






The Effectiveness of Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy on Marital Burnout and Social Anxiety in Married Women with Family Problems

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The present study aimed to determine the effectiveness of mindfulness-based cognitive therapy on marital burnout and social anxiety among married women with family problems.

Methods and Materials: The present study employed a quasi-experimental design with a pre-test–post-test structure including an experimental group and a control group. The statistical population consisted of married women with family problems who referred to counseling centers in Tehran in 2024. Using convenience sampling, 30 participants who obtained high scores on the marital burnout and social anxiety questionnaires were selected and randomly assigned into an experimental group ($n = 15$) and a control group ($n = 15$). Data collection instruments included the Pines Couple Burnout Measure (CBM) and the Social Anxiety Scale. The experimental group participated in eight 2-hour sessions of mindfulness-based cognitive therapy, while the control group received no intervention. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and univariate analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) in IBM SPSS Statistics version 27.

Finding: The results of the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test confirmed the normal distribution of the data ($p > .05$). The findings of univariate analysis of covariance demonstrated that, after controlling for pre-test scores, the effect of group membership on post-test marital burnout scores was significant ($F = 32.78, p = .001, \eta^2 = .59$). In addition, the effect of mindfulness-based cognitive therapy on post-test social anxiety scores was significant ($F = 38.14, p = .001, \eta^2 = .56$). The results indicated that participants in the experimental group showed significantly lower levels of marital burnout and social anxiety compared to the control group after the intervention.

Conclusion: The findings suggest that mindfulness-based cognitive therapy is effective in reducing marital burnout and social anxiety among married women with family problems.

Keywords: *mindfulness-based cognitive therapy, marital burnout, social anxiety, family problems, married women.*

1. Introduction

Family is considered one of the most fundamental social institutions and plays a decisive role in maintaining psychological health, emotional stability, and social functioning among individuals. Marital relationships constitute the central core of family functioning, and the quality of these relationships significantly affects the emotional and psychological well-being of spouses. In recent decades, rapid social, economic, and cultural changes have increased psychological pressures within families, leading many couples to experience chronic emotional exhaustion, interpersonal conflicts, reduced intimacy, and psychological distress. Among married women, especially those facing family-related problems, persistent interpersonal tensions may gradually result in marital burnout and heightened levels of social anxiety, thereby negatively affecting both individual and family functioning (Koçyiğit & Uzun, 2024; Salah et al., 2024).

Marital burnout is one of the major psychological consequences of prolonged marital stress and unresolved emotional conflicts within intimate relationships. This construct refers to a state of emotional, psychological, and physical exhaustion that emerges as a result of chronic dissatisfaction and repeated failures in fulfilling emotional and relational expectations within marriage. Individuals experiencing marital burnout often report emotional detachment, hopelessness toward the marital relationship, decreased intimacy, chronic fatigue, and feelings of helplessness regarding conflict resolution. Research findings suggest that marital burnout is associated with reduced marital satisfaction, impaired communication patterns, emotional disengagement, and increased psychological vulnerability among spouses (Koçyiğit & Uzun, 2024; Sabetro et al., 2023). Women with family problems are particularly vulnerable to marital burnout because they are often exposed to multiple interpersonal stressors, emotional demands, and family role pressures simultaneously.

One of the factors consistently associated with marital burnout is perceived stress and the inability to regulate emotional responses effectively. Studies have shown that increased psychological stress reduces emotional resilience and weakens adaptive coping strategies in marital relationships. In this regard, mindfulness has been identified as a protective psychological factor capable of reducing the

adverse effects of stress on marital functioning. Alipour and Heidari Nasab demonstrated that mindfulness and ego strength significantly mediate the relationship between perceived stress and marital burnout, indicating that individuals with higher mindfulness skills experience lower levels of emotional exhaustion within marital relationships (Alipour & Heidari Nasab, 2024; Alipour & Heydarinasab, 2023). Similarly, Teimoori and Ghamari found that mindfulness, psychological well-being, and cognitive flexibility significantly predicted marital burnout among couples attending counseling centers, highlighting the role of mindful awareness in improving interpersonal adaptation and emotional functioning (Teimoori & Ghamari, 2022).

Mindfulness refers to purposeful, nonjudgmental attention to present-moment experiences and internal psychological states. Individuals with higher mindfulness skills are better able to regulate emotions, manage stress, and respond adaptively to interpersonal challenges. Mindfulness-based approaches emphasize conscious awareness of thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations without avoidance or excessive emotional reactivity. This process enables individuals to reduce automatic cognitive distortions, maladaptive emotional responses, and dysfunctional interpersonal behaviors. Previous studies have consistently shown that mindfulness contributes to emotional regulation, interpersonal intimacy, and psychological adjustment in marital relationships (Dehghan et al., 2019; Shoghi et al., 2023).

The relationship between mindfulness and marital functioning has attracted considerable attention in contemporary psychological research. Dehghan, Lavasani, and Madani reported that mindfulness plays a mediating role in the relationship between relational beliefs and marital burnout. Their findings suggested that higher mindfulness reduces dysfunctional cognitive patterns and improves emotional awareness, thereby decreasing emotional exhaustion in marital relationships (Dehghan et al., 2019). Likewise, Koçyiğit and Uzun found that mindfulness and emotion regulation serially mediated the relationship between couple burnout and marital satisfaction, emphasizing the importance of mindful emotional processing in maintaining healthy intimate relationships (Koçyiğit & Uzun, 2024). Furthermore, Salah and colleagues demonstrated that mindfulness significantly predicts marital conflicts among couples experiencing extra-

marital relationship problems, indicating that mindful awareness may reduce interpersonal tension and improve conflict management (Salah et al., 2024).

Another major psychological difficulty commonly observed among women with family problems is social anxiety. Social anxiety refers to persistent fear and discomfort in social situations in which individuals anticipate negative evaluation, criticism, or rejection by others. Individuals with social anxiety often experience excessive self-consciousness, avoidance of interpersonal interactions, fear of embarrassment, and heightened physiological arousal in social contexts. Social anxiety can substantially impair interpersonal relationships, emotional intimacy, and daily functioning. Married women experiencing family conflicts may become increasingly socially withdrawn due to feelings of inadequacy, emotional insecurity, and fear of negative judgment from others. Such psychological difficulties may further intensify marital dissatisfaction and emotional isolation (Öztekin, 2024; Zhong et al., 2024).

Recent evidence indicates that mindfulness is closely associated with reduced levels of social anxiety and improved self-regulation. Zhong and colleagues demonstrated that mindfulness negatively correlates with social evaluation anxiety and impulsive behavior, suggesting that mindful awareness enhances self-regulatory capacities and reduces maladaptive emotional reactions in socially stressful situations (Zhong et al., 2024). Similarly, Öztekin reported that mindfulness mediates the relationship between social anxiety and subjective well-being among adolescents, indicating that mindful awareness can alleviate emotional distress and loneliness associated with social anxiety (Öztekin, 2024). These findings emphasize the importance of mindfulness-based interventions in reducing maladaptive cognitive and emotional patterns related to social anxiety.

Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy is considered one of the most effective third-wave psychological interventions for improving emotional regulation and reducing psychological distress. This therapeutic approach integrates cognitive therapy techniques with mindfulness practices in order to increase present-moment awareness, reduce cognitive rumination, and modify maladaptive thought patterns. Unlike traditional cognitive approaches that primarily focus on changing the content of thoughts, mindfulness-based cognitive therapy emphasizes changing individuals' relationships with their thoughts and emotions through nonjudgmental awareness and acceptance. This approach helps individuals disengage from automatic

negative thinking patterns and develop more adaptive emotional responses to stressful situations (Eaton et al., 2024; Shen et al., 2024).

Several empirical studies have confirmed the effectiveness of mindfulness-based cognitive therapy in improving marital and psychological functioning. Kalhor and colleagues found that mindfulness-based cognitive therapy significantly reduced marital burnout and dysfunctional attitudes among women with marital conflict, suggesting that mindfulness interventions improve emotional adjustment and reduce cognitive rigidity within marital relationships (Akram Kalhor et al., 2020; A. Kalhor et al., 2020). Zarastvand and colleagues also demonstrated that mindfulness-based cognitive therapy improved marital self-regulation and reduced marital burnout and self-criticism among infertile women (Zarastvand et al., 2020). Moreover, Tokhali and Mohammadzadeh Qorbanqoli reported that mindfulness-based therapy improved social capital and mental health among women with marital conflicts attending counseling centers, highlighting the broader psychosocial benefits of mindfulness interventions (Tokhali & Mohammadzadeh Qorbanqoli, 2025).

In addition to marital functioning, mindfulness-based interventions have shown substantial effectiveness in reducing social anxiety symptoms across different populations. Sukmawati and colleagues reported that mindfulness therapy and cognitive behavioral therapy significantly reduced social anxiety among adolescents, indicating that mindfulness-based approaches can improve emotional coping and interpersonal confidence in socially stressful contexts (Sukmawati et al., 2023). Dones and colleagues, in a systematic review and meta-analysis, concluded that mindfulness-based interventions were highly effective in reducing adolescent social anxiety and could serve as an important alternative or complementary treatment to cognitive behavioral therapy (Dones et al., 2024). Likewise, Hazrati and Abdi found that mindfulness-based cognitive behavioral therapy significantly improved social anxiety, self-efficacy, and quality of life among adults with stuttering (Hazrati & Abdi, 2024). Taheri also demonstrated that mindfulness-based cognitive therapy effectively reduced social anxiety and loneliness among adolescents, further supporting the therapeutic value of mindfulness-oriented interventions in socially anxious populations (Taheri, 2025).

The theoretical mechanisms underlying the effectiveness of mindfulness-based cognitive therapy may explain its impact on both marital burnout and social anxiety

simultaneously. Mindfulness practices increase emotional awareness, attentional control, cognitive flexibility, and acceptance of internal experiences. These processes reduce rumination, emotional avoidance, and maladaptive interpersonal reactions that often contribute to marital dissatisfaction and social fear. Furthermore, mindfulness promotes empathy, emotional intimacy, and adaptive communication patterns, which may improve marital interactions and decrease emotional exhaustion. The intervention also strengthens self-regulation capacities and reduces automatic negative evaluations in social situations, thereby alleviating social anxiety symptoms (Shoghi et al., 2023; Zhong et al., 2024).

Despite the growing body of evidence regarding mindfulness-based interventions, relatively few studies have simultaneously examined the effectiveness of mindfulness-based cognitive therapy on both marital burnout and social anxiety among married women with family problems. Given the psychological vulnerability of this population and the increasing prevalence of marital conflicts and emotional distress among couples, identifying effective therapeutic approaches remains clinically important. Additionally, cultural and interpersonal factors may influence the manifestation of marital burnout and social anxiety among Iranian women, necessitating further research within this sociocultural context (Dehghanidowlatabadi et al., 2025; Salah et al., 2024). Therefore, the present study was conducted to determine the effectiveness of mindfulness-based cognitive therapy on marital burnout and social anxiety among married women with family problems.

2. Methods and Materials

2.1. Study design and Participant

The present study employed a quasi-experimental design consisting of an experimental group and a control group. The statistical population included married women with family problems who referred to counseling centers in Tehran in 2024. Using the convenience sampling method, 30 married women with family problems who obtained high scores on the marital burnout and social anxiety questionnaires were selected. The participants were then randomly assigned into two groups: an experimental group (15 participants) and a control group (15 participants). Data were collected using the Marital Burnout Questionnaire and the Social Anxiety Scale. Subsequently, the experimental group received eight 2-hour sessions of mindfulness-based cognitive therapy, while the control group received no specific intervention.

2.2. Measures

The Couple Burnout Measure (CBM) is a self-report instrument designed to assess the degree of marital burnout among couples. The CBM was adapted from another self-report instrument used to measure burnout (BM). The CBM was developed by Ayala Pines in 1996. Evaluation of the reliability coefficient of the CBM demonstrated an internal consistency ranging from .84 to .90. The validity of the CBM has been confirmed through negative correlations with positive relational characteristics such as positive attitudes toward the relationship, quality of communication, sense of security, self-actualization, sense of purposefulness, emotional attraction toward the spouse, and quality of sexual relationship. Navidi (2005) administered the questionnaire to a sample of 240 participants in order to calculate reliability and reported a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .86. In another study examining the validity of the CBM, the instrument was correlated with the ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire, yielding a correlation coefficient of $-.40$, which was statistically significant at $p < .001$. In the present study, the reliability of the Marital Burnout Questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, which was .96 for the total scale.

The Social Anxiety Scale consists of 16 items scored on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "Completely like me" (5) to "Completely unlike me" (1). Total scores range from 16 to 80, with a cutoff score of 48. The psychometric properties of the Social Anxiety Scale in Iran were examined by Estavar and Razavieh (2013). The results of factor analysis confirmed the existence of three factors. Test-retest reliability was used to assess reliability, and the test-retest coefficient for the total questionnaire was reported as .88. Additionally, Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the factors ranged from .74 to .84.

2.3. Intervention

The mindfulness-based cognitive therapy intervention was implemented in eight weekly sessions, each lasting approximately 2 hours, for the participants in the experimental group. The treatment protocol was designed based on the principles of mindfulness training and cognitive therapy, with the aim of increasing present-moment awareness, reducing automatic negative thoughts, improving emotional regulation, and enhancing adaptive coping strategies in interpersonal and social situations. During the initial sessions, participants were introduced to the concepts of mindfulness, conscious awareness, and nonjudgmental

acceptance of thoughts and emotions. Breathing awareness exercises, body scan techniques, and mindful attention practices were conducted to strengthen attentional control and self-awareness. In the middle sessions, participants were trained to identify dysfunctional cognitions and maladaptive emotional responses associated with marital dissatisfaction and social anxiety. Cognitive restructuring techniques, mindfulness of emotions, and strategies for disengaging from ruminative and self-critical thought patterns were practiced. In the final sessions, emphasis was placed on integrating mindfulness skills into daily life, improving interpersonal communication, managing stressful family interactions, and preventing relapse. Homework assignments and daily mindfulness exercises were provided throughout the intervention process to facilitate the generalization of therapeutic skills to real-life situations.

2.4. Data Analysis

Data analysis was performed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 27. Descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, were used to summarize the data. The normality of data distribution was assessed using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test. To examine the effectiveness of mindfulness-based cognitive therapy on marital burnout and social anxiety, univariate analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was employed while controlling for pre-test scores. The significance level for all statistical analyses was considered at $p < .05$.

3. Findings and Results

Table 1 indicates that the mean and standard deviation of marital burnout and social anxiety changed from pre-test to post-test in the statistical sample.

Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations of Pre-test and Post-test Scores for Marital Burnout and Social Anxiety

Variables	Group	Pre-test Mean	Pre-test SD	Post-test Mean	Post-test SD
Marital Burnout	Control	54.57	7.86	53.35	7.68
	Experimental	53.37	7.31	42.17	6.38
Social Anxiety	Control	50.45	6.68	52.68	6.56
	Experimental	49.78	6.45	39.38	5.74

The results of the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test indicated that the distribution of data in both research groups and in both conditions (pre-test and post-test) was normal ($p > .05$).

Therefore, parametric tests could be used to examine the research hypotheses.

Table 2

Results of Univariate Analysis of Covariance for Examining Differences Between the Two Groups in Marital Burnout

Variable	Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Significance	Eta Squared
Marital Burnout	Pre-test	1286.68	1	1286.68	29.53	.001	.57
	Group	1954.54	1	1954.54	32.78	.001	.59
	Error	922.86	27	34.18			
	Total	45273.32	29				

The results of the analysis of covariance presented in Table 2 indicate that after controlling for pre-test scores, the effect of group membership on post-test marital burnout scores was significant. Specifically, following mindfulness-based cognitive therapy, marital burnout scores in the

intervention group decreased significantly compared to the control group. Therefore, mindfulness-based cognitive therapy was effective in reducing marital burnout among married women with family problems.

Table 3*Results of Univariate Analysis of Covariance for Examining Differences Between the Two Groups in Social Anxiety*

Variable	Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Significance	Eta Squared
Social Anxiety	Pre-test	2214.86	1	2214.86	35.53	.001	.59
	Group	2537.12	1	2537.12	38.14	.001	.56
	Error	1868.35	27	69.19			
	Total	56542.78	29				

The results of the analysis of covariance presented in Table 3 indicate that after controlling for pre-test scores, the effect of group membership on post-test social anxiety scores was significant. Specifically, following mindfulness-based cognitive therapy, social anxiety scores in the intervention group decreased significantly compared to the control group. Therefore, mindfulness-based cognitive therapy was effective in reducing social anxiety among married women with family problems.

4. Discussion

The present study was conducted to investigate the effectiveness of mindfulness-based cognitive therapy on marital burnout and social anxiety among married women with family problems. The findings demonstrated that mindfulness-based cognitive therapy significantly reduced marital burnout in the experimental group compared to the control group. Furthermore, the results indicated that the intervention significantly decreased social anxiety among participants receiving mindfulness-based cognitive therapy. These findings suggest that mindfulness-oriented interventions can effectively improve both interpersonal and psychological functioning among women experiencing family-related difficulties and emotional distress.

One of the principal findings of the present study was the significant reduction in marital burnout following mindfulness-based cognitive therapy. This finding is consistent with previous research emphasizing the protective role of mindfulness in marital relationships and emotional functioning. Koçyiğit and Uzun demonstrated that mindfulness and emotion regulation significantly mediate the relationship between couple burnout and marital satisfaction, indicating that mindful awareness can reduce emotional exhaustion and improve relational quality (Koçyiğit & Uzun, 2024). Similarly, Alipour and Heidari Nasab reported that mindfulness mediates the relationship between perceived stress and marital burnout, suggesting that individuals with higher mindfulness skills experience lower levels of emotional fatigue and relational distress (Alipour & Heidari Nasab, 2024; Alipour & Heydarinasab,

2023). The findings of the present study are also aligned with the results of Kalhor and colleagues, who found that mindfulness-based cognitive therapy significantly reduced marital burnout among women with marital conflict (Akram Kalhor et al., 2020; A. Kalhor et al., 2020). Likewise, Zarastvand and colleagues observed that mindfulness-based cognitive therapy improved marital self-regulation and reduced marital burnout in infertile women (Zarastvand et al., 2020).

The effectiveness of mindfulness-based cognitive therapy in reducing marital burnout may be explained through several psychological mechanisms. Marital burnout often develops when chronic interpersonal stress, emotional dissatisfaction, and unresolved relational conflicts accumulate over time and exceed an individual's coping resources. Women with family problems frequently experience persistent emotional strain, maladaptive communication patterns, self-criticism, and cognitive rumination, all of which intensify emotional exhaustion within marital relationships. Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy helps individuals become aware of their emotional reactions and automatic cognitive processes without judgment or avoidance. This increased awareness enables participants to disengage from maladaptive cognitive cycles and respond more adaptively to interpersonal stressors. Through mindfulness exercises such as breathing awareness, body scanning, and nonjudgmental observation of thoughts, individuals gradually develop greater emotional regulation and cognitive flexibility, which may reduce emotional exhaustion and improve marital functioning (Dehghan et al., 2019; Shoghi et al., 2023).

Another explanation for the reduction in marital burnout relates to the role of mindfulness in improving interpersonal intimacy and emotional communication. Marital burnout is commonly associated with emotional distancing, reduced empathy, and ineffective conflict management. Mindfulness enhances present-moment awareness and empathic responsiveness, allowing individuals to become more attentive to their partners' emotional needs and interpersonal interactions. Dehghanidowlatabadi and colleagues

demonstrated that interpersonal mindfulness moderates the relationship between marital conflict and marital intimacy among married individuals, suggesting that mindfulness facilitates emotional closeness and adaptive relational functioning (Dehghanidowlatabadi et al., 2025). Similarly, Salah and colleagues found that mindfulness significantly predicts marital conflicts among couples facing extra-marital relationship difficulties, indicating that mindfulness may reduce interpersonal tensions and improve relational stability (Salah et al., 2024). Therefore, mindfulness-based cognitive therapy may reduce marital burnout by increasing emotional awareness, promoting acceptance, and improving interpersonal responsiveness in marital relationships.

The present findings also revealed that mindfulness-based cognitive therapy significantly reduced social anxiety among married women with family problems. This finding is consistent with a growing body of literature supporting the effectiveness of mindfulness-oriented interventions in reducing social anxiety symptoms. Dones and colleagues, in a systematic review and meta-analysis, concluded that mindfulness-based interventions significantly reduced social anxiety and improved emotional functioning among adolescents (Dones et al., 2024). Likewise, Sukmawati and colleagues demonstrated that mindfulness therapy and cognitive behavioral therapy effectively reduced social anxiety levels among adolescents (Sukmawati et al., 2023). Hazrati and Abdi also reported that mindfulness-based cognitive behavioral therapy significantly improved social anxiety, self-efficacy, and quality of life among adults with stuttering (Hazrati & Abdi, 2024). Furthermore, Taheri found that mindfulness-based cognitive therapy significantly reduced social anxiety and loneliness among adolescents (Taheri, 2025).

The reduction in social anxiety observed in the present study may be explained by the cognitive and emotional processes targeted by mindfulness-based cognitive therapy. Social anxiety is often characterized by excessive self-focused attention, fear of negative evaluation, emotional avoidance, and heightened physiological arousal during social interactions. Individuals with social anxiety tend to engage in repetitive negative thinking and catastrophic interpretations of interpersonal situations. Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy reduces these maladaptive processes by encouraging individuals to observe their thoughts and emotions without overidentifying with them. Instead of attempting to suppress anxious thoughts or avoid social situations, participants learn to accept internal experiences with openness and nonjudgmental awareness. This process

weakens the automatic relationship between anxious cognitions and emotional reactivity, thereby reducing the intensity of social anxiety symptoms (Öztekin, 2024; Zhong et al., 2024).

Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy may also reduce social anxiety by strengthening self-regulation capacities and attentional control. Zhong and colleagues demonstrated that mindfulness is negatively associated with social evaluation anxiety and impulsive behavior, suggesting that mindful awareness enhances emotional self-regulation and adaptive coping in stressful social contexts (Zhong et al., 2024). Similarly, Öztekin found that mindfulness mediates the relationship between social anxiety and subjective well-being, indicating that mindful awareness may buffer the negative emotional consequences of social anxiety (Öztekin, 2024). In the present study, participants who received mindfulness-based cognitive therapy likely developed improved attentional control and emotional acceptance, which reduced their tendency toward self-critical thinking and excessive concern about social judgment. Consequently, these individuals may have experienced greater confidence and emotional stability during interpersonal interactions.

The findings of the present study can also be interpreted within the broader theoretical framework of third-wave cognitive-behavioral therapies. Unlike traditional cognitive therapies that focus primarily on challenging the content of dysfunctional thoughts, mindfulness-based cognitive therapy emphasizes changing individuals' relationships with their thoughts and emotions. This therapeutic perspective encourages participants to view thoughts as transient mental events rather than objective truths requiring emotional reaction. Such cognitive decentering may be particularly beneficial for women experiencing marital stress and social anxiety because these difficulties are often maintained through maladaptive cognitive schemas, self-criticism, and emotional avoidance. Eaton and colleagues emphasized that mindfulness and cognitive interventions improve psychological adjustment and adaptive functioning through enhanced emotional processing and cognitive awareness (Eaton et al., 2024). Similarly, Shen and colleagues highlighted the importance of mindfulness-based approaches in promoting adaptive behavioral and emotional changes in psychologically distressed populations (Shen et al., 2024).

The present findings further suggest that mindfulness-based cognitive therapy may have broad implications for improving overall psychological health among married women with family problems. Family conflicts and chronic

relational stress often affect multiple dimensions of mental health simultaneously, including emotional regulation, self-esteem, interpersonal functioning, and psychological well-being. Because mindfulness-based interventions target fundamental cognitive and emotional processes, they may contribute to comprehensive psychological improvement rather than symptom reduction alone. Tokhali and Mohammadzadeh Qorbanqoli found that mindfulness-based therapy improved social capital and mental health among women with marital conflicts, indicating that mindfulness interventions may positively influence broader psychosocial functioning (Tokhali & Mohammadzadeh Qorbanqoli, 2025). Similarly, Teimoori and Ghamari demonstrated that mindfulness significantly predicts marital burnout and psychological well-being among couples attending counseling centers (Teimoori & Ghamari, 2022).

Another important aspect of the present findings relates to the mediating role of mindfulness itself in psychological adaptation. Several previous studies have emphasized that mindfulness contributes to cognitive flexibility, wisdom, emotional awareness, and adaptive coping. Shoghi and colleagues found that mindfulness mediates the relationship between cognitive abilities and wisdom in students, highlighting the role of mindfulness in facilitating higher-order psychological functioning (Shoghi et al., 2023). Similarly, Sabetro and colleagues demonstrated that mindfulness mediates the relationship between psychological flexibility and marital burnout among teachers, suggesting that mindfulness reduces emotional exhaustion through enhanced adaptive coping capacities (Sabetro et al., 2023). These findings support the assumption that mindfulness-based cognitive therapy may reduce both marital burnout and social anxiety by improving psychological flexibility and emotional resilience.

5. Conclusion

Overall, the findings of the present study provide strong evidence for the effectiveness of mindfulness-based cognitive therapy in reducing marital burnout and social anxiety among married women with family problems. The intervention appears to improve emotional regulation, reduce maladaptive cognitive processes, enhance interpersonal functioning, and promote psychological flexibility. Considering the increasing prevalence of family conflicts and emotional distress among couples, mindfulness-based cognitive therapy may serve as an

effective and accessible psychological intervention for improving both marital and individual well-being.

6. Limitations and Suggestions

One of the limitations of the present study was the relatively small sample size, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to broader populations. In addition, the participants were selected using convenience sampling from counseling centers in Tehran, and therefore the results may not be representative of all married women experiencing family problems. Another limitation was the use of self-report questionnaires, which may be influenced by response biases and participants' subjective perceptions. Furthermore, the absence of a long-term follow-up period prevented the evaluation of the durability and stability of treatment effects over time.

Future research is recommended to examine the long-term effectiveness of mindfulness-based cognitive therapy through follow-up assessments conducted several months after intervention completion. Researchers may also compare mindfulness-based cognitive therapy with other psychological interventions such as acceptance and commitment therapy, emotion-focused therapy, and schema therapy in order to identify the most effective approaches for reducing marital burnout and social anxiety. It is also suggested that future studies investigate the moderating roles of demographic and psychological variables such as personality traits, attachment styles, emotional intelligence, and coping strategies in treatment outcomes. Expanding research to different cultural contexts and larger clinical populations may further improve the external validity of findings.

The findings of the present study have important practical implications for counselors, psychologists, and family therapists working with married women experiencing family problems. Counseling centers and mental health clinics may incorporate mindfulness-based cognitive therapy into marital counseling and psychological support programs in order to reduce emotional distress and improve interpersonal functioning. Training programs focusing on mindfulness skills, emotional awareness, stress management, and adaptive communication strategies may help couples strengthen emotional intimacy and reduce chronic relational conflicts. Educational workshops and preventive interventions based on mindfulness principles may also contribute to improving psychological well-being and

reducing social anxiety among vulnerable women within the community.

Authors' Contributions

Authors equally contributed to this article.

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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