



The Effect of Emotional Blackmail on the Quality of Marital Relationships: The Mediating Role of Marital Burnout in Women Seeking Divorce

Shirin. Shahi¹, Maryam. Rostamnezhad^{2*}

¹ Department of Psychology and counseling ,To.C., Islamic Azad University, Tonekabon ,Iran.

² Department of Clinical and Health Psychology, To.C. , Islamic Azad University, Tonekabon , Iran.

* Corresponding author email address: M.rostamnezhad55@iau.ac.ir

Article Info

Article type:

Original Research

How to cite this article:

Shahi, Sh., & Rostamnezhad, M. (2024). The Effect of Emotional Blackmail on the Quality of Marital Relationships: The Mediating Role of Marital Burnout in Women Seeking Divorce. *KMAN Counseling and Psychology Nexus*, 2(2), 253-261.

<http://doi.org/10.61838/kman.psynexus.2.2.31>



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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate the effect of emotional blackmail on the quality of marital relationships among women applying for divorce, with marital burnout considered as a mediating variable. This research employed a descriptive-correlational design with an applied purpose. The statistical population included all women seeking divorce who referred to licensed pre-divorce counseling centers in Ramsar and Tonekabon between February and June 2024. A purposive sample of 210 participants completed three standardized questionnaires: Rahmat's Emotional Blackmail Inventory (2019), Pines' Marital Burnout Questionnaire (1996), and the Marital Relationship Quality Scale by Busby et al. (1995). Data were analyzed using SPSS 25 and AMOS 24. Normality was confirmed through the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, and structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to assess the research model. The results revealed a significant negative relationship between emotional blackmail and marital relationship quality ($\beta = -0.37, p < 0.01$). Marital burnout was also significantly and negatively associated with relationship quality ($\beta = -0.61, p < 0.01$) and positively associated with emotional blackmail ($\beta = 0.82, p < 0.01$). The Sobel test confirmed the mediating role of marital burnout ($Z = 6.685$), and the Variance Accounted For (VAF) indicated that 57.5% of the total effect of emotional blackmail on relationship quality was explained through indirect effects, confirming partial mediation. Emotional blackmail significantly reduces marital relationship quality both directly and indirectly by increasing marital burnout. This highlights the destructive role of emotional manipulation in intimate relationships and underscores the importance of identifying and addressing emotional burnout as a key mechanism of relational decline.

Keywords: Emotional blackmail, Marital relationship quality, Marital burnout, Women seeking divorce

1. Introduction

Marital relationships are widely regarded as one of the most complex and influential interpersonal dynamics in adult life. The quality of such relationships often determines individual well-being, family stability, and even broader social health outcomes. As a vital psychological and sociocultural institution, marriage is influenced by numerous variables, including emotional interactions, cognitive schemas, communication styles, and external sociopolitical factors (Acquah et al., 2024). Among these, emotional abuse—particularly in the form of emotional blackmail—has garnered growing academic attention due to its subtle yet destructive impact on marital satisfaction and overall relational quality (Niknam & Rikhtegar, 2022; Rabelani et al., 2022).

Emotional blackmail, as conceptualized in psychological literature, refers to a coercive manipulation strategy wherein one partner uses fear, guilt, or obligation to control or dominate the other (Rahmat et al., 2019). This form of abuse, although often difficult to detect externally, exerts significant internal pressure that can corrode trust, intimacy, and the sense of personal agency within the relationship (Alsawalqa et al., 2021; Kreimeen et al., 2022). Empirical evidence suggests that emotional blackmail is closely associated with psychological distress, emotional dysregulation, and maladaptive coping patterns among victims—particularly women who are already experiencing marital dissatisfaction or contemplating separation (Mattom & Lokesh, 2021; Rabelani et al., 2022).

One of the consequential psychological outcomes of persistent emotional blackmail is marital burnout, which encompasses emotional exhaustion, cognitive disengagement, and a sense of futility regarding the relationship (Saffarinia et al., 2022). Marital burnout can function not only as a direct outcome of abusive dynamics but also as a mediating variable that exacerbates the decline in relationship quality. Research confirms that couples experiencing emotional manipulation report significantly lower levels of marital satisfaction and emotional closeness, and often suffer from prolonged psychological fatigue (Jacob & Ahmed, 2018; Mohammadipour et al., 2021).

While emotional blackmail is not always visible through overt conflict, it manifests through a persistent imbalance of emotional power. Victims may feel obligated to comply with the partner's demands to avoid punishment, criticism, or guilt—creating a dynamic where autonomy is suppressed and emotional wellbeing eroded (Glasser & Sahebi, 2022;

Niknam & Rikhtegar, 2022). Studies have shown that this form of coercion, when experienced over time, can gradually lead to a breakdown in communication, sexual dissatisfaction, and detachment, ultimately resulting in diminished marital quality and increased likelihood of divorce (Abbasi et al., 2019; Jardine et al., 2022).

From a theoretical standpoint, Glasser's reality therapy emphasizes the role of unmet psychological needs—such as love, freedom, and power—in shaping maladaptive relationship behaviors (Glasser & Sahebi, 2022). In emotionally manipulative marriages, these needs are distorted, leading to patterns of conditional affection and psychological dependency. Such relational dynamics are also explored in the biopsychosocial-spiritual model of emotionally focused therapy, which underscores the interplay of emotional vulnerabilities, cognitive biases, and relational traumas in perpetuating negative interaction cycles (Hawkins et al., 2020).

Moreover, the duration of marriage and prior relational history also play significant roles in how couples respond to emotional blackmail. Long-term exposure can normalize manipulation as a communicative pattern, while shorter-term marriages might exhibit sharper conflicts due to unresolved expectations (Acquah et al., 2024). In cases where couples have received minimal premarital education or lack effective communication skills, emotional blackmail becomes a surrogate strategy for asserting unmet needs, often escalating into chronic dissatisfaction and emotional detachment (Hosseini et al., 2015; Park & Park, 2019).

Gendered experiences of emotional abuse are particularly salient in Middle Eastern and South Asian cultures, where marital roles are often shaped by patriarchal norms and social expectations (Alsawalqa et al., 2021). In these contexts, women are frequently conditioned to prioritize family stability and endurance over personal well-being, making them more susceptible to emotional blackmail and less likely to seek formal support or therapy (Mohammadipour et al., 2021; Rabelani et al., 2022). Nevertheless, increasing awareness and access to counseling services have empowered more women to recognize and articulate the psychological toll of manipulative emotional dynamics.

At the same time, recent psychological models have begun to address the cognitive underpinnings of emotional blackmail, including maladaptive schema modes and dysfunctional beliefs about self-worth and relational security (Niknam & Rikhtegar, 2022). Research suggests that individuals who internalize guilt or possess heightened fear

of abandonment are more vulnerable to emotional coercion, and may continue to accommodate their partner's demands even when it undermines their own mental health (Neal & Lemay, 2019). Furthermore, emotional blackmail has been shown to impair emotional intelligence and reduce the capacity for healthy conflict resolution and perspective-taking, both of which are essential for sustaining satisfying romantic relationships (Jardine et al., 2022).

Marital relationship quality, as a multidimensional construct, includes emotional intimacy, mutual respect, conflict resolution, shared values, and life satisfaction. High-quality marital relationships are marked by adaptive emotional regulation, effective communication, and mutual empowerment—elements that are systematically eroded in the presence of emotional blackmail and sustained burnout (Abbasi et al., 2019; Hosseini et al., 2015). Interventions such as solution-focused therapy and emotion-focused couple therapy have demonstrated promising outcomes in rebuilding marital cohesion by addressing these maladaptive emotional dynamics (Hawkins et al., 2020; Mohammadipour et al., 2021).

In light of the increasing number of divorce applications, particularly among women citing psychological distress and emotional neglect, it becomes imperative to understand the intricate role of emotional blackmail and its downstream effects on marital satisfaction. Studies indicate that couples who undergo therapeutic interventions focused on identifying manipulative patterns and building assertive communication strategies are more likely to experience relational improvement and reduced burnout symptoms (Mattom & Lokesh, 2021; Park & Park, 2019).

The current study aims to expand upon this growing body of research by specifically investigating the effect of emotional blackmail on the quality of marital relationships in women applying for divorce.

2. Methods and Materials

2.1. Study Design and Participants

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design. The statistical population included all women seeking divorce who referred to licensed pre-divorce counseling centers in the cities of Ramsar and Tonekabon between February 2024 and June 2024. The research sample consisted of 210 women seeking divorce who were selected using purposive sampling. Given the proposed model and the number of observed variables (i.e., 9), the sample size is considered appropriate.

2.2. Measures

a) Emotional Blackmail Questionnaire: This questionnaire, developed by Rahmat (2018), consists of 72 items covering three components: (1) fear (items 1–31), (2) sense of obligation (items 32–52), and (3) guilt (items 53–72). Each item is rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Never) to 5 (Always). The Cronbach's alpha obtained for this questionnaire was reported as 0.74, indicating high internal consistency and acceptable reliability and validity (Rahmat et al., 2019). The reliability coefficients using Cronbach's alpha for the subscales were reported as 0.70. To finalize the questionnaire, Rahmat and colleagues applied classical test theory principles and evaluated its reliability and validity using sources such as Hambleton (1985) and Nunnally et al. (1994).

b) Pines' Marital Burnout Questionnaire: This 21-item questionnaire was developed by Pines (1996) and includes three components: (1) physical fatigue, (2) emotional exhaustion, and (3) psychological weariness. Responses are given on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Never), indicating no experience of the described state, to 7 (Always), indicating a high frequency of the experience. The total score can range from 21 to 147, with higher scores reflecting greater marital burnout (Pines & Nunes, 2003). The reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) for the subscales were reported between 0.84 and 0.90. Negative correlations with positive relational attributes (correlation coefficients above 0.30) support the construct validity of the instrument. Translated versions of the Marital Burnout Scale have also been successfully used in cross-cultural studies in Norway, Hungary, Mexico, Spain, Portugal, Finland, and Israel. In the study by Saffarinia et al. (2022), the overall Cronbach's alpha was 0.88, and the subscale reliabilities ranged from 0.81 to 0.91 (Saffarinia et al., 2022).

c) Marital Relationship Quality Questionnaire: The Marital Relationship Quality Scale, developed by Busby et al. (1995), is designed to assess the quality of marital relationships. The instrument contains 14 items divided into three subscales: (1) agreement (6 items), (2) satisfaction (5 items), and (3) cohesion (3 items) (Busby et al., 1995). In the study conducted by Holist, Ku, and colleagues (2005), the reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) for the subscales of agreement, satisfaction, and cohesion were reported as 0.79, 0.80, and 0.90, respectively (Holist & Miller, 2005). In the study by Yousefi (2012), the Cronbach's alpha and split-half coefficients for the overall questionnaire and the four extracted factors, disaggregated by gender, were above

0.70, indicating satisfactory internal consistency. Scoring is based on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (We always disagree) to 5 (We always agree) (Yousefi, 2012).

2.3. Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS version 25 and AMOS version 24. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was employed to assess the normality of data distribution. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to verify the validity of the items and to identify the key factors of each component. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was employed to examine the fit of the research model with the collected data.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Skewness	Kurtosis	Min	Max
Fear	113.40	21.835	-0.426	-0.680	55	150
Obligation	73.26	15.440	-0.464	-0.540	34	103
Guilt	68.83	12.612	-0.129	-0.986	42	92
Emotional Blackmail	255.50	43.156	-0.400	-0.646	154	336
Physical Fatigue	25.57	5.334	-0.183	-0.786	13	35
Emotional Exhaustion	25.68	5.795	-0.296	-0.722	11	37
Psychological Weariness	25.71	5.597	-0.354	-0.494	12	40
Marital Burnout	76.97	15.438	-0.291	-0.958	43	106
Agreement	14.24	4.873	0.206	-0.907	3	24
Satisfaction	11.97	3.957	0.034	-0.635	3	21
Cohesion	7.38	2.970	0.147	-1.122	2	14
Marital Relationship Quality	33.58	10.049	0.234	-0.860	12	55

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to assess the normality of data distribution. Since the significance levels for the research indices were greater than the threshold value of 0.05, the data distribution was considered normal. Based

3. Findings and Results

As shown in Table 1, among the emotional blackmail subscales, the highest mean score was related to the "fear" variable ($M = 113.40$, $SD = 21.835$), while the lowest was for "guilt" ($M = 68.83$, $SD = 12.612$). In the marital burnout questionnaire, the highest mean was for "psychological weariness" ($M = 25.71$, $SD = 5.597$), and the lowest for "physical fatigue" ($M = 25.57$, $SD = 5.334$). Regarding marital relationship quality, the "agreement" subscale had the highest mean ($M = 14.24$, $SD = 4.873$), while the "cohesion" subscale had the lowest ($M = 7.38$, $SD = 2.970$).

on this result, Pearson correlation coefficients were employed to assess the relationships between variables. These results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Correlation Matrix of Research Variables

#	Variable	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	Fear	0.508	0.531	0.403	0.346	0.327	-0.419	-0.411	-0.356
2	Obligation	1	0.562	0.305	0.292	0.279	-0.394	-0.366	-0.351
3	Guilt		1	0.425	0.509	0.666	-0.691	-0.633	-0.523
4	Physical Fatigue			1	0.567	0.482	-0.518	-0.592	-0.454
5	Emotional Exhaustion				1	0.485	-0.437	-0.597	-0.508
6	Psychological Weariness					1	-0.670	-0.521	-0.486
7	Agreement						1	0.604	0.489
8	Satisfaction							1	0.653
9	Cohesion								1

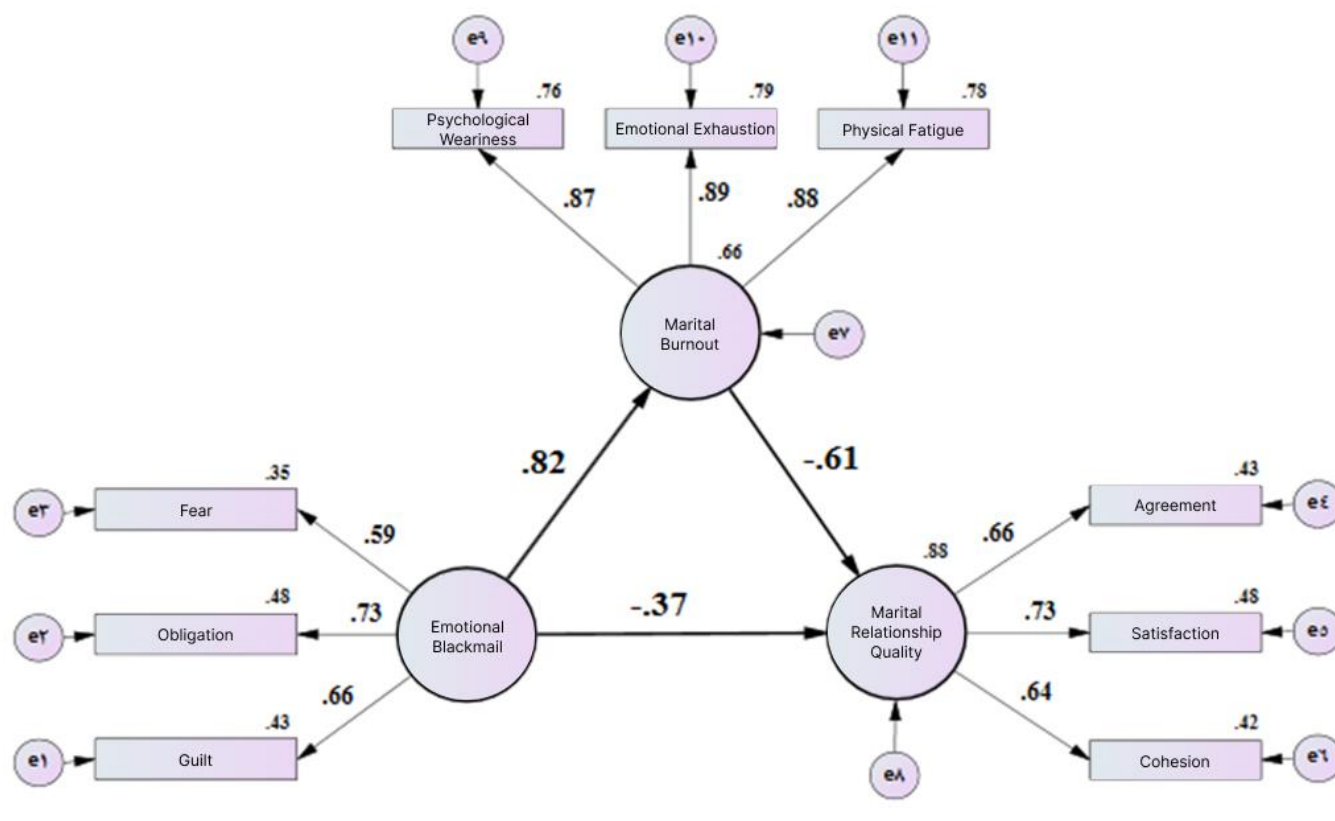
As indicated in Table 2, all correlation coefficients were statistically significant at the 0.05 level. This confirms that the relationships among the research variables are significant at the 95% confidence level. Notably, the correlation

between marital relationship quality and both marital burnout and emotional blackmail was negative, suggesting that higher levels of emotional blackmail or burnout are associated with lower relationship quality.

The conceptual model of the research was then illustrated using a path diagram and evaluated using various fit indices.

Figure 1

Standardized Path Coefficients of the Structural Model



To evaluate model fit, several goodness-of-fit indices were used. Table 3 summarizes the key indices, all of which indicated acceptable model fit.

Table 3

Structural Model Fit Indices

Result	Recommended Value	Fit Index	Calculated Value
Good fit	< 5.00	Chi-square/df	4.332
Good fit	< 0.10	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	0.082
Good fit	< 0.10	Root Mean Square Residual (RMR)	0.057
Good fit	> 0.90	Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI)	0.913
Good fit	> 0.90	Normed Fit Index (NFI)	0.911
Good fit	> 0.90	Incremental Fit Index (IFI)	0.917
Good fit	> 0.90	Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.916

Several fit indices were used to evaluate the structural model. The Chi-square (χ^2) test, one of the most commonly used indices in structural equation modeling, yielded a chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio of 4.332, which is below the threshold of 5 and indicates a good model-data fit. The

RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation), which assesses model fit based on residuals, was 0.082, suggesting an acceptable fit as values below 0.10 are considered adequate. Similarly, the RMR (Root Mean Square Residual), calculated from the residual matrix, was

0.057, also indicating a good fit. Additionally, the model showed strong performance on comparative fit indices, including NFI (Normed Fit Index), CFI (Comparative Fit

Index), GFI (Goodness-of-Fit Index), and IFI (Incremental Fit Index), all of which exceeded the 0.90 threshold, further confirming the model's overall goodness-of-fit.

Table 4

Structural Model Evaluation Results

#	Path	Path Coefficient (β)	Standard Error (SE)	t-value	Test Result
1	Emotional Blackmail → Marital Relationship Quality	-0.37	0.033	-3.515	Confirmed
2	Marital Burnout → Marital Relationship Quality	-0.61	0.087	-5.901	Confirmed
3	Emotional Blackmail → Marital Burnout	0.82	0.037	8.265	Confirmed

To assess the mediating role of marital burnout in the relationship between emotional blackmail and marital relationship quality, the Sobel test was applied. This test is widely used to determine the significance of a mediator variable. A Z-value greater than 1.96 indicates significance at the 95% confidence level.

In this study, the absolute value of the Sobel Z was 6.685, which exceeds 1.96, confirming that marital burnout significantly mediates the effect of emotional blackmail on relationship quality.

Additionally, to evaluate the strength of the indirect effect, the VAF (Variance Accounted For) index was used, which ranges from 0 to 1. The closer the value is to 1, the stronger the mediation. This index measures the proportion of the total effect that is mediated.

The VAF result showed that 57.5% of the total effect of emotional blackmail on marital relationship quality was mediated indirectly through marital burnout. Since the direct effect of emotional blackmail on relationship quality remained significant even with the mediator included, it can be concluded that marital burnout has a partial mediating role in this relationship.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The results of the present study provide significant insight into the complex psychological dynamics underlying emotional blackmail and its impact on the quality of marital relationships among women seeking divorce. As hypothesized, the findings indicated a significant negative relationship between emotional blackmail and marital relationship quality. Furthermore, marital burnout was shown to play a partial mediating role in this relationship, highlighting the indirect path through which emotional manipulation undermines relational well-being. These findings emphasize the multifaceted effects of emotional abuse and underscore the importance of examining

intrapersonal mediators such as emotional exhaustion, detachment, and cognitive disengagement.

The significant negative association between emotional blackmail and marital relationship quality aligns with previous findings in the literature. For instance, Niknam and Rikhtegar (2022) demonstrated that emotional blackmail significantly moderates the relationship between schema modes and the quality of marital life, suggesting that manipulative emotional strategies directly disrupt intimacy and trust in marital settings (Niknam & Rikhtegar, 2022). Similarly, Kreimeen et al. (2022) found that emotional blackmail not only affects interpersonal relationships but also impairs broader psychological adjustment, confirming the generalizability of the current findings to other domains of emotional functioning (Kreimeen et al., 2022). These consistent outcomes underscore the toxic role that fear, guilt, and obligation—three pillars of emotional blackmail—play in eroding emotional safety and openness in marriage.

Moreover, the findings support the theoretical assertions of Glasser's reality therapy, which posits that unmet psychological needs can lead individuals to employ coercive tactics to fulfill those needs, often at the expense of relational harmony (Glasser & Sahebi, 2022). When one partner resorts to emotional blackmail as a compensatory behavior for unaddressed insecurities or perceived threats, the result is a power imbalance that deteriorates the relational foundation. Jardine et al. (2022) also underscore this in their meta-analysis, showing that low emotional intelligence—often observed in perpetrators of emotional abuse—contributes to dissatisfaction and instability in romantic relationships (Jardine et al., 2022). These dynamics were mirrored in the current study's findings, particularly in the strong path coefficient observed between emotional blackmail and reduced marital satisfaction.

The mediating role of marital burnout adds an essential layer of understanding. The Sobel test confirmed that burnout significantly mediates the relationship between

emotional blackmail and marital relationship quality. This suggests that while emotional blackmail directly affects relationship quality, it also indirectly undermines it by fostering emotional exhaustion, psychological detachment, and hopelessness in the victim. This is in line with findings by Saffarinia et al. (2022), who emphasized that marital boredom and burnout are prevalent outcomes of ongoing emotional conflict and dysfunctional interaction patterns (Saffarinia et al., 2022). The emotional toll of constant manipulation leads to disengagement, and over time, the capacity to emotionally invest in the relationship diminishes, resulting in a loss of intimacy and connection.

In a similar vein, Mohammadipour et al. (2021) found that couples undergoing marital distress, especially those at the brink of separation, exhibit elevated levels of burnout, which in turn mediates relational dissatisfaction (Mohammadipour et al., 2021). This process is especially evident among women in traditional marital structures, where cultural expectations often discourage open confrontation and encourage emotional endurance. Alsawalqa et al. (2021) documented that Jordanian men experiencing emotional abuse often reported relational instability, but similar dynamics can be extrapolated to women as victims of such manipulation, particularly in patriarchal contexts (Alsawalqa et al., 2021).

The results also reaffirm earlier observations by Jacob and Ahmed (2018), who reported that burnout among spouses, particularly those involved in caretaking or high-stress marital dynamics, is a significant predictor of relational dissatisfaction and psychological distress (Jacob & Ahmed, 2018). This substantiates the claim that emotional blackmail not only affects marital satisfaction directly but also operates through psychological mechanisms that impair an individual's emotional resilience and ability to sustain intimacy.

The partial nature of the mediation also suggests that while marital burnout is a crucial explanatory factor, other variables likely contribute to the deteriorating quality of marital relationships in the presence of emotional blackmail. Neal and Lemay (2019) proposed that cognitive distortions such as projection and attribution bias exacerbate relational tension, particularly when one partner perceives imagined threats, often leading to manipulative behaviors like emotional blackmail (Neal & Lemay, 2019). These cognitive and affective disruptions may interact with burnout to create a cumulative effect that makes relational recovery increasingly difficult without professional intervention.

The role of socio-demographic factors such as education, religious beliefs, and marital longevity in shaping vulnerability to emotional blackmail is also critical. Acquah et al. (2024) found that lower educational levels and shorter marital duration were associated with higher instability in marital relationships, factors that may indirectly amplify the effect of emotional manipulation (Acquah et al., 2024). Women with less access to supportive resources or lower assertiveness skills may be more susceptible to internalizing guilt or obligation, thereby prolonging exposure to abusive dynamics.

The study's findings also indirectly support the effectiveness of interventions that target emotional communication and relational resilience. For example, Hawkins et al. (2020) argued that incorporating biopsychosocial-spiritual approaches in emotionally focused couple therapy enhances empathy and reduces maladaptive emotional responses (Hawkins et al., 2020). Similarly, Hosseini et al. (2015) demonstrated that training in intimate relationship skills significantly improves marital quality among couples by promoting healthy conflict resolution and mutual understanding (Hosseini et al., 2015). These studies suggest that structured therapeutic intervention could mitigate the psychological effects of emotional blackmail and potentially restore damaged relationship dynamics.

The cultural context also cannot be ignored. In societies where marital endurance is idealized, women may internalize manipulative tactics as normative, thereby minimizing their own distress and reinforcing the manipulator's behavior (Rabelani et al., 2022). Park and Park (2019) provided case-based evidence showing how cultural and familial expectations, such as co-residence with in-laws, exacerbate marital conflict and indirectly facilitate emotional manipulation (Park & Park, 2019). In such settings, interventions must be both culturally sensitive and empowering to disrupt the cycle of abuse and reestablish psychological autonomy.

Finally, the validation of the emotional blackmail inventory used in the study lends credibility to the findings. Rahmat et al. (2019) highlighted the need for culturally contextualized and psychometrically sound instruments to assess emotional blackmail in relational contexts (Rahmat et al., 2019). The significant results obtained in the current study demonstrate the inventory's effectiveness in identifying emotional manipulation and its psychological ramifications in intimate relationships.

Despite its valuable findings, the current study is not without limitations. First, the use of a purposive sample

consisting solely of women seeking divorce in two Iranian cities limits the generalizability of the findings. The psychological dynamics of emotional blackmail may vary across different demographic groups, marital statuses, and cultural contexts. Second, the cross-sectional design precludes any causal inferences. While the mediation model offers a theoretical explanation for the relationships among variables, longitudinal studies are needed to confirm the temporal sequence. Third, the reliance on self-report measures introduces the risk of response bias, especially considering the sensitive nature of marital conflict and emotional abuse.

Future studies should consider adopting longitudinal designs to examine how emotional blackmail and burnout evolve over time and how they jointly influence marital outcomes. Expanding the sample to include male participants and couples in intact marriages would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon across gender and relational stages. It is also recommended that future research incorporate qualitative methods such as interviews or narrative analysis to capture the subjective experiences and cultural meanings attached to emotional manipulation. Furthermore, integrating physiological or behavioral measures could offer a more objective assessment of psychological distress related to emotional blackmail.

Practitioners working in the field of marriage and family therapy should prioritize screening for emotional blackmail in couples presenting with dissatisfaction or burnout. Developing culturally appropriate psychoeducational programs can help clients recognize and resist manipulative tactics. Therapists should also focus on enhancing assertiveness, emotional regulation, and communication skills to foster healthier interaction patterns. Policy-makers and counselors should work together to make supportive services more accessible to at-risk populations, particularly women navigating emotionally abusive relationships. Ultimately, interventions must address both the emotional and cognitive components of abuse to achieve sustainable improvements in marital well-being.

Authors' Contributions

Authors contributed equally 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.

Acknowledgments

We would like to express our gratitude to all individuals helped us to do the project.

Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

Funding

According to the authors, this article has no financial support.

Ethical Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants. This article is extracted from the master's thesis of the first author at the Tonekabon Branch of Islamic Azad University, Tonekabon, Iran. The thesis topic was approved by the Educational and Postgraduate Council of the Islamic Azad University, Tonekabon Branch, under tracking code 162847240, on September 30, 2023, by the relevant departmental specialized committee.

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