




Structural Equation Modeling of Marital Adjustment with Early Maladaptive Schemas Considering the Mediating Role of Marriage Styles in Men

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The present study aimed to model the structural equations of marital adjustment with early maladaptive schemas considering the mediating role of marriage styles in men.

Methods: The research method was descriptive-correlational. The statistical population included married men from the general population in districts 2, 7, and 11 of Tehran in the first quarter of 2022. A total of 300 men were selected as the research sample using purposive sampling. Data were collected using the Marital Adjustment Questionnaire (Busby et al., 1995), Young Schema Questionnaire (Young, 1994), and a researcher-made Marriage Styles Questionnaire. Data analysis was conducted using Pearson's correlation coefficient and structural equation modeling with SPSS-24 and AMOS-24 software.

Findings: The results indicated a good fit for the model linking marital adjustment with early maladaptive schemas and marriage styles. The final model fit indices showed a negative and significant relationship between early maladaptive schemas and marital adjustment. Additionally, marriage styles mediated the relationship between early maladaptive schemas and marital adjustment.

Conclusion: Based on the findings, it can be concluded that since marriage is one of the significant life decisions, focusing on early maladaptive schemas and pre-marital education can enhance marital adjustment, improve marriage styles, and sustain relationships, thereby increasing the marital quality of life.

Keywords: marital adjustment, marriage styles, early maladaptive schemas, men.

1. Introduction

Marriage is considered one of the experiences that affect individuals' lives in various aspects (Bijani et al., 2023; Navabinejad et al., 2024). Marital life is formed through the union between a man and a woman. This union

is associated with many psychological issues. The most common goals of young couples include bonding, freedom, love and affection, forming a family, satisfying sexual desires, preserving the lineage, and having children (Jejeebhoy & Raushan, 2022). Many factors contribute to the

formation of emotional security in marital relationships, among which marital adjustment can be mentioned.

Marital adjustment is one of the factors that influence family compatibility and functioning. Marital adjustment is a condition in which the husband and wife often feel happiness and satisfaction with life and enjoy being together (Mohammadi et al., 2021; Saggino et al., 2016). Cohesion and satisfaction are among the components examined in marital relationships and are predictors of marital adjustment (Tsai et al., 2023). On the other hand, marital adjustment is the ability of couples to achieve satisfaction, contentment, and fulfillment in their marital roles (Gopal & Valarmathi, 2020). Couples with higher levels of marital adjustment have more satisfactory social, emotional, and sexual relationships, which results in better physical and emotional health, and they thus experience fewer behavioral and emotional problems (Elbayouthi, 2018). Many factors influence the creation and formation of marital adjustment, and one of them is early maladaptive schemas (Körük & Özabacı, 2023; Langhinrichsen-Rohling et al., 2017; Staniaszek & Popiel, 2019).

Early maladaptive schemas are defined as broad, pervasive, and dysfunctional patterns that include memories, emotions, cognitions, and bodily sensations about oneself and relationships with others. These schemas are formed in early childhood and persist throughout life. They arise from unmet emotional needs during childhood and are divided into five developmental needs: secure attachment to others (including the need for security, affection, and acceptance), autonomy, identity, competence, freedom to express needs and unhealthy emotions, spontaneity and play, realistic limits, and self-control (Young, 1999). Some schemas, which mainly result from adverse childhood experiences, lead to the formation of personality disorders and weaker characterological problems in chronic disorders (Gomes & Sá, 2021). On the other hand, maladaptive behaviors arise in response to schemas (Langreichan Röhling et al., 2017). Early maladaptive schemas are deep and pervasive themes that relate to an individual's relationship with themselves or others and are highly dysfunctional (Langhinrichsen-Rohling et al., 2017). In other words, various research findings have shown that there is a relationship between early maladaptive schemas and marital adjustment and satisfaction (Akkol, 2017; Janovsky et al., 2023). Furthermore, individuals with early maladaptive schemas do not receive sufficient emotional and protective support from their spouses, feel abandoned by their spouses, and sometimes see themselves as less or more than their spouse,

which leads to estrangement and reduced marital satisfaction (Bach et al., 2018). Various studies have shown that early maladaptive schemas play a role in the emergence of marital problems (Janovsky et al., 2023), and marriage styles can affect this relationship.

Marriage styles in this study are defined as modern and traditional, considering the cultural context of Iranian society. Additionally, choosing a spouse is essential for family health and marital satisfaction (Shabani et al., 2022). Many family problems arise from the way a spouse is chosen; in fact, success in choosing a spouse is the first stage in the family life cycle, which affects success in later stages of marital life (Sayar et al., 2013). In some societies, individuals independently choose their spouse, while in others, the family is responsible for choosing the spouse. In modern societies, friendships play a more significant role in individual choice (Jwaheri Mohamadi et al., 2015). Historically, marriage based on love and affection is very recent, whereas past marriages were formal and calculated unions for achieving a logical and predetermined outcome. Today, young people aim for a higher and more valuable goal in marriage; they seek a strong spiritual connection with their spouse and a continuous and enjoyable contact with their spouse's soul and body. In other words, individuals' interactions with each other affect spouse selection and marital satisfaction. Couples with appropriate interaction levels report higher marital satisfaction (Gündoğmuş et al., 2023). Regarding desirable marriage, spouse selection can be considered an essential factor in the relationship between individual psychological characteristics and marital adjustment (Wang & Zhao, 2022). In recent decades, traditional marriage, where the boy's family chooses the spouse, was prevalent and could happen without the man and woman knowing each other. However, today, individuals make marriage decisions with knowledge and sometimes interaction (Sayar et al., 2013; Shabani et al., 2022).

Given that many issues and problems faced by young couples stem from the duality of marriages in Iran, part of which is traditional and part modern, many young people prefer non-traditional marriages. They choose their spouse independently, but cultural diversity, lack of mutual understanding, and reliance on superficial criteria have made non-traditional marriages vulnerable in our society (Jwaheri Mohamadi et al., 2015; Sayar et al., 2013; Shabani et al., 2022). Additionally, psychological issues such as early maladaptive schemas in couples can affect compatibility and marital adjustment (Körük & Özabacı, 2023). Therefore, examining the psychological characteristics of couples is

essential. This study seeks to answer the question: "Does the structural equation model of marital adjustment based on early maladaptive schemas with the mediation of marriage styles in men have a desirable fit?"

2. Methods

2.1. Study design and Participant

The present study is descriptive-correlational and uses structural equation modeling. The statistical population included married men in districts 2, 7, and 11 of Tehran during the first quarter of 2022, considering the diverse cultural contexts of these regions. Given the unlimited statistical population and the lack of access to a complete list of the population, 300 men were selected as the research sample using purposive sampling, as suggested by Garou & Mentzer (1999). The collected questionnaires were analyzed. Inclusion criteria included informed consent to participate in the study, legal marriage, no history of divorce or remarriage, no history of psychiatric disorders or severe physical illness, and no addiction (according to participants' self-reports). Exclusion criteria included failure to respond to the questionnaire within the specified time and late submission. The questionnaires were organized in Google Forms and distributed via social media. Participants were assured of confidentiality, and a consent form was included.

2.2. Measures

2.2.1. Marital Adjustment

Developed by Busby et al. (1995), this 14-item questionnaire assesses three components: consensus (items 1-6), satisfaction (items 7-11), and cohesion (items 12-14). Higher scores indicate better marital adjustment. The scoring is based on a 6-point Likert scale (0 = always disagree to 5 = always agree). Busby et al. (1995) reported 74.12% sensitivity and 78.47% specificity. Scores from 0 to 24 indicate low, 24 to 35 indicate medium, and above 35 indicate high marital quality. Reliability using Cronbach's alpha in Holist et al. (2005) was 0.79, 0.80, and 0.90 for the three subscales, respectively, with convergent validity with the Gottman Emotional Divorce Scale (GEDS) at 0.64. In Yousefi's (2011) study, Cronbach's alpha and split-half reliability for the entire sample were above 0.70, indicating consistency. Convergent validity with marital satisfaction, couple's assessment, and dyadic adjustment scales was 0.39, 0.36, and 0.33, respectively (Mohammadi et al., 2021). In

the present study, Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability were 0.80 and 0.91, respectively.

2.2.2. Early Maladaptive Schemas

Developed by Young (1994), this 75-item short form measures 15 early maladaptive schemas: emotional deprivation, abandonment, mistrust/abuse, social isolation, defectiveness/shame, failure, dependence/incompetence, vulnerability to harm or illness, entrapment, subjugation, self-sacrifice, emotional inhibition, unrelenting standards/criticism, entitlement, and insufficient self-control/self-discipline. These schemas are categorized into five domains based on early developmental needs. Scoring is on a 6-point Likert scale (1 = completely untrue to 6 = completely true), with higher scores indicating more maladaptive schemas. Young (1994) reported 0.96 reliability using Cronbach's alpha and 0.70 correlation between short and long forms. Staniszek and Popiel (2019) reported 0.80 convergence validity. Shahamat et al. (2010) calculated a 0.34 correlation with the Irrational Beliefs Test (IBT) (Khatibi & Meghrazi, 2023; Lotfihaghiqat et al., 2021). In the present study, Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability were 0.89 and 0.72, respectively.

2.2.3. Marriage Styles

This researcher-made questionnaire includes demographic information (duration of marriage, education, residence) and questions about the type of marriage (traditional, free, and combined). Indicators and characteristics of traditional and modern families were extracted from literature, resulting in a 78-item questionnaire. Scores range from 33 to 132, with higher scores indicating modern thinking and lower scores indicating traditional thinking. The scoring is on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = completely disagree to 4 = completely agree). Reverse scoring was applied to specific items. The questionnaire was validated by seven experts in psychology, sociology, and counseling. After refinement, a final 33-item questionnaire was tested on 55 individuals (25 men, 30 women), yielding a Cronbach's alpha of 0.77. The primary study achieved a Cronbach's alpha of 0.70. The distribution of styles (traditional, combined, modern) was determined by calculating the mean and standard deviation, with specific thresholds defining each style.

2.3. Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using structural equation modeling with SPSS-24 and AMOS-24 software.

3. Findings and Results

The mean age of the participants was 31.66 years with a standard deviation of 1.52. The mean duration of marriage

among the participants was 6.49 years with a standard deviation of 4.64. A total of 32 participants (10.66%) had education below a high school diploma, 74 participants (24.66%) had a high school diploma, 54 participants (18%) had an associate degree, 85 participants (28.33%) had a bachelor's degree, 38 participants (12.66%) had a master's degree, and 17 participants (5.66%) had a doctoral degree.

Table 1

Correlation Matrix of Research Variables

| Variable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | M | SD | Skewness | Kurtosis |
|------------------------------------|---------|--------|---------|--------|-------|-------|------|-------|---|-------|-------|----------|----------|
| 1. Marital Adjustment | 1 | | | | | | | | | 45.42 | 7.63 | 0.12 | -0.81 |
| 2. Disconnection & Rejection | -0.32** | 1 | | | | | | | | 90.17 | 31.01 | -0.22 | -0.59 |
| 3. Impaired Autonomy & Performance | -0.34** | 0.27* | 1 | | | | | | | 51.27 | 21.04 | -0.24 | -0.53 |
| 4. Impaired Limits | -0.36** | 0.43** | 0.44 | 1 | | | | | | 52.50 | 16.39 | -0.22 | -0.62 |
| 5. Other-Directedness | -0.30** | 0.34* | 0.43 | 0.31** | 1 | | | | | 32.81 | 11.24 | -0.20 | -0.49 |
| 6. Overvigilance & Inhibition | -0.34** | 0.32** | 0.36* | 0.34* | 0.22 | 1 | | | | 33.69 | 12.32 | 0.15 | -0.57 |
| 7. Traditional Marriage Style | 0.34** | -0.29* | -0.32* | -0.35 | -0.41 | -0.22 | 1 | | | 88.65 | 2.94 | -0.40 | -0.63 |
| 8. Modern Marriage Style | 0.31** | -0.26* | -0.35** | -0.29 | -0.28 | -0.38 | 0.31 | 1 | | 67.90 | 3.41 | -0.33 | -0.57 |
| 9. Combined Marriage Style | 0.29** | -0.28* | -0.35** | -0.31 | -0.44 | -0.28 | 0.34 | 0.29* | 1 | 68.51 | 3.44 | -0.36 | -0.61 |

*p < .05, **p < .01

The results of the correlation matrix in Table 1 indicate a significant negative relationship between the domains of Disconnection and Rejection (-0.32), Impaired Autonomy and Performance (-0.34), Impaired Limits (-0.36), Other-Directedness (-0.30), and Overvigilance and Inhibition (-0.34) with Marital Adjustment. Additionally, there is a significant positive relationship between Traditional Marriage Style (0.34), Modern Marriage Style (0.31), and Combined Marriage Style (0.29) with Marital Adjustment at the 0.01 level.

The mean and standard deviation indices to examine the assumption of univariate normality show an appropriate distribution of the data, and the skewness and kurtosis indices, which fall within the range of ±1.96, indicate that the distribution of variables is normal. Furthermore, the tolerance statistics for the variables were all greater than 0.40, and the VIF statistics were all less than 10, indicating no concerning multicollinearity among the predictor variables. The Durbin-Watson test yielded a value of 1.95, which is within the acceptable range of 1.5 to 2.5, suggesting that the assumption of independent errors was met.

Table 2

Results of Direct Effect Coefficients in the Studied Structural Model

| Path | B | SE | Beta | t | P |
|---|-------|------|-------|-------|-------|
| Direct Path Coefficient: Disconnection & Rejection → Marital Adjustment | -2.62 | 0.09 | -0.32 | -4.26 | <.001 |
| Direct Path Coefficient: Other-Directedness → Marital Adjustment | -2.12 | 0.08 | -0.41 | -4.22 | <.001 |
| Direct Path Coefficient: Impaired Autonomy & Performance → Marital Adjustment | -2.44 | 0.06 | -0.43 | -5.32 | <.001 |
| Direct Path Coefficient: Impaired Limits → Marital Adjustment | -2.34 | 0.08 | -0.41 | -4.27 | <.001 |
| Direct Path Coefficient: Overvigilance & Inhibition → Marital Adjustment | -2.23 | 0.04 | -0.42 | -4.38 | <.001 |
| Direct Path Coefficient: Disconnection & Rejection → Traditional Marriage Style | 1.36 | 0.04 | 0.28 | 3.68 | .012 |

| | | | | | |
|---|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Direct Path Coefficient: Other-Directedness → Traditional Marriage Style | 1.22 | 0.04 | 0.22 | 3.44 | .012 |
| Direct Path Coefficient: Impaired Autonomy & Performance → Traditional Marriage Style | 1.13 | 0.04 | 0.21 | 3.86 | <.001 |
| Direct Path Coefficient: Impaired Limits → Traditional Marriage Style | 1.23 | 0.05 | 0.23 | 3.49 | <.001 |
| Direct Path Coefficient: Overvigilance & Inhibition → Traditional Marriage Style | 1.17 | 0.04 | 0.22 | 3.42 | .003 |
| Direct Path Coefficient: Disconnection & Rejection → Modern Marriage Style | 1.21 | 0.04 | 0.24 | 3.83 | .018 |
| Direct Path Coefficient: Other-Directedness → Modern Marriage Style | 1.16 | 0.03 | 0.24 | 3.85 | .017 |
| Direct Path Coefficient: Impaired Autonomy & Performance → Modern Marriage Style | 1.25 | 0.02 | 0.26 | 3.91 | .016 |
| Direct Path Coefficient: Impaired Limits → Modern Marriage Style | 1.04 | 0.01 | 0.27 | 3.75 | .019 |
| Direct Path Coefficient: Overvigilance & Inhibition → Modern Marriage Style | 1.17 | 0.04 | 0.28 | 3.71 | .013 |
| Direct Path Coefficient: Disconnection & Rejection → Combined Marriage Style | 1.25 | 0.04 | 0.29 | 3.43 | .018 |
| Direct Path Coefficient: Other-Directedness → Combined Marriage Style | 1.18 | 0.03 | 0.24 | 3.54 | .017 |
| Direct Path Coefficient: Impaired Autonomy & Performance → Combined Marriage Style | 1.26 | 0.02 | 0.35 | 3.61 | .016 |
| Direct Path Coefficient: Impaired Limits → Combined Marriage Style | 1.05 | 0.01 | 0.26 | 3.75 | .019 |
| Direct Path Coefficient: Overvigilance & Inhibition → Combined Marriage Style | 1.13 | 0.04 | 0.23 | 3.62 | .013 |
| Direct Path Coefficient: Traditional Marriage Style → Marital Adjustment | 1.18 | 0.05 | 0.34 | 4.13 | <.001 |
| Direct Path Coefficient: Modern Marriage Style → Marital Adjustment | 1.28 | 0.06 | 0.33 | 4.07 | .003 |
| Direct Path Coefficient: Combined Marriage Style → Marital Adjustment | 2.41 | 0.04 | 0.31 | 4.09 | .004 |

Table 2 shows that the direct effect of Disconnection & Rejection ($\beta = -0.32, p < .001$), Impaired Autonomy & Performance ($\beta = -0.43, p < .05$), Impaired Limits ($\beta = -0.41, p < .05$), Other-Directedness ($\beta = -0.41, p < .05$), and Overvigilance & Inhibition ($\beta = -0.42, p < .05$) on Marital Adjustment is negative and significant. Additionally, the direct effect of Disconnection & Rejection ($\beta = 0.28, p < .05$), Impaired Autonomy & Performance ($\beta = 0.21, p < .05$), Impaired Limits ($\beta = 0.23, p < .05$), Other-Directedness ($\beta = 0.22, p < .05$), and Overvigilance & Inhibition ($\beta = 0.22, p < .05$) on Traditional Marriage Style is positive and significant. The direct effect of Disconnection & Rejection ($\beta = 0.24, p < .05$), Impaired Autonomy & Performance ($\beta = 0.26, p <$

$.05$), Impaired Limits ($\beta = 0.27, p < .05$), Other-Directedness ($\beta = 0.24, p < .05$), and Overvigilance & Inhibition ($\beta = 0.28, p < .05$) on Modern Marriage Style is positive and significant. The direct effect of Disconnection & Rejection ($\beta = 0.29, p < .05$), Impaired Autonomy & Performance ($\beta = 0.35, p < .05$), Impaired Limits ($\beta = 0.26, p < .05$), Other-Directedness ($\beta = 0.24, p < .05$), and Overvigilance & Inhibition ($\beta = 0.23, p < .05$) on Combined Marriage Style is positive and significant. Furthermore, the direct effect of Traditional Marriage Style ($\beta = 0.34, p < .05$), Modern Marriage Style ($\beta = 0.33, p < .05$), and Combined Marriage Style ($\beta = 0.31, p < .05$) on Marital Adjustment is positive and significant.

Table 3

Results of Mediated Path Analysis using Bootstrapping Method

| Path | B | Beta | P-value |
|--|------|------|---------|
| Indirect Path: Disconnection & Rejection → Traditional Marriage Style → Marital Adjustment | 2.22 | 0.27 | .011 |
| Indirect Path: Other-Directedness → Traditional Marriage Style → Marital Adjustment | 3.37 | 0.35 | .012 |
| Indirect Path: Impaired Autonomy & Performance → Traditional Marriage Style → Marital Adjustment | 2.25 | 0.31 | .021 |
| Indirect Path: Impaired Limits → Traditional Marriage Style → Marital Adjustment | 2.32 | 0.32 | .014 |
| Indirect Path: Overvigilance & Inhibition → Traditional Marriage Style → Marital Adjustment | 3.24 | 0.33 | .022 |
| Indirect Path: Disconnection & Rejection → Modern Marriage Style → Marital Adjustment | 2.27 | 0.24 | .015 |
| Indirect Path: Other-Directedness → Modern Marriage Style → Marital Adjustment | 2.29 | 0.27 | .011 |
| Indirect Path: Impaired Autonomy & Performance → Modern Marriage Style → Marital Adjustment | 3.25 | 0.32 | .012 |
| Indirect Path: Impaired Limits → Modern Marriage Style → Marital Adjustment | 2.37 | 0.30 | .012 |
| Indirect Path: Overvigilance & Inhibition → Modern Marriage Style → Marital Adjustment | 2.33 | 0.28 | .013 |
| Indirect Path: Disconnection & Rejection → Combined Marriage Style → Marital Adjustment | 2.27 | 0.29 | .013 |
| Indirect Path: Other-Directedness → Combined Marriage Style → Marital Adjustment | 3.41 | 0.30 | .011 |
| Indirect Path: Impaired Autonomy & Performance → Combined Marriage Style → Marital Adjustment | 2.55 | 0.31 | .031 |
| Indirect Path: Impaired Limits → Combined Marriage Style → Marital Adjustment | 2.61 | 0.32 | .012 |
| Indirect Path: Overvigilance & Inhibition → Combined Marriage Style → Marital Adjustment | 3.46 | 0.32 | .026 |

According to the results reported in Table 3, the indirect path Disconnection & Rejection → Traditional Marriage Style → Marital Adjustment with a standardized effect size

of 0.27 ($p = .011$), the indirect path Other-Directedness → Traditional Marriage Style → Marital Adjustment with a standardized effect size of 0.35 ($p = .012$), the indirect path

Impaired Autonomy & Performance → Traditional Marriage Style → Marital Adjustment with a standardized effect size of 0.31 ($p = .021$), the indirect path Impaired Limits → Traditional Marriage Style → Marital Adjustment with a standardized effect size of 0.32 ($p = .014$), the indirect path Overvigilance & Inhibition → Traditional Marriage Style → Marital Adjustment with a standardized effect size of 0.33 ($p = .022$), the indirect path Disconnection & Rejection → Modern Marriage Style → Marital Adjustment with a standardized effect size of 0.24 ($p = .015$), the indirect path Other-Directedness → Modern Marriage Style → Marital Adjustment with a standardized effect size of 0.27 ($p = .011$), the indirect path Impaired Autonomy & Performance → Modern Marriage Style → Marital Adjustment with a standardized effect size of 0.32 ($p = .012$), the indirect path Impaired Limits → Modern Marriage Style → Marital Adjustment with a standardized effect size of 0.30 ($p = .012$), and the indirect path Overvigilance & Inhibition

→ Modern Marriage Style → Marital Adjustment with a standardized effect size of 0.28 ($p = .013$) are significant. The indirect path Disconnection & Rejection → Combined Marriage Style → Marital Adjustment with a standardized effect size of 0.29 ($p = .013$), the indirect path Other-Directedness → Combined Marriage Style → Marital Adjustment with a standardized effect size of 0.30 ($p = .011$), the indirect path Impaired Autonomy & Performance → Combined Marriage Style → Marital Adjustment with a standardized effect size of 0.31 ($p = .031$), the indirect path Impaired Limits → Combined Marriage Style → Marital Adjustment with a standardized effect size of 0.32 ($p = .012$), and the indirect path Overvigilance & Inhibition → Combined Marriage Style → Marital Adjustment with a standardized effect size of 0.32 ($p = .026$) are significant. Therefore, it can be concluded that traditional and modern marriage styles mediate the effect of early maladaptive schema domains on marital adjustment.

Table 4

Fit Indices for the Revised Structural Model

| Fit Index | X2/df | RMSEA | NFI | IFI | CFI | GFI |
|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Criterion | < 5 | < .90 | > .90 | > .90 | > .90 | > .90 |
| Value | 1.95 | .048 | .91 | .93 | .96 | .91 |

To determine model fit, an X2/df value less than 5 indicates a better fit. The obtained value in this study was 1.95, indicating good model fit. Additionally, the closer the NFI, IFI, GFI, and CFI values are to 1, the better the model fit. Given that the obtained values for these indices are close to or equal to .90, the model shows a good fit. The RMSEA value of .048 indicates a good fit for the model in this study.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The present study aimed to model the structural equations of marital adjustment with early maladaptive schemas considering the mediating role of marriage styles in men. The results showed a significant relationship between early maladaptive schemas and marital adjustment, consistent with the prior findings (Akkol, 2017; Gomes & Sá, 2021; Körük & Özabacı, 2023). A significant relationship was also found between early maladaptive schemas and marriage styles. Additionally, the results indicated a significant relationship between early maladaptive schemas, marriage styles, and marital adjustment, consistent with the previous findings (Akkol, 2017; Körük & Özabacı, 2023; Wang & Zhao, 2022), who stated that there is a relationship between

marriage styles, spouse selection methods, and psychological components with marital satisfaction.

To explain these findings, it can be stated that men with early maladaptive schemas experience feelings of rejection, insecurity, and mistrust in their relationships due to instability in thoughts, behaviors, and incorrect information processing. Individuals with early maladaptive schemas fear that their spouse will abandon them, leading to the use of various coping mechanisms. Schema avoidance is one such mechanism, as it protects them from the anxiety caused by the activated schema. Therefore, avoiding companionship and dependency on the spouse leads to marital conflicts, endangering family health and reducing marital adjustment (Akkol, 2017). Furthermore, early maladaptive schemas, as emotional and cognitive self-destructive patterns formed during early development and persisting throughout life, manifest in adulthood and marital relationships, causing problems in marital life. Given that early maladaptive schemas are dysfunctional, they lead to dissatisfaction in marital relationships and can reduce marital adjustment. It is logical to expect a relationship between early maladaptive schemas and marital adjustment. Additionally, the ability of couples to resolve conflicts and cope with them determines

marital adjustment. A major mistake couples make is underestimating the importance of creating and maintaining a desirable and satisfying relationship, whereas multiple conditions are necessary for establishing and sustaining such a relationship. When early maladaptive schemas are activated, levels of emotion are released, directly or indirectly leading to various psychological disturbances such as depression, anxiety, interpersonal conflicts, and marital infidelity. These schemas increase individuals' vulnerability to psychological disorders. Moreover, the type of spouse selection can also impact this relationship; individuals who choose their spouse independently based on personal decisions and pre-marital relationships are likely to have more satisfaction than those who choose a spouse without deep acquaintance (Gomes & Sá, 2021). While individual spouse selection is a factor in marital adjustment, it does not negate the role and importance of the family. The role of family and parents in spouse selection cannot be easily overlooked; appropriate and beneficial family intervention should be emphasized. Intervention where decision-making responsibility lies with the children, allowing them to freely choose their spouse under parental supervision, is ideal. However, individuals who choose their spouse independently and based on excessive love face threats, including irrational beliefs about marriage, leading to challenges and reduced marital adjustment over time. Early maladaptive schemas can serve as a clear organizing principle for understanding and making sense of an individual's life experiences. In psychotherapy, it is important to recognize that schemas, often formed early in life, continue with all their details and influence later life experiences, even when no longer applicable. Schemas are sometimes referred to as a need for cognitive consistency to maintain a stable view of oneself and the world, even if distorted. Schemas can be positive or negative, adaptive or maladaptive, and formed in childhood or later, impacting individuals' future lives and even influencing spouse selection. Individuals with high levels of early maladaptive schemas are more likely to exhibit maladaptive psychological behaviors if their spouse is chosen by others without considering their personal preferences, leading to marital challenges. It can be expected that extreme traditional or modern marriage styles can influence early maladaptive schemas and affect marital adjustment.

5. Suggestions and Limitations

Overall, the findings indicate a relationship between early maladaptive schemas and marriage styles with marital adjustment in men, and marriage styles can mediate the relationship between early maladaptive schemas and marital adjustment. Additionally, the model of marital adjustment based on early maladaptive schemas with the mediation of marriage styles has a good fit. The present study, like other studies, had limitations, including the use of questionnaires as the sole research tool, lack of control over intervening variables, and limiting the research population to men in districts 2, 7, and 11 of Tehran, indicating the need for caution in generalizing the results. Using other methods to assess research variables and examining the generalizability of the fitted model to other samples can increase the external validity of the findings; hence, conducting research on other samples is recommended.

Authors' Contributions

Authors contributed equally to this study.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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Ethical Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants.

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