



Original Article

# The relationship between early maladaptive schemas and sexual self-esteem in female sex workers

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## Abstract

**Introduction:** The present study aimed to investigate the relationship between early maladaptive schemas and sexual self-esteem in female sex workers.

**Materials and Methods:** In this descriptive-correlational study conducted in February 2015, 108 female sex workers residing in Toos women's care center in Mashhad were selected through convenience sampling method. For data collection, Young Early Maladaptive Schema Questionnaire-Short Form (YSQ-SF) and Sexual Self-Esteem Inventory for Women-Short Form (SSEI-W-SF) were applied. Data analysis was performed using Pearson's correlation coefficient, stepwise regression and independent t-test by SPSS-22 software.

**Results:** There was an inverse relationship between the scores of most of the early maladaptive schemas and sexual self-esteem in female sex workers ( $P < 0.05$ ). Three schemas of emotional deprivation, abandonment/instability and mistrust/abuse were significant predictors of sexual self-esteem in female sex workers ( $P < 0.05$ ). Scores of the schemas of social isolation/alienation, defectiveness/shame, failure, insufficient self-control/self-discipline, and unrelenting standards/hypercriticalness in female sex workers who have been living with their parents were lower than the scores of those female sex workers who lived with non-parents ( $P < 0.05$ ). Furthermore, the rate of sexual self-esteem in female sex workers who have been living with parents was higher relative to the female sex workers living with non-parents ( $P = 0.017$ ).

**Conclusion:** The higher the rate of early maladaptive schemas in female sex workers, the lower the level of their sexual self-esteem will be. Not living with parents in the stages of development has a major role in the formation of early maladaptive schemas and thus reduced sexual self-esteem.

**Keywords:** Schema, Sexual self-esteem, Women

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## Introduction

Based on the definition by Kramer (1), prostitution is to engage in sexual activities with people other than one's spouse or friends in exchange for money. In an international study in 9 countries, 70 to 95 percent of female sex workers reported physical assault, which between 60 and 75 percent of them were raped (2). Nearly 15 percent of college women have experienced sexual assault since the age of 14 years (3). Studies have shown that depressive symptoms, anxiety and psychological disturbances in female sex workers are more than other women (4-6). Several studies have demonstrated the relationship between psychological disturbances and

different types of childhood injuries including sexual abuse (7-9). Such injuries during the early stages of their development lead to the establishment of poor interpersonal relationships in adulthood (10-12). Prostitution as one of the long-term effects of sexual abuse enjoys great empirical backing in the conducted studies (13). Sexual abuse in children includes any kind of unwanted sexual experience in children which can be in various forms such as kissing, fondling, sexual voyeurism, obtaining pornographic images and having sexual relationships (14). Research has shown that sexual abuse in childhood increases the risk of turning to prostitution (15-17). Over the past three decades, extensive research has been performed on the impacts of childhood sexual abuse and mental health by Ferguson and Mullen (18), Putnam (19), MacMillan (20), Maniglio (21) and Hillberg et al. (22). The

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results obtained from these studies indicate that exposure to sexual risks is accompanied by a wide range of mental, behavioral and sexual disorders.

The results of the research conducted by Silbert (23) revealed that 23% of female sex workers have been sexually abused by godfathers and 10% by strangers at ages 3 to 16 years. In a study, Fatehi et al. (24) observed that 23.9% of women have been sexually abused before the beginning of prostitution and the rates of abuse by strangers, boyfriend and familiar people were respectively 36.3%, 27.3% and 18.2%. In addition, 63.1% of female sex workers believed in the fundamental role of parents in girls' tendency to prostitution. Victims of abuse in the family are more exposed to running away from home and ultimately sexual abuse and prostitution (25,26).

In the cognitive literature, it is assumed that internal cognitive processes play a mediating role in the clinical symptoms associated with traumatic experiences in childhood (27,28). These underlying cognitive patterns have been introduced under the title of communication schemas, core beliefs or early maladaptive schemas (EMS) (29-31). Early maladaptive schemas are created due to not satisfying the basic emotional needs of childhood. Secure attachment to others, self-regulation, freedom to express normal needs and emotions, spontaneity and realistic limitations are among these needs (32). These schemas at the deepest level of cognition usually act out of awareness and make the individual psychologically vulnerable to the creation of disturbances such as depression, anxiety, inefficient relationships, addiction and psychosomatic disorders (33). When these schemas are activated, they influence perception, reality and cognitive processing of individuals (34). Generally, those who excessively use maladaptive schemas are further affected by negative life events (35). In childhood, incidents, social environment and negative attitudes of parents are among the external risk factors for creating psychological disorders (36).

Numerous studies have been conducted on the relationship between early maladaptive schemas with attachment (37, 38), traumatic childhood experiences (39-41) and mental disorders including sexual dysfunctions in women (42,43), bipolar disorder (44), interpersonal problems (45), alcohol abuse (46), sexual abuse and high risk sexual behaviors among women (47). The results of the study carried out by Abolqasemi and Kiyamarsi (48) suggested that there is a significant negative correlation between early maladaptive schemas and

female sexual function. Baranoff and Tian (49) in their studies came to the conclusion that inefficient interactions of parents are very good predictors of early maladaptive schemas and less interactions of children in future interpersonal relationships.

According to the definition provided by Zeanah and Schwarz (50), sexual self-esteem is an individual's emotional reactions to his own sexual thoughts, feelings and behaviors. Rosenfeld (51) believes that sexual self-esteem reflects those characteristics that facilitate the sexual interactions during sexual relations. The research by Melanie and Offman (52) revealed that people with high sexual self-esteem have greater ability to guide their sexual desires and experiences. Besides, Dilation et al. (53) demonstrated that a significant relationship exists between sexual self-esteem, sexual satisfaction and sexual dysfunction.

There are many studies stating that any type of abuse in childhood including sexual abuse leads to reduced self-esteem in adulthood (54-58). Further, childhood sexual abuse is associated with low sexual self-esteem, sexual concerns, and displaying sexual behaviors without commitment, vulnerability to next sexual assaults, high-risk sexual behaviors and exposure to violence by strangers or sexual partner of an individual (59-62).

Given the prominent role of schemas and sexual self-esteem in human relationships, including sexual relations, and considering that female sex workers are looking for sex merely in exchange for money, the present study has examined the relationship between early maladaptive schemas and sexual self-esteem in these women.

## Materials and Methods

The present research was a descriptive study and of a correlational and causal-comparative type, which was conducted in February, 2015, with the approval of research deputy of Hakim Sabzevari University. 108 of the female sex workers referring to Toos women's care center in Mashhad who had a history of sexual abuse at least once in childhood and adolescence (before age 16) were selected through convenience sampling method. Before administering the test, the participants were told about the objectives of the project and they were assured that all their information will remain confidential while taking into account ethical considerations. For data collection, in addition to a demographic questionnaire including age, education level (elementary, secondary, diploma and above diploma), marital status (single, married, divorced), the number of cases of sexual abuse in childhood

and adolescence, type of their guardian and whether or not they have been trying to escape from the situation at the time of sexual harassment, Sexual Self-Esteem Inventory for Women - Short Form (SSEI-W-SF) and Young Early Maladaptive Schema Questionnaire-Short Form (YSQ-SF) were employed. To analyze the data, Pearson's correlation coefficient, stepwise regression and independent t test in SPSS-22 software were used.

### Research instruments

- *Sexual Self-Esteem Inventory for Women-Short Form (SSEI-W-SF)*: This questionnaire consists of 35 items and has been developed to assess the effective responses in women's sexual evaluation of self. Questions are responded on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 6 (strongly disagree to strongly agree). This questionnaire has five subscales that reflect the domains of sexual self-esteem and include skill and experience, attractiveness, control, morality and adaptiveness. By summing the scores of five domains together, the total score of the scale is achieved and a higher score indicates higher sexual self-esteem. Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the total scale, skill and experience, attractiveness, control, morality and adaptiveness have been reported to be respectively 0.92, 0.84, 0.88, 0.80, 0.80 and 0.80. In the study by Zeanah and Schwarz (63), convergent validity of SSEI-W-SF was confirmed through correlation with Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale ( $r=0.57$ ). In the study by Farokhi and Shareh (64), in a sample of 510 Iranian married women, the same 5 factors of the original version were obtained by factor analysis on SSEI-W-SF. Internal consistency coefficient of items in the whole sample was estimated to be 0.88 and correlation coefficients between each of the items and the total score of the scale were between 0.54 and 0.72. Test retest reliability coefficient was reported to be 0.91 for the total scale and in the range of 0.82 to 0.94 for its five subscales. Besides, a significant positive relationship was observed between SSEI-W-SF with Coppersmith self-esteem Scale ( $P<0.05$ ,  $r=0.31$ ) and Female Sexual Function Index ( $P<0.05$ ,  $r=0.31$ ), which suggests the convergent validity of this scale. Divergent validity of this index with depression subscale of DASS-21 scale ( $P<0.05$ ,  $r=0.29$ ) was also confirmed.

- *Young Early Maladaptive Schema Questionnaire-Short Form (YSQ-SF)*: This questionnaire has been developed by Young to evaluate 15 early maladaptive schemas and comprises 75 questions (65). The schemas include emotional deprivation, abandonment/instability, mistrust/abuse, social

isolation/alienation, defectiveness/shame, failure, dependence/incompetence, vulnerability to harm or illness, undeveloped self/enmeshment, subjugation, self-sacrifice/devotion, emotional inhibition, entitlement/grandiosity, insufficient self-control/self-discipline and unrelenting standards/excessive fault-finding. Questions are responded on a 6-point Likert scale from "quite right" about me (6) to "completely wrong" about me (1). If someone has three or four high scores (5 or 6) in a schema, it clinically means that this schema exists in the patient's mind (31). In the research conducted by Waller et al. (66), the scale reliability was obtained to be 0.96 for the whole test and higher than 0.80 for the subscales using Cronbach's alpha. In the study by LachenaL-Chevallet et al. (67), Cronbach's alpha of the questionnaire was between 0.64 and 0.87. Wang et al. (68) reported the alpha coefficients of subscales to be between 0.85 and 0.95. In a study on 10 male and 10 female orphans, Khater et al. (69) reported the following: Internal correlation coefficient of the whole questionnaire= 0.88; Cronbach's alpha of the whole questionnaire= 0.85; Cronbach's alpha of subscales= between 0.55 and 0.89. Among students population in Iran, Ahi et al. (70) obtained the internal consistency of the whole questionnaire to be 0.97 for women and 0.98 for men using Cronbach's alpha. Further, Ghiyasi et al. (71) also reported the following: Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the subscales= 0.60 to 0.86; concurrent validity with Dysfunctional Attitude Scale= 0.64.

### Results

Of 108 subjects, 39 individuals (36.11%) had an elementary school degree; 27 (25%) had a middle school degree; 35 (32.40%) had a diploma and 7 (6.49%) were above diploma. Mean and standard deviation of age and the data obtained from the implementation of SSEI-W-SF and SQ-SF questionnaires have been presented in Table 1. As Shown in Table 1, the average score of women's sexual self-esteem is 121.27. The highest average belongs to the first schema, i.e. emotional deprivation, and the lowest average is related to the fourth schema, i.e. social isolation/alienation.

**Table 1.** Mean and standard deviation of the research variables

Variable	Mean	Standard deviation
Age	26.21	6.24
Sexual self-esteem	121.27	17.92
Emotional deprivation	20.63	7.00
Abandonment/Instability	16.46	6.78
Mistrust/Abuse	15.94	6.85

Social isolation/Alienation	14.62	7.04
Defectiveness/Shame	15.21	5.38
Failure	16.10	7.07
Dependence/Incompetence	16.84	6.28
Vulnerability to harm or illness	16.27	6.63
Undeveloped self/Enmeshment	15.94	7.35
Entitlement/Grandiosity	16.77	6.39
insufficient self-control/Self-discipline	16.84	7.32
Subjugation	16.84	6.96
Self-sacrifice/Devotion	18.98	5.74
Emotional inhibition	17.35	6.04
Unrelenting standards/Hypercriticalness	18.01	4.98

Correlation coefficients between the scores of early maladaptive schemas and sexual self-esteem have been provided in Table 2. According to the results of this table, there is a significant inverse relationship between the score of early maladaptive schemas and sexual self-esteem of female sex workers. That is, the higher the rate of early maladaptive schemas in female sex workers, the lower the level of their sexual self-esteem. Among the early maladaptive schemas, emotional deprivation, abandonment/instability, mistrust/abuse, social isolation/alienation, vulnerability to harm or illness, insufficient self-control/self-discipline have a significant inverse

relationship with female sex workers' sexual self-esteem.

**Table 2.** Pearson's correlation coefficients of the scores of early maladaptive schemas and sexual self-esteem of female sex workers

Variable	Sexual self-esteem	Significance level
Emotional deprivation	-0.32**	0.001
Abandonment/Instability	-0.31**	0.002
Mistrust/Abuse	-0.28**	0.006
Social isolation/Alienation	-0.23*	0.021
Defectiveness/Shame	-0.14	0.168
Failure	-0.17	0.096
Dependence/Incompetence	-0.24*	0.016
Vulnerability to harm or illness	-0.22*	0.032
Undeveloped self/Enmeshment	-0.07	0.465
Entitlement/Grandiosity	-0.04	0.698
Insufficient self-control/Self-discipline	-0.20*	0.043
Subjugation	-0.18	0.068
Self-sacrifice/Devotion	-0.04	0.670
Emotional inhibition	-0.11	0.260
Unrelenting standards/Hypercriticalness	0.16	0.101

\*Correlation coefficient is significant at the level of  $P < 0.05$ .

\*\*Correlation coefficient is significant at the level of  $P < 0.01$

Regression analysis results of sexual self-esteem have been provided in Table 3 in terms of 15 early maladaptive schemas

**Table 3.** Data related to regression coefficients of sexual self-esteem in terms of 15 early maladaptive schemas

Predictor variables	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Standard error of measurement	F	Significance level	Beta coefficient	B	t	Significance level
Constant	0.42	17.5	16.5	6.8	0.001	155.69	-	38.18	0.001
Emotional deprivation						-0.60	-0.23	-2.28	0.025
Abandonment/instability						-0.60	-0.23	-2.22	0.029
Mistrust/abuse						-0.68	-0.19	-2.04	0.044

Based on the results of this table, stepwise regression shows that 17.5% of the variance of sexual self-esteem in female sex workers is explained respectively by three maladaptive schemas of emotional deprivation, abandonment/instability and mistrust/abuse. That is, these schemas are significant predictors of sexual

self-esteem in female sex workers.

The results of t test to compare the mean score of sexual self-esteem and early maladaptive schemas between female sex workers living with parents and female sex workers living with non-parents have been presented in Table 4.

**Table 4.** T test for independent groups to compare the mean score of sexual self-esteem and early maladaptive schemas between female sex workers living with parents and female sex workers living with non-parents

Variable	Type of guardian	Mean	Standard deviation	t	Significant level
Sexual self-esteem	Father or mother	122.56	18.19	2.71*	0.017
	Non-parents	118.72	17.98		
Emotional deprivation	Father or mother	21.4	7.77	2.64*	0.033
	Non-parents	24.4	6.89		
Abandonment/Instability 0.07	Father or mother	16.9	5.2	0.15	0.885
	Non-parents	17.2	5.91		
Mistrust/Abuse	Father or mother	16.8	3.37	0.8	0.432
	Non-parents	18.9	4.12		
Social isolation/Alienation	Father or mother	12.8	6.03	3.32**	0.001
	Non-parents	16.3	5.59		

Defectiveness/Shame	Father or mother	12.8	6.31	2.65*	0.011
	Non-parents	15.9	5.48		
Failure	Father or mother	14.7	5.63	2.71**	0.003
	Non-parents	18.1	5.96		
Dependence/incompetence	Father or mother	18.8	4.93	0.29	0.772
	Non-parents	19.3	4.51		
Vulnerability to harm or illness	Father or mother	16.2	4.78	0.57	0.573
	Non-parents	17.3	3.95		
Undeveloped self/Enmeshment	Father or mother	14.7	5.93	0.77	0.443
	Non-parents	16.5	6.23		
Entitlement/Grandiosity	Father or mother	19.8	4.68	1.07	0.290
	Non-parents	22.00	5.02		
Insufficient self-control/Self-discipline	Father or mother	17.1	6.50	2.48*	0.048
	Non-parents	19.3	5.97		
Subjugation	Father or mother	17.6	5.42	-0.06	0.954
	Non-parents	17.7	5.31		
Self-sacrifice/Devotion	Father or mother	17.5	5.58	0.07	0.946
	Non-parents	17.4	5.11		
Emotional inhibition	Father or mother	16.9	4.71	0.07	0.946
	Non-parents	16.7	3.89		
Unrelenting standards/ Hypercriticalness	Father or mother	17.4	6.52	2.49*	0.048
	Non-parents	19.3	7.01		

\*Correlation coefficient is significant at the level of  $P < 0.05$ .

\*\*Correlation coefficient is significant at the level of  $P < 0.01$ .

Given the results of Table 4, comparison of means shows that sexual self-esteem of women who have been living with their parents is higher than women living with non-parents. Besides, according to the above table, the score of maladaptive schemas of Emotional deprivation, social isolation/alienation, defectiveness/shame, failure, insufficient self-control/self-discipline and unrelenting standards/Hypercriticalness of female sex workers who have been living with parents is significantly lower than the score of other female sex workers. There was no significant difference between the two groups in terms of the mean of other schemas.

The results of t test to investigate the difference between the mean scores of sexual self-esteem in female sex workers subject to reoccurrence of sexual abuse (after 16 years) and other female sex workers and also in female sex workers who have been trying to escape from this perilous situation at the time of sexual abuse and those who have not tried to escape have been provided in Table 5.

**Table 5.** T test for independent groups to compare the mean score of sexual self-esteem in female sex workers with regard to the possibility of the reoccurrence of sexual abuse and trying to escape from or surrender to the situation

Variable	Situation	Mean	Standard deviation	t	Degrees of freedom	Significance level
Sexual self-esteem	Exposure to another sexual abuse	118.86	18.89	-0.76	79	0.446

Non-exposure to another sexual abuse	121.85	19.57			
Trying to escape	119.8	17.53	-0.21	54	0.839
Surrender	120.7	17.11			

The results of Table 5 demonstrate that there is no significant difference between the mean of sexual self-esteem in female sex workers subject to another sexual abuse and other female sex workers and also in female sex workers trying to escape from the situation and those who surrendered to the circumstances.

**Discussion**

This study was conducted with the aim of examining the relationship between early maladaptive schemas and sexual self-esteem in female sex workers. Analysis of the results revealed that among the early maladaptive schemas, emotional deprivation, abandonment/instability, mistrust/abuse, social isolation/alienation, defectiveness/shame, failure, insufficient self-control/self-discipline and unrelenting standards/Hypercriticalness had a significant negative relationship with sexual self-esteem.

Early maladaptive schemas resulting from traumatic events and abuse-related experiences are mainly from disconnection and rejection domain (31,72). These schemas include emotional deprivation, abandonment/instability, mistrust/abuse, defectiveness/shame and social isolation/alienation. According to Young, schemas of this domain are created in cold, heartless, harsh and unpredictable families. Generally, schemas of

this domain are associated with this belief of the individual that his needs are not fully satisfied. The results obtained in this study are consistent with the findings achieved by Messman Moore and Costi (40) and McGinn et al. (39) stating that childhood sexual abuse triggers the schemas of this domain. In the study by Harding et al. (73) on 127 women who had experienced childhood sexual abuse, it was found that maladaptive schemas and posttraumatic stress symptoms were greater in these women. Roemmele and Messman-Moore (47) demonstrated that the schemas of disconnection and rejection domain are of greater importance than other domains of early maladaptive schemas in predicting sexual behaviors in terms of both the number of sexual partners and frequency of sexual behaviors. Further, they showed that sexual abuse is associated with inefficient patterns of rejection, abandonment and thus establishment of sexual relations with a large number of people and displaying high-risk behaviors. Victims of childhood sexual abuse considered engaging in sexual behaviors as a way to increase self-worth and reduce the fear of being abandoned particularly by a sexual partner (47).

With regard to the results obtained from these studies, it can be said in certifying the results of this study that unfavorable past events and bitter experiences of life such as distrust in the nearest people around, abandonment, exposure to abuse and feeling of being different from others have led to the formation of schemas like emotional deprivation, abandonment/instability, mistrust/abuse, defectiveness/shame, failure and social isolation/alienation in these women. In families where necessary social support does not exist in childhood on the part of parents, people in adulthood may give excessive importance to others' demands and ignore their own needs and consequently, unrelenting standards and fault-finding tendency grow in them (31). It seems that female sex workers with schemas of disconnection and rejection believe that their relationships with important people in life are unstable and they will lose them one day. These women, due to lack of an appropriate guardian, have not gained or have lost emotional support and affection from parents as the primary base of attachment. Therefore, they turn to sexual activities to establish new relationships so that they can fill the existing gap in their relations (38). Findings of the present study revealed that female sex workers who live with non-parents and are likely to have more inappropriate guardianship in their lives have more maladaptive schemas and lower sexual self-esteem.

According to the results obtained from this study, sexual self-esteem of female sex workers can be explained respectively by three maladaptive schemas of emotional deprivation, abandonment/instability and mistrust/abuse. That is, these schemas are significant predictors of sexual self-esteem in female sex workers. Those with the schemas of emotional deprivation, abandonment/instability, and mistrust/abuse are distrustful of receiving affection and establishing relationships with others in a satisfying way. This leads to the formation of this belief within them that they should not trust others (74). This distrust causes the individual to decrease his own social relations and on the other hand, since he has an innate need to communicate, he considers involvement in sexual activities as one of the solutions to this conflict. However, he does not enjoy enough self-esteem in sexual relationships because of distrust, feeling of abandonment and emotional deprivation and regards himself as sexually unattractive and dysfunctional.

On the other hand, the existence of emotional deprivation, abandonment/instability and mistrust/abuse schemas causes the creation of this belief in individuals that their desires and need for emotional support, intimacy and attention are not sufficiently satisfied by other people and this issue can be a reason for an individual's avoidance of establishing relationships and engagement in stereotyped behaviors such as having multiple sexual relations with others. When a woman has these schemas, she probably does not have a good body image and does not consider herself as being attractive in sexual relationships and thinks that she does not enjoy sufficient skill for the establishment of a sexual relationship. This issue can in turn results in the strengthening of the same schemas since it leads to being rejected by others. As Feinauer et al. (74) have stated, having difficulties in maintaining interpersonal relationships and building intimacy and also having a sense of shame which are common among sexually abused people arise from decreased ability to trust others. On the other hand, interpersonal relations, continuity of social relationships and self-esteem are negatively affected by sexual abuse (75).

Several studies have shown that there is a relationship between childhood sexual abuse and low sexual self-esteem in adulthood. In the study by Bruggen et al. (60), women with a history of sexual abuse compared to the ordinary women obtained lower sexual self-esteem scores and weaker sexual compatibility. Additionally, the results suggested

that these women after the age of 14 were twice as exposed to sexual assault as other women. In another research, Shapiro and Schwarz (76) observed that women with a history of sexual assault have more traumatic symptoms and lower sexual self-esteem while women with no history of assault achieved higher scores in the subscales of moral judgment, control and attractiveness in sexual self-esteem questionnaire. The results obtained from the study by Runtz (59) on a college sample also revealed that a relationship exists between low sexual self-esteem, dysfunctional sexual behaviors and next sexual assaults.

In the present study, the results of Table 5 indicated that there is no difference between the sexual self-esteem of women who have been exposed to another sexual abuse in adulthood and those who have not had such an experience. It seems that childhood sexual abuse leaves a permanent effect so that even if the individual is not exposed to another abuse in adulthood, he enjoys low self-esteem. Moreover, the results of the present study demonstrate that merely exposure to sexual abuse in childhood can make adverse effects on women's sexual self-esteem and trying to escape from or surrender to the situation has no impact on the rate of sexual self-esteem. Generally, the results of this research are in line with other studies conducted in this regard and show the importance of the effects of sexual abuse and its role in the formation of maladaptive schemas. Also, they state how female sex workers' maladaptive schemas can be effective in their interpersonal relationships and sexual self-esteem. Lower sexual self-esteem can itself lead to a sense of worthlessness and greater involvement in multiple transient and unstable sexual relations with no commitment and prepare the ground for other health and social problems.

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This study was implemented in a short period of time and merely investigated the relationship between the research variables. But these relationships are not evidence of a causal relationship. This issue should be tested through longitudinal or experimental research so that causal relationships between childhood sexual abuse, early maladaptive schemas, sexual self-esteem and prostitution can be clarified. Since the sample size was limited to a center in Mashhad, generalization of the findings in this study to other cities and provinces should be performed with caution with regard to cultural, economic, social and geographical differences.

### Conclusion

Childhood sexual abuse leaves a lasting impact on the psyche of the victim such that it leads to the formation of maladaptive schemas, cognitions, and thoughts and makes the individual vulnerable to trauma in adulthood. The higher the rate of early maladaptive schemas in female sex workers, the lower the level of their sexual self-esteem. Not living with parents in the stages of development has a major role in the formation of early maladaptive schemas and thus reduced sexual self-esteem.

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