

The Mediating Role of Marital Infidelity Justification in the Relationship Between Cognitive Flexibility and Marital Burnout

Somayeh. Rezaee¹ , Mohammadali. Mohammadyfar^{2*} , Mahmoud. Najafi³ 

¹ Department of Psychology, Se.C., Islamic Azad University, Semnan, Iran

² Department of Psychology, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, University of Semnan, Semnan, Iran

³ Department of Clinical Psychology, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, University of Semnan, Semnan, Iran

* Corresponding author email address: alimohammadyfar@semnan.ac.ir

Editor

Anela Hasanagic 

Full Professor, Department of Psychology, Faculty of Islamic Education, University of Zenica, Bosnia and Herzegovina
anela.hasanagic@unze.ba

Reviewers

Reviewer 1: Masoud Asadi 

Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology and Counseling, Arak University, Arak, Iran.

Email: m-asadi@araku.ac.ir

Reviewer 2: Stephen C. L. Lau 

Professor (Assistant) at Washington University in St, Louis, United States.

Email: lauc@wustl.edu

1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The opening paragraph provides a broad sociological framing of the family; however, its length could be reduced by condensing general statements (e.g., “The family is among the most universal social organizations”) and moving more rapidly toward the specific problem of marital burnout, which appears only later.

This paragraph is conceptually sound, but it would benefit from a clearer theoretical linkage between everyday marital conflict and the later emergence of burnout, rather than treating conflict and burnout as implicitly connected phenomena.

The cut-off score of 74 is reported; please clarify whether this threshold was used analytically in the current study or provided solely for descriptive purposes.

The description of six subscales is strong, yet it would improve clarity to briefly justify why a latent variable approach (rather than subscale-level analysis) was selected in the SEM.

Table 1 is informative; however, the manuscript does not explicitly discuss the magnitude and practical significance of correlations in the text. Please add a short interpretive paragraph highlighting the most theoretically meaningful associations.

The paragraph interpreting skewness and kurtosis values is technically accurate, but it would benefit from explicitly stating why maximum likelihood estimation was appropriate given these diagnostics.

Figure 1 is referenced appropriately; however, the manuscript should clarify whether error terms were allowed to correlate, and if so, provide a theoretical justification.

In Table 4, indirect effects are reported as significant; however, the manuscript does not specify whether bootstrapping was used. Please clarify the mediation testing procedure and confidence interval estimation.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

1.2. *Reviewer 2*

Reviewer:

The paragraph defining cognitive flexibility cites multiple studies, yet the sentence “Cognitive flexibility, by influencing individuals’ capacity for cognitive adaptation to the experience of infidelity...” introduces mediation prematurely. Consider postponing this claim until the study rationale paragraph to maintain logical flow.

Cognitive flexibility is discussed in multiple adjacent paragraphs (paragraphs 3–5 of the Introduction), sometimes with overlapping definitions. The manuscript would benefit from integrating these into one coherent conceptual paragraph to avoid repetition and improve readability.

The paragraph stating “Women have reported men’s involvement in marital infidelity at 80% to 98%...” raises methodological concerns. Please clarify the cultural context, data source, and sampling frame of these figures, or moderate the claim to avoid overgeneralization.

The final paragraph of the Introduction appropriately states the research question; however, it would be strengthened by explicitly stating why infidelity justification is theoretically positioned as a mediator, not merely an associated variable.

In the paragraph beginning “Determining the minimum sample size required for collecting data for SEM is highly important”, the justification for sample size is thorough, but somewhat excessive. Consider summarizing key criteria and relocating detailed citations to a footnote or appendix.

The use of purposive sampling from counseling centers (Districts 3 and 11 of Tehran) raises potential selection bias. This limitation should be explicitly acknowledged earlier in the Method section, not only later under limitations.

While ethical procedures are described clearly, the manuscript does not report an ethics committee approval code. If approval was obtained, please report the reference number; if not, clarify the institutional review process followed.

The psychometric description is comprehensive; however, the paragraph would benefit from explicitly stating which reliability coefficients were obtained in the present sample, not only in prior studies.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

2. Revised

Editor's decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief's decision: Accepted.