

Prediction of tendency to extramarital relationships based on early maladaptive schemas and social support in women

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Abstract

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Introduction: Extramarital relationship is one of the most critical threats to the stability of marital relations and one of the main reasons for divorce in different cultures. Early maladaptive schemas and social support affect the quality of marital relationships and the tendency to extramarital relationships. The present study aimed to investigate the role of early maladaptive schemas and social support in predicting couples' tendency to extramarital relationships.

Methods: This study is a survey and correlation study. The statistical population of the present study was women who were referred to counseling centers in Tehran's district 6 in the second half of 2019, from which a sample of 200 people was randomly selected in a multi-stage sampling. Tendency to extramarital relationship, social support, and early maladaptive schemas questionnaires were used for data collection. Correlation and multiple regression were used to analyze the data in this research. Data were analyzed using SPSS-24.

Results: The findings revealed that a linear combination of predictive variables could predict the tendency to extramarital relationship. Based on regression analysis, 24% of the variance of tendency to extramarital relationship is predictable with the predictive variables (early maladaptive schemas and social support) ($P < 0.001$).

Conclusion: Considering the relationship between early maladaptive schemas and social support with a tendency to extramarital relationship, it is suggested that by identifying and challenging the early maladaptive schemas and increasing the amount of social support, the necessary ground be provided to increase couples' understanding and reduce the tendency to extramarital relationship.

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Extended Abstract

Introduction

Extramarital relationship is one of the most critical threats to the stability of marital relations and one of the main reasons for divorce in different cultures. Extramarital relationship is a phenomenon that often occurs due

to the fulfillment of a person's emotional or sexual needs through relationships outside of marriage. Research has shown that one of the factors influencing the Tendency to extramarital relationship is early maladaptive schemas.

Early maladaptive schemas are memories, emotions, bodily sensations, and cognitions that are formed in the mind at the beginning of development and are repeated throughout life, and affect the way of interprets experiences and relationships with others. Another factor that plays a role in the tendency to extramarital relationship is social support. Social support is one of the most important sources of protection, which refers to the perception of comfort, care, and assistance to the individual or group. In couple's relationships, social support acts as a shock absorber and a means of relieving psychological distress. Extramarital affairs are one of the main reasons for divorce and marriage breakdown. Due to the importance of the above and considering the research background, the present study was conducted to investigate the role of early maladaptive schemas and social support in predicting the Tendency to extramarital relationships of couples.

Methods

The research method was descriptive correlational in which the relationship between research variables is analyzed. In this study, the tendency to extramarital relationships was used as criterion variables, and early maladaptive schemas and social support were used as predictive variables. The statistical population of this study included all women referred to counseling centers in Tehran's district 6 in the second half of 2019, which was about 2000 people. The minimum sample required for correlation research is 200 people. Two hundred people (100 females and 100 males) were selected from the statistical population using a multi-stage random sampling method. For this purpose, at first, six centers were selected from the districts of Tehran, four centers from this district, and 55 people from each center. After reviewing the questionnaire, 20 incomplete questionnaires were filled out, which were excluded from the research and the final sample included 200 questionnaires. The criteria for entering the research included obtaining

informed consent to participate and knowledge about the research goals. Also, the criteria for exclusion included a history of psychiatric disorder, physical illness, and disability affecting a person's life. Moreover, to adhere to ethical principles of research, the researcher introduced himself, explained the research objectives, and received informed consent from the participants. Notably, participation in the research was voluntary, and the subjects were ensured of the confidentiality terms regarding their personal information., Drigotas et al.'s tendency to extramarital affairs questionnaire, Young early maladaptive schemas questionnaire, and Vaux et al.'s social support were used to measure the research variables. Data analysis was performed by descriptive statistical methods (mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage), Pearson correlation, and multiple regression by SPSS-24 software. (In multiple regression, multivariate normality is one of the essential assumptions that must be considered. The normality of data distribution was checked using Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistical test. In this study, a significance level of less than 0.05 was considered.

Results

In this study, the mean and standard deviation of the age of the subjects were 27.48 and 6.28, respectively. In terms of education, 148 people had diplomas, 12 had associate's degree, 35 had bachelor's degrees, and five had master's degrees. In terms of the duration of marriage, 126 persons (1-10 years), 38 persons (11-20 years), and 36 persons (21-39 years) had been married. To ensure that the data of this study meet the basis of regression analysis, the normality of data distribution was checked and confirmed using Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistical test ($P < 0.05$). The significance of Wilks' Lambda demonstrated a significant relationship between the tendency to extramarital relationship variables and the early maladaptive schemas and social support ($F = 75.38$, $\lambda = 0.76$, and $P < 0.001$). In

other words, the early maladaptive schemas and social support had a significant correlation with the tendency to extramarital relationships of couples. Moreover, the model presented in the current research explained 24% of the variance of the early maladaptive schemas and social support (in the role of the predictor) and the tendency to extramarital relationships (in the role of criterion variable). According to the simultaneous multiple regression results, the multiple correlation coefficient for the linear composition of the early maladaptive schemas and social support with the tendency to extramarital relationships was estimated at $R=0.48$, and the coefficient of determination was calculated at $R^2=0.24$. In addition, F related to the multiple correlations obtained was equal to 28.56, which was significant at $P<0.001$. According to the calculated coefficient of determination, about 24% of the variance of the tendency to extramarital relationships variable could be predicted by predictors of the early maladaptive schemas and social support. In other words, early maladaptive schemas and social support predicted the tendency to extramarital relationships of couples. As observed, the beta of all variables is significant ($P<0.001$). However, the mistrust/abuse scheme had the highest prediction ability ($\beta=0.45$).

Conclusion

According to the present study results, early maladaptive schemas and social support predicted the tendency to extramarital relationships. Given that extramarital relationship is one of the main reasons for divorce. So it is suggested that workshops and training sessions be held to increase youth awareness of these issues. Also, counselors and therapists consider the importance of social support and early maladaptive in increasing couples' agreement and reducing damage to the family. Similar to other studies performed in the field of behavioral sciences, there were some limitations in the present study. For instance, it

was correlational research, which means that we were unable to determine the causal relations. It is recommended that qualitative methods be used in future studies to enrich the findings in the field. Another limitation of this study is that since the subjects of this study were limited to women referred to counseling centers in Tehran's district 6 in the second half of 2019, the generalization of the results to other student should be made with caution. Therefore, it is suggested that other similar studies be conducted with different occupational groups in other cities and various cultures to increase the generalizability of the results.

Ethical Considerations

Compliance with ethical guidelines

All participants received information about the study. They were assured that all information would remain confidential and would only be used for research purposes. For privacy reasons, the subjects' details were not recorded. The participants signed the informed consent form and had the right to leave the study at any time.

Authors' contributions

Both authors were involved in topic selection, study design, concept definition, and data collection and analysis, and writing and drafting of the article. The article's final version was also studied and approved by both authors.

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Conflict of interest

The author declared no Conflict of Interest.