their wives' marital exhaustion in a negative and significant way.

In other words, the total score of ambivalent attachment style and avoidant attachment style of men on marital exhaustion of their wives is positive, and the total effect of secure attachment style of men on marital exhaustion of their wives is negative and significant. The results of Malem et al.'s research (32) showed that attachment styles are related to marital satisfaction. Based on the findings of Brendao et al. (46), considering the duration of the emotional relationship, the attachment style hurts the psychological well-being and interpersonal relationships of couples by suppressing emotions. Also, secure attachment style has a positive effect on psychological well-being through emotional outpouring.

This is the attachment style that allows a person to experience healthy growth emotionally, socially, and cognitively, and to learn trust, intimacy, and commitment in interactions, and to form a sense of worth and a positive attitude towards themselves. Achieve emotional regulation; therefore, the attachment style formed in people will affect all aspects of life, including adult romantic relationships, and the unfortunate consequence of the gradual decrease in emotional attachment in couples is marital exhaustion. Many characteristics of people with a secure attachment style, such as effective coping skills and efficient emotional regulation (11), self-confidence and the ability to express themselves (14), the ability to establish intimate relationships (19), self-confidence, seeking social support and the ability to share feelings With others (11), it can reduce marital satisfaction, relationship strength, etc. by increasing effective coping with marital challenges. Married people with a secure attachment style are more comfortable in establishing intimate relationships with their spouses, tend to receive support from their spouses, have a positive image of themselves and their spouses, and have positive expectations of their spouses. Married people who have a secure attachment style have high emotional intelligence and can manage their emotions and make effective decisions in their married life, and have the ability to deal with marital tensions.

The theorists of attachment theory believe that people's expectations when entering romantic relationships, often based on previous intimate relationships with primary caregivers, affect their attachment style and the way they communicate with their spouse and their married life. People with secure, avoidant, and ambivalent attachment styles use completely different strategies to regulate emotions and process emotional information; this emotional state of people can be recognized in their personalities (11). The attachment style affects a person's relationships from childhood to the end of life, so it is natural that a person as a spouse also has the same characteristics and indicators, and his relationship with his wife is affected by his attachment style. Because people with secure attachment styles often feel more satisfied with their relationships, have more lively communication and sincere self-expression, and,

of course, are more satisfied with their relationships, they establish longer-term relationships and are more committed to others. A person with a secure attachment feels that he is valuable and worthy of being cared for and cared for by another. Adults with a secure attachment style tend to describe their romantic relationships as happy and trusting. They can approach others relatively easily and tend to be comfortable supporting their partner. Secure partners expect that romantic feelings will have ups and downs during a relationship and are not overly concerned about being left out. Secure partners tend to describe their relationship experiences more positively. According to the explanations given, it seems natural that people with a secure attachment style have a high personal commitment towards their spouse and their marriage. These people trust their spouse's support more because experience has shown them that their spouse has supported them in difficult situations. People with a secure attachment style find it easy to form close relationships with others, rely on others, and allow others to rely on them, and can trust others completely. Couples with a secure attachment style feel comfortable and safe in most situations and have a positive, supportive, and responsive image of their partner. Safe people's trust in others, which is a complementary part of self-confidence, and they more hopeful about the end of their actions, and shows more warmth and intimacy, which increases their satisfaction with their relationships with their spouses, which reduces marital burnout.

Regarding the prediction of marital burnout based on insecure attachment styles, it can be said that a lack of trust in oneself and others is the two main characteristics of insecure people. Lack of self-confidence in facing stressful situations imposes psychological helplessness on the insecure person, and this condition fuels the person's feelings of inferiority and anxiety. Lack of trust in others leads to distance and a lack of support from others. On the other hand, extreme attachment and withdrawal and emotional reactions in times of failure and crisis, which are characteristics of people with an insecure attachment style, can cause conflict and hostility in couples' relationships within the framework of systemic relationships. These characteristics and the feeling of insecurity in their existence make them feel more dissatisfied in their married life. Considering that people with an insecure attachment style are unable to share their thoughts and feelings with others, it can be said that the relationship of an insecure person with a spouse is not stable, which leads to frustration and lack of trust between the couple, and leads to darkness. Relationship, poor communication, unforgiveness, low intimacy, an increase in marital conflicts, and, as a result increase in marital exhaustion (30).

Since a child with an avoidant attachment style experiences self-taught helplessness due to repeated rejection of his requests by his mother and avoids communication with his peers and other people, such a child in adulthood considers intimacy worthless and is unable to trust his emotional and sexual partner. Therefore, with such a background of thinking and belief, there is a problem in mutual communication. People with this style feel uncomfortable getting close to others and cannot fully trust others. It is difficult for these people to rely on others, and they get nervous when they see someone trying to get too close to them and feel that others are often more intimate with them than they are comfortable with. According to the background, it can be concluded that the wife with an avoidant attachment style does not

seek to communicate with others and does not make any effort in this field, distrusts her husband, and rejects his efforts to become more intimate. He wants more solitude and more freedom; therefore, they do not enjoy sufficient satisfaction in their marital relationship (12). From the point of view of neuroscience, the relationship between attachment style and marital exhaustion can be explained as follows: attachment styles are associated with the activation of a subcortical network (amygdala, hippocampus, striatum) and limbic areas of the cortex (insula, cingulate). New neuroscientific findings show that the amygdala (as the most important part of the fear circuit in the brain) has evolved to store negative associations stably. Insecure attachment has a direct relationship with the amygdala, fear, negative experiences, and emotional dysregulation caused by intimate relationships (31). Therefore, in people with insecure attachment, the desire for intimacy is met with a message of danger from the amygdala; the amygdala's excitement during intimacy causes defensive reactions, fight, or flight. Therefore, the quality of intimate relationships in people with insecure attachment style is low and can strengthen marital problems and marital exhaustion.

Also, the results showed that men's initial maladaptive schemas were positive and significant on their wives' marital burnout, and the indirect effect of men's ambivalent attachment style and avoidant attachment on their wives' marital burnout was positive, and the indirect effect of their secure attachment style on their wives' marital burnout was negative and significant. The findings of the current research on the role of attachment styles and initial incompatible schemas with marital burnout of couples were consistent with numerous studies. Adel Peror et al. (30) confirmed the fit of a suitable structural model for predicting marital conflicts based on attachment styles and with the mediating role of cut/rejection schemas and self-management/impaired functioning in women on the verge of divorce, which is consistent with the present study.

In line with the findings of the present study, Afshari, Mutabi, and Panaghi (31) also confirmed the mediating role of primary maladaptive schemas in the relationship between attachment styles and marital satisfaction. In line with the findings of the present study, other researchers, Malem et al. (32) and Brendao et al. (46) confirmed the relationship between attachment style and marital exhaustion. Also, the findings of the current research on the relationship between initial incompatible schemas and marital burnout are consistent with other research findings.

On the other hand, one of the main characteristics of people with an ambivalent attachment style is that they focus on their concerns instead of addressing the needs of their spouse, and both of these cases (ignoring their spouse's needs and focusing on their disturbing thoughts) can lead to major conflicts. To share in relationships. Ambivalent people are generally dependent, emotionally unstable in relationships, and jealous in romantic relationships. Extremes in this attachment style can easily shake love and intimacy. Ambivalent people insult and humiliate the other person during conflict. This is why people with an avoidant attachment style think that they should not rely on the support of another person in times of tension and believe that the best way to achieve peace of mind is to rely on their own person and distance themselves from their attachment figure. Due to their strong focus on independence, self-reliance, and self-validating goals, and neglecting strengthening the joint

relationship, these people have many negative consequences on their marital relationship, and as a result, they are more likely to experience marital burnout (24).

Also, people with ambivalent attachment style with characteristics such as high anxiety, low self-esteem, and untrustworthiness of others, ineffective coping, excessive irritation, and high vulnerability to emotional and social problems (11) are highly sensitive to rejection. Ambivalent anxious people, unlike avoidant people, are very dependent on others to provide a sense of self-worth; as a result, they may need constant control and clinging to their spouse, which increases marital dissatisfaction and exhaustion by depriving the other party of freedom and autonomy (3, 12). Also, married people with ambivalent attachment style consider themselves as misunderstood and lacking in self-confidence by their spouse, and they worry that their spouse will leave them or not truly love them, which gradually increases Conflicts and marital exhaustion.

An insecurely ambivalent child in childhood is distrustful of communicating with others and, at the same time, wants relationships with peers. He tries to fit in with others, and at the same time, he may quickly fall out with other peers. This group of children constantly rejects others, gets angry easily, and constantly feels mistrustful. In adulthood, such children become spouses who want too much relationship and intimacy, and when their spouse approaches to fulfill this need, they get angry and do not allow him to approach them. While they want intimacy, they run away from it and don't know exactly how close they want to be with their spouse. Most couples who go to court for divorce have an insecure attachment style. When someone approaches them, they quickly feel mistrust, and this mistrust affects their married life. Usually, ambivalent anxious spouses have high expectations, are very sensitive and quick-tempered, and usually complain about their spouse's inattention. People with this style feel that others do not want to be as close to them as they would like to be. They often worry that their spouse does not love them. They want to become completely one with some people, but this desire sometimes makes people feel uncomfortable and distance themselves from them (16, 17).

In the context of the significant relationship between ambivalent attachment style and marital burnout and the lack of relationship between avoidant attachment and burnout in women (11), they point out that the dimension of anxiety in the relationship (that is, the characteristic of ambivalent attached people) plays a more important role in marital satisfaction or burnout. Also, in explaining the lack of a significant relationship between avoidant attachment and marital burnout, it is possible to ignore the attachment style of spouses. According to the researchers, spouses' attachment has a close relationship with others' avoidance/anxiety and even their marital satisfaction or exhaustion.

**Research limitations:** The results of the present study represent the sample of couples referred to psychology and counseling clinics in six and seven districts of Tehran, so the generalization of the findings of the present study to other people is limited, because the sampling method in the present study was targeted, the generalization of the results should be done with caution. The researcher's lack of interview with some of the subjects and the lack of access to the files registered by other colleagues, due to the limitations caused by the codes of ethics about the maintenance of client records, are the limitations of the present

research, and not considering the effect of influential factors such as age, gender, economic status and Education on the research model, which can affect the results and reduce their credibility, is one of the limitations of the current research.

**Application of Research:** It is suggested that research similar to the current research be conducted in other cities and statistical communities to provide more and more accurate experimental evidence, and also, the current research model should be observed with non-self-reporting tools, such as interviews. Qualitative research should also be used to investigate the role of cultural and social factors on marital burnout; In this way, it is possible to more closely examine the factors affecting marital burnout and their interaction with attachment styles and incompatible schemas, and in future researches, the variable of marriage length should also be examined as a moderating variable in the relationship between attachment styles, incompatible schemas, and marital burnout.

**Ethical Considerations:** The present research is taken from the doctoral thesis of the first author in the field of psychology and has been approved by the specialized research council with the ethics code IR.IAU.K.REC.1400.070 of the Islamic Azad University of Karaj Branch. The researchers of this study consider it necessary to thank all the participants who helped us in this research and made it possible to conduct the study.

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