

Association of Primary Maladaptive Schemas and Sexual Intimacy with Emotional Divorce (Case Study: The Couples of Quchan)

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ABSTRACT:

Purpose: The current research investigates the relation of primary maladaptive schemas and sexual intimacy with emotional divorce in couples in Quchan. **Method:** This research is a basic research whose method is descriptive correlational. Its statistical population included all the couples who had not been married for 10 years and been referred to comprehensive health service centers in Qochan in 2021 to receive family counseling. They were selected by sampling at convenience (301 people). Information was collected through short-form questionnaires of Yang's early maladaptive schema (1990), the sexual intimacy of Botlani et al. (2019), and Gutman's emotional divorce (2008). Multiple regression analysis was used for data analysis and SPSS-26 software in all statistical analyses of the research. **Findings:** As the main hypothesis of the research reveals, initial maladaptive schemas (social isolation, defect/shame/abandonment, obedience, insufficient self-discipline, self-sacrifice, dependency/incompetence), and sexual intimacy are associated with the emotional divorce of Quchan's couples. The results of the first sub-hypothesis of the research also showed that only the schemas of social isolation, defect/shame/abandonment, obedience, insufficient self-discipline, self-sacrifice, and dependency/incompetence among the fourteen primary maladaptive schemas were related to the emotional divorce of couples in Quchan. Furthermore, there is a significant negative relationship between sexual intimacy and emotional divorce in the couples of Quchan.

Conclusion: As the results show, the variables of initial maladaptive schemas and sexual intimacy played an important and effective role in predicting the emotional divorce of couples in Quchan. Therefore, initial maladaptive schemas and sexual intimacy should be taught to couples through educational workshops to reduce the emotional divorce of couples.

Keywords: Emotional divorce, Primary maladaptive schemas, Sexual intimacy

INTRODUCTION:

The family is the first and the most unique social institution. The health and well-being of a society depends on the health and satisfaction of its members, and the influence of no other institution or relationship has such deep and intense durability (Goldenberg and Goldenberg, 2012). A family's performance can be a key factor in creating dissatisfaction and increasing the present and future risks in facing adverse events and conditions. Emotional divorce is one of the most important marital problems (Zubrick, Silburn, and De Maio, 2006).

Divorce among couples is one of the most important family traumas that lead to personal, family, and social collapse and has more negative effects for women than for men (Mousaei, Tavasoli, and Mehrara, 2011). Divorce increases the risk of disease (Bloom, Asher & White, 1978; Björkenstam, Hallqvist, Dalman & Ljung, 2013) and the risk of early death (Sbarra, Law & Portley, 2011; Donrovich, Drefahl & Koupil, 2014;

Shor, Roelfs, Bugyi & Schwartz, 2012). Research reports the relationship between emotional divorce and depression (Sbarra, Emery, Beam & Ocker, 2014). The emotional divorce of couples also negatively affects the quality of life and performance of children (Anthony, DiPerna, and Amato, 2014).

Tiller, Garrison, Block, et al. (2003) never considered emotional divorce as a single-factor phenomenon and showed that when individuals' perceptions and expectations of each other fail after marriage, the emotional bonds between them fail and lead to emotional divorce. The quality of life of couples suffering from emotional divorce is low, and the quality of life of normal couples is high (Yazdani, Hekhratian, and Keshavarz, 2013). Reviewing the research shows that various factors play a role in the occurrence of emotional divorce. One of these factors is the type of relationship and interactions between couples. Sexual dissatisfaction and low sexual intimacy are also among these factors (Orzeck &

Lung, 2010; Yeniceri & Kokdemir, 2011; quoted by Brown, 2015). The introversion of the couple, sexual relations, and the intimacy and satisfaction with it can be one of these factors in a marital relationship. Individuals with low sexual intimacy and distance may be involved in emotional divorce (Jovanovic et al., 2011). Most research shows that lack of sexual intimacy can be a predictor factor for emotional divorce (Egan and Angus, 2003; Shackelford, Besser, and Goetz, 2008; quoted by Orzeck and Lung, 2010). Sexual intimacy is a personal experience in marriage, which can only be evaluated by the individual in response to the level of pleasure in the marital relationship. Many factors can affect marital relationships in a shared life, and sexual intimacy plays an important role in the normal functioning of marital relationships (Darrodi, 2010). Couples with high sexual intimacy have much agreement with each other and are satisfied with the type and level of their relationship. They are satisfied with the type and quality of spending leisure time and apply good management in their relationships (Greif, 2000). Therefore, an important indicator of marital intimacy between couples is sexual intimacy (Shackelford, Besser, and Goetz, 2008). Sexual intimacy, with a person's pleasant feelings about their sexual relations, reduces emotional divorce. Intimacy in sexual relationships as one of the most important indicators of life satisfaction is an important factor of marital life satisfaction, a factor that affects the health, quality of life, and reduction of marital conflicts of couples. Sexual intimacy is of special importance in family and marital issues, and several studies have pointed out the effect of sexual intimacy on marital conflicts. As these studies have shown, the existence of a desirable sexual relationship that can ensure the satisfaction of the parties has a very important and essential role in the stability of the family center (Ali Akbari Dehkordi, 2010). Marmar and Fairbank (2021) showed in their research a significant positive relationship between sexual intimacy and marital satisfaction of couples. Ochsner et al. (2019) concluded that sexual intimacy has a significant inverse relationship with emotional divorce. The results revealed that 14% of the variance of emotional divorce is explained by sexual intimacy and personality traits.

Another factor that can affect the emotional divorce of couples is the couple's mental schemas (Schultz, 2014; Curry, 2015). Schemas are beliefs that individuals have about themselves, others, and the environment (Zhang and He, 2010). Primary maladaptive schemas are cognitive patterns of self-harm that arise from unfortunate childhood experiences and failure to meet the child's basic needs (Thiel et al., 2014), basic needs such as secure attachment to others, self-direction, freedom in expressing healthy needs and emotions, spontaneity, etc. (Oliver, O'Connor, Jose, McLachlan and Peters, 2012). Primary maladaptive schemas usually originate from not satisfying basic needs, especially emotional needs in childhood (Zhang,

2010). The primary maladaptive schema is a broad and pervasive theme or pattern that consists of memories, emotions, cognitions, and physical feelings about oneself and relationships with others, is developed during childhood or adolescence, is a consequence of a person's life, and does not work properly to a certain extent (Thimm, 2010).

Schemas operate in five domains abandonment and rejection, self-direction and impaired performance, impaired limitations, other orientation, and excessive vigilance (Mojalal et al., 2014). A group of schemas is beliefs about oneself based on which a person thinks of himself as weak, ineffective, and helpless. These beliefs also have significant effects on the married life of couples in various areas (Shorey, Anderson & Stuart, 2011).

Several studies have pointed out the impact of initial maladaptive schemas on marital conflicts and emotional divorce.

Mauss, Cook, and Cheng (2018) concluded that initial maladaptive schemas are a positive and significant predictor of marital conflicts. As Tuason (2015) also showed, there is an inverse relationship between initial maladaptive schemas and sexual satisfaction. The research results of Goldzweig, Dorfman & Uziely (2014) also indicated a direct relation between primary maladaptive schemas including emotional deprivation, abandonment, isolation, shame, dependency, vulnerability, emotional inhibition, and entitlement with marital dissatisfaction and social anxiety. Therefore, primary maladaptive schemas can predict marital dissatisfaction. Domestic research by Akbari, Azimi, Talebi, and Fahimi (2019) found that the primary maladaptive schemas of emotional deprivation, shame/deficiency, failure, untransformed self/entrapment, obedience, self-sacrifice, emotional inhibition are associated with divorce. Mousavi Khorrami, Dukanei Fard, and Khakpour (2019) also showed that the direct path of attachment style and early maladaptive schemas and emotional intelligence on emotional divorce is significant.

Thus, this study tries to investigate the relation of primary maladaptive schemas and sexual intimacy with emotional divorce in the couples of Quchan. Therefore, the researcher will answer this research question: are the initial maladaptive schemas and sexual intimacy associated with emotional divorce in the couples of Quchan?

Research Method:

This research is a fundamental research whose method is descriptive correlational. Its statistical population included all the couples who had not been married for 10 years and been referred to comprehensive health service centers in Qochan in 2021 to receive family counseling. They were selected by sampling at convenience (301 people). Simple sampling involves collecting information from population members who are easily available to provide information. Information was collected through short-form questionnaires of Yang's early maladaptive schema

(1990), the sexual intimacy of Botlani et al. (2008), and Gutman's emotional divorce (2008). This research used descriptive and inferential statistics to analyze the data. The descriptive statistical indicators are tables of frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. Multiple regression analysis was used to prove or reject the research hypotheses, and SPSS-26 software in all statistical analyses of this research.

Information gathering tool:

Yang's primary maladaptive schema short form (1990) Yang's schema questionnaire is based on observations of clinical experts and has two long and short forms. The long form of this self-report questionnaire has 205 items that measure sixteen primary maladaptive schemas. The shorter form of this questionnaire has been used more because of its features of the original version and ease of implementation. Yang Schema Questionnaire short form was created by Yang in 1988. This scale included 75 items, which were answered on a 6-point Likert scale according to the validity of 70 items (completely false to completely true). It had 14 subscales including emotional deprivation, rejection/abandonment, mistrust/mistreatment, social isolation, defect/shame, dependency/incompetence, vulnerability, entrapment/being trapped, obedience, self-sacrifice, emotional inhibition, stubborn criteria, entitlement, self-control, and insufficient self-discipline. All five questions of this questionnaire are associated with one schema, and the average score of each 5 questions is calculated to gain the score of the schemas.

The approved items of these schemas in Yang's (1990) revised form by schema researchers (Yan, Wang, Yu, He, and Oei, 2018) after checking their validity and reliability in previous research are emotional deprivation (5 questions), rejection/abandonment (5 questions), mistrust/mistreatment (5 questions), social isolation (5 questions), defect/shame (5 questions), dependency/incompetence (5 questions), vulnerability (5 questions), entrapment/being trapping (5 questions), obedience (5 questions), self-sacrifice (5 questions), emotional inhibition (5 questions), stubborn criteria (5 questions), entitlement (5 questions) and insufficient self-discipline (5 questions). This research used 70 items with high validity.

Smith, Jones, and Yangutlech (1995, quoted by Lotfi, 2015) carried out the first comprehensive research on these schemas and Cronbach's alpha coefficient in the non-clinical population for the subscales of this questionnaire was between 0.5 and 0.82. As these researchers showed, Yang's schematic questionnaire has a high correlation with scales of psychological distress and personality disorders and has favorable validity. This questionnaire was translated and ready to be implemented in Iran in 2015 and its internal consistency according to Cronbach's alpha was 0.98 in the male group and 0.97 in the female group (Yavari et al., 2015).

Sexual intimacy questionnaire of Botlani et al. (2009)

The sexual intimacy questionnaire was prepared by Botlani et al. (2009) according to reliable scientific sources and Bagarorzi's sexual intimacy scale. The sexual intimacy questionnaire has 30 questions; each question has a spectrum of 4 options (always, sometimes, rarely, and never) with scores from 1 to 4. The maximum score is 120 and the minimum score is 30. A higher score indicates more intimacy between couples.

Botlani et al. (2009) show a favorable validity of this attitude, so that the Cronbach's alpha of the internal consistency coefficient was 80%. Two methods of Cronbach's alpha and retest coefficient were used to determine the reliability of this scale. Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the sexual intimacy questionnaire is estimated at 71%. The resulting retest coefficient of this test has also been 87%. Criterion validity (divergent type) has been used to check the validity of this test. The divergent validity of sexual satisfaction has been 29%.

Gutman's Emotional Divorce Questionnaire (2008)

One of the common tools to measure emotional divorce is Gutman's Emotional Divorce Questionnaire. This questionnaire (written in 2008) contains statements about different aspects of life that a person may agree or disagree with. This scale has 24 questions and must be answered with Yes or No.

The method of comparing known groups determines the validity of the questionnaire, which is a form of construct validity. The method of comparing known groups was used in the construct validity method. The method of total correlation and retest also found the questionnaire of 24 questions reliable. The score of the questionnaire had a significant statistical difference between the 5 groups (F=121.66, P<0.0001). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of this questionnaire was calculated as 0.79 (Taqaorobi, Taqaorobi, Sharifi, and Suki, 2019). The reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was 0.78 using the Guttman formula. Gutman (2008) proposed a reliability coefficient of 0.70 as an acceptable level of reliability. Alpha in this study was also 0.74.

Findings:

This section analyzes descriptively the information on implementing questionnaires on the members of the research sample. The information in this section includes the average and standard deviation.

Table 1: Descriptive indices of research variables

Variable	Factors	Mean	Standard deviation
Primary maladaptive schemas	Emotional deprivation	13.492	5.0137
	Rejection/abandonment	16.309	4.6376
	Distrust/mistreatment	16.977	5.3075
	Social isolation	15.316	4.6062
	Flaw/shame	16.439	4.0365
	Dependency/incompetence	14.568	4.4294
	Vulnerability	15.542	5.1045
	Trouble/being trapped	13.814	5.0225
	Obedience	14.621	4.8010

	Emotional inhibition	15.425	5.1067
	Stubborn criteria	16.841	4.6749
	Entitlement	15.050	4.5123
	Self-sacrifice	13.040	4.6409
	Insufficient self-discipline	12.056	4.3574
Sexual intimacy		89.146	21.3363
Emotional Divorce		19.558	5.6250

As Table 1 shows, the mean of emotional divorce is 19.558 with a standard deviation of 5.6250. The mean of sexual intimacy is 89.146, with a standard deviation of 21.3363. The average score of the mistrust/mistreatment schema is 16.977, with a standard deviation of 5.3075. It is higher than other initial maladaptive schemas.

The progressive method of multiple regression analysis was used to investigate the power of predicting emotional divorce in couples of Quchan by primary maladaptive schemas (14 factors) and sexual intimacy (1 main factor). It first calculates the simple correlation between each of the independent variables and the dependent variable. Then, the independent variable that has the highest correlation with the dependent variable and explains the highest amount of variance, enters the analysis. The second variable that enters the analysis is the variable that has the highest correlation coefficient with the dependent variable after separating the first variable. This method continues until the test error reaches five percent.

Table 2: Summary of the regression model

Model H	Correlation coefficient R	R ²	The squared correlation coefficient of the population	standard error of the regression	Durbin-Watson
1	0.299 ^a	0.090	0.087	5.3762	1.504
2	0.346 ^b	0.120	0.114	5.2956	
3	0.401 ^c	0.161	0.153	5.1779	
4	0.456 ^d	0.208	0.197	5.0397	
5	0.517 ^e	0.267	0.254	4.8568	
6	0.567 ^f	0.321	0.307	4.6822	
7	0.585 ^g	0.342	0.327	4.6156	
8	0.686 ^h	0.470	0.455	4.1508	

As the results of the above table show, the variable of social isolation explains more than 0.087% of the common variance of emotional divorce. When the variable of defect/shame is added to it, this value reaches 0.114%. Finally, this value can reach 05.45% by adding the variable of sexual intimacy.

Table 4: Results of regression analysis

Model		Non-standardized coefficients		Standardized coefficient	t	Sig.
		Coefficient B	Standard error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	25.155	1.078		23.344	0.000
	Social isolation	0.365	0.067	0.299		
2	(Constant)	22.630	1.324		17.091	0.000
	Social isolation	0.526	0.083	0.431		
	Flaw/shame	0.303	0.095	0.218		
3	(Constant)	24.139	1.353		17.840	0.000
	Social isolation	0.413	0.087	0.338		

reaches 0.114%. Finally, this value can reach 05.45% by adding the variable of sexual intimacy.

Table 3: Analysis of variance test for the significance of the model

	Model	Total squares	Degrees of freedom	Total mean squares	F	Sig.
1	Regression	850.019	1	850.019	29.409	0.000 ^b
	Reminder	8642.214	299	28.904		
	Total	9492.233	300			
2	Regression	1135.355	2	567.678	20.243	0.000 ^c
	Reminder	8356.877	298	28.043		
	Total	9492.233	300			
4	Regression	1529.620	3	509.873	19.018	0.000 ^d
	Reminder	7962.613	297	26.810		
	Total	9492.233	300			
5	Regression	1974.401	4	493.600	19.435	0.000 ^e
	Reminder	7517.831	296	25.398		
	Total	9492.233	300			
6	Regression	2533.516	5	506.703	21.481	0.000 ^f
	Reminder	6958.717	295	23.589		
	Total	9492.233	300			
7	Regression	3046.877	6	507.813	23.163	0.000 ^g
	Reminder	6445.356	294	21.923		
	Total	9492.233	300			
8	Regression	3250.288	7	464.327	21.796	0.000 ^h
	Reminder	6241.945	293	21.304		
	Total	9492.233	300			

- a. Dependent Variable: emotional divorce
- b. Predictors: (Constant) social isolation
- c. Predictors: (Constant) social isolation, defect/shame
- d. Predictors: (Constant) social isolation, defect/shame, rejection/abandonment, social isolation, defect/shame, rejection/abandonment.
- e. Predictors: (Constant) social isolation, defect/shame, rejection/abandonment, obedience
- f. Predictors: (Constant) social isolation, defect/shame, rejection/abandonment, obedience, insufficient self-discipline
- g. Predictors: (Constant) social isolation, defect/shame, rejection/abandonment, obedience, insufficient self-discipline, self-sacrifice
- h. Predictors: (Constant) social isolation, defect/shame, rejection/abandonment, obedience, insufficient self-discipline, self-sacrifice, dependency/incompetence

As we can see in the above table, variance analysis in all steps confirms the validity of step-by-step regression analysis in predicting emotional divorce ($P < 05.0$).

4	Flaw/shame	0.413	0.097	0.296	4.247	0.000
	Rejection/abandonment	0.310	0.081	0.255	3.835	0.000
	(Constant)	22.818	1.354		16.848	0.000
	Social isolation	0.480	0.086	0.393	5.591	0.000
	Flaw/shame	0.396	0.095	0.284	4.179	0.000
	Rejection/abandonment	0.416	0.083	0.343	5.034	0.000
5	Obedience	0.299	0.071	0.255	4.185	0.000
	(Constant)	23.650	1.316		17.967	0.000
	Social isolation	0.314	0.090	0.257	3.508	0.001
	Flaw/shame	0.426	0.092	0.306	4.650	0.000
	Rejection/abandonment	0.485	0.081	0.400	6.001	0.000
	Obedience	0.452	0.076	0.386	5.975	0.000
6	Insufficient self-discipline	0.413	0.085	0.320	4.869	0.000
	(Constant)	24.782	1.290		19.205	0.000
	Social isolation	0.302	0.086	0.247	3.494	0.001
	Flaw/shame	0.394	0.088	0.283	4.457	0.000
	Rejection/abandonment	0.654	0.085	0.539	7.658	0.000
	Obedience	0.316	0.078	0.270	4.047	0.000
	Insufficient self-discipline	0.618	0.092	0.478	6.711	0.000
7	Self-sacrifice	0.491	0.101	0.405	4.839	0.000
	(Constant)	24.734	1.272		19.443	0.000
	Social isolation	0.246	0.087	0.201	2.826	0.005
	Flaw/shame	0.465	0.090	0.334	5.159	0.000
	Rejection/abandonment	0.540	0.092	0.445	5.869	0.000
	Obedience	0.382	0.080	0.326	4.780	0.000
	Insufficient self-discipline	0.611	0.091	0.473	6.734	0.000
	Self-sacrifice	0.432	0.102	0.356	4.241	0.000
8	Dependency/incompetence	0.282	0.091	0.222	3.090	0.002
	(Constant)	15.101	1.621		9.314	0.000
	Social isolation	0.241	0.078	0.197	3.073	0.002
	Flaw/shame	0.285	0.084	0.204	3.392	0.001
	Rejection/abandonment	0.507	0.083	0.418	6.121	0.000
	Obedience	0.380	0.072	0.325	5.291	0.000
	Insufficient self-discipline	0.616	0.082	0.477	7.545	0.000
	Self-sacrifice	0.402	0.092	0.332	4.388	0.000
	Dependency/incompetence	0.056	0.086	0.044	0.648	0.517
	Sexual intimacy	- 0.103	0.012	- 0.390	8.384	0.000

As the results show, social isolation in the first model can explain emotional divorce ($P < 0.05$). When the defect/shame variable is added to it in the second model, the variables of social isolation and defect/shame can explain emotional divorce ($P < 0.05$). When (social isolation, defect/shame/abandonment, obedience, insufficient self-discipline, self-sacrifice, dependence/incompetence) and sexual intimacy are added to primary maladaptive schemas in the final model, primary maladaptive schemas and sexual intimacy can explain emotional divorce ($P < 0.05$). Therefore, only the schemas of social isolation, defect/shame/abandonment, obedience, insufficient self-discipline, self-sacrifice, and dependency/incompetence were associated with the emotional divorce of couples in Quchan. As the results show, there is a significant relationship between initial maladaptive schemas and sexual intimacy and emotional divorce in the couples of Quchan. The progressive method of multiple regression analysis tests was used to investigate the power of predicting emotional divorce in the couples of Quchan by the initial maladaptive schemas (14 factors).

Table 5: Summary of Regression model

Model H	Correlation coefficient R	R ²	The squared correlation coefficient of the population	standard error of the regression	Durbin-Watson
1	0.299 ^a	0.090	0.087	5.3762	1.715
2	0.346 ^b	0.120	0.114	5.2956	
3	0.401 ^c	0.161	0.153	5.1779	
4	0.456 ^d	0.208	0.197	5.0397	
5	0.517 ^e	0.267	0.254	4.8568	
6	0.567 ^f	0.321	0.307	4.6822	
7	0.585 ^g	0.342	0.327	4.6156	
<p>a. Predictors: (Constant) social isolation b. Predictors: (Constant) Social isolation, defect/shame, rejection/abandonment c. Predictors: (Constant) social isolation, defect/shame, rejection/abandonment, obedience. d. Predictors: (Constant) Social isolation, defect/shame, rejection/abandonment, obedience, insufficient self-discipline. e. Predictors: (Constant) Social isolation, defect/shame, rejection/abandonment, obedience, insufficient self-discipline, self-sacrifice f. Predictors: (Constant) Social isolation, defect/shame, rejection/abandonment, obedience, insufficient self-discipline, self-sacrifice, dependency/incompetence.</p>					

g. Predictors: (Constant)
h. Dependent Variable: emotional divorce

As the results of the above table show, the variable of social isolation explains more than 0.087% of the common variance of emotional divorce and when the variable of defect/shame is added to it, this value reaches 0.114%. Finally, this value reaches 0.327% by adding the variable of dependency/incompetence.

Table 6: Analysis of variance test for the significance of the model

	Model	Total squares	Degrees of freedom	Total mean squares	F	Sig.
1	Regression	850.019	1	850.019	29.409	0.000 ^b
	Reminder	8642.214	299	28.904		
	Total	9492.233	300			
2	Regression	1135.355	2	567.678	20.243	0.000 ^c
	Reminder	8356.877	298	28.043		
	Total	9492.233	300			
3	Regression	1529.620	3	509.873	19.018	0.000 ^d
	Reminder	7962.613	297	26.810		
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4	Regression	1974.401	4	493.600	19.435	0.000 ^e
	Reminder	7517.831	296	25.398		
	Total	9492.233	300			
5	Regression	2533.516	5	506.703	21.481	0.000 ^f
	Reminder	6958.717	295	23.589		
	Total	9492.233	300			
6	Regression	3046.877	6	507.813	23.163	0.000 ^g
	Reminder	6445.356	294	21.923		
	Total	9492.233	300			
7	Regression	3250.288	7	464.327	21.796	0.000 ^h

Reminder	6241.945	293	21.304		
Total	9492.233	300			

a. Dependent Variable: emotional divorce
b. Predictors: (Constant) social isolation
c. Predictors: (Constant) social isolation, defect/shame
d. Predictors: (Constant) social isolation, defect/shame, rejection/abandonment,
e. Predictors: (Constant) social isolation, defect/shame, rejection/abandonment, obedience.
f. social isolation, deficiency/shame, rejection/abandonment, obedience, insufficient self-discipline
f. Predictors: (Constant) social isolation, defect/shame, rejection/abandonment, obedience, insufficient self-discipline
g. Predictors: (Constant) social isolation, defect/shame, rejection/abandonment, obedience, insufficient self-discipline, self-sacrifice
h. Predictors: (Constant) social isolation, defect/shame, rejection/abandonment, obedience, insufficient self-discipline, self-sacrifice, dependency/incompetence

As the results of the above table show, the variable of social isolation explains more than 0.087% of the common variance of emotional divorce and when the variable of defect/shame is added to it, this value reaches 0.114%. Finally, this value reaches 0.327% by adding the variable of dependency/incompetence.

As we can see in the above table, variance analysis in all steps confirms the validity of step-by-step regression analysis in predicting emotional divorce (P<0.05).

Table 7: Results of regression analysis

Model		Non-standardized coefficients		Standardized coefficient	t	Sig.
		Coefficient B	Standard error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	25.155	1.078		23.344	0.000
	Social isolation	0.365	0.067	0.299		
2	(Constant)	22.630	1.324		17.091	0.000
	Social isolation	0.526	0.083	0.431		
	Flaw/shame	0.303	0.095	0.218		
3	(Constant)	24.139	1.353		17.840	0.000
	Social isolation	0.413	0.087	0.338		
	Flaw/shame	0.413	0.097	0.296		
	Rejection/abandonment	0.310	0.081	0.255		
4	(Constant)	22.818	1.354		16.848	0.000
	Social isolation	0.480	0.086	0.393		
	Flaw/shame	0.396	0.095	0.284		
	Rejection/abandonment	0.416	0.083	0.343		
	Obedience	0.299	0.071	0.255		
5	(Constant)	23.650	1.316		17.967	0.000
	Social isolation	0.314	0.090	0.257		
	Flaw/shame	0.426	0.092	0.306		
	Rejection/abandonment	0.485	0.081	0.400		
	Obedience	0.452	0.076	0.386		
6	(Constant)	24.782	1.290		19.205	0.000
	Social isolation	0.302	0.086	0.247		
	Insufficient self-discipline	0.413	0.085	0.320		
	Obedience	0.452	0.076	0.386		
	Insufficient self-discipline	0.413	0.085	0.320		

	Flaw/shame	0.394	0.088	0.283	4.457	0.000
	Rejection/abandonment	0.654	0.085	0.539	7.658	0.000
	Obedience	0.316	0.078	0.270	4.047	0.000
	Insufficient self-discipline	0.618	0.092	0.478	6.711	0.000
	Self-sacrifice	0.101	0.101	0.405	4.839	0.000
7	(Constant)	1.272	1.272		19.443	0.000
	Social isolation	0.087	0.087	0.201	2.826	0.005
	Flaw/shame	0.090	0.090	0.334	5.159	0.000
	Rejection/abandonment	0.092	0.092	0.445	5.869	0.000
	Obedience	0.080	0.080	0.326	4.780	0.000
	Insufficient self-discipline	0.091	0.091	0.473	6.734	0.000
	Self-sacrifice	0.102	0.102	0.356	4.241	0.000
	Dependency/incompetence	0.091	0.091	0.222	3.090	0.002

As the results show, social isolation in the first model can explain emotional divorce ($P < 0.05$). When the defect/shame variable is added to it in the second model the variables of social isolation and defect/shame can explain emotional divorce ($P < 0.05$). Social isolation, defect/shame/abandonment, obedience, insufficient self-discipline, self-sacrifice, and dependency/incompetence in the final model can explain emotional divorce ($P < 0.05$). Therefore, only the schemas of social isolation, defect/shame/abandonment, obedience, insufficient self-discipline, self-sacrifice, and dependency/incompetence have a relationship with the emotional divorce of couples in Quchan. Step-by-step regression analysis was used to investigate the relationship between sexual intimacy and emotional divorce in couples.

Table 8: Summary of Regression model

Model	Correlation coefficient R	R ²	The squared correlation coefficient of the population	standard error of the regression	Durbin-Watson
1	1	0.457 ^a	0.209	0.207	5.0102

a. Predictors: (Constant), sexual intimacy
b. Dependent Variable: emotional divorce

As the results of the above table show, couples' communication patterns explain more than 0.209% of the common variance of emotional divorce.

Table 9: Analysis of variance test for the significance of the model

Model	Total squares	Degrees of freedom	Total mean squares	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	1986.566	1	1986.566	79.138	0.000 ^b
	Reminder	7505.667	299	25.103		
	Total	9492.233	300			

a. Dependent Variable: emotional divorce
b. Predictors: (Constant), sexual intimacy

As we can see in the above table, variance analysis confirms the validity of stepwise regression analysis in predicting emotional divorce ($P < 0.05$).

Table 10: Coefficients of variables in step-by-step multivariate regression

Model		Non-standardized coefficients		Standardized coefficient Beta	t	Sig.
		Coefficient B	Standard error			
1	(Constant)	8.807	1.243		7.087	0.000
	Sexual intimacy	- 0.121	0.014	- 0.457	- 8.896	0.000

a. Dependent variable: emotional divorce

Sexual intimacy in the above model can predict emotional divorce in couples. The results show a significant inverse relationship between sexual intimacy and emotional divorce ($P < 0.05$). This means that the more sexual intimacy increases in couples in Quchan, emotional divorce will decrease. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between sexual intimacy and emotional divorce in the couples of Quchan.

CONCLUSION:

The results showed that social isolation in the first model can explain emotional divorce ($P < 0.05$). The variables of social isolation and defect/shame can explain emotional divorce in the second model ($P < 0.05$). Primary maladaptive schemas and sexual intimacy can explain emotional divorce in the final model when added to primary maladaptive schemas (social isolation, defect/shame/abandonment, obedience, insufficient self-discipline, self-sacrifice, dependency/incompetence) and sexual intimacy ($P < 0.05$). Therefore, initial maladaptive schemas and sexual intimacy are significantly associated with emotional divorce in the couples of Quchan.

The above results are in accordance with the researches of Akbari, Azimi, Talebi, and Fahimi (2019), Mousavi Khormi, Dukanei Fard and Khakpour (2019), Heydari (2018), Bazdar and Mousavi (2019), Lalzadeh, Asghari Ebrahimabad and Hesarsorkhi (2014) Mauss, Cook and Cheng (2018), and Goldzweig, Dorfman and Yuzili (2014).

As for explaining this finding, when maladaptive schemas are triggered, individuals usually experience high levels of emotions, such as intense anger, anxiety,

depression, or guilt (Muris, 2006). The high prevalence of anxiety, depression, and other emotional problems and the impact of these problems on the general performance of the person causes disturbance in the emotional order of the couples of Quchan (Gross, 2007). As the experts say, it predicts the mental damage of the person in the future and is a key and important factor in emotional divorce (Beauregard, 2001).

As the results showed, there is a direct relationship between the initial maladaptive schemas and the emotional divorce of couples in Quchan. Yang proposes a subset of schemas called primary maladaptive schemas (Yang, Klosko, & Wisnar, 2003). The approach focused on schemas places the main emphasis on the deepest level of cognition, i.e. primary maladaptive schemas instead of focusing on automatic thoughts and underlying assumptions. The schema-focused model defines early maladaptive schemas as comprehensive and extensive issues regarding self and personal relationships with others that are created during childhood and expand throughout personal life with a degree of dysfunction. The schema-centered approach assumes that maladaptive schemas are the core of personality pathology and emotional distress (Young, Arntz, Atkinson, Lobbestael, Weishaar & Van Vreeswijk, 2007).

As for this finding, we can say that the presence of maladaptive cognitive schemas may differentiate between couples who have emotional divorce and those who have a negative attitude towards emotional divorce (Shory, Anderson, and Stewart, 2011). The existence of pessimistic views towards life, such as others will not empathize with us and understand us (up to social isolation), or they will not meet our needs in time, our loved ones will not support us emotionally (abandonment), or the belief that others hurt us and lie to us (mistrust) or the feeling that I am a failed person and will fail in any field (failure), all of them cause negative emotions, causing the person's inability to deal with life problems (Oliver, O'Connor, Jose, McLachlan, and Peters, 2012).

The occurrence of such a situation will eventually lead to an increase in emotional divorce in a person. Yang et al. (2003) believe that schemas arise because of the non-satisfaction of the basic emotional needs of childhood and act as proofs or confirmations of childhood experiences. Thus, negative schemas in individuals who have problematic childhood experiences lead to symptoms such as anxiety or depression. An optimistic view calls for positive emotions and happiness and improves emotional divorce in a person in contrast to the initial maladaptive schemas that impose a negative view of life events. Couples who have less initial maladaptive schemas experience less emotional divorce and can better deal with negative emotions when faced with life's problems (Coker, Drummond, & Lee, 2010).

Therefore, a person's desires and needs for emotional support in the scheme of emotional deprivation are not

sufficiently satisfied by others. These deprivations include deprivation of love, deprivation of empathy, and deprivation of support. A person with a defect/shame schema believes that a person is imperfect, undesirable, bad, inferior, and worthless in the most important aspects of his personality. These findings are consistent with the results of Yang et al. (2003) and show that negative schemas can affect individuals' evaluation of stressful events and their ability to deal with problems. It seems that the presence of initial maladaptive schemas leads to a person's vulnerability to various types of psychological and personality disorders. This may become an obstacle to reducing emotional divorce. Schemas are often the basis of a person's view of the world and naturally fight hard for survival and remain regardless of the negative consequences they leave in a person's life (Roper, Dixon, Tynoll, Butt and McGirr, 2010).

Basically, maladaptive schemas cause bias in the interpretation of events. These biases in psychopathology arise from misunderstandings, distorted attitudes, false assumptions, unrealistic goals, and expectations in couples. Since maladaptive schemas are ineffective, cause an increase in emotional divorce in the lives of couples (Arntz, 2014).

Schemas are defined as an organizational framework through which individuals construct their feelings about life, schemas act as a lens into individuals' personal lives and organize the ways in which they interpret experiences (Shory, Stewart, and Anderson, 2014). Maladaptive schemas, which are the major cause of the formation of inefficient and irrational emotions in couples, lead to an increase in emotional divorce in their lives. We can say that improving emotional divorce requires teaching to achieve compatible schemas. From a practical point of view, consistent and positive schemas create through education a better feeling in the couples of Quchan. Thus, the maladaptive schemas of the couples of Quchan will gradually decrease and their emotional divorce will also decrease in different aspects of life.

As the results showed, there is a significant inverse relationship between sexual intimacy and emotional divorce ($P < 0.05$). This means that the more sexual intimacy increases in the couples of Quchan, the more emotional divorce decreases in them. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between sexual intimacy and emotional divorce in the couples of Quchan. The above results are aligned with the research of Taheri, Ali Akbari Dehkordi (2017), Momeni and Azadi Fard (2014), Marmar and Fairbank (2021), Oshner et al. (2019), Deveni and Pizzagli (2015).

As for these results, we can say that sexual intimacy is a personal experience in marriage, which can only be evaluated by the individual in response to the level of pleasure in the marital relationship. There are many factors that affect marital relationships in a shared life, and sexual intimacy plays an important role in the normal functions of marital relations (Jiang, Wang, Zhang, Liu et al., 2015). Couples with high sexual intimacy have much agreement with each other; they

are satisfied with the type and level of their relationship; they are satisfied with the type and quality of spending free time, and apply good management in their relationships (Greif, 2000). An important indicator of couples' satisfaction with each other is sexual intimacy (Brzeniak and Wiseman, 2004).

Sexual intimacy, with a person's pleasant feelings about their sexual relationships, reduces emotional divorce (Yang, Denny, Yang, and Lukois, 2000). Intimacy in sexual relationships as one of the most important indicators of satisfaction with life is an important factor of satisfaction with married life, an important factor affecting health, quality of life, and reducing emotional divorce of women. Sexual intimacy is of special importance for the family and marital issues. Several studies have also pointed to the effect of sexual satisfaction on emotional divorce. These studies have shown that the existence of a desirable sexual relationship that can ensure the satisfaction of the parties has a very important and essential role in the stability of the family center (Ali Akbari Dehkordi, 2010).

Sexual satisfaction is of special importance for family and marital matters. Feelings of failure, frustration, and insecurity caused by a lack of sexual satisfaction can increase emotional divorce in couples (Brzeniak and Weissman, 2004).

These results are in line with the research findings of Danson (2015), Dennis and Beker (2015), Morin, Collechi, Stone, Sood & Brink (2015), Deminof (2013), Neff and Tirch (2013). They reported that sexual intimacy, as a component of the meaningfulness of life, increases flexibility, marital satisfaction, and life satisfaction through increasing safety and peace, the inner connection of a person with his family, and reducing the threat and isolation that occurs for a person. Thus, increasing the meaningfulness of life causes more emotional balance for the family and increases the life satisfaction of the couple (Allen, 2012).

The meaningfulness of life has a significant negative relationship with self-criticism, depression, anxiety, and rumination (Raes, 2010; Bergen-Cico and Cheon, 2014). There is a positive relationship between sexual intimacy and satisfaction with life and social relationships (Neff, 2003). Sexual intimacy, mental strength, and sexual happiness increase mental health and well-being (Neff and Costigan, 2014; Bluth and Blanton, 2014).

As for explaining the significant relationship between sexual intimacy and emotional divorce in couples, we can say that because sexual intimacy is supposedly an effective factor for life balance, it causes a feeling of meaningfulness in life. Therefore, it can affect emotional divorce in couples, because sexual intimacy breaks the cycle of self-absorption, decreases selfishness and loneliness, and simultaneously increases the feeling of connectedness and connection (Neff, 2012).

As various research findings have shown, sexual intimacy has a significant negative relationship with self-criticism, depression, anxiety (Gilbert and Procter, 2006; Schultz, 2014), use of the first person singular pronoun, and isolation. There is a positive and significant relationship between sexual intimacy and life satisfaction, happiness, optimism, personal initiative, positive mood, and agreement (Allen and Leary, 2010), the use of the first person plural pronoun, feeling of social connection and connectedness with the group (Curry, 2015), and individual flexibility (Schultz, 2014). Therefore, increasing the thought of sexual intimacy leads to an increase in the emotional connection between couples and a decrease in criticism, a decrease in rumination, a decrease in suppression of thoughts and anxiety, and a decrease in the mental pressure and psychological balance of couples.

As the results show, the following suggestions can be made as practical suggestions for researchers, officials, and planners, those who directly and indirectly face couples and other interested individuals:

The variable of initial maladaptive schemas played an important and effective role in predicting the emotional divorce of couples in Quchan. Therefore, the emotional divorce of couples should be reduced in Quchan. Initial maladaptive schemas should be taught to couples through educational workshops.

As the results of the research hypothesis on the relationship between sexual intimacy and emotional divorce show in the population under study, the necessary background for examining the role of Sexual intimacy should be provided in their emotional divorce by providing a suitable environment for couples, raising their awareness, and continuous education in counseling centers and psychological clinics.

The planners and practitioners of educational programs should make learners aware of the importance of sexual intimacy in reducing the level of emotional divorce.

As the topics of primary incompatible schemas reveal, the lower the dimensions of primary maladaptive schemas are in life, the less emotional divorce the couple will have and the less they will experience a loss in their emotions.

Using perseverance and educational effort by couples can provide conditions for them to know the factors of the initial maladaptive schemas reliably and thus reduce the level of their emotional divorce.

As for the importance of each component of primary maladaptive schemas and sexual intimacy and the need to know each of them separately, the relationship and effect of each of these components with other concepts such as marital compatibility, marital satisfaction, marital conflicts, well-being, emotional regulation and the like should be investigated in research on married couples.

Educational classes for couples with the help of university professors and experts on the meaning and importance of the components of primary maladaptive schemas and sexual intimacy are recommendable.

The results of this research are useful to inform families, counselors, and those involved in the education of couples in Quchan on the importance of schemas as one of the effective factors in the emotional divorce of couples. It is possible to increase their mental health and their families with psychotherapeutic solutions and methods based on schema therapy besides increasing sexual intimacy. Increasing the mental and environmental health of the family prevents the increase in the level of emotional divorce in couples.

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