

# Examining the Relationship Between Attachment Styles and Marital Conflicts with the Mediating Role of Intimacy Styles in Couples Applying for Divorce

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Article type:  
Original Research

Article history:  
Received 22 September 2025  
Revised 07 December 2025  
Accepted 10 December 2025  
Initial Publish 27 March 2026  
Published online 01 May 2026

## ABSTRACT

The objective of the present study was to examine the relationship between attachment styles and marital conflicts with the mediating role of intimacy styles in couples applying for divorce. This study employed a descriptive–correlational design using structural equation modeling. The statistical population consisted of 500 individuals (250 couples) applying for divorce who referred to the Dispute Resolution Councils of Tehran Province in 2025. Participants were selected using convenience sampling. Data were collected using the Revised Adult Attachment Scale, the Marital Intimacy Scale, and the Kansas Marital Conflict Scale. The reliability of the instruments was confirmed using Cronbach's alpha coefficients (attachment styles = 0.863, intimacy styles = 0.742, marital conflicts = 0.801). Data analysis was conducted using SPSS and AMOS (Version 24). Model fit was evaluated using multiple indices including CFI, GFI, NFI, RMSEA, and CMIN/DF. The structural model demonstrated acceptable fit (CMIN/DF = 1.439, CFI = 0.980, GFI = 0.972, NFI = 0.980, RMSEA = 0.030). Attachment styles had a significant direct effect on intimacy styles ( $\beta = 0.298, p < 0.001$ ) and marital conflicts ( $\beta = 0.230, p < 0.001$ ). Intimacy styles exerted a significant negative effect on marital conflicts ( $\beta = -0.255, p < 0.001$ ). The indirect effect of attachment styles on marital conflicts through intimacy styles was significant ( $\beta = 0.075, p = 0.001$ ), confirming partial mediation, with a total effect coefficient of 0.305. The findings indicate that intimacy styles play a critical mediating role in the relationship between attachment styles and marital conflicts, underscoring the importance of addressing attachment-related emotional processes and enhancing intimacy in interventions aimed at reducing marital conflict among couples seeking divorce.

**Keywords:** intimacy styles, marital conflicts, attachment styles, divorce, couples

### How to cite this article:

Tayebi, T., Vatankhah, H., & Jadidi, H. (2026). Examining the Relationship Between Attachment Styles and Marital Conflicts with the Mediating Role of Intimacy Styles in Couples Applying for Divorce. *Mental Health and Lifestyle Journal*, 4(3), 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.61838/mhlj.173>

## Introduction

Marital relationships constitute one of the most central interpersonal bonds in adulthood, profoundly shaping psychological well-being, emotional security, and social functioning across the life span. The quality of marital interaction not only influences partners' subjective well-being but also plays a decisive role in family stability, parenting effectiveness, and broader societal health. Among the most influential psychological determinants of marital quality, attachment styles, intimacy processes, and conflict dynamics

have repeatedly emerged as core explanatory constructs within contemporary relationship science. These constructs interact in complex ways that determine whether couples experience their relationship as a secure, supportive environment or as a source of persistent stress and emotional distress (1-3).

Marital conflict, while a normative and inevitable feature of intimate relationships, becomes psychologically destructive when it is chronic, poorly regulated, and emotionally hostile. Persistent conflict predicts declines in marital satisfaction, increased psychological symptoms, and heightened risk of divorce, particularly when couples lack adaptive emotional and communicative resources (4, 5). In societies experiencing rapid social change, including shifts in gender roles, economic pressures, and evolving family expectations, the frequency and intensity of marital conflicts have risen markedly, creating an urgent need for deeper scientific understanding of the psychological mechanisms that generate and sustain conflict (6, 7). Understanding why some couples manage conflict constructively while others spiral toward relational breakdown remains a central question for family psychology and marital therapy.

Attachment theory offers one of the most powerful explanatory frameworks for understanding individual differences in relational functioning. Early attachment experiences shape internal working models of self and others that persist into adulthood, influencing emotional regulation, interpersonal trust, conflict behavior, and intimacy processes. Secure attachment is consistently associated with emotional stability, adaptive conflict management, and relational satisfaction, whereas insecure attachment patterns—namely anxious, avoidant, and ambivalent orientations—predict emotional dysregulation, heightened conflict sensitivity, fear of intimacy, and relational instability (1, 8, 9). These attachment-based differences provide a developmental lens through which marital functioning can be understood as the unfolding of long-standing emotional templates within the context of adult romantic bonds.

Empirical research has demonstrated robust associations between attachment styles and marital conflicts across diverse cultural contexts. Insecure attachment has been linked to maladaptive emotional responses during conflict, including excessive anger, withdrawal, blame, and defensiveness, which escalate relational distress and undermine constructive problem solving (9, 10). Hassanzadeh and Samavati (2022) reported that attachment styles exert both direct and indirect effects on marital conflicts through couples' understanding perspectives and fear of intimacy, highlighting the importance of intervening psychological processes that connect attachment dynamics with overt conflict behavior (2). Similarly, Rahiman (2024) demonstrated that maladaptive schemas and communication skills serve as critical mediators linking attachment patterns to marital conflict among couples facing divorce, underscoring the multi-layered psychological architecture of marital distress (10).

At the heart of these relational processes lies intimacy, which represents the emotional, cognitive, physical, and existential closeness between partners. Intimacy functions as the relational “glue” that sustains commitment, trust, and emotional safety within marriage. Contemporary models conceptualize marital intimacy as a multidimensional construct encompassing emotional, sexual, psychological, physical, social–recreational, spiritual, and aesthetic components. High levels of intimacy provide a protective buffer against stress, enhance relationship satisfaction, and foster cooperative conflict resolution, whereas deficits in intimacy amplify vulnerability to conflict, alienation, and emotional withdrawal (11-13).

Recent empirical findings increasingly emphasize the pivotal role of intimacy as a mediating mechanism between attachment and marital outcomes. Afshin et al. (2024) demonstrated that attachment styles

significantly predict marital intimacy among married students, with insecure attachment patterns undermining emotional and sexual closeness and contributing to relational dissatisfaction (11). Parsakia et al. (2023) further revealed that attachment styles mediate the relationship between marital intimacy and self-differentiation, illustrating how attachment-based emotional regulation capacities shape the experience and expression of intimacy within couples (3). In parallel, Pouya et al. (2025) reported that marital intimacy, together with marital self-regulation, mediates the impact of attachment styles on marital burnout, reinforcing the notion that intimacy operates as a central psychological conduit linking attachment dynamics with long-term relational outcomes (14).

Beyond individual emotional processes, broader relational contexts such as communication patterns, conflict resolution strategies, and emotional intelligence further interact with attachment and intimacy processes. Parsakia et al. (2023) demonstrated that emotional intelligence significantly predicts marital conflicts through actor-partner interdependence processes, indicating that relational dynamics cannot be fully understood without considering reciprocal emotional influences between spouses (7). Akbari et al. (2021) showed that emotion-focused couples therapy effectively improves marital intimacy and reduces marital conflicts, providing strong evidence for the therapeutic modifiability of these core psychological processes (15). Similarly, Arshadi et al. (2021) found that marriage adjustment training significantly reduces distress intolerance, emotional regulation difficulties, and marital conflict among couples seeking counseling (5).

Cultural context further shapes how attachment, intimacy, and conflict are expressed and negotiated within marriage. In collectivist and family-centered societies such as Iran, marital dynamics are deeply embedded in social expectations, religious values, and extended family networks. These cultural forces influence how couples interpret emotional closeness, express dissatisfaction, and respond to conflict. Dehghanidowlatabadi et al. (2025) demonstrated that interpersonal mindfulness moderates the association between marital conflict and marital intimacy among Iranian couples, highlighting culturally embedded emotion regulation practices that can either exacerbate or alleviate relational distress (16). Rajai et al. (2022) similarly showed that compassion-focused therapy significantly reduces marital conflicts among women seeking divorce, emphasizing the therapeutic importance of culturally resonant emotional interventions (6).

The consequences of unresolved marital conflict extend beyond relational dissatisfaction, contributing to emotional divorce, psychological distress, and in many cases legal dissolution of marriage. Mosadegh et al. (2023) identified sexual satisfaction as a critical mediator between personality traits and emotional divorce in men, illustrating how deficits in intimate connection translate into emotional disengagement even before formal divorce occurs (13). Sarhani and Homaei (2023) further demonstrated that fear of intimacy and low self-differentiation predict marital infidelity through reduced sexual satisfaction in women experiencing marital conflict, revealing the cascading effects of intimacy disruptions on relationship stability (17). SeyedEbrahimi (2024) likewise found that avoidant attachment undermines marital satisfaction through heightened fear of intimacy, reinforcing the centrality of intimacy processes in the attachment-conflict nexus (18).

Despite the growing body of evidence linking attachment, intimacy, and marital conflict, several critical gaps remain in the literature. First, most studies have examined these variables in isolation or through simple correlational models, rather than within integrated structural frameworks capable of capturing their

complex reciprocal relationships. Second, few studies have focused specifically on couples actively seeking divorce, a population characterized by heightened relational distress and particularly salient attachment–intimacy disruptions. Third, although numerous mediators have been proposed—including communication skills, maladaptive schemas, emotional intelligence, and fear of intimacy—the precise mediating role of intimacy styles as a multidimensional construct remains insufficiently clarified, particularly within non-Western cultural contexts (2, 10, 12).

Addressing these gaps is not merely of theoretical interest but carries significant practical implications for marital therapy, divorce prevention, and family policy. Clarifying the mechanisms through which attachment styles influence marital conflict via intimacy processes can inform more precise therapeutic interventions, allowing clinicians to target the emotional and relational roots of conflict rather than its superficial behavioral manifestations. Given the increasing rates of marital instability and divorce in contemporary societies, including Iran, developing empirically grounded models of marital functioning is essential for strengthening couple resilience and promoting long-term relational health (4, 7, 14).

Therefore, the aim of the present study is to examine the relationship between attachment styles and marital conflicts with the mediating role of intimacy styles among couples applying for divorce.

## **Methods and Materials**

### *Study Design and Participants*

The present study employed a descriptive–correlational design based on structural equation modeling and, in terms of purpose, was an applied study. Confirmatory factor analysis was used to evaluate the structural model of the research. The inclusion criteria were as follows: residence of the participating couples in Robat Karim County or the new city of Parand, at least six months having passed since the beginning of married life, a minimum educational level of primary education for both spouses, and provision of informed consent for participation and withdrawal from the study. The sample of the present study consisted of 500 individuals (250 couples) applying for divorce, who were selected through convenience sampling from among couples applying for divorce in Tehran Province and referring to the Dispute Resolution Councils of Robat Karim and Parand.

### *Data Collection*

The data collection instruments in this study were as follows: The Marital Intimacy Scale developed by Walker and Thompson (MIS) was constructed in 1983 to measure intimacy in marital relationships. This scale consists of 17 items, each rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from never to always. Higher scores on this scale indicate a higher level of marital intimacy (Rajabi et al., 2011). Studies have been conducted regarding the validity and reliability of this scale. Walker and Thompson (1983) reported the reliability of the instrument using Cronbach's alpha as 0.97. In Iranian studies, the validity and reliability of this scale have also been examined. Naderi and Azadmanesh (2012) reported the reliability of this scale using Cronbach's alpha as 0.90 and split-half reliability as 0.83. They also examined the face validity of the questionnaire, and psychology and counseling experts confirmed its adequate validity. For scoring this scale, the items are rated as follows: never = 1, rarely = 2, sometimes = 3, often = 4, mostly = 5, almost always = 6, always = 7. It should be noted that obtaining higher scores on this scale indicates greater marital intimacy.

The Kansas Marital Conflict Scale (KMCS) was developed by Kenneth Egman and Maxelio Scham (1985) and consists of 27 items designed to assess marital conflict. The emergence of disagreement and conflict between spouses is not an abnormal phenomenon. Due to the interactive nature of spouses' functioning within married life, differences in viewpoints may occur or certain needs may not be met, and the outcome of such negative interactions has been reported as dissatisfaction, frustration, and feelings of anger between spouses (Amrollahi et al., 2013). In the original study, the KMCS demonstrated excellent internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from 0.91 to 0.95 for men and from 0.88 to 0.95 for women across all assessment stages. The scale also exhibited very good test-retest reliability over a six-month interval across three measurement occasions, with coefficients ranging from 0.64 to 0.96. The scale has shown good known-groups validity and is capable of significantly distinguishing between distressed and non-distressed marriages based on marital satisfaction. These correlations were also positive for husbands, although not always statistically significant. The KMCS also demonstrates strong correlations with several other measures, supporting its excellent construct validity, including FACES-II, empathy, respect, and cohesion scales, several subscales of the Marital Communication Questionnaire, relationship understanding, and marital goal orientation.

The Revised Adult Attachment Scale (RAAS) developed by Collins and Read (1990) is a self-report measure assessing relationship-building skills and self-descriptions of attachment relationship formation toward close attachment figures. This instrument consists of 18 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "does not describe me at all" (1) to "describes me very well" (5). Factor analysis identifies three subscales, each comprising six items: Dependence (D), which measures the extent to which individuals trust others and rely on them, particularly their perceived availability in times of need; Closeness (C), which assesses comfort with intimacy and emotional closeness; and Anxiety (A), which measures fear of abandonment and relationship-related anxiety. Collins and Read (1990, as cited in Pakdaman, 2001), based on the descriptions of the three primary attachment styles in the Adult Attachment Questionnaire developed by Hazan and Shaver, constructed the items of their questionnaire. The Anxiety subscale (A) corresponds to anxious-ambivalent attachment, and the Closeness subscale (C) represents a bipolar dimension that essentially contrasts secure and avoidant attachment (Feeney & Noller, 1996). Accordingly, the Closeness subscale is aligned with secure attachment, whereas the Dependence subscale (D) can be regarded as approximately the inverse of avoidant attachment.

### *Data analysis*

The data of the present study were analyzed using structural equation modeling with SPSS and AMOS statistical software, Version 24.

### **Findings and Results**

Before conducting the final data analysis, the reliability of the research instruments was examined using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which was confirmed for attachment styles (0.863), intimacy styles (0.742), and marital conflicts (0.801).

**Table 1. Descriptive Statistics (Mean and Standard Deviation) of the Main Research Variables**

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Attachment Style – Dependence	2.023	0.346
Attachment Style – Closeness	2.049	0.230
Attachment Style – Anxiety	2.231	0.363
Marital Conflicts	2.581	0.096
Marital Intimacy – Physical	4.562	1.727
Marital Intimacy – Emotional	4.702	1.158
Marital Intimacy – Sexual	3.296	1.309
Marital Intimacy – Psychological	3.532	1.205
Marital Intimacy – Social–Recreational	5.318	1.564
Marital Intimacy – Spiritual	3.338	1.042
Marital Intimacy – Aesthetic	3.440	1.725

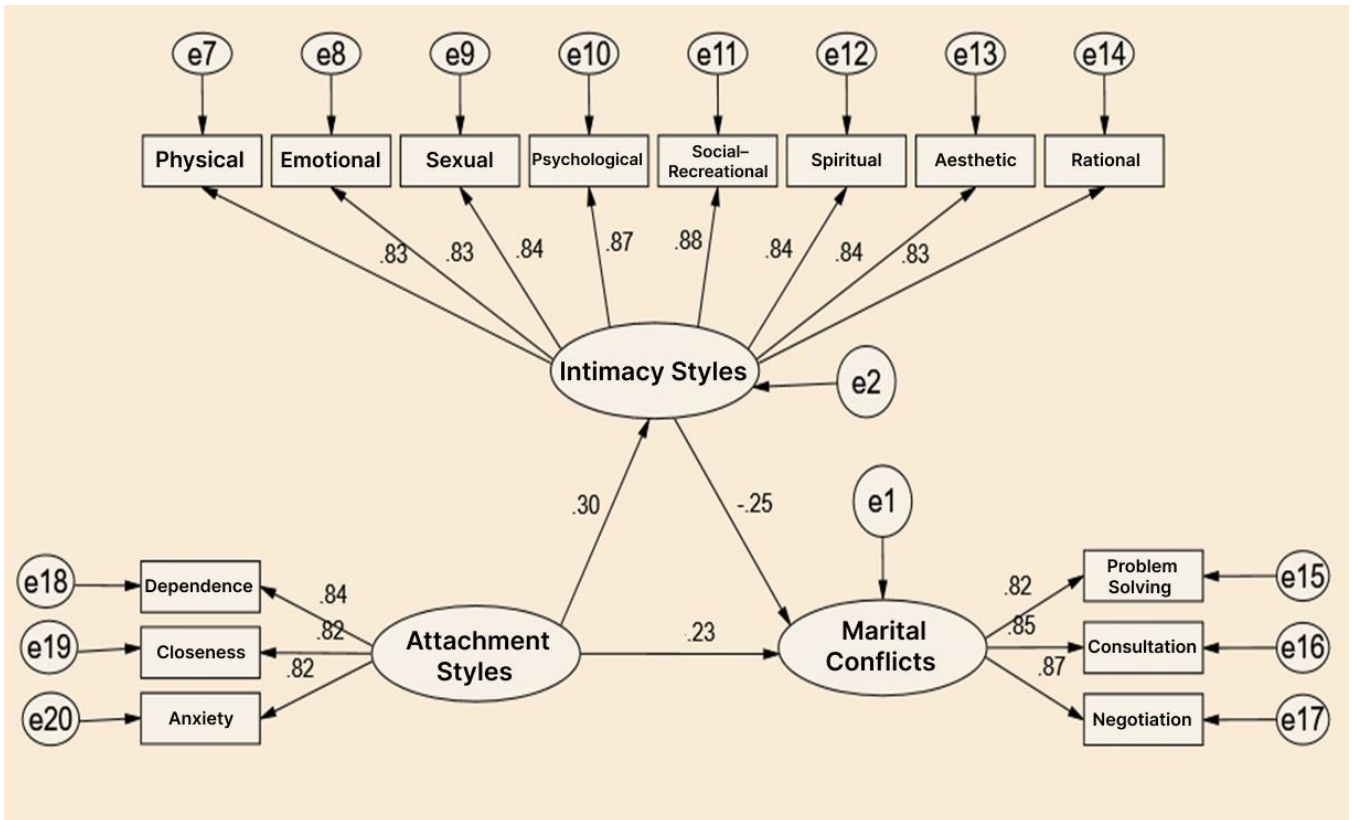
According to the above table, the mean score for attachment style–dependence was 2.023 with a standard deviation of 0.346, attachment style–closeness was 2.049 with a standard deviation of 0.230, attachment style–anxiety was 2.231 with a standard deviation of 0.363, marital conflicts was 2.581 with a standard deviation of 0.096, physical intimacy was 4.562 with a standard deviation of 1.727, emotional intimacy was 4.702 with a standard deviation of 1.158, sexual intimacy was 3.296 with a standard deviation of 1.309, psychological intimacy was 3.532 with a standard deviation of 1.205, social–recreational intimacy was 5.318 with a standard deviation of 1.564, spiritual intimacy was 3.338 with a standard deviation of 1.042, and aesthetic intimacy was 3.440 with a standard deviation of 1.725.

**Table 2. Kolmogorov–Smirnov Test for Normality of Variable Distributions**

Variables	Significance Level	Test Result
Attachment Style – Dependence	0.066	Normal distribution
Attachment Style – Closeness	0.115	Normal distribution
Attachment Style – Anxiety	0.096	Normal distribution
Marital Conflicts	0.111	Normal distribution
Marital Intimacy – Physical	0.180	Normal distribution
Marital Intimacy – Emotional	0.185	Normal distribution
Marital Intimacy – Sexual	0.097	Normal distribution
Marital Intimacy – Psychological	0.081	Normal distribution
Marital Intimacy – Social–Recreational	0.200	Normal distribution
Marital Intimacy – Spiritual	0.150	Normal distribution
Marital Intimacy – Aesthetic	0.074	Normal distribution

Based on the above test and the significance levels of all variables, which were greater than 0.05, it can be inferred that all variables follow a normal distribution.

The results of the structural model fitting are presented in Figure 1 and the following tables. The model fit indices in Figure 1 indicate the acceptable fit of the conceptual model.



**Figure 1. Standardized coefficients of the conceptual model of relationships among attachment styles, intimacy styles, and marital conflicts.**

Note. CMIN/DF = 1.439, GFI = 0.972, CFI = 0.980, NFI = 0.980, RMSEA = 0.030.

**Table 3. Examination of the Direct Effects of the Research Variables**

Result	Significance Level	t	Standardized Direct Effect Coefficient	Direct Paths
Confirmed	0.000	6.072	0.298	Attachment Styles → Intimacy Styles
Confirmed	0.000	3.655	0.230	Attachment Styles → Marital Conflicts
Confirmed	0.000	5.148	-0.255	Intimacy Styles → Marital Conflicts

According to the table, since the absolute value of the calculated t-statistics for all direct paths is greater than 1.96 and their significance levels are less than 0.05, these paths are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. Therefore, all direct paths of the research model are supported.

Based on the conceptual model of the study, in addition to direct effects, the indirect effect of attachment styles on marital conflicts through the mediating variable of intimacy styles was examined using the bootstrap method.

**Table 4. Bootstrap Test of the Indirect Effect of Attachment Styles on Marital Conflicts with the Mediating Role of Intimacy Styles**

Variable	t	Significance (Sig.)	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Total Effect
Attachment Styles → Marital Conflicts (mediated by Intimacy Styles)	2.870	0.001	0.230	0.075	0.305

The above table presents the results of the bootstrap test for the indirect effect of attachment styles on marital conflicts through the mediating role of intimacy styles. The findings indicate that attachment styles,

through the mediating role of intimacy styles, exerted a significant indirect effect on marital conflicts with a coefficient of 0.075 at the 0.05 significance level. Moreover, attachment styles had a direct effect on marital conflicts with a coefficient of 0.230, and an indirect effect through intimacy styles with a coefficient of  $-0.075$ , resulting in a total effect coefficient of  $-0.296$  for this relationship.

## Discussion and Conclusion

The present study investigated the structural relationships among attachment styles, intimacy styles, and marital conflicts in couples applying for divorce, with a particular focus on the mediating role of intimacy styles. The results of the structural equation modeling demonstrated that attachment styles exert a significant direct effect on marital conflicts and a significant indirect effect through intimacy styles, thereby confirming the central theoretical proposition that intimacy functions as a core psychological mechanism through which attachment orientations shape conflict processes within distressed marital relationships. These findings contribute important empirical evidence to the growing literature emphasizing the intertwined roles of emotional bonding, relational closeness, and conflict regulation in marital functioning.

The direct association observed between attachment styles and marital conflicts is consistent with attachment-based models of adult romantic relationships, which posit that insecure attachment patterns predispose individuals to maladaptive emotional regulation, heightened threat sensitivity, and dysfunctional conflict behaviors. In line with the current findings, Henschel et al. (2020) demonstrated that insecure attachment is strongly associated with deficits in emotional regulation and empathic functioning, both of which are critical determinants of how couples experience and manage conflict (1). Similarly, Schetsche and Mustaca (2021) reported that attachment insecurity is linked to frustration intolerance and heightened emotional reactivity, psychological processes that intensify marital disagreements and undermine constructive problem solving (8). The present findings extend this body of evidence by demonstrating that these attachment-based vulnerabilities remain highly salient among couples actively seeking divorce.

The significant mediating role of intimacy styles identified in this study further clarifies the psychological pathway connecting attachment and marital conflict. Couples with secure attachment orientations typically experience higher levels of emotional, physical, sexual, psychological, and spiritual intimacy, which fosters trust, emotional safety, and cooperative interaction. Conversely, insecure attachment is associated with fear of closeness, emotional withdrawal, and avoidance of vulnerability, which erode intimacy and create fertile ground for chronic conflict. Afshin et al. (2024) similarly found that attachment styles significantly predict marital intimacy, with insecure attachment undermining multiple dimensions of relational closeness (11). Parsakia et al. (2023) likewise demonstrated that attachment styles mediate the association between marital intimacy and self-differentiation, underscoring the central regulatory function of intimacy in attachment-based relationship dynamics (3).

The present findings also align closely with Hassanzadeh and Samavati's (2022) results, which showed that attachment styles influence marital conflicts both directly and indirectly through couples' understanding perspectives and fear of intimacy (2). By extending this model to include multidimensional intimacy styles as a mediator, the current study provides a more comprehensive account of the emotional and relational mechanisms through which attachment exerts its effects on marital functioning. This is

particularly important in the context of divorce-seeking couples, for whom disruptions in intimacy are often severe and entrenched.

The observed negative effect of intimacy styles on marital conflicts further highlights intimacy's protective function within distressed marriages. High levels of emotional and physical closeness appear to buffer couples against the escalation of disagreements, facilitating more adaptive conflict resolution strategies. This finding is consistent with Nugrahani et al. (2025), who demonstrated that emotional intimacy significantly shields marital satisfaction from role conflict in dual-earner couples (12). Dehghanidowlatabadi et al. (2025) similarly reported that interpersonal mindfulness strengthens the protective role of intimacy against the harmful effects of marital conflict, particularly within Iranian cultural contexts (16). The present results reinforce the conclusion that intimacy is not merely an outcome of relational health but a central regulatory resource that actively shapes conflict trajectories.

Furthermore, the significant total effect of attachment styles on marital conflicts observed in this study underscores the enduring influence of early emotional schemas on adult relationship functioning. Pudelko et al. (2025) showed that partners' attachment pairings predict negative emotional reactions during conflict and the occurrence of intimate partner violence, illustrating the powerful role of attachment configurations in determining conflict outcomes (9). Rahiman (2024) likewise demonstrated that attachment styles influence marital conflicts through maladaptive schemas and communication skills among couples facing divorce (10). The present findings converge with these results and provide further evidence that attachment operates as a foundational organizing system shaping emotional, cognitive, and behavioral responses within marital interactions.

Importantly, the present study's focus on couples applying for divorce offers unique insights into the psychological architecture of severe marital distress. While prior research has examined attachment and intimacy among community samples, fewer studies have explored these processes within populations on the brink of relationship dissolution. The current findings suggest that as attachment insecurity intensifies and intimacy deteriorates, conflict becomes increasingly rigid, emotionally charged, and resistant to resolution, ultimately contributing to the decision to seek divorce. This pattern is consistent with Jahani Dolat Abadi and Ashayeri's (2022) findings that marital conflicts and ineffective conflict resolution strategies play a critical role in couples' inclination toward divorce (4).

The results also complement intervention-based research demonstrating that therapeutic efforts targeting emotional bonding and intimacy can significantly reduce marital conflicts. Akbari et al. (2021) showed that emotion-focused couples therapy enhances marital intimacy while simultaneously improving conflict resolution (15). Rajai et al. (2022) similarly found that compassion-focused therapy effectively reduces marital conflicts among women seeking divorce (6). These intervention outcomes provide strong external validation for the present model, which identifies intimacy as a central mediator linking attachment and conflict.

In addition, the findings resonate with broader relational research emphasizing the interconnected roles of emotional intelligence, sexual satisfaction, and intimacy in marital stability. Parsakia et al. (2023) demonstrated that emotional intelligence significantly predicts marital conflicts through dyadic emotional processes (7). Mosadegh et al. (2023) reported that sexual satisfaction mediates the relationship between personality traits and emotional divorce in men (13). Sarhani and Homaei (2023) further found that fear of

intimacy and self-differentiation influence marital infidelity via sexual satisfaction among women with marital conflict (17). Collectively, these findings reinforce the central conclusion of the present study: that intimacy processes occupy a pivotal position in the psychological network governing marital health and conflict.

Finally, the present results carry important implications for attachment-based models of marital therapy. SeyedEbrahimi (2024) demonstrated that avoidant attachment undermines marital satisfaction through fear of intimacy (18). Pouya et al. (2025) similarly found that marital intimacy and self-regulation mediate the effects of attachment on marital burnout (14). The current study extends these findings by demonstrating that intimacy styles also serve as a key mechanism linking attachment to marital conflict among divorce-seeking couples. This integrated framework offers a theoretically coherent and empirically supported model for understanding how early emotional patterns translate into present-day relational crises.

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the cross-sectional design of the study limits causal inference regarding the directionality of the observed relationships. Second, reliance on self-report measures may have introduced response biases, including social desirability and recall bias. Third, the use of convenience sampling and focus on couples from a specific cultural context may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other populations. Finally, the study did not incorporate longitudinal follow-up to assess the stability of these relationships over time.

Future studies should employ longitudinal designs to examine how attachment, intimacy, and conflict evolve across different stages of marriage and during the process of divorce. Incorporating multi-method assessments, including behavioral observation and partner reports, would strengthen measurement validity. Comparative studies across cultural contexts could further illuminate the role of sociocultural factors in shaping these dynamics. Additionally, examining the effectiveness of attachment- and intimacy-focused interventions using experimental designs would provide valuable evidence for clinical application.

The findings highlight the importance of addressing attachment insecurities and rebuilding intimacy in couples therapy, particularly for couples experiencing severe conflict. Clinicians should focus on enhancing emotional safety, improving communication, and fostering multiple dimensions of intimacy to interrupt destructive conflict cycles. Prevention programs targeting young couples may also benefit from incorporating attachment education and intimacy skill training to reduce the risk of future marital distress.

## **Acknowledgments**

The authors express their deep gratitude to all participants who contributed to this study.

## **Authors' Contributions**

All authors equally contributed to this study.

## **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.

## 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.

## Funding

This research was carried out independently with personal funding and without the financial support of any governmental or private institution or organization.

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