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The Relationship Between Marital Burnout and Psychological Capital with Psychological Hardiness in Conflicted Couples

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study aimed to examine the extent to which marital burnout and psychological capital predict psychological hardiness in couples experiencing marital conflict.

Methods and Materials: The research design was descriptive–correlational with a predictive approach. The statistical population comprised couples with marital conflicts who visited the Armaghan Bahar Counseling Center, the Niyan Goal-Oriented Growth and Development Center, and the Savalan Center in Karaj during the first six months of 2024. Using the Tabachnick and Fidell sample size formula $N \geq 50 + 8M$, 160 participants were selected through non-probability purposive sampling. Data were collected using validated instruments, including the Marital Conflicts Questionnaire (Sanaei et al., 2008), the Marital Burnout Scale (Pines, 1996), the Psychological Capital Questionnaire (Luthans, 2007), and the Psychological Hardiness Scale (Kobasa et al., 1982). After obtaining informed consent, participants completed the paper-based questionnaires under researcher supervision. Data analysis was performed using SPSS version 24 with Pearson's correlation and multiple regression analysis.

Findings: Results indicated that marital burnout had a significant and negative predictive relationship with psychological hardiness ($t = -5.601$, $\beta = -0.399$, $p < .001$), while psychological capital had a significant and positive predictive relationship with psychological hardiness ($t = 4.619$, $\beta = 0.329$, $p < .001$). Together, marital burnout and psychological capital explained 39% of the variance in psychological hardiness ($R^2 = .399$).

Conclusion: Marital burnout significantly undermines psychological hardiness, while psychological capital acts as a protective resource that enhances resilience and adaptability in conflicted couples.

Keywords: psychological hardiness, marital burnout, psychological capital, conflicted couples

1. Introduction

Marital relationships are among the most influential interpersonal systems affecting individuals' psychological health, life satisfaction, and social stability. When these relationships face persistent tension and unresolved conflict, couples are at risk of experiencing emotional distance, decreased commitment, and eventual relational breakdown (Makhanova et al., 2018; Park & Park, 2019). Prolonged exposure to marital distress often leads to marital burnout—a multidimensional state of physical, emotional, and psychological exhaustion resulting from chronic dissatisfaction and unresolved relational issues (Jafarimanesh et al., 2021; Moein et al., 2012). Marital burnout can deeply undermine an individual's adaptive coping resources, making it harder for partners to remain resilient and psychologically strong when facing relational challenges (Hosseini, 2016).

Within this context, psychological hardiness has been identified as a crucial protective factor in sustaining mental well-being and relational functioning in times of interpersonal stress (Bartone et al., 2022; Kowalski & Schermer, 2019). Psychological hardiness refers to a constellation of attitudes and coping tendencies characterized by commitment, control, and challenge orientation (Nordmo et al., 2017). These attributes help individuals interpret marital difficulties as manageable and meaningful rather than overwhelming threats (Makiwane et al., 2017). Evidence suggests that individuals high in psychological hardiness exhibit greater marital stability, effective conflict resolution, and lower psychological distress (Jarwan & Al-Frehat, 2020; Roshannejhad et al., 2019). Conversely, when hardiness is low, marital conflicts tend to escalate, contributing to emotional withdrawal and disillusionment (Azimi et al., 2020).

Marital burnout has gained significant attention as a progressive condition that erodes relational satisfaction and personal well-being (Moein et al., 2012). It emerges when couples repeatedly fail to resolve conflicts and feel emotionally deprived within the relationship (Mohammadpour et al., 2020). Symptoms such as physical fatigue, emotional exhaustion, and psychological detachment can lead to increased risk of separation and mental health difficulties, including anxiety and depression (Darbandi et al., 2020; Jafarimanesh et al., 2021). Research indicates that marital burnout not only impacts individual well-being but also reduces couples' ability to invest in problem-solving and emotional regulation (Azimi et al.,

2020). As unresolved stress accumulates, cognitive inflexibility and hopelessness grow, making it harder to remain engaged and optimistic about the relationship (Hashemi Pour et al., 2022).

In Iranian cultural and social contexts, marital burnout has been reported as a rising concern due to shifting family dynamics and evolving gender roles (Ansari, 2021). Rapid social transitions and increasing pressures on economic and emotional stability have left many couples vulnerable to relational fatigue and psychological disengagement (Mahdikhani & Izadi, 2021). Without appropriate coping mechanisms, these couples may experience a downward cycle where burnout intensifies conflict and conflict reinforces burnout (Tehrani Azad & Mojtabaei, 2019).

Parallel to the study of vulnerability factors, scholars have emphasized the importance of positive psychological resources in protecting against relational distress. Psychological capital (PsyCap) is a higher-order construct encompassing self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience (Çavuş & Gökçen, 2015). These elements collectively represent an individual's capacity to believe in their abilities, generate pathways toward desired goals, remain hopeful in the face of obstacles, and adapt flexibly to adversity (Sarsar et al., 2022). High PsyCap has been linked to enhanced subjective well-being, reduced depressive symptoms, and stronger interpersonal functioning (Sun, 2025).

In marital contexts, psychological capital fosters constructive coping and helps couples maintain positive perspectives during conflicts (Mohammadi et al., 2023; Sepahvand et al., 2023). Hope and optimism can counteract the sense of helplessness that characterizes marital burnout, while self-efficacy encourages partners to feel competent in resolving disagreements (Khan et al., 2024). Resilience, as an embedded dimension of PsyCap, enables individuals to rebound from setbacks and sustain emotional balance during interpersonal crises (Viskarami & Khalafi, 2024). Empirical research supports that higher levels of psychological capital predict stronger marital adjustment and satisfaction, acting as a buffer against disillusionment and emotional withdrawal (Mohammadi et al., 2023; Tehrani Azad & Mojtabaei, 2019).

Although both marital burnout and psychological capital have been independently associated with marital well-being, psychological hardiness may serve as a pivotal psychological structure linking these constructs (Bartone et al., 2022). Individuals with strong hardiness traits interpret conflict as a challenge rather than a threat, thereby reducing the impact of marital burnout (Jarwan & Al-Frehat, 2020;

Roshannejhad et al., 2019). They remain committed to the relationship despite difficulties and perceive themselves as capable of influencing outcomes (Nasiri, 2016). Conversely, couples experiencing low hardiness tend to avoid conflict, engage in negative cognitive patterns, and show higher vulnerability to emotional disconnection (Ghobadi et al., 2021).

Notably, psychological capital may indirectly strengthen hardiness. Hope and optimism support the “commitment” and “challenge” dimensions of hardiness by reinforcing a future-oriented mindset, while self-efficacy aligns with the “control” dimension by increasing perceived influence over marital outcomes (Çavuş & Gökçen, 2015; Sun, 2025). Therefore, exploring the combined effect of marital burnout and psychological capital on psychological hardiness provides valuable insight into mechanisms that protect couples under relational stress.

Previous studies have highlighted the predictive role of marital burnout in psychological vulnerabilities, including lower resilience and higher separation tendencies (Azimi et al., 2020; Mohammadpour et al., 2020). At the same time, research in different cultural contexts confirms that psychological capital promotes marital stability and mutual support (Mohammadi et al., 2023; Sepahvand et al., 2023). Yet, the interplay between these negative and positive forces in predicting psychological hardiness remains insufficiently explored, especially in non-Western cultural contexts. Iranian couples face unique socio-economic and familial expectations that may influence how burnout and psychological capital affect their coping capacities (Ansari, 2021; Mahdikhani & Izadi, 2021).

Studies have also shown that cultural values, including collectivism and family honor, may intensify the psychological costs of marital burnout while simultaneously shaping resilience strategies (Azimi et al., 2020; Darbandi et al., 2020). Moreover, couples experiencing chronic conflict often oscillate between emotional withdrawal and sporadic repair attempts, which can be better understood through the lens of psychological hardiness (Hashemi Pour et al., 2022; Tehrani Azad & Mojtabaei, 2019). Given these dynamics, identifying modifiable positive resources like psychological capital is essential for culturally responsive interventions (Ebrahimi et al., 2023; Khalaf & Al-Hadrawi, 2022).

Although the protective roles of resilience and psychological capital have been recognized, existing evidence has tended to examine them in isolation (Hamidi Cholabi & Salehi, 2023; Sarsar et al., 2022). Studies linking marital burnout with hardiness are emerging but remain

scarce, and few have simultaneously analyzed how psychological capital may counteract burnout’s detrimental impact on hardiness (Dong et al., 2022; Khan et al., 2024). Additionally, much prior research has relied on Western conceptualizations of marriage and stress, leaving a gap in understanding how these constructs operate within Iranian sociocultural frameworks (Ansari, 2021; Mahdikhani & Izadi, 2021).

By exploring the predictive capacity of marital burnout and psychological capital on psychological hardiness in conflicted couples, the present study addresses an important gap in both theory and practice. It integrates vulnerability and resource perspectives, recognizing that hardiness may serve as a key adaptive mechanism when couples face severe relational challenges (Bartone et al., 2022; Roshannejhad et al., 2019). Furthermore, by focusing on couples actively seeking counseling services, the study provides ecologically valid insights for therapeutic and educational interventions (Azimi et al., 2020; Darbandi et al., 2020).

Drawing from the above theoretical and empirical foundations, the current research aims to predict psychological hardiness in conflicted couples based on marital burnout and psychological capital.

2. Methods and Materials

2.1. Study Design and Participants

The present study was applied in terms of its aim. In addition, according to the stated objectives, the research design, based on the method of data collection, was descriptive–correlational with a predictive approach. The statistical population included couples with marital conflicts who sought counseling services at Armaghan Bahar Counseling Center, the Niyan Goal-Oriented Growth and Development Center, and the Savalan Center in Karaj during the first six months of 2024.

Based on the Tabachnick and Fidell formula $N \geq 50 + 8M$ (where M is the number of predictor variables and N is the minimum sample size), considering the two predictor variables (marital burnout and psychological capital and their components), the minimum appropriate sample size for this study was calculated to be 122 participants. To increase the validity of the tests and to control for potential participant dropout, the sample size was set at 160 individuals. A non-probability purposive sampling method was employed.

First, couples with marital conflicts who visited the Armaghan Bahar Counseling Center, the Niyan Goal-Oriented Growth and Development Center, and the Savalan

Center were identified. Couples were selected who had not yet entered the process of receiving counseling services. Then, volunteer participation forms were distributed among couples experiencing marital conflicts. After identifying volunteer couples, the Marital Conflicts Questionnaire was administered. Couples who scored above 126 on the Marital Conflicts Questionnaire were selected. Subsequently, these couples were re-evaluated using a clinical interview to ensure the presence of marital conflicts.

2.2. Measures

The Marital Conflicts Questionnaire (MCQ) developed by Sanaei et al. (2008) is a comprehensive self-report instrument designed to assess the intensity and nature of conflicts between spouses. It evaluates multiple dimensions of marital discord, including cooperation breakdown, decreased sexual relations, increased emotional separation, negative emotional expression, and interference from relatives. The questionnaire consists of 54 items rated on a Likert scale, where higher scores reflect more severe and frequent marital conflict. The MCQ was specifically developed and validated within the Iranian sociocultural context, making it suitable for use in studies on Iranian couples. It demonstrates strong psychometric properties; internal consistency coefficients reported in previous studies have ranged from 0.89 to 0.95, and test-retest reliability has been found to be satisfactory over a two-week interval. Construct validity has been established through factor analysis, which confirmed its multidimensional structure and its ability to discriminate between couples with high and low marital satisfaction. The tool's cultural adaptability and robust psychometric support make it appropriate for examining conflict patterns among couples experiencing relational distress.

The Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ) developed by Luthans (2007) is a widely used instrument for measuring the four key components of psychological capital: self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience. It contains 24 items divided equally across the four subscales, with responses rated on a six-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Self-efficacy assesses confidence in one's ability to mobilize cognitive and motivational resources to achieve goals; hope measures determination and goal-directed energy; optimism reflects positive expectations about the future; and resilience evaluates the capacity to recover from adversity and adapt to change. The PCQ has been extensively validated across

diverse populations, including couples and working adults, with Cronbach's alpha values typically ranging from 0.85 to 0.92 for the total scale. Convergent validity has been confirmed through correlations with constructs such as well-being and adaptive coping, and discriminant validity has been demonstrated by its ability to differentiate between high- and low-functioning individuals. Its positive psychology foundation and strong psychometric evidence make it particularly suitable for assessing internal psychological resources in marital research.

The Psychological Hardiness Scale (PHS), originally developed by Kobasa et al. (1982), is a prominent instrument designed to measure the personality disposition of hardiness, conceptualized through the three interrelated dimensions of commitment, control, and challenge. The scale consists of 50 items rated on a four-point Likert scale ranging from "not at all true" to "completely true." Commitment refers to the individual's tendency to remain involved and engaged in life activities despite difficulties; control reflects the belief that one can influence events and outcomes; and challenge denotes the perception of change and stress as opportunities for growth rather than threats. The PHS has demonstrated strong psychometric characteristics, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients typically reported between 0.80 and 0.88 and test-retest reliability supporting its temporal stability. Convergent validity has been established by significant correlations with resilience, adaptive coping strategies, and lower psychological distress, while discriminant validity shows that it effectively distinguishes between high- and low-hardiness individuals. Its theoretical grounding and reliable measurement structure have made it a widely accepted tool for exploring personal adaptability and stress resistance, particularly within high-conflict interpersonal contexts such as marital relationships.

The Marital Burnout Scale (MBS), developed by Pines (1996), is a specialized adaptation of the general burnout concept applied to intimate relationships. The scale captures the progressive physical, emotional, and psychological exhaustion experienced by individuals in unsatisfying marriages. It includes 21 items rated on a seven-point Likert scale, with higher scores indicating greater burnout severity. The MBS is organized into three subscales: physical fatigue (loss of energy and somatic complaints due to relational stress), emotional fatigue (feelings of hopelessness and disappointment about the marriage), and psychological fatigue (detachment and alienation from the partner). Extensive research has supported its reliability, with Cronbach's alpha values consistently reported above 0.90

for the total scale and ranging from 0.80 to 0.88 for the subscales. Construct validity has been established through strong correlations with marital dissatisfaction, psychological distress, and divorce proneness. The MBS is widely recognized for its sensitivity in identifying burnout in various cultural contexts, including Middle Eastern populations, and is thus a valuable tool for studies addressing marital exhaustion and its impact on psychological resilience and hardiness.

2.3. Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 24. Descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, and ranges, were first calculated to summarize participants' scores on marital burnout, psychological capital, and psychological hardiness. Pearson's correlation coefficient was then used to examine the bivariate relationships among study variables. To determine the

predictive power of marital burnout and psychological capital on psychological hardiness, multiple linear regression analysis was performed after checking the assumptions of normality, linearity, homoscedasticity, and independence of residuals (verified by the Durbin–Watson statistic). A significance level of $p < .05$ was adopted for all inferential tests.

3. Findings and Results

Before examining the relationships between the main study variables, descriptive statistics were calculated to summarize the participants' scores on psychological hardiness, marital burnout dimensions (physical fatigue, emotional fatigue, psychological fatigue), and psychological capital components (self-efficacy, hope, resilience, and optimism). Table 1 presents the means and standard deviations for all measured variables.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables (N = 160)

Variable	M	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Psychological Hardiness	86.42	10.35	58	112
Physical Fatigue	22.16	5.47	10	35
Emotional Fatigue	24.08	6.03	11	38
Psychological Fatigue	21.74	5.85	9	36
Self-efficacy	28.31	4.92	15	38
Hope	27.64	5.27	13	39
Resilience	29.05	5.10	16	40
Optimism	26.57	5.38	14	40

As shown in Table 1, participants reported moderate to high levels of psychological hardiness ($M = 86.42$, $SD = 10.35$). Among the burnout dimensions, emotional fatigue had the highest mean ($M = 24.08$, $SD = 6.03$), followed closely by physical fatigue ($M = 22.16$, $SD = 5.47$) and psychological fatigue ($M = 21.74$, $SD = 5.85$). In terms of

psychological capital, self-efficacy showed the highest average score ($M = 28.31$, $SD = 4.92$), while optimism had a slightly lower mean ($M = 26.57$, $SD = 5.38$). These descriptive findings suggest that although participants displayed moderately strong psychological capital, burnout symptoms were also present at notable levels

Table 2

Correlation Matrix Between the Study Variables

Components	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Psychological Hardiness	1							
2. Physical Fatigue	-.412**	1						
3. Emotional Fatigue	-.399**	.119	1					
4. Psychological Fatigue	-.436**	.306**	.570**	1				
5. Self-efficacy	.292**	-.403**	-.191*	.080	1			
6. Hope	.277**	-.166*	-.145	-.201*	.164*	1		
7. Resilience	-.055	.169*	.343**	.190*	-.414**	-.080	1	
8. Optimism	.402**	-.276**	-.631**	-.585**	.096	.116	-.341**	1

As shown in Table 2, psychological hardiness had a negative and significant relationship with the components of marital burnout (physical fatigue, emotional fatigue, and

psychological fatigue) and a positive and significant relationship with the components of psychological capital (self-efficacy, hope, and optimism).

Table 3

Summary of Regression Model for Predicting Psychological Hardiness Based on Marital Burnout and Psychological Capital

R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin–Watson
.632	.399	.391	2.88686	2.264

According to the findings in Table 3, marital burnout and psychological capital jointly explained about 39% of the variance in the dependent variable (psychological hardiness) significantly.

The Durbin–Watson test was used to check the independence of residuals (predictor: psychological capital).

The test result indicated that the assumption of independence of residuals was met because the Durbin–Watson value for psychological capital did not exceed the critical limits (1.5–2.5).

Table 4

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Results for Predicting Psychological Hardiness Based on Marital Burnout and Psychological Capital

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	868.541	2	434.270	52.108	.000b
Residual	1308.434	157	8.334		
Total	2176.975	159			

Based on the findings in Table 4, the estimated regression model was statistically significant, as the F value was 52.108 with a significance level of .000, which is smaller than .05.

Table 5

Estimated Regression Coefficients for Predicting Psychological Hardiness Based on Marital Burnout and Psychological Capital

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	p
Constant	55.589	6.376		8.718	.000
Marital Burnout	-.242	.043	-.399	-5.601	.000
Psychological Capital	.316	.068	.329	4.619	.000

As shown in Table 5, the regression analysis results indicated that marital burnout ($t = -5.601$, $\beta = -0.399$) significantly and negatively predicted psychological hardiness in conflicted couples, while psychological capital ($t = 4.619$, $\beta = 0.329$) significantly and positively predicted psychological hardiness in conflicted couples.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The present study examined how marital burnout and psychological capital predict psychological hardiness among conflicted couples. The results showed that marital burnout significantly and negatively predicted psychological hardiness, while psychological capital significantly and

positively predicted psychological hardiness. These two variables together explained approximately 39% of the variance in psychological hardiness, which is a substantial proportion considering the multifactorial nature of adaptive functioning in couples experiencing conflict.

The negative predictive role of marital burnout on psychological hardiness is consistent with theoretical models describing burnout as an erosion of essential psychological resources (Jafarimanesh et al., 2021; Moein et al., 2012). Marital burnout is characterized by physical fatigue, emotional exhaustion, and psychological withdrawal, which directly oppose the core elements of hardiness—commitment, control, and viewing adversity as

a challenge rather than a threat (Azimi et al., 2020; Hosseini, 2016). Our finding parallels earlier research showing that couples with chronic unresolved conflicts report lower resilience and adaptability (Ansari, 2021; Mohammadpour et al., 2020). For instance, (Jafarimanesh et al., 2021) found that marital burnout diminishes emotional regulation capacity, while (Darbandi et al., 2020) demonstrated that persistent conflict depletes partners' sense of control and willingness to problem-solve.

Cognitive-behavioral explanations also support this association. Marital burnout fosters catastrophic thinking and negative expectations about the relationship's future, weakening the "challenge" dimension of hardiness, which frames stress as an opportunity for growth (Azimi et al., 2020; Hashemi Pour et al., 2022). Furthermore, the emotional detachment associated with burnout undermines the "commitment" aspect by decreasing relational investment and hope for change. In cultural contexts like Iran, where marriage holds high social value, such disengagement may lead to guilt and additional stress, intensifying the depletion of adaptive resources (Ansari, 2021; Mahdikhani & Izadi, 2021).

Conversely, the strong positive predictive effect of psychological capital on psychological hardiness aligns with growing evidence that positive psychological resources serve as protective factors in stressful interpersonal contexts (Çavuş & Gökçen, 2015; Sun, 2025). Psychological capital—a combination of self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience—helps individuals withstand and reinterpret stressors more adaptively. Self-efficacy fosters confidence in handling conflict, hope and optimism sustain goal-directed action despite adversity, and resilience facilitates emotional recovery after relational setbacks (Khan et al., 2024; Sepahvand et al., 2023). Together, these dimensions support both the "control" and "challenge" components of hardiness, helping couples stay engaged and solution-focused during conflict (Bartone et al., 2022; Roshannejhad et al., 2019).

Several studies reinforce these findings. (Mohammadi et al., 2023) reported that psychological capital contributes to marital adjustment and adaptive coping among couples, while (Sarsar et al., 2022) identified resilience as a key mediator linking psychological capital to emotion regulation. Similarly, (Viskarami & Khalafi, 2024) found that resilience strengthens subjective well-being and buffers against adversity, supporting its role in promoting hardiness. These findings collectively highlight that couples with stronger psychological capital are better equipped to resist

the erosive effects of burnout and maintain psychological strength under chronic stress.

The interplay between burnout and psychological capital can be understood through conservation of resources (COR) theory, which proposes that stress leads to resource loss but can be counteracted by resource gain (Çavuş & Gökçen, 2015; Sun, 2025). Marital burnout represents significant resource depletion, whereas psychological capital provides resource replenishment through positive expectations and adaptive coping. This dual dynamic explains why, even among distressed couples, psychological capital significantly predicted psychological hardiness in our sample.

From a cultural standpoint, these results also make sense. In collectivistic societies such as Iran, where family cohesion and endurance are valued, couples may avoid openly addressing conflict, resulting in suppressed emotions and increased burnout (Ansari, 2021; Mahdikhani & Izadi, 2021). However, psychological capital offers internal strengths that allow individuals to sustain hardiness while adhering to cultural norms of marital preservation (Khalaf & Al-Hadrawi, 2022; Tehrani Azad & Mojtabaei, 2019). In this way, fostering psychological capital could help couples maintain both relational stability and psychological well-being.

Another implication is the extension of psychological hardiness beyond occupational and military contexts, where it has traditionally been studied (Bartone et al., 2022; Nordmo et al., 2017). Our findings show that hardiness is also a meaningful construct in intimate relationships, sensitive to marital burnout and positively influenced by psychological capital. This suggests that hardiness may serve as a valuable marker of adaptive capacity and readiness for couple-based interventions (Jarwan & Al-Frehat, 2020; Roshannejhad et al., 2019).

Additionally, the emphasis on psychological capital aligns with modern positive psychology and couples therapy, which focus on building strengths rather than merely alleviating distress (Sepahvand et al., 2023; Sun, 2025). By promoting hope, optimism, and self-efficacy, therapists may indirectly cultivate hardiness, enabling couples to engage more constructively with conflict. Empirical support for this approach is found in interventions such as resilience training and acceptance and commitment therapy, which have been shown to reduce burnout and enhance adaptive engagement (Darbandi et al., 2020; Jafarimanesh et al., 2021).

Despite its valuable contributions, the present study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the research relied on self-report questionnaires, which are subject to social desirability bias and may not fully capture the depth of participants' marital experiences. Second, the cross-sectional design limits the ability to infer causal relationships between marital burnout, psychological capital, and psychological hardiness. It remains unclear whether burnout directly erodes hardiness or if low hardiness predisposes individuals to experience greater burnout. Third, the sample was limited to couples seeking counseling services in Karaj, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to couples in other cultural or socioeconomic contexts. Additionally, the non-probability purposive sampling may introduce selection bias, as couples willing to participate might differ systematically from those avoiding psychological evaluation. Finally, unmeasured variables such as personality traits, external stressors (e.g., financial pressure, extended family interference), or previous therapy experience may have influenced the outcomes.

Future studies would benefit from adopting longitudinal or experimental designs to explore the directionality and causality among burnout, psychological capital, and hardiness. Tracking couples over time could clarify whether strengthening psychological capital precedes increases in hardiness or if hardiness independently predicts declines in burnout. Expanding the sample to include couples from diverse cultural backgrounds and socioeconomic strata would improve external validity and help identify culturally specific resilience mechanisms. Qualitative research could also deepen understanding by exploring how couples narrate their experiences of burnout and the psychological strategies they use to maintain commitment and control. Additionally, integrating physiological or behavioral measures of stress regulation, such as cortisol levels or conflict interaction coding, could complement self-reports and provide richer insights into adaptive processes. Intervention-based research is also warranted to test whether targeted psychological capital training directly increases hardiness and reduces marital exhaustion.

Practitioners working with conflicted couples should consider assessing both marital burnout and psychological capital at intake to identify vulnerability and resource levels. Tailored therapeutic interventions could aim to reduce burnout through emotional regulation training, stress management, and communication skills while simultaneously enhancing psychological capital by building hope, optimism, self-efficacy, and resilience.

Psychoeducational programs could help couples reframe marital conflict as an opportunity for growth rather than defeat, thereby strengthening hardiness. Counselors should also adapt strategies to cultural values, encouraging persistence and family cohesion while promoting open emotional expression and help-seeking when necessary. Furthermore, integrating hardiness-building modules into premarital or early marital counseling may serve as a preventive measure to fortify couples against future relational strain.

Authors' Contributions

All authors significantly contributed to this study.

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.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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Ethical Considerations

In this study, to observe ethical considerations, participants were informed about the goals and importance of the research before the start of the study and participated in the research with informed consent.

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