

Explaining Attitudes Toward Extramarital Relationships Based on Personality Dimensions and Sexual Schemas: The Mediating Role of Sexual Novelty-Seeking

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The present study aimed to explain attitudes toward extramarital relationships based on personality dimensions and sexual schemas, with the mediating role of sexual novelty-seeking.

Methods: This research employed a descriptive-correlational design. The statistical population included all couples who referred to psychological counseling centers and family courts in Tehran in 2021. The sample size was determined as 674 individuals based on Morgan's table and selected using a convenience sampling method considering inclusion and exclusion criteria. Individuals with anxiety or mood disorders were excluded from the study. Research instruments included the Attitudes Toward Extramarital Relationships Questionnaire by Mark (2006), the NEO Personality Inventory-Revised (2004), the Questionnaire of Cognitive Schema Activation in Sexual Contexts (QCSASC), and the Glass and Wright Justification for Extramarital Relationships Questionnaire (1992). Data were analyzed using structural equation modeling and path analysis with LISREL software version 10.20.

Findings: Results indicated that 30.7% of the variance in attitudes toward extramarital relationships was indirectly explained by personality dimensions and sexual schemas, with the mediating role of sexual novelty-seeking. Based on the findings, attitudes toward extramarital relationships were positively and significantly predicted by neuroticism (path coefficient = 0.25), openness to experience (path coefficient = 0.84), sexual schemas (path coefficient = 0.27), and sexual novelty-seeking (path coefficient = 0.16).

Conclusion: The findings revealed that attitudes toward extramarital relationships were negatively and significantly predicted by agreeableness (path coefficient = -0.38) and conscientiousness (path coefficient = -0.33). Thus, personality traits and sexual schemas predict extramarital relationships and sexual novelty-seeking.

Keywords: Extramarital relationships, Personality, Sexual schemas, Sexual novelty-seeking.

1. Introduction

Marriage has been recognized as a beneficial and structuring factor for societies, aimed at meeting individuals' personal needs (Sheidanfar et al., 2020). After marriage, spouses expect themselves and their partners to remain sexually and emotionally faithful throughout their marriage. However, numerous issues occasionally arise within marital relationships, often referred to as extramarital relationships. In other words, one of the most detrimental factors affecting family structure and marital relationships is the violation of commitment and trust, addressed within the framework of extramarital relationships (Azkhosh et al., 2024; Jahan et al., 2017; Valentova et al., 2020).

Extramarital relationships have taken on various dimensions in contemporary times, causing significant harm to familial bonds (Fatehi, 2020). Research findings also indicate that extramarital relationships have become increasingly prevalent (Bazrgar & Honarparvaran, 2019; Harris, 2018; Mahdizadeh & Darreh Kordi, 2020; Soltani Zadeh & Bajelani, 2020; Ueda et al., 2018). Extramarital relationships involve emotional and sexual connections formed by a married individual with someone other than their spouse (Pichon, Travis-Cagan, Stern, Stachel, & Bowler, 2020).

Furthermore, attitudes toward extramarital relationships can be categorized into four types: sexual, emotional, combined (emotional and sexual), and virtual (Azkhosh et al., 2024). Specifically, when spouses face unresolved emotional needs and remain apart for extended periods due to various reasons, the likelihood of another individual fulfilling these needs increases. What complicates the situation further is the emotional connection formed with the person meeting those needs, which can lead to feelings of love that drive behavior and reactions beyond personal control (Fallahian et al., 2019).

This has prompted studies to examine the various dimensions of extramarital relationships, identify influencing factors, and propose strategies to enhance family health (Garbinsky et al., 2020). Research has shown that attitudes toward extramarital relationships are associated with psychological and emotional issues, mood disorders, and communication problems (Bagheri & Albeheshti, 2020; Bibi Alavi Zadeh & Majidi-Yaychi, 2020).

One factor that can predict tendencies toward extramarital relationships is personality. Costa and McCrae (1992) classified personality traits into five dimensions: conscientiousness, neuroticism, extraversion, openness to

experience, and agreeableness (Teybi, 2020). According to Costa and McCrae (1992), negative emotions such as fear, sadness, excitement, anger, guilt, and constant frustration form the basis of the neuroticism scale (Bordbar & Ebrahimzadeh-Pezeshki, 2019). Extraverts are socially oriented individuals, while those high in openness to experience are curious about both their internal experiences and the external world, leading to a life rich in experiences. Agreeableness emphasizes interpersonal relationships, characterized by altruism (Qureshi Rad & Pourjabar Akhoooni, 2019).

Research on personality dimensions and marital relationships has shown that personality significantly impacts marital dynamics (Firoozi & Kharamin, 2020). Certain personality dimensions, such as neuroticism, increase tension and conflict between spouses, posing threats to marital continuity (Xie et al., 2018). Studies have also identified extraversion as the strongest predictor of marital satisfaction (O'Rourke et al., 2011).

Sexual schemas are another factor influencing the development of extramarital relationships. Sexual schemas refer to individuals' sexual attitudes and are considered "abstract cognitive maps" that guide the interpretation of information and problem-solving within the realm of cognitive development (Mam Salehi & Moradi, 2021; Mam Salehi et al., 2020). According to Andersen and Sirvanoski's theory, sexual schemas are core beliefs about an individual's sexual dimensions, derived from past experiences and emerging in current experiences. These schemas significantly impact sexual information processing and play a critical role in sexual satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Mam Salehi & Moradi, 2021).

Sexual schemas consist of two positive dimensions—passionate-romantic and explicit-comfortable—and a negative dimension—shy-cautious schema. Individuals with positive sexual schemas are more comfortable with their sexual attitudes, leading to a broader range of satisfying sexual activities throughout their lives (Gottman & Levenson, 2016).

The mediating role of sexual novelty-seeking can also be considered in the relationship between attitudes toward extramarital relationships, personality dimensions, and sexual schemas. Sexual novelty-seeking often arises from fulfilling emotional and sexual needs outside the marital domain. It is characterized by instability across various aspects of life, including familial, emotional, and social domains, with a strong inclination toward constant change (O'Rourke et al., 2011).

Sexual novelty-seeking is a sexual motivation factor that influences sexual behavior and marital functioning, viewed as either a personality trait or a predisposition to extramarital relationships (Selterman et al., 2019). Concealing extramarital relationships from one's spouse, rooted in sexual novelty-seeking, is considered infidelity (Frederick et al., 2017). Sexual novelty-seeking encompasses a spectrum of behaviors, from emotional involvement without sexual intercourse to sexual involvement without emotional attachment, or a combination of both, which poses greater harm to marriage.

Sexual novelty-seeking often culminates in extramarital relationships or unconventional romantic or sexual activities, primarily characterized by secrecy. In married individuals, sexual novelty-seeking equates to marital infidelity, involving intimate emotional or sexual relationships with someone other than one's spouse, often due to dissatisfaction with marital quality (Bell et al., 2018). Motivations include seeking pleasure from diverse sexual experiences, feeling valued by a new partner, enjoying unrestricted sexual relationships, and dissatisfaction with current marital relations.

Leonhardt and Willoughby (2017) identified sexual novelty-seeking as a factor contributing to sexual addiction, shaped by sexual biases, intense sexual desires, and extensive sexual interactions (Leonhardt & Willoughby, 2017). Despite the critical importance of attitudes toward extramarital relationships in undermining marital and family stability, there is a notable research gap regarding the mediating role of sexual novelty-seeking in the relationship between attitudes toward extramarital relationships, personality dimensions, and sexual schemas. This study aims to address whether attitudes toward extramarital relationships can be explained based on personality dimensions and sexual schemas, with the mediating role of sexual novelty-seeking.

2. Methods

2.1. Study Design and Participants

The method of this study is descriptive-correlational. The statistical population of the present study consists of all couples visiting psychological counseling centers and family courts in Tehran during the year 2021. For the selection of the sample, 674 individuals from the population were chosen based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria, using the Morgan table and convenient sampling method.

Additionally, individuals with anxiety and mood disorders were excluded from the study.

Inclusion criteria:

- Married couples at the time of the study.
- At least one year of married life.
- Informed consent to participate in the study.

Exclusion criteria:

- Dishonesty in completing the questionnaires.
- Non-cooperation in the research process.

2.2. Measures

2.2.1. Attitudes Toward Extramarital

To assess attitudes toward extramarital relationships, the *Attitudes toward Extramarital Relationships Questionnaire* by Mark (2006) was used. This questionnaire was designed by Mark in 2006 and consists of 12 questions, scored on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The aim of this questionnaire is to assess attitudes toward extramarital relationships. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this questionnaire was reported by Mark as 0.88 through split-half reliability, and the test validity was reported as 0.79. In Iran, Barahani-zadeh and Abdi (2017) reported the reliability of the test using Cronbach's alpha as 0.78 and assessed the content validity as 0.70 (Bibi Alavi Zadeh & Majidi-Yaychi, 2020; Fatehi, 2020; Mahdizadeh & Darreh Kordi, 2020).

2.2.2. Personality

To assess personality dimensions, the NEO-FFI Short Personality Inventory (60 items) was used. The NEO-FFI is a shortened version of the original NEO Personality Inventory, developed by McCrae and Costa in 1985. This questionnaire measures the five major personality factors. Shahandeh (2004) adapted the shortened NEO inventory based on translation and cultural adaptation, using the IPIP-NEO version by Dr. Johnson. The test contains 60 items, and responses are provided on a self-report basis using five options: strongly disagree (score 1), somewhat disagree (score 2), neither agree nor disagree (score 3), somewhat agree (score 4), and strongly agree (score 5), requiring approximately 10 minutes to complete. Each factor contains 12 items, with higher scores indicating higher levels of that particular personality trait. The NEO-FFI evaluates personality traits in terms of conscientiousness, extraversion, neuroticism, openness, and agreeableness, with 27 subscales. Items 1, 6, 11, 16, 21, 26, 31, 36, 41, 46,

51, 56 assess neuroticism; items 2, 7, 12, 17, 22, 27, 32, 37, 42, 47, 52, 57 assess extraversion; items 3, 8, 13, 18, 23, 28, 33, 38, 43, 48, 53, 58 assess openness; items 4, 9, 14, 19, 24, 29, 34, 39, 44, 49, 54, 59 assess agreeableness; and items 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50, 55, 60 assess conscientiousness. Content validity in the original version of the test was reported to range from 0.72 to 0.87, and test-retest reliability was found to range from 0.79 to 0.87. Garousi (2002) translated the test into Persian and validated it. In Iran, the validity of the test was assessed using the correlation method between scores on the short-form NEO and the full 240-item NEO Personality Inventory, yielding a correlation of $r = 0.30$, which was significant at $p < 0.05$. The test-retest reliability, assessed with a sample of university students in Ahvaz, was 0.75 after 4 weeks, and internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha was 0.78 for the full scale and 0.65 for the subscales, which is acceptable from a psychometric standpoint (Bakhshayesh & Bagheri, 2020; Salayani et al., 2020).

2.2.3. Sexual Schemas

To assess sexual schemas, the Cognitive Sexual Arousal Schema Questionnaire (QCSASC) was used. This questionnaire, which consists of 28 items, measures cognitive schemas in individuals when placed in four sexual situations, including sexual desire disorders, arousal disorders, difficulty achieving orgasm, and vaginismus. The scoring of this questionnaire is based on a 5-point scale ranging from "always" to "never," with a minimum score of 32, a maximum score of 160, and a mean score of 96. The validity and reliability of the questionnaire have been supported by studies, including Novera et al. (2006). In Ziayi's (2013) study with an Iranian sample, the Cronbach's alpha was reported as 0.68, and in Mam Salehi et al. (2019), reliability was calculated at 0.66 (Ziaei et al., 2013).

2.2.4. Sexual Novelty Seeking

Finally, to assess sexual novelty-seeking, the Justification of Extramarital Relationships Questionnaire by Glass and Wright (1992) was used. This questionnaire, developed by Glass and Wright, measures sexual novelty-seeking and the justifications individuals provide for engaging in emotional or sexual relationships outside of marriage. It contains 17 items that assess emotional and sexual justifications for engaging in extramarital relationships. In other words, it

measures the reasons married individuals give for being involved in emotional or sexual relationships with someone of the opposite sex. Sexual justification evaluates four reasons: sexual pleasure, curiosity, or excitement. Emotional intimacy justification assesses reasons related to emotional understanding, interpersonal connections, self-esteem, and interpersonal respect. Responses are measured on a 5-point Likert scale, with scoring for the items based on this scale. Glass and Wright (1992) reported internal consistency of the scale with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.91. In the study by Navaei and Mohammadi (2016), the validity of the tool was confirmed by expert raters, and reliability was calculated using Cronbach's alpha at 0.69 (Tabatabai Soorijeh et al., 2020).

2.3. Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using structural equation modeling (SEM) to examine the relationships between the study variables. Descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, were first calculated for all variables to provide an overview of the sample characteristics. The normality of data distribution was assessed by examining skewness and kurtosis values. For the main analysis, SEM was employed to test the hypothesized relationships between personality dimensions, sexual schemas, sexual diversity seeking, and attitudes toward extramarital relationships. Fit indices such as chi-square (χ^2), chi-square/df ratio, comparative fit index (CFI), goodness-of-fit index (GFI), adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI), and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) were used to evaluate the model fit. The significance of individual paths was assessed using t-values, with paths considered significant if the absolute t-value exceeded 1.96. Additionally, multicollinearity was assessed by examining tolerance and variance inflation factor (VIF) values, and potential issues with error independence were tested using the Durbin-Watson statistic.

3. Findings and Results

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics, including the mean and standard deviation, of the variables in the study, such as attitudes toward extramarital relationships, personality dimensions, sexual schemas, and sexual novelty-seeking, within the sample group.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of the Study Variables

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Cronbach's Alpha
Attitudes toward Extramarital Relationships	29.08	6.38	0.79
Neuroticism	27.40	4.30	0.82
Extraversion	37.25	5.83	0.71
Openness to Experience	41.38	6.97	0.77
Agreeableness	35.90	6.52	0.84
Conscientiousness	39.38	7.71	0.70
Sexual Schemas	89.06	9.01	0.75
Sexual Novelty-Seeking	41.85	8.36	0.85

These findings indicate that for the variable of attitudes toward extramarital relationships, participants obtained a mean score of 29.08 and a standard deviation of 6.38, suggesting that the participants had moderate scores regarding their attitudes toward extramarital relationships.

To test the assumption of univariate normality, the skewness and kurtosis values were examined. In structural equation modeling, multivariate normality suggests that each indicator should have a normal distribution for each value of the other indicators. Kline (2005) notes that deviation from this assumption is associated with increased

or decreased chi-square values. In this study, the skewness and kurtosis values of the data ranged between +2 and -2. Additionally, values of tolerance below 0.10 or a variance inflation factor (VIF) above 10 indicate linear multicollinearity. In this analysis, no violations of multicollinearity assumptions were observed for any of the calculated tolerance or VIF statistics for the study variables. To assess the independence of errors, the Durbin-Watson statistic was used, and the results showed that the assumption of independence was met (DW = 2.09).

Figure 1

Path Diagram of Relationships between Research Variables in Terms of Standardized Coefficients

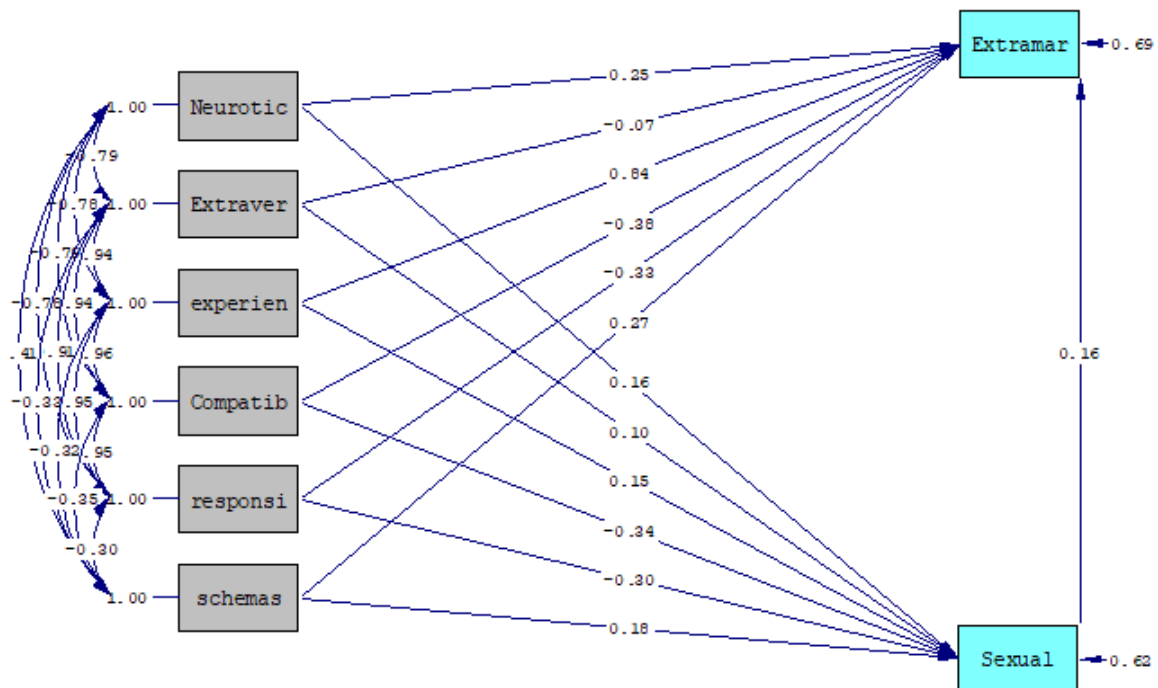
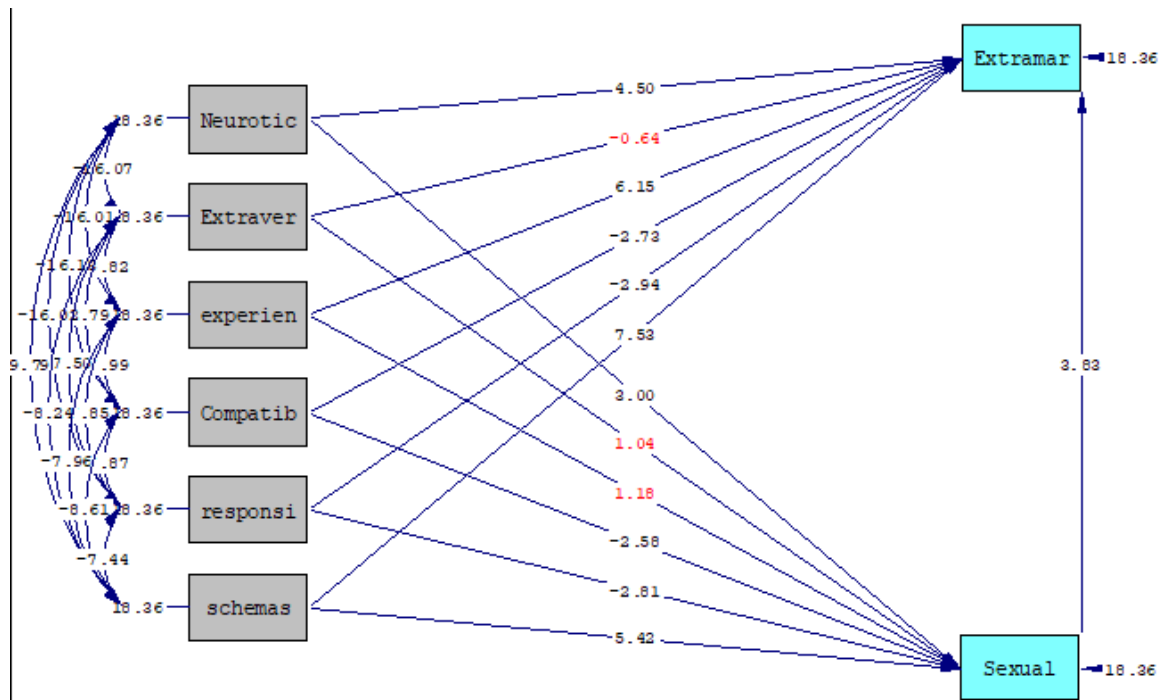


Figure 2

Path Diagram of Relationships between Research Variables in Terms of t-Test Significance Coefficients



The results from the structural equation modeling showed that in the analyzed model, 30.7% of the variance in attitudes toward extramarital relationships was indirectly explained by the personality dimensions, sexual schemas, and the mediating role of sexual novelty-seeking (Errorvar. = 143.471, $R^2 = 0.307$). Additionally, the results indicate that 48% of the variance in sexual novelty-seeking was explained by the personality dimensions and sexual schemas (Errorvar. = 258.069, $R^2 = 0.378$). Furthermore, Models 1 and 2, the hypothesized model of attitudes toward extramarital relationships based on personality dimensions and sexual schemas, with the mediating role of sexual novelty-seeking, are shown after modifications. For the modified model, the goodness-of-fit indices, including chi-square (χ^2), chi-square per degrees of freedom (χ^2/df), comparative fit index (CFI), goodness of fit index (GFI), adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI), and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) were 190.17, 2.18, 0.97, 0.95, 0.97, and 0.042, respectively. The numerical values of the goodness-of-fit

indices suggest that the proposed model provides an acceptable fit to the data.

Based on the results, attitudes toward extramarital relationships are positively and significantly predicted by neuroticism with a path coefficient of 0.25, openness to experience with a path coefficient of 0.84, sexual schemas with a path coefficient of 0.27, and sexual novelty-seeking with a path coefficient of 0.16. Furthermore, attitudes toward extramarital relationships are negatively and significantly predicted by agreeableness with a path coefficient of -0.38 and conscientiousness with a path coefficient of -0.33.

In this section, we examine the hypotheses of the study. To test the hypotheses, if the t-value exceeds the absolute value of 1.96, this indicates a positive effect, and the hypothesis is significant. If the t-value is between +1.96 and -1.96, the effect is not significant, and if it is smaller than -1.96, the effect is negative. Table 2 summarizes the results for the hypotheses.

Table 2

Testing of the Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Path Coefficient	t-Statistic
First Hypothesis		
Extraversion → Extramarital Relationships	-0.126	1.993
Openness to Experience → Extramarital Relationships	0.124	4.962

Agreeableness → Extramarital Relationships	-0.126	2.174
Neuroticism → Extramarital Relationships	0.120	2.671
Conscientiousness → Extramarital Relationships	-0.152	2.840
Second Hypothesis		
Extraversion → Sexual Novelty-Seeking	-0.112	2.115
Openness to Experience → Sexual Novelty-Seeking	0.177	3.141
Agreeableness → Sexual Novelty-Seeking	-0.163	2.522
Neuroticism → Sexual Novelty-Seeking	0.154	2.795
Conscientiousness → Sexual Novelty-Seeking	-0.153	2.923
Third Hypothesis		
Sexual Schemas → Extramarital Relationships	-0.113	3.991
Fourth Hypothesis		
Sexual Schemas → Sexual Novelty-Seeking	-0.255	6.205
Fifth Hypothesis		
Sexual Novelty-Seeking → Extramarital Relationships	0.293	4.548
Sixth Hypothesis		
Extraversion → Sexual Novelty-Seeking → Extramarital Relationships	-0.043	1.967
Openness to Experience → Sexual Novelty-Seeking → Extramarital Relationships	0.052	2.457
Agreeableness → Sexual Novelty-Seeking → Extramarital Relationships	-0.048	2.461
Neuroticism → Sexual Novelty-Seeking → Extramarital Relationships	0.045	2.413
Conscientiousness → Sexual Novelty-Seeking → Extramarital Relationships	-0.045	2.106
Seventh Hypothesis		
Sexual Schemas → Sexual Novelty-Seeking → Extramarital Relationships	-0.075	3.994

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The findings obtained from this study indicate that attitudes toward extramarital relationships are positively explained by neuroticism, openness to experience, sexual schemas, and sexual novelty-seeking, and negatively explained by agreeableness and conscientiousness. Previous studies aligned with the results obtained in this research. For example, Moral and Jose (2020) demonstrated that the most significant variable in their model was the desire for sexual infidelity, with sexual desire being the main determinant (Moral & José, 2020). They also showed a negative correlation between attitudes toward marital infidelity and constructive marital communication patterns and sexual satisfaction. Jahan and colleagues (2018) predicted the factors affecting attitudes toward marital infidelity and found that sexual novelty-seeking, low empathy in relationships, lack of mutual understanding between partners, dissatisfaction with sexual relationships, and personality traits are key factors influencing attitudes toward extramarital relationships (Jahan et al., 2018). Glass and Wright (2010) also found that sexual novelty-seeking, sexual love experience, emotional love, and emotional intimacy are influential factors in attitudes toward extramarital relationships. According to their results, women paid less attention to sexual justifications and emphasized emotional justifications more. In this study, women believed that the perception of love and sexual relationships are

interconnected, and falling in love justifies the sexual relationship (Glass & Wright, 2010).

Bakhshayesh and Bagheri (2020) showed that sexual satisfaction among couples with a history of extramarital relationships was lower, and personality traits such as neuroticism, extraversion, and openness to experience were more prevalent in them than in non-infidelity couples (Bakhshayesh & Bagheri, 2020). Soltani Zadeh and Bajelani (2020) demonstrated that marital intimacy and sexual satisfaction are good predictors of attitudes toward marital infidelity in men (Soltani Zadeh & Bajelani, 2020). Firoozi and Kharamin (2020) found that the personality trait of agreeableness is related to marital satisfaction (Firoozi & Kharamin, 2020). Mahdizadeh and Darekhordi (2020) showed that maladaptive schemas predict attitudes toward extramarital relationships through mindfulness dimensions (Mahdizadeh & Darreh Kordi, 2020). Bakhtiari and colleagues (2019) revealed a significant relationship between couples' attitudes toward extramarital relationships with attachment styles, maladaptive schemas, and the mediating variables of marital intimacy and love styles (Bakhtiari et al., 2019). Ghorbani-Pishkhani (2018) found a relationship between love schemas and justifications for extramarital relationships. Significant differences were also observed between types of love schemas in terms of justification for extramarital relationships. Generally, men with secure love schemas reported the lowest levels of justification for extramarital relationships across all dimensions (Ghorbani Pishkhani, 2018). Momeni and

colleagues (2017) showed that individuals with high emotionality, alexithymia, and negative affectivity traits have a higher tendency toward marital infidelity (Momeni et al., 2017). Yousofi-Miridani and colleagues (2020) identified communication attitudes, dark personality traits, and social trust as influential factors in attitudes toward marital infidelity (Yousefi et al., 2018).

Glasser (2007) considered the attempt to re-experience personal and sexual intimacy as the most significant motivation for married men and women drawn to extramarital relationships. Secretive communications outside the marital relationship often result in severe emotional damage, along with feelings such as depression, anger, hopelessness, low self-esteem, loss of identity, and sometimes post-traumatic stress symptoms in the betrayed spouse. These relationships can also lead to doubts, depression, and guilt in the unfaithful spouse. The consequences of extramarital relationships include severe physical and psychological turmoil, persistent thoughts about the reasons for the occurrence, disarray in relationships with the unfaithful spouse, grief, and longing. The revelation of extramarital relationships can have detrimental effects on personality, physical and mental health, or the relationship between spouses (Pizarro & Gaspay-Fernandez, 2015).

According to the need-satisfaction theory, relationships between spouses are fulfilled through the satisfaction of not only sexual needs but also four other needs, including intimacy, companionship, security, and emotional relationships. If these needs are not adequately met, it leads to issues in the marital relationship. According to the deficiency theory, when a relationship encounters a lack or deficiency in certain areas, such as unmet sexual needs, it leads to infidelity (Frederick et al., 2017; Leonhardt & Willoughby, 2017). Individuals with positive sexual schemas, in contrast to the other group, are more comfortable in their sexual attitudes and, as a result, report a broader range of satisfying sexual activities throughout their sexual lives (Gottman & Levenson, 2016). As a mediating variable, sexual novelty-seeking is a phenomenon that often occurs as a means of fulfilling emotional and sexual needs through relationships outside the marital domain. Sexual novelty-seeking is a sexual motivation influencing sexual relationships and marital performance and is considered a personality trait or a readiness to engage in extramarital relationships. Sexual novelty-seeking typically leads to extramarital relationships or any secretive, unconventional romantic or sexual activity with the opposite sex. In the case

of marriage, sexual novelty-seeking refers to marital infidelity, a form of emotional or sexual intimacy with someone other than one's spouse, usually resulting from dissatisfaction with the quality of the marital relationship.

Thus, a married man's sexual relationship with someone other than his spouse may arise from the pleasure of experiencing different sexual experiences, feeling valued by the sexual partner, engaging in attractive and unlimited sexual relationships, satisfaction with new sexual relationships, and dissatisfaction with the current marital relationship. Other motivations for men's sexual novelty-seeking include the attempt to reduce sexual and marital conflicts, alleviate sexual tensions resulting from unsuccessful sexual experiences with the spouse, reach agreements with a new sexual partner, and reduce ineffective sexual schemas. Leonard and Willoughby (2017) showed that sexual novelty-seeking is a factor in the development of sexual addiction, which arises from sexual bias, intense sexual desire, and extensive sexual connections.

5. Suggestions and Limitations

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting its findings. First, the sample was limited to a specific demographic, which may not be representative of the broader population, limiting the generalizability of the results. Additionally, the use of self-reported data may have introduced response biases, such as social desirability bias, affecting the accuracy of the reported attitudes and behaviors. Furthermore, the cross-sectional design of the study restricts the ability to establish causal relationships between the variables. The study also did not account for potential moderating variables such as cultural or societal factors, which could influence the attitudes toward extramarital relationships. Finally, the study focused primarily on individual-level predictors and did not explore relationship-level factors that might also play a significant role in attitudes toward infidelity.

Future research could address these limitations by using a more diverse sample across different cultural, geographical, and socio-economic contexts to increase the generalizability of the findings. Longitudinal studies are needed to better understand the causal relationships between personality traits, sexual schemas, and attitudes toward extramarital relationships. Furthermore, examining the role of relationship-specific factors, such as communication patterns, attachment styles, and conflict resolution strategies, would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the

predictors of marital infidelity. Investigating the impact of societal changes and evolving gender roles on extramarital tendencies could also offer valuable insights into the dynamics of modern relationships.

The findings of this study have several practical implications for clinical and counseling psychology. Understanding the factors that contribute to attitudes toward extramarital relationships can help therapists and counselors develop more targeted interventions aimed at improving marital satisfaction and preventing infidelity. Specifically, interventions focused on enhancing emotional intimacy, communication, and sexual satisfaction may be beneficial in addressing the underlying issues that contribute to infidelity. Moreover, promoting healthier sexual schemas and addressing personality traits such as neuroticism and openness to experience could be integral components of therapeutic interventions. Educating couples on the importance of mutual understanding, empathy, and relationship satisfaction may help reduce the likelihood of extramarital involvement.

Authors' Contributions

All authors have contributed significantly to the research process and the development of the manuscript.

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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