

Article history:
Received 25 April 2024
Revised 20 June 2024
Accepted 25 June 2024
Published online 01 July 2024

Predicting Attitudes Toward Marital Infidelity in Couples Based on Attachment Styles and Personality Traits with the Mediation of Coping Strategies (Gender Comparison)

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Article Info

Article type:

Original Research

How to cite this article:

Khezlrou, E., Aghayousefi, A., & Ebrahim Moghadam, H. (2024). Predicting Attitudes Toward Marital Infidelity in Couples Based on Attachment Styles and Personality Traits with the Mediation of Coping Strategies (Gender Comparison). *Applied Family Therapy Journal*, 5(3), 256-269.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.61838/kman.aftj.5.3.27>



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ABSTRACT

Objective: The present study aimed to predict attitudes toward marital infidelity in couples based on attachment styles and personality traits with the mediation of coping strategies (gender comparison).

Methods: The research method was correlational and used structural equation modeling. The statistical population included all married women and men aged 25 to 45 in Tehran. A sample of 420 individuals, comprising 210 women and 210 men, was selected through convenience sampling. Research data were collected using the Whately Marital Infidelity Attitude Questionnaire (2006), the Collins and Read Attachment Styles Questionnaire (1994), the Cattell 16 Personality Factor Test (1973), and the Lazarus-Folkman Coping Strategies Questionnaire (1988). Relationships between variables were assessed using Pearson's correlation test, and the research model was evaluated using the Partial Least Squares (PLS) structural equation modeling technique. The mediation role was also assessed using the bootstrapping method in Smart PLS software. Data analysis was performed using SPSS version 27 and Smart PLS version 3.

Findings: The research findings indicated that in the female sample, risk-taking as a personality trait could predict marital infidelity ($p < .05$). In the male sample, the conscientiousness personality trait directly predicted marital infidelity, while insecure attachment predicted marital infidelity both directly and indirectly through the avoidant-escape coping style ($p < .05$).

Conclusion: The results showed that insecure attachment influences the tendency toward marital infidelity in the male group. Additionally, the conscientiousness factor influences the tendency toward marital infidelity in the male group, and the avoidance and escape strategies influence the tendency toward marital infidelity in the male group. The results also demonstrated that secure attachment negatively impacts the problem-solving coping strategy in the female group. Secure attachment negatively impacts the avoidant-escape strategy in the female group but positively impacts it in the male group. Insecure attachment positively impacts

the avoidant-escape strategy in both the female and male groups. The conscientiousness factor positively impacts the problem-solving coping strategy in the female group. Moreover, sociability positively impacts the avoidant-escape strategy in the male group, while emotional stability negatively impacts the avoidant-escape strategy in the overall and male groups. Risk-taking negatively impacts the avoidant-escape strategy in the overall and male groups. These results showed no relationship between insecure attachment and the tendency toward marital infidelity in women.

Keywords: *Marital Infidelity, Attachment Styles, Personality Traits, Coping Strategies.*

1. Introduction

The discussion about family and ways to strengthen it is a common topic in scientific forums, with psychology striving to enhance family stability through various measures (Korahng Behshti & Torkaman, 2023). Marital commitment, a prevalent human phenomenon, occasionally grapples with the issue of "marital infidelity or extramarital relationships" (Rienecke, 2018). Marital infidelity challenges family health and is the most significant factor threatening the function, stability, continuity, and marital relationships (Ghezselflo et al., 2023; Lee & McKinnish, 2018). Recent studies with large samples indicate that approximately 22 to 25 percent of men and 11 to 15 percent of women in the United States reported having had at least one extramarital sexual relationship. Annually, 1.5 to 4 percent of married individuals engage in extramarital sex, with men twice as likely as women to have engaged in such activity over the past year (Harris, 2018). Thus, divorce is a major factor in the collapse and disintegration of the fundamental unit of society, the family, which can lead to numerous social harms and problems (Isaac, 2020). Some researchers consider it a significant stressor individuals may face in their lifetime, with long-lasting adverse effects (Lin & Brown, 2020).

There are differences between women's and men's reactions to marital infidelity. Women experience more problems when confronted with this phenomenon, even years later (Kemer et al., 2016), suffering from various psychological issues, including depression, anxiety, damaged self-esteem, and emotional regulation problems (Feng, 2018). Consequently, marital infidelity is a harmful issue for spouses and families and a common concern for marriage and family therapists (Feng, 2018). Marital infidelity is considered an attachment injury, occurring when a spouse realizes they cannot trust their attachment figure, leading to increased or heightened insecurity in the attachment bond (Grigoropoulos, 2024). According to Bowlby's theory, attachment forms through early cognitive relationships with primary caregivers, related to the

individual's ability to infer caregivers' behaviors in response to their needs during early life (Granqvist et al., 2020). Adult attachment theory emphasizes the importance of the child-mother bond and the issues and consequences arising from its disruption, categorized into three styles: anxious (ambivalent style), approach (secure style), and dependency (avoidant attachment) (Jafari Siavashani et al., 2018). Attachment style comprises deep emotional bonds individuals form with specific people in their lives (Pakdaman et al., 2016). Securely attached individuals are characterized by intimacy, greater confidence, and better interpersonal satisfaction (Černe et al., 2018). Insecurely attached individuals are characterized by low self-esteem, dependency, jealousy, hopelessness in relationships, and a tendency for excessive control (Doinita & Maria, 2015), while avoidant individuals avoid intimacy and closeness with others, do not trust others, and are considered unpredictable by others (Parsakia et al., 2023). Many studies have shown that individuals with insecure attachment have more interpersonal problems than those with secure attachment (Dunkel et al., 2016; Snir & Wiseman, 2016). Insecure attachment has two dimensions: anxiety and avoidance. The avoidance dimension features pervasive discomfort with intimate closeness, fear of dependency and interpersonal intimacy, and a strong orientation towards self-reliance, associated with a negative view of others (Chinaveh & Daghlavi, 2017).

Marital infidelity is a means by which individuals reveal problematic and dark aspects of their personalities without overt misconduct. Despite the importance of personality in explaining behavior, psychology lacks a unified definition of personality. Nonetheless, most theories define personality as relatively stable patterns of thoughts, emotions, and behaviors that likely remain unchanged over time and explain individuals' behaviors in different situations (Rafezi & Yeganeh, 2019). In the past decade, there has been significant interest in finding a scientific and acceptable classification of personality traits. The Five-Factor Model of Personality by Costa and McCrae is one of the leading and exploratory structural models of personality introduced in

1999 (Gill & Berezina, 2019) and recognized as a prominent and exploratory structural model of personality (Rezaee & Yousefi, 2019). By explaining an individual's status in each of the five factors, a comprehensive description can be provided to identify individuals' emotional, social, experiential, attitudinal, and motivational states (MamSharifi et al., 2020). From an intrapersonal perspective, personality traits influence couples' interactions (Jafari & Nobavehvatan, 2022). One of the best conceptualizations of personality is reflected in the Five-Factor Model (Rashidi & Karimi, 2019). The Five-Factor Personality Traits define individuals' ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving based on their disposition across five main domains: neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness (Boudreaux & Ozer, 2015). Personality traits, as predispositions individuals bring into marital relationships, affect how they handle marital problems (Tolo Takmili Torabi et al., 2020). Individuals whose spouses score lower on agreeableness and conscientiousness exhibit more negative interactions, lower marital satisfaction, and a higher likelihood of engaging in extramarital relationships (Sadeghi et al., 2019).

One of the significant predictors of negative interactions is emotion dysregulation, which hampers individuals' ability to employ effective and efficient coping strategies when facing marital challenges (Raudales et al., 2019). Coping is a way of responding to stress or psychological pressure, which can be adaptive or maladaptive (Zandkarimi & Yazdi, 2017). Coping strategies include individuals' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral efforts to overcome, endure, or minimize the effects of stress. Lazarus believes that multiple ways exist to cope with stress in any stressful situation. Men and women differ significantly in the strategies they use to cope with life's stressful conditions, and specific coping strategies create unique qualities in their relationships (Stancu et al., 2020; Vedelago et al., 2023). Each person uses coping styles differently, and no one responds to stressors in the same way as others. There are generally three main coping strategies for stressful conditions: problem-focused coping (focusing on the problem and trying to solve it), emotion-focused coping (emphasizing the control of emotions and emotional reactions), and avoidant coping (efforts to cognitively change and distance oneself from the stressful reality) (Gashi et al., 2023; Leszko et al., 2020; Stancu et al., 2020; Vedelago et al., 2023). Stress among family members is transferable; for instance, a husband may express his stress verbally or non-verbally, and his wife

responds in three ways: being affected, completely ignoring the stressful topic, or reacting based on either positive or negative adaptive behaviors. Ultimately, the family's adaptive responses should enable them to return to a pre-stress state (Omidian et al., 2019).

The significance of this research topic lies in the increasing rate of marital infidelity and the rising costs associated with infidelity and divorce in contemporary society. Currently, spouses experiencing infidelity become aware of it despite all efforts and secrecy, leading to disputes, conflicts, and struggles, which result in problems for the couples and their children. These issues negatively impact all aspects of the couples' lives, gradually diminishing affection and potentially leading to divorce. Infidelity plays a major role in family harm, and recognizing the factors that cause it and ways to reduce it is crucial for pre-marital counseling and acquaintance periods to reduce harm. Therefore, like many other social phenomena, marital infidelity is a multifaceted, complex, and extensive event influenced by numerous potential factors. The research background indicates the impact of attachment styles on marital infidelity (Kaya & Şakiroğlu, 2023; Swets & Cox, 2023), the role of personality in predicting marital infidelity (Grigoropoulos, 2024), and the role of coping strategies in predicting marital infidelity (Chi et al., 2019). Since no research was available that studied all three variables as a model in predicting attitudes toward marital infidelity in men and women, the main research question of this study is: To what extent do attachment styles, personality traits, and coping strategies by gender predict attitudes toward marital infidelity in couples?

2. Methods

2.1. Study design and Participant

This research is applied in terms of its goal and utilizes a correlational research method and structural equation modeling for data collection. The statistical population comprises all married women and men aged 25 to 45 in Tehran. Given the structural equation modeling approach and Klein's (2011) recommendation that the minimum sample size should be 200, this study included 420 individuals to ensure generalizability and account for potential dropouts. Participants were selected based on inclusion and exclusion criteria (inclusion criteria: minimum age 25, maximum age 45, married and cohabiting, at least a high school diploma; exclusion criteria: withdrawal from

completing the questionnaire and participation in the research) through convenience sampling.

2.2. Measures

2.2.1. Marital Infidelity Attitude

This questionnaire, developed by Whatley in 2006, contains 12 items scored on a 7-point Likert scale from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." The questionnaire measures individuals' inclination to accept or reject infidelity, with the highest score (84) indicating acceptance of infidelity and the lowest (12) indicating rejection. Cronbach's alpha for the entire questionnaire was reported as .79. To assess validity in Iran, criterion validity (divergent type) was used. In one study, the Cronbach's alpha for the infidelity questionnaire was reported as .89. Another study reported a Cronbach's alpha of .81 (Bakhtyari et al., 2021).

2.2.2. Attachment Styles

Developed by Collins and Read in 1994, this questionnaire consists of 18 items on a five-point Likert scale with three subscales, each containing six items. The subscales are dependency, closeness, and anxiety. The anxiety subscale corresponds to anxious-ambivalent attachment, and the closeness subscale is a bipolar dimension contrasting secure and avoidant descriptions. Thus, closeness aligns with secure attachment, and the dependency subscale roughly corresponds to avoidant attachment. Scoring is done on a five-point Likert scale from "does not describe me at all" to "describes me very well," with scores ranging from 0 to 4. Subscale scores are obtained by summing the six items for each subscale, and the total score is the sum of all items. Collins and Read (1994) reported good reliability and validity, with Cronbach's alpha above .80 for the subscales. In Iran, the questionnaire was normed by Pakdaman (2001), with Cronbach's alpha for the three subscales reported as .83, .80, and .82, respectively (Pakdaman et al., 2016).

2.2.3. Personality Traits

In this study, the 16 Personality Factor Questionnaire by Cattell was used to assess personality. This structured test is based on the hypothesis that human traits or characteristics are relatively stable across different situations but vary from person to person. The questionnaire contains 187 questions. In this research, four factors (A, H, G, C) are examined, totaling 46 items: emotional stability (C) or ego strength

(general neuroticism or emotional instability), containing 13 items (items 4-5-29-30-55-79-80-104-105-129-130-154-179); stable temperament (G), conscientiousness (conscientious versus expedient: measuring the extent to which ethical issues are internalized and the tendency to avoid doing wrong), containing 10 items (items 9-34-59-84-109-134-159-160-184-185); daring cyclic temperament (H), boldness (bold versus timid: assessing comfort and accessibility in social environments and courage), containing 13 items (items 10-35-36-60-61-85-86-110-111-135-136-185-186); and factor (A): cyclic temperament, sociability (sociability versus unsociability), containing 10 items (items 3-26-27-51-52-76-101-126-151-176). The Persian version of the 16 Personality Factor Questionnaire was validated by Barzegar (1996) on high school students. Three methods were used to assess the reliability of each factor: test-retest with a short time interval, test-retest with a long time interval, and internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha). The average reliability coefficient obtained from the short interval test-retest method was .65, from the long interval test-retest method was .52, and from the internal consistency method (Cronbach's alpha) was .54. The average validity coefficient for the factors was .76, indicating acceptable reliability and validity of the questionnaire (Rafezi & Yeganeh, 2019; Rashidi & Karimi, 2019; Rezaee & Yousefi, 2019).

2.2.4. Coping Strategies

Based on Lazarus-Folkman's stress theory, the Coping Strategies Questionnaire contains 66 items with eight subscales: confrontation, distancing, self-control, seeking social support, accepting responsibility, escape-avoidance, planned problem-solving, and positive reappraisal). This study evaluated two coping strategies: planned problem-solving and escape-avoidance, with 14 related items. The reliability of the questionnaire was determined through Cronbach's alpha, indicating adequate internal consistency. Aldwin and Revenson also confirmed its validity through factor analysis. The coping strategies described are those individuals report using in response to stressful situations. The Lazarus Coping Strategies Questionnaire has face validity (Aghayousefi et al., 2020; Zandkarimi & Yazdi, 2017).

2.3. Data Analysis

Pearson correlation and structural equation modeling using PLS software were employed to test the research hypotheses in this study.

3. Findings and Results

Out of the total 210 participants in the study, 50% were men and 50% were women. Forty-five percent of the respondents were aged 25 to 35, and 55% were aged 36 to 45. Most respondents had a bachelor's degree (31%), a

master's degree (27.1%), and a high school diploma (23.8%). Sixty percent of the respondents had been married for 1 to 10 years, 38.8% for 11 to 20 years, and 1.2% for 21 to 25 years. Regarding occupation, the majority of respondents were self-employed (38.1%), homemakers (19.3%), and employees (19%).

In this section, the means of the variables between men and women were compared using Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA). The results of the MANOVA test are reported in Table 1.

Table 1

Comparison of Mean Variables Between Men and Women Using Multivariate Analysis of Variance

Variable	Component	Women's Mean	Women's SD	Men's Mean	Men's SD	Mean Difference	p-value	Effect Size
Attachment Styles	Secure Attachment Style	12.92	2.86	12.54	2.50	0.38	.146	.005
	Insecure Attachment Style	22.80	5.53	24.77	4.91	1.97	<.001	.037
Personality	Factor A: Sociability	11.14	3.11	10.17	2.64	0.97	.001	.025
	Factor C: Emotional Stability	13.35	3.95	11.94	3.98	1.41	<.001	.032
	Factor G: Conscientiousness	12.64	2.80	12.22	2.84	0.41	.165	.005
	Factor H: Risk-taking	15.80	4.69	15.09	4.62	0.72	.100	.007
Coping Strategies	Avoidance	7.94	3.03	8.82	4.66	0.88	.006	.018
	Problem-solving	8.48	2.82	9.51	2.87	1.03	<.001	.032
Marital Infidelity		44.20	5.06	44.16	4.92	0.05	.865	.001

The results in Table 1 indicated statistically significant differences in the means of five variables: insecure attachment style, personality factor of sociability, personality factor of emotional stability, avoidance coping strategy, and problem-solving coping strategy between men and women ($p < .05$). The mean scores showed that men had higher means in insecure attachment style, avoidance coping

strategy, and problem-solving coping strategy, while women had higher means in the sociability factor and emotional stability factor. The effect size values showed the largest mean difference between men and women was in the insecure attachment style (effect size = .037), followed by emotional stability and problem-solving coping strategy (effect size = .032).

Table 2

Pearson Correlation Matrix Between Main Variables in Women (n=210)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	8
1. Secure Attachment	1								
2. Insecure Attachment	-.12	1							
3. Sociability	*.16	-.07	1						
4. Emotional Stability	** .19	**-.37	** .34	1					
5. Conscientiousness	-.16*	**-.25	.08	.01	1				
6. Risk-taking	** .36	-.11	** .52	** .45	.02	1			
7. Avoidance	**-.20	** .28	-.16*	**-.22	-.13	-.16*	1		
8. Problem-solving	-.17*	.05	.07	.10	*-.14	.06	** .31	1	
9. Marital Infidelity	-.08	.09	.01	-.08	-.05	*.14	-.01	-.04	1

* $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$

The results in Table 2 showed that in the female sample, only the personality factor of risk-taking was significantly correlated with marital infidelity ($p < .05$), with a positive correlation strength of .14. The correlation between independent and mediator variables indicated significant correlations between both secure and insecure attachment

styles and the three personality factors of sociability, emotional stability, and risk-taking with the avoidance coping strategy. Additionally, significant correlations were observed between secure attachment style and conscientiousness with the problem-solving coping strategy ($p < .05$).

Table 3

Pearson Correlation Matrix Between Main Variables in Men (n=210)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Secure Attachment	1								
2. Insecure Attachment	**-.24	1							
3. Sociability	.08	-.12	1						
4. Emotional Stability	**-.18	**-.40	**-.26	1					
5. Conscientiousness	-.05	.13	.02	.09	1				
6. Risk-taking	**-.21	-.10	**-.41	**-.36	.03	1			
7. Avoidance	.07	**-.26	-.08	**-.32	-.01	**-.35	1		
8. Problem-solving	-.04	.02	.07	.02	.08	.11	**-.36	1	
9. Marital Infidelity	.09	**-.18	-.01	-.03	*-.16	.10	**-.25	.06	1

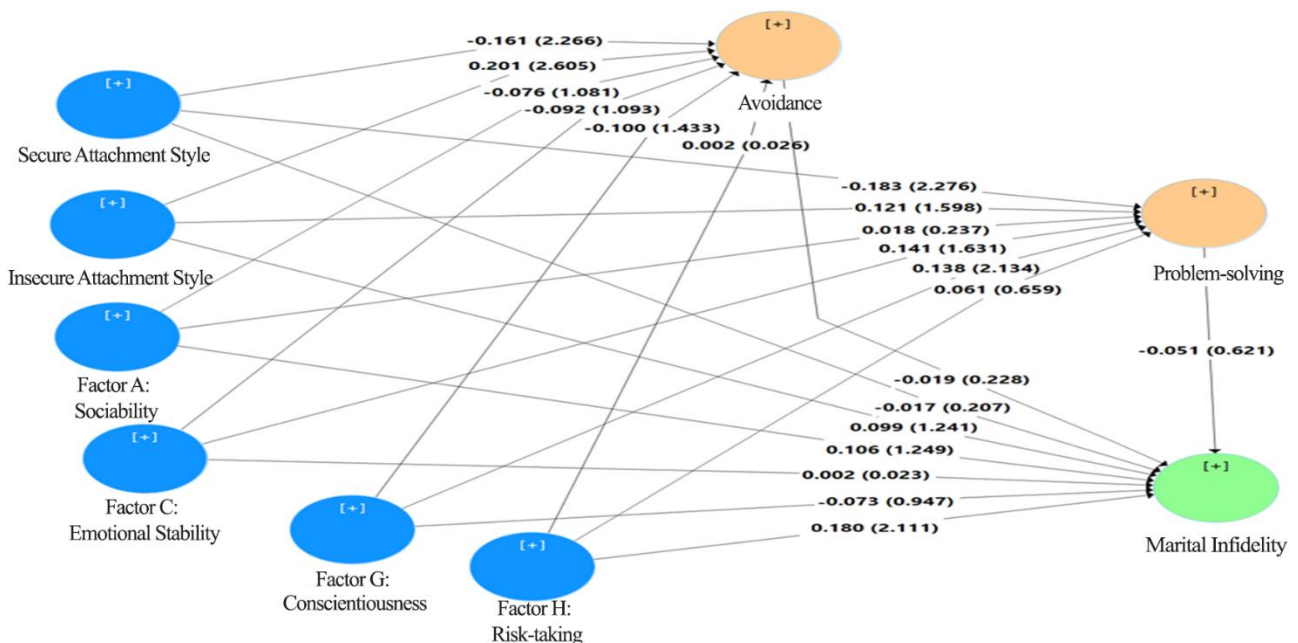
* $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$

The results in Table 3 showed that in the male sample, significant correlations were found between insecure attachment style, the conscientiousness factor, and the avoidance coping strategy with marital infidelity ($p < .05$). The direction of the relationship between conscientiousness and marital infidelity was negative, while the relationships between insecure attachment style and avoidance coping

strategy with marital infidelity were positive. The strongest correlation was observed between avoidance coping strategy and marital infidelity, with a correlation coefficient of .25. Significant correlations were observed between insecure attachment style and two personality factors of emotional stability and risk-taking with the avoidance coping strategy ($p < .05$).

Figure 1

Research Model with Standardized Path Coefficients (and t-values) for the Female Group

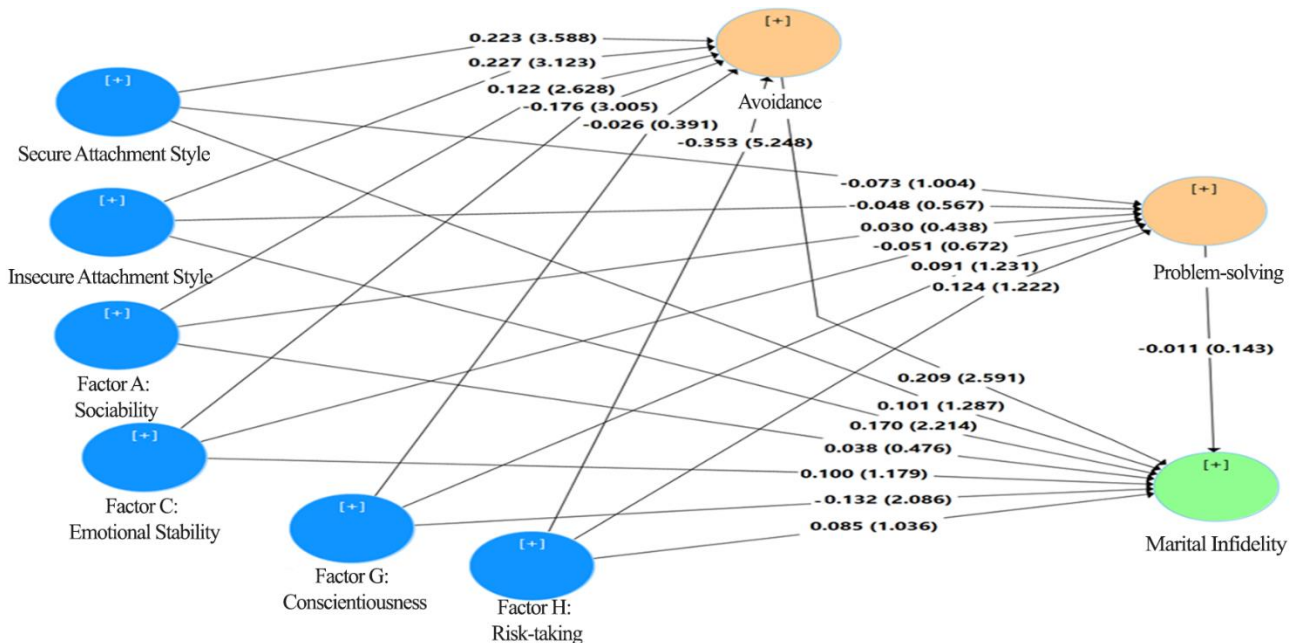


The results in Figure 1 show that in the female group model, the direct effect of the risk-taking factor on marital infidelity was confirmed ($p < .05$). Additionally, the direct effect of secure and insecure attachment styles on the

mediator variable avoidance coping strategy was confirmed ($p < .05$). The direct effect of secure attachment style and conscientiousness on the mediator variable problem-solving coping strategy was also confirmed ($p < .05$).

Figure 2

Research Model with Standardized Path Coefficients (and *t*-values) for the Male Group



The results in Figure 2 show that in the male group model, the direct effect of insecure attachment style, conscientiousness, and avoidance coping strategy on marital infidelity was confirmed ($p < .05$). Additionally, the direct effect of secure attachment style, insecure attachment style,

sociability, emotional stability, and risk-taking on the mediator variable avoidance coping strategy was confirmed ($p < .05$). None of the variables had a direct effect on the problem-solving coping strategy ($p > .05$).

Table 4

Model Fit Indices

Model	R-squared (R2)	Redundancy Index (Q2)	Normed Fit Index (NFI)	Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR)
Women	.041	.021	.82	.061
Men	.118	.046	.91	.045
Overall	.061	.027	.86	.055

The results in Table 4 showed that the Normed Fit Index (NFI) value in the male model was desirable, exceeding .90, while the NFI values in the female and overall models were moderate. The SRMR in all three models was less than .08, indicating that the SRMR fit index confirmed the model fit in all three cases. Overall, the NFI and SRMR indices showed that all three models had an approximately adequate fit. Examining the explanatory power of the model with the

fit indices R-squared and redundancy showed that in the male model, the independent and predictor variables could explain 11.8% of infidelity, 4.1% in the female model, and 6.1% in the overall model. Thus, the predictive power of the model in the male sample was higher than in the female group. Additionally, the redundancy index in the male model was .046, indicating stronger predictive power compared to the female model.

Table 5

Test of Model Relationships (in Female Sample)

Effects	Standardized Coefficient	t-value	p-value
Secure Attachment --> Avoidance	-.161	2.27	.024
Insecure Attachment --> Avoidance	.201	2.61	.009
Sociability --> Avoidance	-.076	1.08	.280
Emotional Stability --> Avoidance	-.092	1.09	.275
Conscientiousness --> Avoidance	-.100	1.43	.152
Risk-taking --> Avoidance	.002	.03	.979
Secure Attachment --> Problem-solving	-.183	2.28	.023
Insecure Attachment --> Problem-solving	.121	1.60	.111
Sociability --> Problem-solving	.018	.24	.812
Emotional Stability --> Problem-solving	.141	1.63	.104
Conscientiousness --> Problem-solving	.138	2.13	.033
Risk-taking --> Problem-solving	.061	.66	.510
Secure Attachment --> Marital Infidelity	-.017	.21	.836
Insecure Attachment --> Marital Infidelity	.099	1.24	.215
Sociability --> Marital Infidelity	.106	1.25	.212
Emotional Stability --> Marital Infidelity	.002	.02	.982
Conscientiousness --> Marital Infidelity	-.073	.95	.344
Risk-taking --> Marital Infidelity	.180	2.11	.035
Avoidance --> Marital Infidelity	-.019	.23	.820
Problem-solving --> Marital Infidelity	-.051	.62	.535

The results in Table 5 showed that in the female sample, the direct effects of two variables, secure attachment and insecure attachment styles, on the mediator variable avoidance coping strategy were confirmed ($p < .05$). The direct effects of secure attachment style and

conscientiousness on the mediator variable problem-solving coping strategy were also confirmed ($p < .05$). Additionally, the direct effect of one variable, the risk-taking factor, on the dependent variable marital infidelity was confirmed ($p < .05$).

Table 6

Test of Model Relationships (in Male Sample)

Effects	Standardized Coefficient	t-value	p-value
Secure Attachment --> Avoidance	.223	3.59	<.001
Insecure Attachment --> Avoidance	.227	3.12	.002
Sociability --> Avoidance	.122	2.63	.009
Emotional Stability --> Avoidance	-.176	3.01	.003
Conscientiousness --> Avoidance	-.026	.39	.696
Risk-taking --> Avoidance	-.353	5.25	<.001
Secure Attachment --> Problem-solving	-.073	1.01	.316
Insecure Attachment --> Problem-solving	-.048	.57	.571
Sociability --> Problem-solving	.030	.44	.662
Emotional Stability --> Problem-solving	-.051	.67	.502
Conscientiousness --> Problem-solving	.091	1.20	.219
Risk-taking --> Problem-solving	.124	1.22	.222
Secure Attachment --> Marital Infidelity	.101	1.29	.199
Insecure Attachment --> Marital Infidelity	.170	2.21	.027
Sociability --> Marital Infidelity	.038	.48	.634
Emotional Stability --> Marital Infidelity	.100	1.18	.239
Conscientiousness --> Marital Infidelity	-.132	2.09	.038
Risk-taking --> Marital Infidelity	.085	1.04	.300
Avoidance --> Marital Infidelity	.209	2.59	.010
Problem-solving --> Marital Infidelity	-.011	.143	.887

The results in Table 6 showed that in the male sample, the direct effects of five variables—secure attachment style, insecure attachment style, sociability, emotional stability, and risk-taking—on the mediator variable avoidance coping strategy were confirmed ($p < .05$). None of the independent variables had a direct effect on the problem-solving coping strategy ($p > .05$). The direct effects of three variables—insecure attachment style, conscientiousness, and avoidance coping strategy—on the dependent variable marital infidelity were confirmed ($p < .05$).

4. Discussion and Conclusion

This study aimed to predict attitudes toward marital infidelity in couples based on attachment styles and personality traits with the mediation of coping strategies (gender comparison). The results showed that insecure attachment influences the tendency toward marital infidelity in men. This finding is consistent with prior studies (Bakhtyari et al., 2021; Kaya & Şakiroğlu, 2023; Sakman et al., 2021; Swets & Cox, 2023), which confirm the relationship between attachment style and the tendency toward marital infidelity. In explaining the impact of attachment styles on the tendency toward marital infidelity, it can be said that individuals with avoidant attachment style tend to have unrestricted sociosexual orientation, which may reduce their inclination to engage in sexual activities exclusively with their partner. Avoidant attachment is also associated with pursuing short-term sexual relationships, possibly due to discomfort in committed long-term relationships. Additionally, avoidant attachment is associated with relatively low motivation to engage in sexual behavior for experiencing emotional intimacy and is linked to various indicators of dishonest behavior. Research findings indicate that avoidant attachment is consistently associated with lower levels of commitment to a partner, which in turn reflects a greater interest in alternative options and more extramarital relationships (Sakman et al., 2021; Swets & Cox, 2023). Moreover, anxiously attached individuals are often distressed by an unconscious desire to merge with others. Partners are mostly idealized, but the partner's responsiveness is uncertain, leading to relationships characterized by neediness and clinginess, low self-esteem, and constant worry about abandonment. They feel undervalued, believe their partner does not love them enough, and report negative effects, fluctuating emotions, and lower levels of happiness, trust, interdependence, and commitment (Sakman et al., 2021).

The results showed that conscientiousness influences the tendency toward marital infidelity in men. This finding aligns with prior studies (Alavi et al., 2018; Grigoropoulos, 2024; Sakman et al., 2021; Sevi et al., 2020; Swets & Cox, 2023), which confirm the relationship between personality and the tendency toward marital infidelity. In explaining the impact of personality on the tendency toward marital infidelity, it can be said that personality traits and behaviors significantly influence couples' inclination toward infidelity (Sevi et al., 2020). In fact, some personality traits may predispose individuals to marital infidelity, such as the inability to maintain commitments, the need for new excitement, lack of self-confidence, lack of a sense of worth, and social influence (Alavi et al., 2018). Additionally, personality traits such as emotion regulation deficiencies, poor control of sexual impulses, dissatisfaction with the current relationship, and inability to resolve relationship issues may also lead to marital infidelity. However, it should be noted that personality is just one factor, and other factors may also influence the tendency toward marital infidelity. Each individual and relationship is unique, and many factors may influence the decision to commit marital infidelity (Grigoropoulos, 2024). Conscientiousness can significantly impact the tendency toward marital infidelity in couples. Conscientious individuals are less likely to commit marital infidelity as they view such behavior as a departure from their moral path and disobedience to their values and principles. Risk-taking can also significantly impact the tendency toward marital infidelity in both men and women. Individuals with higher risk-taking tendencies are more likely to commit marital infidelity as they seek new and exciting experiences and derive less satisfaction from stable and faithful relationships.

The results showed that avoidance coping strategy influences the tendency toward marital infidelity in men. This finding aligns with prior studies (Chi et al., 2019; Gharagozloo et al., 2018; Khatibi & Meghrazi, 2023), which confirm the relationship between coping strategies and marital infidelity. In explaining the impact of coping strategies on the tendency toward marital infidelity, it can be said that coping strategies are used to reduce the stress caused by stressful events in daily life. Individuals who use avoidance coping strategies strive for cognitive changes and distancing from stressful realities (Vedelago et al., 2023). These individuals choose responses to deny or minimize the damage of a crisis or its consequences. They engage in new activities to replace the losses caused by crises and create new sources of satisfaction. One of these methods may be

the tendency toward marital infidelity and replacing a partner with another.

The results showed that secure attachment negatively influences the problem-solving coping strategy in women. Similarly, secure attachment negatively influences the avoidance coping strategy in women but positively influences it in men. Insecure attachment positively influences the avoidance coping strategy in both women and men. This finding aligns with prior studies (Nematzadeh Getabi et al., 2022; Saffarinia & Dehkhodaei, 2020; Stancu et al., 2020; Vedelago et al., 2023), which confirm the relationship between attachment style and coping strategies. In explaining the impact of attachment styles on coping strategies, it can be said that individuals with different attachment styles use different approaches to coping with stress and processing emotional information. Securely attached individuals use efficient and effective communication methods in their relationships and can manage their emotional and emotional connections. As a result, they are expected to use problem-focused coping styles (Nematzadeh Getabi et al., 2022; Saffarinia & Dehkhodaei, 2020). The relationship between attachment style and avoidance coping strategies refers to how individuals may react to closeness and emotions. Attachment style is a pattern experienced by individuals in their relationships with others and includes their approach to closeness, self-confidence, fear of rejection, and need for independence. Individuals with avoidant insecure attachment have poor marital functioning, poor communication and problem-solving, low flexibility and mutual trust, and weak support-seeking in stressful situations (Nematzadeh Getabi et al., 2022).

The results showed that conscientiousness positively influences the problem-solving coping strategy in women. Similarly, sociability positively influences the avoidance coping strategy in men. Emotional stability negatively influences the avoidance coping strategy in both the general group and the men's group. Risk-taking negatively influences the avoidance coping strategy in both the general group and the men's group. This finding aligns with prior studies (Gashi et al., 2023; Leszko et al., 2020), which confirm the relationship between personality and coping strategies. In explaining the impact of personality (conscientiousness, sociability, emotional stability, and risk-taking) on coping strategies, it can be said that conscientiousness comprises organizational practices, perseverance, perfectionism, and caution, meaning that conscientious individuals do not act impulsively. They tend

to assess all aspects of an issue before taking any action, work hard, adhere to ethics, are interested in details, meticulously examine mistakes to achieve perfect performance, and ultimately have the ability to restrain impulses and scrutinize each issue carefully (Leszko et al., 2020).

The results showed no relationship between insecure attachment and the tendency toward marital infidelity in women. Generally, insecure attachment can be related to the tendency toward marital infidelity in women, but whether this relationship exists between the two factors depends on various factors and cannot be generalized to all women. However, it should be noted that insecure attachment alone cannot indicate marital infidelity. Some women with secure attachment may also tend toward marital infidelity. Various factors can play a role in this relationship, so understanding the issue requires examining the psychological, social, and relational factors associated with each individual (Lopez et al., 2011).

The results also showed no relationship between secure attachment and the problem-solving coping strategy in men. Secure attachment and problem-solving coping strategy in men are two independent concepts with no direct relationship. Secure attachment refers to behavioral and emotional patterns in emotional relationships, including feelings of security, trust, the ability to establish deep and meaningful connections with a partner, and psychological support. Therefore, these two concepts are examined separately and are not directly dependent on each other. A man can simultaneously have secure attachment and use problem-solving coping strategies. For example, a man with secure attachment may solve issues in his emotional relationships using problem-solving strategies, reach agreements, and maintain a healthy relationship (Swets & Cox, 2023).

There is no relationship between secure attachment and the problem-solving coping strategy in men. There is a dependent relationship between secure attachment and the problem-solving coping strategy in men. Secure attachment refers to emotional and behavioral patterns in emotional relationships, including feelings of security, trust, the ability to establish deep and meaningful connections with a partner, and psychological support. Problem-solving coping strategies in relationships refer to using methods and patterns to identify relationship problems and solve them through negotiation, respectful communication, and cooperation to reach agreements and improve the relationship. Problem-solving coping strategies can strengthen secure attachment

in men. When men use problem-solving strategies to solve issues in their relationships, this can improve communication, trust, and feelings of security in the relationship. For example, men who can identify their own and their partner's needs and problems and use problem-solving methods can trust their partner and experience a deeper connection (Yárnnoz-Yaben, 2010).

There is no relationship between conscientiousness and the tendency toward marital infidelity in women. Conscientiousness refers to an individual's inner conscience and a sense of responsibility and personal ethics. This factor can play an important role in an individual's decisions and behaviors. Marital infidelity refers to unfaithfulness and violation of commitments in a marital relationship. There can be a relationship between conscientiousness and the tendency toward marital infidelity. Individuals with a strong conscience may have strong values and principles and emphasize maintaining commitments and fidelity in the relationship. In this sense, conscientiousness can act as a skill in communication and managing effective relationships with a partner and influence relationship stability. However, it should be noted that having a strong conscience alone cannot guarantee the absence of marital infidelity. Other factors such as life circumstances, marital communication, values and beliefs, previous experiences, and other psychological and social factors can also play an important role in the relationship with marital infidelity (Leszko et al., 2020).

There is no relationship between risk-taking and the tendency toward marital infidelity in men. There can be a relationship between risk-taking and the tendency toward marital infidelity in men. Risk-taking involves an individual's tendency to seek excitement and new, high-risk experiences. Some men may tend toward marital infidelity due to high risk-taking and the need for new excitement and facing risks. Men with high risk-taking may seek new relationships and adventures and may not be committed to their current marital relationship. This could be due to dissatisfaction with the current relationship, inability to engage in deeper and more meaningful interactions with the spouse, greater attraction to new relationships, and so on. In these cases, risk-taking can be a factor leading to marital infidelity (Leszko et al., 2020; Swets & Cox, 2023).

There is no relationship between avoidance coping strategy and the tendency toward marital infidelity in women. Women may use avoidance coping strategies to avoid facing life problems, but this does not necessarily lead to marital infidelity. Individuals may tend toward various

behaviors and avoidance coping strategies when facing life problems, but this tendency is not dependent on marital infidelity. For example, a woman may use avoidance coping strategies due to various reasons such as fear of facing problems, discomfort, or unpleasant tasks, but this does not indicate marital infidelity. Rather, it emphasizes behaviors that are not loyal to marital commitments and attempts to avoid responsibilities and problems (Vedelago et al., 2023).

There is no relationship between risk-taking and avoidance coping strategy in women. Women may be risk-takers and interested in movement and excitement, facing challenges and high risks, but this does not necessarily lead to the use of avoidance coping strategies in relationships. In other words, risk-taking alone cannot cause neglect of the relationship and the use of avoidance coping strategies in women. Similarly, women may use avoidance coping strategies to avoid facing problems and discomforts, but this does not necessarily lead to risk-taking. Individuals may tend toward various behaviors and avoidance coping strategies when facing life problems, but this tendency is not dependent on risk-taking, and there is no relationship between conscientiousness and problem-solving coping strategy in men. Conscientiousness and problem-solving coping strategies are two different concepts, and no definite relationship can be established between them. These two concepts independently influence men's behavior and decision-making. Conscientiousness refers to the cognitive and moral power that forms in an individual and plays an important role in their decisions and behaviors. This power allows the individual to distinguish between right and wrong, good and bad, and make decisions based on their values and principles (Černe et al., 2018; Kemer et al., 2016).

There is no relationship between sociability and avoidance coping strategy in women. Sociability and avoidance coping strategy are also two different concepts, and no definite relationship can be established between them. These two concepts influence women's behavior and decision-making and operate independently. Sociability refers to the desire or willingness of women to improve and strengthen social relationships. Women can use communication skills, empathy, cognitive and moral power to improve their relationships with others and effectively interact with people (Bakhtyari et al., 2021).

5. Suggestions and Limitations

Limitations of this research include the honesty of the participants in responding to the questions, which is almost beyond the researcher's control. Some respondents may not have given appropriate answers due to impatience, fatigue, or inattention. Some participants were not inclined to participate in the study and complete the questionnaires because they were unaware of the results of other studies and questionnaires they had previously answered. Variables such as social conditions, economic pressure, communication skills, sexual satisfaction, quality of life, etc., could be considered confounding variables in this research, and their impact on the research results was not evaluated. Additionally, the following suggestions can be offered to other researchers:

Awareness of Attachment Styles: Understanding attachment styles can be the first step in addressing the tendency toward marital infidelity. By understanding the factors and experiences that shape an individual's avoidant insecure attachment style, the best strategies for coping with them can be identified.

Participation in Marital Counseling: Marital counseling can help couples better understand their attachment styles and the factors leading to marital infidelity. Marital counseling can also guide couples to find effective strategies to strengthen their relationship and reduce the tendency toward marital infidelity.

Communication with Emotional Partner: Discussing concerns and fears about the relationship with one's partner can help couples improve their relationships. By expressing needs, feelings, and expectations to their partner, they can strengthen the relationship and prevent marital infidelity.

Authors' Contributions

Authors contributed equally 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.

Acknowledgments

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

Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

Funding

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

Ethical Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants.

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