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1 Department of Counseling, Ro.c, Islamic Azad University, Roudehen, Iran.
2 Department of Counseling, Ro.c, Islamic Azad University, Roudehen, Iran.
3 Department of Counseling, Ro.c, Islamic Azad University, Roudehen, Iran.

Corresponding author email address:
Mabehboodi@gmail.com



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A Structural Model of Attitudes Toward Marriage Based on Metacognitive Beliefs and Perceived Social Support: The Mediating Role of Emotion Regulation and Ego Strength

Hamideh. Etesami¹, Masoumeh. Behboodi^{2*}, Farideh. Dokaneifard³

ABSTRACT

Objective: This study aimed to develop a structural model to predict attitudes toward marriage based on metacognitive beliefs and perceived social support, with the mediating roles of emotion regulation and ego strength.

Methods and Materials The research employed a descriptive-correlational design using structural equation modeling (SEM). A sample of 320 unmarried female undergraduate students from Shahid Beheshti University was selected through convenience sampling. Participants completed validated questionnaires measuring metacognitive beliefs, perceived social support, ego strength, emotion regulation, and attitudes toward marriage. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS 22 and AMOS 23.

Findings: Results revealed that both metacognitive beliefs and social support had significant direct effects on attitudes toward marriage ($p < 0.001$). Moreover, ego strength and emotion regulation significantly mediated these relationships, indicating that higher levels of psychological flexibility and emotional control were associated with more positive marital attitudes. The overall model demonstrated acceptable fit indices (e.g., RMSEA = 0.047, CFI = 0.98), supporting its theoretical adequacy.

Conclusion: This study highlights the importance of psychological and emotional variables—particularly metacognitive regulation and perceived support—in shaping marital attitudes among young women. Limitations include the cross-sectional design, single-gender sample, and reliance on self-report measures. Future research should expand to more diverse populations and use longitudinal designs to strengthen causal inferences.

Keywords: Attitudes toward marriage, metacognitive beliefs, social support, ego strength, emotion regulation.

Introduction

Marriage is one of the most important interpersonal relationships that nearly all adults experience (Scherpe, 2025). It plays a crucial role in the functioning of the family by providing a foundation for meeting emotional and psychological needs (Şahin & Bilge, 2022). Today, marriage is no longer as simple as it once was. Although some studies have confirmed the benefits of marriage, many individuals delay marriage, and it appears that young people approaching marriage suffer from a negative attitude toward marriage and related matters (Kanji et al., 2024). Factors such as fear of post-marriage problems, lack of employment and housing, poor communication skills, lack of trust in the opposite sex, continuing education, fear of betrayal, fear of oneself, and previous unsuccessful experiences contribute to the formation of negative attitudes toward marriage (Ritakallio et al., 2010).

A positive attitude toward marriage, as a long-term relationship, is highly important because it can lead to happiness, life satisfaction, mental health, and well-being, and it significantly impacts an individual's success or failure (Tucker et al., 2022). In contrast, when a negative attitude toward marriage dominates, it can lead to procrastination in responsibilities, negative thoughts about one's future spouse, a decrease in desirable interpersonal relationships, and assumptions about conflict and marital tension, fostering a pessimistic view of life with a partner (Bradshaw et al., 2022). Such negativity is often accompanied by weak control over changing beliefs and expectations about marriage (Mokhtari et al., 2022).

Perceived social support is considered one of the influential factors in the quality of interpersonal relationships and plays a key role in shaping attitudes and decision-making regarding relationships (Kalate Sadati & Jiriaei, 2022). Social support refers to individuals' subjective evaluations of supportive behaviors and relationships. Research has shown that adequate social support can reduce loneliness, increase life satisfaction, lower stress responses, and improve mental health (Altmann, 2020). Social support and communication networks are significant factors contributing to positive and rewarding experiences, ultimately enhancing self-worth and self-esteem (Boothby et al., 2018). Kalate Sadati & Jiriaei, (2022)

found that perceived social support has a significant positive relationship with positive attitudes toward marriage. Heinze et al. (2020) also reported that parental and peer social support plays an important role in shaping attitudes toward the opposite sex due to its impact on the quality and continuity of interpersonal relationships.

Extensive research has explored the role of metacognition in areas such as attitudes. Metacognition is a multifaceted concept that includes knowledge (beliefs), processes, and strategies used to evaluate, monitor, or control cognition (Wells et al., 2020). Metacognition can be divided into three areas: metacognitive knowledge, metacognitive experiences, and metacognitive strategies. Metacognitive knowledge refers to beliefs and theories individuals hold about their thinking; metacognitive experiences involve specific evaluations and feelings about one's mental states, including subjective emotional experiences. Metacognitive strategies are responses used to regulate and change thought processes and to achieve emotional and cognitive regulation (Ahmadkhani et al., 2021; Banihashem et al., 2024). Several studies have examined the link between metacognition and attitudes toward marriage, showing that dysfunctional metacognitive beliefs can predict negative attitudes toward marriage. There is substantial evidence that enhancing metacognitive skills is associated with increased effectiveness (Normann & Morina, 2018).

Given the benefits that marital relationships bring to the individual, family, and society, numerous studies over the past three decades have investigated factors related to attitudes toward marriage in young people approaching marriage (AKSU et al., 2023). Despite conceptual progress in this field, identifying fundamental mechanisms such as the role of emotional processes in shaping or reducing attitudes toward marriage still requires further investigation (Fors Connolly & Gärling, 2022). Recently, researchers have paid increasing attention to the role of emotion regulation in interpersonal relationships (Lochrie & Vishnuvajjala, 2022). Emotion regulation encompasses a range of strategies individuals use to influence which emotions they have, when they have them, and how they experience and express them (Mohebi et al., 2020).

Emotion regulation is not merely an intrapersonal phenomenon; it often develops in social contexts, is

influenced by social settings, and affects the quality of social relationships. Others are frequently both triggers and recipients of emotional responses, and emotion regulation processes are commonly applied during interactions with close individuals such as spouses, friends, or family members (Potoczny et al., 2022). Research shows that individuals with greater emotion regulation abilities have more positive social interactions and experience fewer conflicts with peers (Agus et al., 2021). Mohebi et al. (2020) found that female students with better emotion regulation had more positive attitudes toward marriage. Similarly, (Amin et al., 2024) concluded that emotion regulation significantly impacts attitudes toward marriage.

Another concept that appears to determine how individuals respond to stress from life events (such as marriage) and activate underlying schemas is ego strength. Ego strength is a major personality factor derived from Freud's tripartite model of the psyche (Hammen et al., 1985). It refers to an individual's capacity to successfully manage conflicting forces of instinctual drives, internal inhibitions, and social demands, including the ability to tolerate anxiety, channel and moderate instinctual pressures, and respond to superego demands (Behrendt, 2015). A significant relationship between ego strength and marital satisfaction has been confirmed (Rajabi et al., 2024). Ego strength is considered crucial to personality development and maturity, enabling individuals to form intimate relationships. According to Erikson's theory, having a developed personality is dependent on resolving the crises of earlier life stages to achieve intimacy. Those with higher ego strength are better equipped to deal with marital conflicts and thus report greater marital satisfaction.

Individuals' attitudes toward choosing a spouse during marriage are key factors that can lead to success or failure in marriage. Being aware of one's own attitudes and beliefs about marriage and partner selection can play a significant role in achieving a satisfying marriage. Part of the importance of attitudes stems from the fact that theorists consider studying attitudes essential for understanding social behavior. Moreover, attitudes determine behavior, and it is implicitly assumed that by changing individuals' attitudes, their behavior can also be changed. By understanding attitudes, one can also predict and influence behaviors. Given that the decision

to marry is among the most important decisions in life, and marriage itself is a fundamental necessity for human life, examining the factors related to attitudes toward marriage is essential. Despite numerous studies addressing the rising age of marriage, most have focused on socio-economic factors. Few have investigated the psychological dimensions and related factors influencing young people's attitudes toward marriage. Thus, examining psychological predictors of marital attitudes appears necessary.

This study aims to contribute to the understanding of marriage-related issues among young people and seeks to identify psychological components influencing attitudes toward marriage. This could pave the way for timely and appropriate marriages. Indeed, marriage and family formation, like many other phenomena, have positive consequences for society. Therefore, considering individual preferences, interests, and attitudes before marriage is essential. Implementing these factors in premarital counseling can play a vital role in the quality of marital relationships. Neglecting both risk and protective factors for marriage may contribute to the spread of prolonged singleness. A detailed investigation of this issue enables a deeper understanding of marital challenges and the necessity of adopting appropriate strategies. Thus, in light of the above, the present study aims to provide a model for predicting attitudes toward marriage based on metacognitive beliefs and perceived social support, with the mediating roles of ego strength and emotion regulation among female undergraduate students at Shahid Beheshti University.

Methods and Materials

Study Design

The present study employed a descriptive-correlational design using structural equation modeling (SEM). The statistical population included all female undergraduate students from various academic disciplines at Shahid Beheshti University in the year 2022. To estimate the sample size, the formula proposed by Tabachnick & Fidell (2007) was used. According to this formula, the minimum sample size in correlational studies is calculated using the formula $N \geq 50 + 8m$. In this study, 7 independent variables were identified; thus, with oversampling and accounting for potential attrition,

320 participants were selected using a non-random, convenience sampling method.

After coordination with the university's security office, questionnaires were distributed among participants and collected upon completion. The inclusion criteria were: informed consent, being female, unmarried, undergraduate student status, and an age range of 19–35 years. Exclusion criteria included withdrawal from the study, suffering from specific physical illnesses, or incomplete questionnaire responses.

To ensure ethical and legal compliance, the following ethical considerations were observed: Participants were informed of the research topic and procedures before the study began. The researcher committed to protecting participants' private information and using the data solely for research purposes. The researcher agreed to interpret the results for the participants if requested. Participants received guidance in case of any ambiguities during questionnaire completion. Participation involved no financial costs for the participants. The study did not conflict with participants' religious or cultural values.

Instruments

Marriage Attitude Scale (Holman & Li, 1997): Developed by Braaten & Rosén (1998) to assess attitudes toward marriage, the MAS was validated in Iran by Nilforooshan et al. (2013). It includes 23 items across four subscales: pessimistic attitude toward marriage (items 4, 17, 10, 15, 13, 21, 22, 14), optimistic attitude (20, 23, 19, 9, 12, 11), realistic attitude (1, 7, 6, 5, 16, 2), and idealistic attitude (3, 8, 18). The questionnaire uses a 4-point Likert scale (e.g., "Marriage is pointless because most marriages end in divorce"). Items 1, 3, 5, 8, 12, 16, 19, 20, and 23 are reverse scored. The total score ranges from 23 to 92, with higher scores indicating a more optimistic attitude toward marriage. Braaten & Rosén (1998) reported an internal consistency coefficient of 0.79 and Cronbach's alpha of 0.89. Nilforooshan et al. (2013) reported content, face, and criterion validity coefficients of 0.73 and 0.77, respectively, and a Cronbach's alpha of 0.86. In the present study, the Cronbach's alpha was 0.83.

Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ) (Garnefski & Kraaij, 2007): This 36-item scale measures cognitive emotion regulation strategies across nine subscales: self-blame, other-blame, acceptance, rumination, positive refocusing, refocus on planning, positive reappraisal,

catastrophizing, and perspective-taking. Responses are rated from 1 (never) to 5 (always). It yields two overall scores: adaptive and maladaptive strategies. The instrument has demonstrated good reliability and validity in various studies (Garnefski & Kraaij, 2007), with Cronbach's alpha often above 0.80. In the Iranian context, internal consistency ranged from 0.74 to 0.92, and test-retest reliability from 0.51 to 0.77 (Basharn, 2017). In the present study, Cronbach's alpha was 0.79 for adaptive and 0.78 for maladaptive strategies, and subscale alphas ranged from 0.72 to 0.85.

Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS): Developed by Zimet et al. (1988), this 12-item scale evaluates perceived social support from family, friends, and significant others using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree). The total score ranges from 12 to 84, with higher scores indicating greater perceived support. Internal consistency reliability was reported as 0.88, and confirmatory factor analysis supported the three-subscale structure. In an Iranian validation by Bagherian-Sararoudi et al. (2013), exploratory factor analysis confirmed the three-factor structure, with explained variances of 77.87% (clinical sample) and 78.55% (non-clinical sample). Cronbach's alpha was 0.84 overall; in the current study, it was 0.82.

Ego Strength Scale (Alessandri et al. 2011): This 25-item self-report scale was designed by Basharat (2006) to measure an individual's capacity to manage and adapt to life's challenges. It uses a 5-point Likert scale and includes five subscales: ego control, resilience, mature defense mechanisms, problem-focused coping, and positive emotion-focused coping. Total scores range from 25 to 125. Psychometric evaluations from multiple studies between 2005 and 2011 confirmed its validity and reliability in both clinical (n=327) and non-clinical (n=1257) populations. Cronbach's alphas for subscales ranged from 0.73 to 0.91, and test-retest reliabilities from 0.64 to 0.88. In this study, reliability was confirmed with satisfactory coefficients across all subscales.

Metacognitions Questionnaire (MCQ-30): Developed by Wells et al. (2020), this 30-item self-report scale measures individuals' beliefs about thinking. It includes five subscales: positive beliefs about worry, uncontrollability and danger of thoughts, need to control thoughts, cognitive confidence, and cognitive self-consciousness. Responses are on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = do not agree, 4 = strongly agree), with total scores

ranging from 30 to 120. Higher scores indicate greater dysfunctional metacognitive beliefs. Cronbach’s alphas for subscales ranged from 0.73 to 0.93, and test-retest reliability over 18–22 days ranged from 0.59 to 0.87. In Mirzaei et al., (2022), the overall alpha was 0.81. In the present study, Cronbach’s alpha was 0.82 for the total score, and subscale alphas were: positive beliefs (0.78), uncontrollability and danger (0.76), cognitive confidence (0.79), need for control (0.63), and cognitive self-consciousness (0.70).

Analysis

Data were analyzed using path analysis with SPSS version 22 and AMOS version 23.

Findings and Results

The demographic analysis of the data showed that among the participants, 90 individuals (28.13%) were

aged 18 to 20 years, 130 individuals (40.62%) were aged 20 to 22 years, and 100 individuals (31.25%) were aged 22 to 24 years. The mean age was 26.65 with a standard deviation of 1.52. All participants were female and unmarried undergraduate students. Among the participants, 152 students (47.50%) were enrolled in the Faculty of Engineering and 168 students (52.50%) were studying in the Faculty of Literature and Humanities. Regarding fields of study, 60 students (18.75%) studied Electrical Engineering, 50 students (15.62%) Mechanical Engineering, 40 students (12.50%) Civil Engineering, 70 students (21.88%) Persian Literature, 45 students (14.06%) English Language, and 55 students (17.19%) Law. The means (and standard deviations) for the research variables were shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of the Research Variables

Variable	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Metacognitive Beliefs	66.35	8.16	35	118
Perceived Social Support	13.12	3.45	5	13
Ego Strength	71.18	10.08	37	120
Emotion Regulation	75.03	12.66	43	147
Attitude Toward Marriage	40.14	7.05	26	85

Table 2

Standardized and Unstandardized Path Coefficients for Direct Effects in the Proposed Model

Path	Standardized Estimate	Unstandardized Estimate	SE	Critical Ratio (CR)	p-value
Metacognitive Beliefs → Ego Strength	0.48	1.45	0.35	4.14	p = 0.001
Metacognitive Beliefs → Attitude Toward Marriage	0.42	1.36	0.41	3.31	p = 0.001
Ego Strength → Attitude Toward Marriage	0.45	1.42	0.37	3.83	p = 0.001
Social Support → Emotion Regulation	0.50	1.58	0.25	6.32	p = 0.001
Social Support → Attitude Toward Marriage	0.53	1.63	0.22	7.40	p = 0.001
Emotion Regulation → Attitude Toward Marriage	0.40	1.40	0.39	3.58	p = 0.001

Based on the standardized path coefficients and the corresponding critical ratios presented in Table 2, all

direct paths in the proposed model were found to be statistically significant ($p \leq 0.001$).

Table 3*Goodness-of-Fit Indices of the Proposed Research Model*

Fit Indices	Value
Chi-square Goodness-of-Fit Test (χ^2)	9.32
Significance Level	p = 0.023
Degrees of Freedom (df)	4
Chi-square to Degrees of Freedom Ratio (χ^2/df)	2.33
Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI)	0.97
Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI)	0.95
Normed Fit Index (NFI)	0.99
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.98
Incremental Fit Index (IFI)	0.99
Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI)	0.98
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	0.047

To evaluate the goodness-of-fit of the structural model, the following indices were used: chi-square, degrees of freedom, chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio (χ^2/df), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), goodness-of-fit index (GFI), adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI), normed fit index (NFI), comparative fit index (CFI), incremental fit index (IFI), and non-normed fit index (NNFI), which were respectively equal to 9.32, 4, 2.33, 0.047, 0.97, 0.95, 0.99, 0.98, 0.99, and 0.98.

In evaluating the model fit using the above indices, the validity and fitness of the tool were assessed. If the chi-

Discussion and Conclusion

This study aimed to present a model for predicting attitudes toward marriage based on metacognitive beliefs and perceived social support with the mediating role of ego strength and emotion regulation among undergraduate female students at Shahid Beheshti University. The findings showed that modeling of attitudes toward marriage based on metacognitive beliefs and social support with the mediating role of ego strength and emotion regulation is predictable among undergraduate female students at Shahid Beheshti University. These findings are consistent with those of (Kalate Sadati & Jiriaei, 2022; Heinze et al., 2020; Amin et al., 2024) and (Mikelani et al., 2024).

To interpret these findings, it can be said that social support affects attitudes toward marriage through two main processes: the direct effect of social support through attitude-related behaviors such as encouraging proper behaviors, and the buffering effect of social support which moderates the effects of acute and chronic stress on attitudes and enhances adjustment (Kalate

square to degrees of freedom ratio is less than 3, it is considered desirable. Also, when the RMSEA is less than 0.10, the analysis and model report an acceptable fit (Kline, 2015), and the closer the values of GFI, AGFI, NFI, CFI, and NNFI are to one, the better the model fit. According to the indices obtained in the above table, the chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio is 2.33, and the values of the fit indices GFI, AGFI, NFI, CFI, and NNFI fall within the range of 0.90 to 1.00, indicating that these indices meet the required standards. Therefore, it can be concluded that the model has a good fit and is confirmed.

Sadati & Jiriaei, 2022). The direct effect model assumes that social support enhances one's attitudes regardless of stress level. The buffering model argues that in the presence of negative events, social support protects individuals from negative attitudes. Among individuals with negative attitudes, social support is associated with improved emotional control and functioning. Those who perceive high levels of social support usually feel that others care about and value them. This sense of worth can increase self-confidence and lead individuals toward a more positive attitude toward interpersonal relationships, including marriage.

Marriage is typically accompanied by new concerns and responsibilities. Perceived social support, by offering emotional and informational support, can reduce anxieties and fears about the future of marriage and shift one's attitude from being threat-focused to opportunity-oriented (Altmann, 2020). Individuals who receive significant social support from family and friends usually grow up in environments where positive and healthy emotional relationships are reinforced. These positive experiences can serve as models for future relationships, including marriage, and foster an

optimistic attitude toward marriage. Perceived social support also fosters a sense of belonging to a social network. This sense of belonging may encourage individuals to engage in long-term emotional relationships such as marriage, as marriage is considered one of the main ways to maintain social connection.

Social support, particularly through interactions with close individuals, can enhance interpersonal skills such as effective communication, conflict resolution, and understanding others' emotions (Heinze et al., 2020). These skills not only increase the likelihood of a successful marriage but also contribute to forming a positive attitude toward it. Emotion regulation is not merely an intrapersonal phenomenon; it is often shaped in social contexts, influenced by social backgrounds, and affects the quality of social relationships. Others are often triggers and recipients of our emotional responses, and most of the time, emotion regulation processes are employed in interactions with others—especially spouses, friends, or family members (Mikelani et al., 2024).

Research shows that individuals with greater emotion regulation abilities experience more positive attitudes and social support, and fewer conflicts (Kökönyei et al., 2024). Emotion regulation is associated with higher self-esteem and social support, and increased positive emotional experiences help effectively deal with stressful situations such as marriage, enhancing appropriate responses to social contexts (Mikelani et al., 2024). Emotion regulation is associated with increased adaptation, efficient coping, problem-solving, and psychological well-being, while dysregulation leads to negative psychological and emotional outcomes and worsens the current state, playing a negative role in attitudes toward marriage (Potoczny et al., 2022).

The inability to manage emotional responses causes individuals to experience more intense and prolonged distress, which may ultimately lead to a negative attitude. Therefore, emotion regulation skills are important in shaping attitudes toward marriage, and effective emotion regulation strategies can improve emotional stability and marital satisfaction (Amin et al., 2024).

Metacognitive beliefs are predictors of negative emotional experiences such as anxiety and depression. Studies also show that positive and negative

metacognitive beliefs may contribute to the persistence of negative attitudes. In the metacognitive approach, metacognitive beliefs are key guiding elements that influence how individuals respond to negative attitudes, beliefs, symptoms, and emotions, and they drive the toxic thinking style (Cognitive Attentional Syndrome), which leads to negative attitudes and psychological-emotional distress.

The metacognitive theory posits that despite the fundamental similarities in the psychopathological mechanisms of various psychological disorders, each disorder has its specific cognitive and metacognitive content (Wells et al., 2020). In this regard, Schwarz & Clore, (1996) state that people use their attitudes as information for evaluations and judgments; therefore, negative evaluations result in psychological dysfunction and impaired functioning.

According to metacognitive theory in psychological disorders, metacognitions are sensitive components in predicting and forming attitudes (Normann & Morina, 2018). Papageorgiou and (Wells et al., 2020) proposed a clinical metacognitive model concerning attitudes toward marriage. They argued that positive metacognitive beliefs about attitudes toward marriage lead to their maintenance. In other words, when a negative attitude is activated, the individual first evaluates it as an uncontrollable and harmful process. This leads to interpersonal and social consequences and ultimately activates negative metacognitive beliefs about the attitude toward marriage.

Wells et al., (2020), in their Self-Regulatory Executive Function (S-REF) theory, conceptualized the role of metacognition in negative attitudes. According to the S-REF theory, negative attitudes persist when maladaptive coping strategies such as rumination, worry, threat monitoring, avoidance, and thought suppression fail to correct dysfunctional self-beliefs and increase access to negative self-information.

The results of the present study showed that the proposed mediation model of ego strength in the relationship between attitudes toward marriage and metacognitive beliefs had an acceptable fit with the data. In other words, the results demonstrate that the conceptual bridge of ego strength between attitudes toward marriage and metacognitive beliefs plays a crucial interpretative role.

Regarding the mediating role of ego strength in the relationship between attitudes toward marriage and metacognitive beliefs, it can be stated that ego strength is the individual's ability to manage conflicting forces among instinctual drives, internal inhibitions, and social needs. It includes the ability to tolerate anxiety, modulate and channel instinctual pressures, and respond to superego demands. This role of ego strength explains its relation to attitudes toward marriage and metacognitive beliefs (Behrendt, 2015).

A significant relationship between ego strength and attitudes toward marriage has been confirmed (Basharat, 2006). Ego strength is considered an important factor in personality development and maturity, crucial for forming intimate relationships and positive attitudes toward marriage based on metacognitive awareness.

According to Erikson's theory, having a well-developed personality for forming a positive attitude toward marriage and intimate relationships depends on resolving life-stage crises and acquiring ego strength. Erikson's psychosocial development theory suggests that success at each life stage depends on success in resolving previous crises. Those with higher ego strength have better understanding to resolve conflicts and form positive attitudes. They are also better at sharing ideas, have better sexual relationships, understand their partner more, and express emotions more effectively. Higher ego strength is associated with greater self-awareness, meaning individuals can express their needs in relationships more appropriately (Orenstein & Lewis, 2022).

Caldwell & Shaver, (2015) stated that individuals with higher ego strength have more positive attitudes. Such individuals, due to having a flexible life approach, do not experience emotional turmoil in facing stressful and demanding tasks. Individuals with high ego strength experience more positive attitudes, higher self-confidence, and greater psychological adaptability compared to those with lower ego strength (Alessandri et al., 2011).

In fact, ego strength is a combination of beliefs about oneself and the world that shields individuals from internal and external pressures. People with ego strength tend to be social and extroverted, maintaining calm and comfort. They are competitive in many

situations, experience lower levels of anxiety than others, and hold more positive attitudes.

The present study also faced limitations, including the use of non-random convenience sampling, restricting the sample to undergraduate female students at Shahid Beheshti University, the completion of questionnaires at different class hours, and the cross-sectional nature of the study, all of which limit the generalizability of the results. Moreover, the use of self-report instruments to collect data may increase the risk of response bias. Therefore, it is recommended that future studies be conducted in various cities and among different groups with larger sample sizes. In addition, it is suggested that other data collection methods such as interviews be used alongside questionnaires to allow for more reliable generalization of the results.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

Ethical Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants. Ethical considerations in this study were that participation was entirely optional.

Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

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Authors' Contributions

All authors equally contribute to this study.

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