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## Self-Esteem and Relationship Between Early Maladaptive Schemas and Sexual Ideologies of Couples in Tehran

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### A B S T R A C T

Based on the theoretical foundations of quality of life, early maladaptive schemas as dysfunctional cognitions resulting from childhood are among the underlying or inhibiting factors that predispose a person to dissatisfaction with life and consequently reduce quality of life. Quality of life and the reasons for its decline among couples have also drawn the attention of most psychologists to early maladaptive schemas. Early maladaptive schemas lead people to negative events, and the reason for the events may be the result of certain psychological characteristics, including self-esteem, which in a person's life leads to a decrease in quality of life. Therefore, the present study investigated the mediating role of self-esteem in the relationship between early maladaptive schemas and sexual ideologies. Therefore, the present study investigated the mediating role of self-esteem in the relationship between early maladaptive schemas and sexual ideologies. This research was applied in terms of type, descriptive in terms of method. The statistical population of the study included all couples referring to counseling centers in Tehran in the age range of 24 to 45 years living in Tehran that 100 couples were selected by convenience sampling method. A questionnaire including early maladaptive schemas, gender ideology scale and self-esteem scale were used to collect information. For data analysis, the relationship between variables was correlated and regression using SPSS software and AMOS software for structural equations for path analysis. The results showed that the existence of maladaptive schemas is one of the main causes of stress and disruption of marital life in terms of sexual ideologies. maladaptive schemas can significantly predict gender ideologies and self-esteem; Self-esteem can also significantly predict gender ideologies. maladaptive schemas are related to gender ideology through self-esteem.

**Keywords:** Self-Esteem, Early Maladaptive Schemas, Sexual Ideologies.

### INTRODUCTION

The family, as the first institution in which one opens one's eyes, whether it belongs to developed or developing countries, is the most important factor in the transmission of gender discrimination; Because the child is very passive due to the emptiness of his mind in the early years of life and also his close relationship with family members (Beltrán Tapia & Raftakis, 2022; Riina & McHale, 2010; Tian, Yu, & Klasen, 2018). Also, family as one of the important social institutions and as the smallest social unit in which one experiences life, has always been considered by scholars and researchers in the humanities, especially psychologists, sociologists and counselors. Factors such as couple self-esteem, early maladaptive schemas and gender

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ideologies can affect the quality of life of married people ([Anhange, Iorwuese, & Hannah, 2018](#); [Rajabi, Ghorbani, & Khojasteh Meher, 2011](#)).

People's self-esteem enhances the quality of couples' relationships ([Voss, Markiewicz, & Doyle, 1999](#); [Wang et al., 2022a](#)). Self-esteem is a dynamic and active trait ([Monteiro, Coelho, Hanel, de Medeiros, & da Silva, 2022](#); [Pop, Iorga, & Iurcov, 2022](#)), that changes with the growth of the individual and is affected by psychological threats, and with increasing self-esteem, the severity of psychological threats decreases ([Aspinwall & Taylor, 1993](#)). Self-esteem is the amount of credibility, acceptance and value that a person place on himself ([Branden, 2021](#)). A person with mental health also has high self-esteem and appears successful in relation to others. People with lower self-esteem refuse to be present in public, which leads to their isolation and depression ([Barbalat et al., 2022](#); [Moksnes & Reidunsdatter, 2019](#); [Xu, Huebner, & Tian, 2020](#)). Couples who have high self-esteem perform well in their lives and couples who have low self-esteem also have a low quality of married life ([Wang et al., 2022b](#)). Schemas are deep and pervasive patterns or themes composed of memories, excitement, cognitions, and bodily sensations formed in childhood and adolescence and used as patterns for processing subsequent experiences.

Dissatisfaction with the basic emotional needs of childhood has arisen ([Darabi, Borjali, & Azami, 2015](#); [Renner, Lobbestael, Peeters, Arntz, & Huibers, 2012](#); [Wegener, Alfter, Geiser, Liedtke, & Conrad, 2013](#)). Patients develop maladaptation early in life in order to adapt to schemas, responses, and coping styles so that they do not have to experience intense emotions. This usually leads to persistence of schemas ([Gök, 2012](#); [Mairet, Boag, & Warburton, 2014](#)). These schemas can trigger stress, anxiety, dysfunctional attitude, pessimistic explanatory style, hopelessness and helplessness in different life situations and events and lead to various forms of psychological disorders such as depression and anxiety ([Kaya & Aydin, 2021](#); [Lukáč & Popelková, 2020](#); [Roelofs, Onckels, & Muris, 2013](#)). The maladaptive nature of schemas usually occurs when individuals interact with others in a way that approves of their schemas, even if their initial perceptions are incorrect ([Maher et al., 2022](#)).

Gender ideologies are the product of childhood and adult experiences. Basically, this structure is considered in accordance with the ideas of individuals about assigning different tasks to men and women and to what extent they are different from men and women ([Ghorbani, Chen, Ghafari, Watson, & Liu, 2021](#)). Gender ideologies include attitudes and behaviors about what is appropriate for the gender stereotyped behaviors of men and women in society ([Rajabi et al., 2011](#)). Division of labor, quality of work, income, and education can influence gender ideologies. According to Fox and Murry (2000), couples are socialized from the beginning by family relatives of the media and other factors in devoting themselves to gender roles, such as developing gender responsibilities and priorities they have already set ([Coltrane, 2000](#)). In the first half of the twentieth century, major changes took place in Western families, resulting in a reduction in the role of traditional housekeeping and bread-making. In most industrialized countries, including ours, most couples work both ([Linda, 2004](#)). But many factors, including increased opportunities for women to continue their education and get jobs, have contributed to change. In addition, economic problems have led to women working to support their families and couples who are both employed experiencing gender conflict. Because they have stereotyped behaviors and gender ideology and are adapted to social expectations and norms ([Silverstein, Auerbach, & Levant, 2002](#)).

Considering the importance of couples' relationships and increasing the rate of incompatibilities and couples referring to psychological and counseling treatment centers and considering the novelty of schema therapy approach and despite the importance of this treatment in preventing and promoting mental health and life satisfaction ([Mitchell, Stanimirovic, Klein, &](#)

Vella-Brodrick, 2009), and the lack of studies on the mediating role of self-esteem in the relationship between maladaptive schemas of couples with gender ideology, the present study seeks to investigate this issue.

**METHODOLOGY**

First, the statistical population was determined then among that statistical sample was selected by available sampling method which included (100 couples) 24 to 45 years old living in Tehran who have been married for at least 3 years. If it has a large geographical area or a large number of people in the statistical population and its sample, usually questionnaire methods were used. The method of the questionnaire requires predictions and planning and the provision of considerable facilities that the researcher should be sure of. After preparing the questionnaires and also explaining the research aims to the couples, considering the prevalence of coronavirus and home quarantine conditions, the questionnaires were provided online to the sample couples. Before starting the answer, the research scales as well as the general purpose of this research were explained to the couple. After collecting the questionnaires, the data were entered into SPSS software and analyzed in inferential dimension. In the inferential dimension of statistical methods, correlation (regression) and path analysis were performed using AMOS software. Collection tools was:

- 1- *Self-esteem scale: The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (1965) measures overall self-esteem and personal value.*
- 2- *Primary maladaptive schemas questionnaire: This questionnaire was developed by Yang (2003).*
- 3- *Gender Ideology Scale: The scale was used by Brogan and Kutner (1976), to spread consensual attitudes about the roles of men and women in the home and workplace.*

**RESULTS**

In order to perform structural equations, its assumptions were first examined.

**Table 1.** Default to be normal

Variable	Component	Skewness	Kurtosis
	Emotional deprivation	0.224	-0.966
	Abandonment / Instability	0.071	-0.623
	Distrust / abuse	0.973	0.214
	Social isolation / alienation	0.762	-0.30
	Defect / Shame	1.36	1.87
	Failure	1.35	1.68
Early maladaptive schemas	Dependence / Inadequacy	1.98	4.17
	Vulnerability to harm and disease	1.55	2.59
	Caught / unchanged self	1.85	3.63
	Obedience	1.06	0.379
	Sacrifice	1.56	2.42
	Emotional deterrence	0.830	0.302
	Stubborn criteria	0.073	-0.612
	Entitlement / secretary	1.04	0.607
	Inadequate self-control / self-discipline	0.098	-0.850
		0.194	- 0.752
		0.501	0.36
	Initial schema	0.621	0.636

The default is normal for dependent variables. Accordingly, the distribution of the variables' scores is normal when the skewness and elongation test results are between +2 and -2. According to the results, the distribution of scores of self-esteem variables and gender ideologies are in this range and are therefore normal.

**Table 2.** Default non-alignment

Variable	Tolerance coefficient	Inflation variance factor
Self-esteem	0.753	1.32
Maladaptive schemas	0.753	1.32

If the tolerance coefficient is close to 1 and the variance inflation factor is less than 2, it indicates that the linearity is low and vice versa. Accordingly, the results of self-esteem predictors and inconsistent schemas show that the alignment value is optimal and this assumption is confirmed.

**Table 3.** Correlation matrix of research variables

Variables	1	2	3
1. Gender ideologies	1		
2. Self-esteem	0.368	1	
3. Incompatible schemas	-0.360	-0.497	1

Based on the results of the above table, there is a significant correlation between gender ideologies and self-esteem with a rate of 0.368 and maladaptive schemas with a rate of -0.360. There is also a significant correlation between self-esteem (-0.497) and maladaptive schemas.

**Table 4.** Correlation matrix of initial maladaptive schemas with research dependent variables

Maladaptive schemas	Gender ideology	Self-esteem
Emotional deprivation	-0.372	-0.328
Abandonment / Instability	-0.244	-0.325
Distrust / abuse	-0.193	-0.264
Social isolation / alienation	-0.303	-0.254
Defect / Shame	-0.241	-0.277
Failure	-0.289	-0.385
Dependence / Inadequacy	-0.339	-0.401
Vulnerability to harm and disease	-0.261	-0.330
Caught / unchanged self	-0.158	-0.280
Obedience	-0.239	-0.378
Sacrifice	-0.072	-0.220
Emotional deterrence	-0.275	-0.342
Stubborn criteria	-0.090	-0.258
Entitlement / secretary	-0.118	-0.273
Inadequate self-control / self-discipline	-0.234	-0.322

Based on the results of the above table, which show the correlation of early maladaptive schemas with the dependent variables of gender ideologies and self-esteem, it can be seen that most maladaptive schemas have a negative and significant correlation with the dependent variables of gender ideologies and self-esteem.

## CONCLUSION

Couples identify their dysfunctional schemas and turn them into positive and effective schemas through their own efforts and those of the therapist. Also, couple therapy based on

schema therapy is more effective than couple therapy based on acceptance and commitment. The use of schematic-based therapies can increase people's ability to solve their problems, and due to the management of people on emotions, in fact, dealing with the problem will logically solve the problem, so the schema therapy method, which is rooted in cognitive therapy. It is very effective in reducing dysfunctional communication beliefs of couples and in case of obstacles in communication, couples will be guided to choose the best solution.

Self-esteem has a protective role against psychological pressures that protect the person against the pressures of negative life events. A person of high value is easily able to face threats and stressful external events of the body, experience negative arousal and disintegration of the external organization. Sexual perversion does not directly affect marital boredom, but indirectly increases marital boredom by affecting self-esteem. In fact, self-esteem plays an important mediating role in the relationship between sexual function and marital boredom. Since self-esteem is related to a person's self-esteem of abilities, self-reliance, sense of worth, and self-esteem, one can evaluate one's ability to deal with problems and people with high self-esteem levels. They have more problems and less problems in life. Therefore, people with low self-esteem feel more unworthy and attribute their failures to their inability.

Explaining this hypothesis, it can be said that the use of therapies based on schematic can increase people's ability to solve their problems, and due to the management of people on emotions, in fact, dealing with the problem will logically solve the problem. Therefore, schema therapy method, which is rooted in cognitive therapy, is very effective in reducing dysfunctional communication beliefs of couples and in case of obstacles in couple's communication, including low self-esteem, which endangers the quality of marital life, they choose the best way. The solution will guide and guide in solving this problem.

According to Young's schema theory, some people create early maladaptive schemas because of negative childhood experiences that affect the way they think, feel, and behave in later intimate relationships and other aspects of their lives. Put. Schemas are realistic constraints due to unsatisfactory childhood emotional needs that include secure attachment to others, self-control, adequacy and identity, freedom to express healthy needs and emotions, spontaneity and fun, realistic limitations, and self-control are created. If left unmanaged, they can be left astray and lose the right path. Among the predictor variables (gender ideologies, marital maps, and emotional intelligence), only the predictive variable of marital maps is the criterion variable (quality of life), while the other two variables are participatory in Variable predictions have no criteria. The use of schema therapy also increases positive feelings towards the spouse and helps couples to feel responsible for each other's role and in addition to playing their role in life, respect each other's role and each other to do it better. To help. Solution-based couple therapy improved marital compatibility, the quality of marital relationships and social health in divorced couples. Based on the results of psychologists, therapists and health professionals can use the solution-based couple therapy along with other treatment methods to improve health-related features, especially improving marital adjustment, the quality of marital relationships and social health in couples seeking divorce.

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