

Research paper

The Moderating Role of Emotional Blackmail in the Relationship between Schema Modes and Quality of Marital Life

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to investigate the moderating role of emotional blackmail in the relationship between schema modes and quality of marital life. The research method was descriptive-correlational. The statistical population of the study included all married female employees in a Pharmaceutical Company in Tehran in 2020, numbering 226 people that Using a census method, and according to the criteria of the study, a sample of 205 people was selected. The research instruments included a questionnaire of Schema mode of Young, Perceived Relationship Quality Components of Fletcher, Simpson and Thomas and Rahmat's Emotional Blackmail Inventory. Relationships between variables were tested by Pearson correlation test and research model using structural equation modeling technique. Based on the findings of the present study, the moderating role of emotional blackmail in the relationship between schema modes and quality of marital life was confirmed.

Keywords: Emotional blackmail, quality of marital life, schema modes

Introduction

The effect that the quality of marital life has on the physical and mental health of family members, including children, as well as various aspects of their individual and social life, indicates its importance (Nejati, 2017). In studies on marital conflicts and divorce, in addition to social, cultural, legal, economic and psychological factors, the effective role of schemas has also been mentioned (Molayem Raftar, et al., 2019) Schema modes are "compatible or incompatible schemas or functions that are currently activated in an individual's information processing system." These schemas are often triggered in situations to which we are very sensitive. For this reason, in relationships between couples, these schemas affect the importance, attitude and function of the relationship (Young, et al., 2003). Existing studies on the quality of marital life and schemas have focused more on how to improve the quality of marital life through schema therapy (Barzegaran, et al., 2021), And little attention has been paid to identifying some factors that may affect the strength and weakness of this relationship. One of the influential factors in the strength and weakness of this relationship is emotional blackmail; Emotional blackmail is a very effective form of exploitation in which a person's relatives threaten him or her directly or indirectly, to punish them, if they not comply according to their wishes (Lin, et al., 2020). Emotional blackmail, like schematic mindsets, is rooted in a person's childhood experiences and is based on beliefs that parents have inadvertently and unknowingly instilled in them (Karnani, et al., 2019). Obviously, it looks good in one of the strongest human relationships, the marital relationship. Given the importance of quality of

marital life in the physical and psychological health of couples, it is necessary to do more research to identify factors that interfere with the quality of marital life in order to provide solutions. therefore, the main hypothesis of the present study is that there is a significant relationship between schema modes and quality of marital life considering the moderating role of emotional blackmail.

Method

The research method was descriptive-correlational. The statistical population of the study included all married female employees Who were working in Minoo Pharmaceutical Company in 2020. Due to the prevalence of corona pandemic and the impossibility of face-to-face access to the sample, as well as the limited number of participants, the census method was adopted and the online submission method was used to complete the questionnaires. Thus, 226 questionnaires were sent to all married female employees, and finally 205 people answered the questionnaires, which were considered as a sample. The relationships between the variables were tested by Pearson correlation test and the research model was structural equation modeling technique.

The tools in research were as follows:

Schema Modes Questionnaire (SMQ): This questionnaire was developed by Young, et al. (2007) to measure 14 schema subjectivities that have 124 items and have a 6-point Likert scale (from never = 1 to always = 6). The internal consistency coefficient of the subscales in this study was between 0.76 to 0.96

Perceived Relationship Quality Components Questionnaire (PRQC): This questionnaire developed by Fletcher, et al., (2000) has 18 items in the dimensions of satisfaction, commitment, intimacy, trust, passion and love. Fletcher, et al. (2000) showed the optimal reliability of this questionnaire with Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.85.

Emotional Blackmail Inventory: This questionnaire was developed by Rahmat (2020) which has 72 items related to the three components of fear, obligation and guilt, the validity confirmed by factor analysis and the reliability by the retest method for the total scores was 0.96.

Results

Pearson correlation showed that there is a significant relationship between the total score of the three main variables of schema mentality, emotional blackmail and marital quality of life ($p < 0.05$). Figure 1 shows the model in the form of standard coefficients.

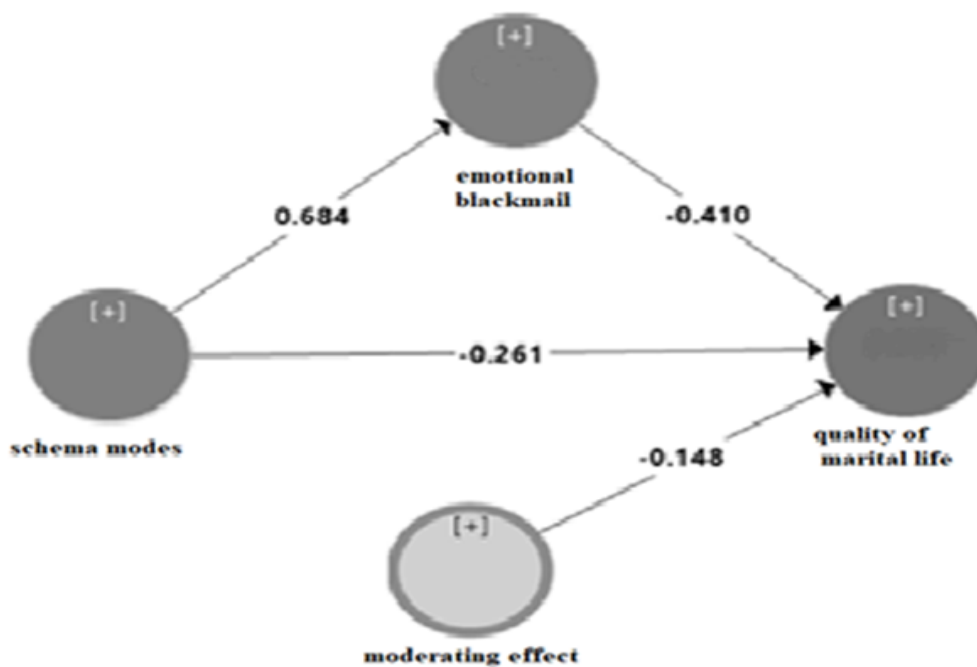


Figure 1. Structural equation model in standard coefficient mode

Table 1 shows that emotional blackmail plays a moderating role in the relationship between schema mindsets and marital quality of life ($p < 0.05$).

Table 1: Structural model coefficient test: standardized coefficients, t value and significance level

Impacts	Standardized coefficient	t value	P value	Result
The effect of schema mentalities on emotional blackmail	0.68	16.44	<0.001	confirmation
The effect of emotional ransom on the quality of married life	- 0.41	4.80	<0.001	confirmation
The effect of schema mentalities on the quality of married life	- 0.26	3.97	<0.001	confirmation
The moderating effect of emotional blackmail	- 0.14	2.06	0.04	confirmation

Discussion and Conclusion

The results showed that emotional blackmail has a significant moderating role between schema modes and quality of marital life. it can be said that, some people, as a result of negative childhood experiences, create unhealthy schema modes that affect their way of thinking, feeling and behaving in their relationships. Emotional blackmail, which is influenced by dysfunctional schema modes, in turn threatens marital relationships between couples over time.

The limitation of the statistical population, which included married women in a given period of time and in a pharmaceutical company, limits the generalizations of the findings, Therefore, it is recommended that the study be performed on married men. It is also suggested that mental health professionals hold workshops and seminars for the benefit of couples and girls and boys about to get married in the field of recognizing and controlling schema modes and emotional blackmail to improve the quality of married life.

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Conflicts of Interest

Authors found no conflict of interests.



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