

Modeling Marital Burnout Based on Love Styles with the Mediating Role of Emotion Regulation Strategies among Married Adults in Bushehr

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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

In the paragraph stating that “One of the most relevant frameworks for understanding marital functioning concerns the nature and organization of love within intimate relationships,” the theoretical basis for the love construct should be developed more rigorously. The manuscript uses Sternberg’s dimensions of intimacy, passion, and commitment, yet the article repeatedly refers to them as “love styles.” This terminology is potentially misleading because Sternberg’s Triangular Theory of Love distinguishes components of love from derived love types or styles. The authors should consistently use “love components” or “dimensions of love” unless they explicitly operationalize categorical love styles, and the title, hypotheses, methods, tables, and discussion should be harmonized accordingly.

The conceptual rationale for mediation requires further development in the introduction. The sentence “The potential mediating role of emotion regulation is particularly plausible when the three dimensions of love are considered separately” provides a useful starting point but remains largely descriptive. The authors should specify the directional mechanism for each pathway. For example, why should greater intimacy predict greater cognitive reappraisal or lower expressive suppression, and why should these regulatory patterns subsequently predict lower burnout? Separate theoretical arguments should be articulated for intimacy, passion, and commitment rather than treating the three components as interchangeable predictors.

The description of the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire contains a conceptual inconsistency that should be resolved throughout the paper. The instrument is introduced as the “Emotion Regulation Questionnaire,” yet elsewhere the manuscript refers to a “cognitive emotion regulation questionnaire.” Gross and John’s measure assesses cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression, not the broader set of cognitive strategies typically assessed by the Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire. The exact English and Persian instrument names should therefore be standardized, and the manuscript should avoid terminology that could lead readers to believe that the Garnefski CERQ was administered.

The psychometric reporting for Sternberg’s measure should be strengthened. The sentence “After determining whether an individual obtains a low or high score on each subscale, the individual’s pattern of romantic love is identified” does not appear aligned with the subsequent analysis, which treats intimacy, passion, and commitment as continuous variables. The authors should remove the categorical interpretation unless it was actually used analytically and explain exactly how each component score was calculated. Reliability coefficients for intimacy, passion, commitment, and the total scale in the current sample should also be reported.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The literature review should more explicitly identify the novelty of the proposed model. The paragraph beginning “Although previous studies have documented relationships between love components and marital burnout” acknowledges prior work on communication patterns, stress, schemas, negative affect, and marital satisfaction, but the precise empirical gap remains somewhat diffuse. The authors should state whether previous studies have directly tested emotion regulation as a mediator between Sternberg’s love components and marital burnout, whether prior evidence has examined these variables within Iranian married populations, and exactly how the current model extends prior structural models rather than merely recombining previously studied variables.

The Method section should provide clear eligibility criteria. In the sentence “The statistical population consisted of all married women and men attending the selected centers in Bushehr in 2025,” neither the nature of the “selected centers” nor the inclusion and exclusion criteria are specified. The manuscript should identify the types and number of centers, explain why these centers were selected, and report criteria such as minimum duration of marriage, age range, ability to read Persian, current marital status, psychiatric or treatment-related exclusions if applicable, and procedures for excluding incomplete questionnaires. Without this information, the sampling frame cannot be adequately evaluated or replicated.

The sample-size justification is currently absent despite the use of structural equation modeling. The sentence “A total of 420 participants were selected as the study sample using a non-probability convenience sampling method” should be followed by an explicit rationale for this number. The authors should report whether the sample size was determined through power analysis, an SEM parameter-to-sample ratio, anticipated effect size, model complexity, or another recognized criterion. Because 17 multivariate outliers were subsequently removed and the final analytical sample was 403, the adequacy of the final sample for the specified SEM should also be justified.

The ethics procedures require formal documentation. The paragraph stating that “participants were assured that their information would remain confidential” describes important ethical safeguards, but it does not report approval by an institutional ethics committee, an ethics code, informed consent procedure, or whether participants were informed of their right to withdraw without consequence. The manuscript should provide the name of the approving institution, ethics approval number, consent procedure, and any measures taken to protect anonymity, particularly because the questionnaires concern sensitive marital and emotional experiences.

The description of the Marital Burnout Measure should be checked carefully for terminological and psychometric accuracy. The sentence “It consists of 21 items rated on a seven-point scale and comprises three components: emotional exhaustion, psychological exhaustion, and physical exhaustion” should be supported by the precise scoring procedure used in the present

study. The authors should specify whether subscale scores or only a total score were analyzed, whether any items required reverse scoring, and report Cronbach's alpha or preferably omega coefficients from the present sample rather than relying exclusively on historical reliability coefficients.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

2. Revised

Editor's decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief's decision: Accepted.