



## The Mediating Role of Psychological Distress In The Relationship Between Childhood Maltreatment and Parent-Child Conflict with Suicide Attempts Among Women in Less Privileged Areas on Cultural Context

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### Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the mediating role of psychological distress in the relationship between childhood maltreatment and parent-child conflict with suicidal attempts among women in underprivileged areas on cultural context. The statistical population embraced all students' mothers in underprivileged areas in Khash city on 2024. The sample consisted of 220 women from the five schools in the underprivileged areas of Khash County, randomly selected through cluster sampling. The research method was correlational study via path analysis. The data were collected by implementing Osman et al. Suicide Behaviors Questionnaire-Revised-SBQ-R (2001), Childhood Trauma Questionnaire-CTQ of Hosseinkhani et al. (2014) and Kessler Psychological Distress Scale-K10 (2010). Data were analyzed using SPSS26 and AMOS24 software. Results indicated that all the direct paths of childhood maltreatment and parent-child conflict to psychological distress and suicide attempts were significant. The direct path of Psychological distress to suicide attempts was also significant ( $p < 0.01$ ). All the indirect paths to suicide attempts were significant too. The model obtained an optimal goodness of fit indices. The findings revealed the necessity of identifying the effective factors and culturally sensitive interventions focused on reducing psychological distress and improving family relationships to take any measures for preventing suicide attempts.



## Extended abstract

**Introduction:** Suicide attempts among women in less privileged areas constitute a pressing public health concern, shaped by a complex interplay of psychological, social, and cultural factors. Living in such areas often entails cultural challenges that amplify hopelessness, stress, and suicidal behavior (Shirkarami et al., 2024). Childhood maltreatment—encompassing emotional, physical, and sexual abuse, as well as neglect—stands out as a critical predictor of self-harming behaviors, including suicide attempts, particularly in culturally sensitive contexts (Nouraei et al., 2024; Babaei et al., 2023). Similarly, the parent-child relationship, when marked by conflict or dysfunction, exacerbates psychological distress and heightens suicide risk (Aneesh et al., 2024). Psychological distress, characterized by depression and anxiety, serves as a potent mediator, linking these adverse experiences to suicidal behavior (Kuzminskaite et al., 2022). In Iran, cultural, economic, and social pressures further intensify this issue, with rising suicide attempt rates underscoring the need for focused research (Cheng et al., 2025). This study examined the mediating role of psychological distress in the relationship between childhood maltreatment, parent-child conflict, and suicide attempts among women in less privileged areas within a cultural framework.

**Method:** The statistical population embraced all students' mothers in underprivileged areas in Khash city on 2024. The sample consisted of 220 women from the five schools in the underprivileged areas of Khash County, randomly selected through cluster sampling. The research method was correlational study via path analysis. The data were collected by implementing Osman et al. Suicide Behaviors Questionnaire-Revised-SBQ-R (2001), Childhood Trauma Questionnaire-CTQ of Hosseinkhani et al. (2014) and Kessler Psychological Distress Scale-K10 (2010). Data were analyzed using SPSS26 and AMOS24 software.

**Results:** Results indicated that all the direct paths of childhood maltreatment and parent-child conflict to psychological distress and suicide attempts were significant. The direct path of Psychological distress to suicide attempts was also significant ( $p < 0.01$ ). All the indirect paths to suicide attempts were significant too. The model obtained an optimal goodness of fit indices. The findings revealed the necessity of identifying the effective factors and culturally sensitive interventions focused on reducing psychological distress and improving family relationships to take any measures for preventing suicide attempts.

**Conclusions:** The findings confirmed that psychological distress significantly mediates the pathways from childhood maltreatment and parent-child conflict to suicide attempts among women in less privileged areas. Childhood maltreatment intensifies psychological distress, fostering a cycle of emotional dysregulation that heightens suicide risk, consistent with prior studies (Nouraei et al., 2024; Ellis et al., 2024). Likewise, dysfunctional parent-child relationships amplify distress, undermining emotional security and increasing vulnerability to suicidal behavior (Aneesh et al., 2024). These results highlighted the necessity of culturally tailored interventions that mitigate psychological distress and enhance family dynamics to prevent suicide in such contexts. The study underscored the urgency of addressing structural and cultural barriers, such as limited mental health access and stigma, to reduce suicide rates among this population. The findings final revealed



the necessity of identifying the effective factors and culturally sensitive interventions focused on reducing psychological distress and improving family relationships to take any measures for preventing suicide attempts.

**Author Contributions:** Dr. Mehdi Shomali Ahmadabadi: Designing the overall framework of the study, composing and editing the article, statistical analysis of data and corresponding author, Atefeh Barkhordari Ahmadabadi and Asyeh Shahnawaz Khaleqdadi: Collecting research data, reviewing, and revising the contents. The authors reviewed and approved the final version of the article.

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