

# Examining the Mediating Role of Marital Commitment and Marital Quality of Life in the Relationship Between Marital Intimacy and Divorce Tendency Among Married Women in Shiraz

Hossein. Ebrahimi<sup>1\*</sup>, Hassan. Khezri<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Psychology, Fir.C., Islamic Azad University, Firoozabad, Iran.

\* Corresponding author email address: hossein.ebrahimi7425@iau.ir

## Article Info

### Article type:

Original Research

### How to cite this article:

Ebrahimi, H., & Khezri, H. (2025). Examining the Mediating Role of Marital Commitment and Marital Quality of Life in the Relationship Between Marital Intimacy and Divorce Tendency Among Married Women in Shiraz. *Psychology of Woman Journal*, 6(4), 1-10.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.61838/kman.pwj.4362>



© 2025 the authors. Published by KMAN Publication Inc. (KMANPUB), Ontario, Canada. This is an open access article under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0) License.

## ABSTRACT

**Objective:** The present study aimed to examine a causal model of marital intimacy, marital commitment, marital quality of life, and divorce tendency among married women in Shiraz.

**Methods and Materials:** This research employed a correlational design within the framework of structural equation modeling. The statistical population consisted of all married women residing in Shiraz during the winter of 2025, from which 250 participants were selected through convenience sampling. Data were collected using the Divorce Tendency Questionnaire by Rusbult, Johnson, and Morrow (1986), the Marital Commitment Questionnaire by Adams and Jones (1997), the World Health Organization Quality of Life Questionnaire (1996), and the Marital Intimacy Questionnaire by Walker and Thompson (1983). Data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 24 and SmartPLS software.

**Findings:** The results of the model analysis indicated that all direct and indirect paths between the variables were significant, and the model demonstrated a good fit.

**Conclusion:** Accordingly, it can be concluded that marital intimacy, marital commitment, and marital quality of life have a significant effect on the divorce tendency of married women.

**Keywords:** Divorce tendency, marital commitment, marital quality of life, marital intimacy, married women

## 1. Introduction

Marital relationships represent one of the most significant interpersonal bonds in adult life, providing emotional, psychological, and social support while serving as a foundation for family stability and well-being (Williams & Lawler, 2020). The quality of this relationship has far-reaching implications for mental health,

life satisfaction, and even physical health outcomes (Chen & Wang, 2023; Girme et al., 2022). Over the past decades, researchers have consistently emphasized that marital intimacy, commitment, and quality of life are critical determinants of marital stability and resilience against dissolution (Cordova et al., 2022; Lin et al., 2022). Despite these insights, divorce rates have continued to rise in many societies, leading to a pressing need for a deeper

understanding of the psychological and relational mechanisms that influence divorce tendency (Cherring et al., 2020; Panah-Pouri & Shahrazad, 2024).

Marital intimacy is a multifaceted construct encompassing emotional closeness, trust, affection, and mutual understanding between partners (Cordova et al., 2022; Gottman & Gottman, 2023). High levels of intimacy foster stronger bonds and increase the likelihood of enduring relationships, while low intimacy is often associated with dissatisfaction and increased conflict (Shahrrouyi et al., 2020; Taziki et al., 2024). Theoretical models such as the Gottman Method underscore the role of intimacy in promoting adaptive communication patterns, emotional attunement, and conflict resolution skills (Gottman & Gottman, 2023). Empirical studies have further shown that marital intimacy is a protective factor against divorce tendencies by enhancing marital commitment and overall quality of life (Dehghanidowlatabadi et al., 2025; Kamrani Dashtjardi & Somayeh, 2022).

Marital commitment—the psychological attachment and intent to maintain the marriage over time—is another central component of relationship stability (Robinson & Smith, 2020; Zarei, 2020). Commitment can be conceptualized across personal, moral, and structural dimensions (Kamrani Dashtjardi & Somayeh, 2022), each contributing uniquely to partners' perseverance through challenges. Higher marital commitment often translates into greater relationship investment, problem-solving efforts, and tolerance during conflict (Famili Motaghi et al., 2022; Sanbal Moqimi et al., 2020). Conversely, weakened commitment is frequently a precursor to relationship breakdown (Panah-Pouri & Shahrazad, 2024; Shafiee Poravayi & Fatemeh Shahamat Deh, 2023). Interventions targeting marital commitment have demonstrated positive effects on relationship satisfaction and stability, underscoring its central role in preventing divorce (Pouya et al., 2025; Rutkin & Brown, 2019).

Marital quality of life refers to spouses' subjective evaluation of their overall life satisfaction within the context of their marriage, encompassing emotional, social, and physical well-being (Chen & Wang, 2023; Martinez et al., 2020). While quality of life is influenced by broader life circumstances, its marital dimension is particularly sensitive to relational dynamics (Lee et al., 2021; Mostajeran et al., 2022). A decline in marital quality of life is often associated with increased marital stress, emotional withdrawal, and divorce inclination (Lin et al., 2022; Martinez et al., 2020). Longitudinal evidence suggests that improvements in

marital satisfaction can significantly enhance overall quality of life and act as a buffer against relationship dissolution (Fouladi et al., 2024; Williams & Lawler, 2020).

The tendency toward divorce is a complex psychological construct shaped by individual, relational, and contextual factors (Cherring et al., 2020; Panah-Pouri & Shahrazad, 2024). While some degree of dissatisfaction is common in long-term relationships, persistent negative patterns—such as chronic conflict, emotional neglect, and betrayal—can shift dissatisfaction into an active inclination toward divorce (Shafiee Poravayi & Fatemeh Shahamat Deh, 2023; Shakouh Novabi Nejad et al., 2023). Personality traits, interpersonal cognitive distortions, and maladaptive coping strategies can also heighten vulnerability to considering divorce (Cherring et al., 2020; Lammers et al., 2020). Cultural and societal factors, including evolving gender roles and increased acceptance of divorce, further shape these tendencies (Ebrahimi et al., 2021; Zare'i Rezaei et al., 2022).

A substantial body of research has investigated the interrelationships between marital intimacy, commitment, quality of life, and divorce tendency. For example, studies indicate that intimacy not only directly reduces divorce tendency but also indirectly does so by increasing marital commitment (Kamrani Dashtjardi & Somayeh, 2022; Shahrrouyi et al., 2020). Similarly, marital commitment has been shown to mediate the relationship between communication quality and relationship stability (Robinson & Smith, 2020; Zarei, 2020). Quality of life, in turn, mediates the link between marital stress and divorce inclination (Lee et al., 2021; Martinez et al., 2020). The integration of these findings supports a causal chain model wherein marital intimacy enhances both commitment and quality of life, which subsequently reduce divorce tendency (Pouya et al., 2025; Taziki et al., 2024).

Furthermore, contemporary studies have explored the role of psychological and interpersonal moderators in these relationships. For instance, interpersonal mindfulness has been found to buffer the negative effects of marital conflict on intimacy (Dehghanidowlatabadi et al., 2025), while marital forgiveness has been associated with reduced divorce inclination through improvements in intimacy (Famili Motaghi et al., 2022; Rutkin & Brown, 2019). Research also points to the detrimental effects of infidelity and midlife crises on marital stability, with intimacy functioning as a key mediator (Shakouh Novabi Nejad et al., 2023; Taziki et al., 2024).

From a theoretical standpoint, relationship models emphasize the reciprocal and dynamic nature of these

constructs. The Investment Model of Commitment highlights that commitment is driven not only by satisfaction and quality of alternatives but also by the magnitude of prior investments (Robinson & Smith, 2020). Attachment theory likewise underscores that secure attachment fosters intimacy, which in turn enhances both satisfaction and commitment (Girme et al., 2022). The emotional attunement processes described by the Gottman Method provide further empirical grounding for understanding how sustained intimacy can reinforce commitment and relationship quality over time (Gottman & Gottman, 2023).

Despite these insights, gaps remain in understanding the simultaneous mediating roles of marital commitment and marital quality of life in the relationship between intimacy and divorce tendency, especially in non-Western cultural contexts. Iran, for example, presents a distinctive socio-cultural environment in which marital norms, gender roles, and family expectations can uniquely shape these dynamics (Ebrahimi et al., 2021; Zare'i Rezaei et al., 2022). Moreover, recent social changes, including shifting attitudes toward divorce and evolving economic pressures, underscore the need for updated empirical models (Khalatbari & Mohammad, 2021; Yang et al., 2024).

Recent Iranian research has begun to address these questions. For example, Panah-Pouri and Shahrazad (Panah-Pouri & Shahrazad, 2024) demonstrated that marital self-disclosure mediates the relationship between intimacy, sexual functioning, and divorce tendencies among couples on the verge of divorce. Similarly, Pouya et al. (Pouya et al., 2025) developed a structural model predicting marital burnout from attachment styles, with marital intimacy serving as a key mediator. Fouladi et al. (Fouladi et al., 2024) showed that positive mindfulness therapy can improve marital quality of life, indirectly reducing marital discord. These studies collectively underscore the need to integrate multiple mediating pathways into a single, comprehensive model.

In addition to empirical findings, the literature emphasizes the importance of cultural adaptation in marital research. For instance, interventions that align with religious or cultural values, such as Islamic enrichment approaches to mindfulness, have demonstrated positive effects on intimacy in Iranian couples (Khalatbari & Mohammad, 2021). Similarly, self-silencing and marital conflict patterns, prevalent in certain cultural settings, have been shown to significantly predict divorce tendencies (Mansouri Jalilian, 2022; Shafiee Poravayi & Fatemeh Shahamat Deh, 2023).

Given this background, the present study aims to test a causal model in which marital intimacy influences divorce tendency both directly and indirectly via marital commitment and marital quality of life.

## 2. Methods and Materials

### 2.1. Study design and Participant

The present study is applied in terms of purpose and descriptive–correlational in terms of method and belongs to the category of structural equation modeling. The statistical population consisted of all married women residing in Shiraz during the winter of 2025. Considering that this study included four observed variables, in order to achieve more accurate results and compensate for possible sample attrition or incomplete responses, a sample size of 250 married women residing in Shiraz was determined. The sampling method was non-probability convenience sampling.

### 2.2. Measures

Walker and Thompson's Marital Intimacy Questionnaire: The Marital Intimacy Questionnaire was developed by Walker and Thompson in 1983. This instrument contains 17 items and is used to assess the degree of affection and intimacy between spouses. Scoring is performed by summing the item scores and dividing by 17. The score range is from one to seven, with higher scores indicating greater intimacy. This scale is part of a broader instrument designed to examine different dimensions of intimacy, but it can also be used independently. Its Persian translation was prepared by Sanaei in 2000. In a study by Sanbol Moghimi (2020), this questionnaire was administered to 166 undergraduate students (68% aged between 20 and 25 years) and 166 middle-class mothers (mostly aged between 40 and 49 years). It was also administered to 147 grandmothers (40% aged between 60 and 69 years and 40% aged between 70 and 79 years). The mean intimacy scores were reported as 6.21 (SD = 0.69) for mothers and 6.04 (SD = 1) for daughters. Chen (2023) reported a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.91 for this questionnaire, indicating very high internal consistency.

Adams and Jones's Marital Commitment Questionnaire: This questionnaire was developed by Adams and Jones in 1997 and consists of 44 items assessing individuals' commitment to their spouse and marriage. It evaluates three dimensions: personal commitment (items 1 to 10), moral commitment (items 11 to 22), and structural commitment

(items 23 to 44). Adams and Jones administered this questionnaire to various samples (417 married individuals, 347 single individuals, 46 divorced individuals) and reported an overall reliability of 0.82. Moreover, Iranian studies (Amani et al., 2015; Shahrouei, 2020; Zarei, 2016) confirmed the validity and reliability of this questionnaire with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from 0.80 to 0.85.

**World Health Organization Quality of Life Questionnaire:** The World Health Organization developed a questionnaire to assess quality of life, initially containing 100 items. Later, a short form with 26 items was introduced for ease of use. This questionnaire measures an individual's overall and general quality of life. Scores are determined on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5; however, items 3, 4, and 26 are reverse-scored. After calculating the raw scores, they are converted to a 0–100 scale. Mansouri Jalilian (2022) translated the Persian version of this questionnaire and confirmed it with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.84. Factor analysis confirmed four main subscales. In a study conducted on 1,167 individuals in Tehran, test–retest reliability for the subscales ranged from 0.75 to 0.84.

**Rusbult, Johnson, and Morrow's Divorce Tendency Questionnaire:** This 14-item questionnaire was developed in 1986 to assess couples' tendency toward divorce. The total score reflects the level of divorce tendency, with higher scores indicating greater inclination. In a study by Fouladi (2024), the reliability of the questionnaire was reported with Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.91 for the divorce tendency dimension and 0.86 for the tolerance dimension.

### 2.3. Intervention

The positive psychotherapy intervention in this study was implemented based on Seligman's (2006) treatment protocol and conducted over ten structured sessions, each lasting 90 minutes. The first two sessions focused on introducing the therapist, co-therapist, participants, and the therapeutic goals, as well as explaining the relevance of positive psychotherapy for women with breast cancer. In the third session, participants identified personal strengths, practiced psychological distancing, and gained control over thoughts

and emotions. Session four emphasized cultivating positive emotions through daily gratitude practices and identifying three positive events. Sessions five and six extended these gratitude exercises to deepen emotional awareness and memory of positive experiences. In session seven, participants completed gratitude worksheets and reflected on both positive and negative memories to enhance cognitive reframing. Session eight served as a mid-point evaluation of progress through gratitude journals, forgiveness letters, and activity plans. The ninth session focused on reframing failures by identifying alternative opportunities, thereby nurturing optimism and a sense of purpose. Finally, session ten introduced techniques to improve interpersonal relationships and discussed strategies for enhancing happiness and life meaning. Throughout the program, participants engaged in reflective exercises and homework assignments designed to reinforce therapeutic gains and promote sustainable psychological well-being.

### 2.4. Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using structural equation model via SPSS version 24 and SmartPLS software.

## 3. Findings and Results

The results indicated that in terms of age, the largest proportion of participants was in the 31–40 age group (49%), while the smallest proportion was in the under-20 age group (5.6%). Regarding education level, most participants held a bachelor's degree (50.4%), whereas the fewest were in the master's degree and above category (7.6%). In terms of occupation, the majority were housewives (47.6%) and the fewest were students (16.7%). Regarding the duration of marriage, most participants had been married for more than 10 years (46.8%), while the smallest group had been married for one year (12%). Finally, concerning the number of children, the majority had two children (32.4%), while the fewest had three or more children (14.4%).

Table 1 presents skewness, kurtosis, mean, and standard deviation for the study variables. Based on the information in this table, all skewness and kurtosis values fall between -2 and +2, indicating the normal distribution of the data and the appropriateness of the data range.

**Table 1**
*Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables*

| Variable                | N   | Mean   | Standard Deviation | Kurtosis | Skewness |
|-------------------------|-----|--------|--------------------|----------|----------|
| Marital Intimacy        | 250 | 94.46  | 23.44              | -1.33    | 1.15     |
| Marital Commitment      | 250 | 146.63 | 17.16              | -1.27    | 1.81     |
| Marital Quality of Life | 250 | 93.90  | 16.32              | -1.46    | 0.72     |
| Divorce Tendency        | 250 | 39.71  | 14.36              | 0.56     | -0.08    |

To determine construct reliability, composite reliability was used. The results indicated that the selected items for measuring the model's constructs were appropriate (all factor loadings exceeded 0.60), and Cronbach's alpha coefficients for each construct were calculated, with all values above 0.70, indicating good construct reliability. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for all constructs was

greater than 0.50, suggesting that the variables had adequate convergent validity. Furthermore, the composite reliability for the constructs exceeded 0.70, indicating the internal consistency of the study's reflective measurement models. Therefore, each model construct demonstrated satisfactory validity and reliability for measuring the study variables.

**Table 2**
*Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) of Discriminant Validity*

| Variable                | Marital Commitment | Marital Intimacy | Marital Quality of Life | Divorce Tendency |
|-------------------------|--------------------|------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| Marital Commitment      | ---                |                  |                         |                  |
| Marital Intimacy        | 0.784              | ---              |                         |                  |
| Marital Quality of Life | 0.533              | 0.623            | ---                     |                  |
| Divorce Tendency        | 0.540              | 0.609            | 0.461                   | ---              |

Table 2 shows that all values are below 0.90, indicating acceptable discriminant validity among constructs.

**Table 3**
*Fornell–Larcker Criterion*

| Variable                | Marital Commitment | Marital Intimacy | Marital Quality of Life | Divorce Tendency |
|-------------------------|--------------------|------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| Marital Commitment      | 0.807              |                  |                         |                  |
| Marital Intimacy        | 0.768              | 0.876            |                         |                  |
| Marital Quality of Life | 0.533              | 0.618            | 0.764                   |                  |
| Divorce Tendency        | 0.512              | 0.579            | 0.452                   | 0.757            |

Table 3 indicates that the constructs are clearly distinct from one another, meaning that the diagonal values (square roots of AVE) for each latent variable are higher than its

correlations with other reflective latent variables in the model.

**Table 4**
*Structural Model Fit Indices*

| Variable                | Coefficient of Determination ( $R^2$ ) | Effect Size ( $f^2$ ) | Redundancy Index ( $Q^2$ ) |
|-------------------------|--|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| Marital Commitment      | 0.590                                  | 0.213                 | 0.352                      |
| Marital Intimacy        | ---                                    | 0.734                 | ---                        |
| Marital Quality of Life | 0.382                                  | 0.318                 | 0.198                      |
| Divorce Tendency        | 0.358                                  | ---                   | 0.187                      |

The results show that in the experimental group, perceived stress scores significantly decreased at posttest

and follow-up compared to pretest, indicating the effectiveness of positive psychotherapy. Similarly, health



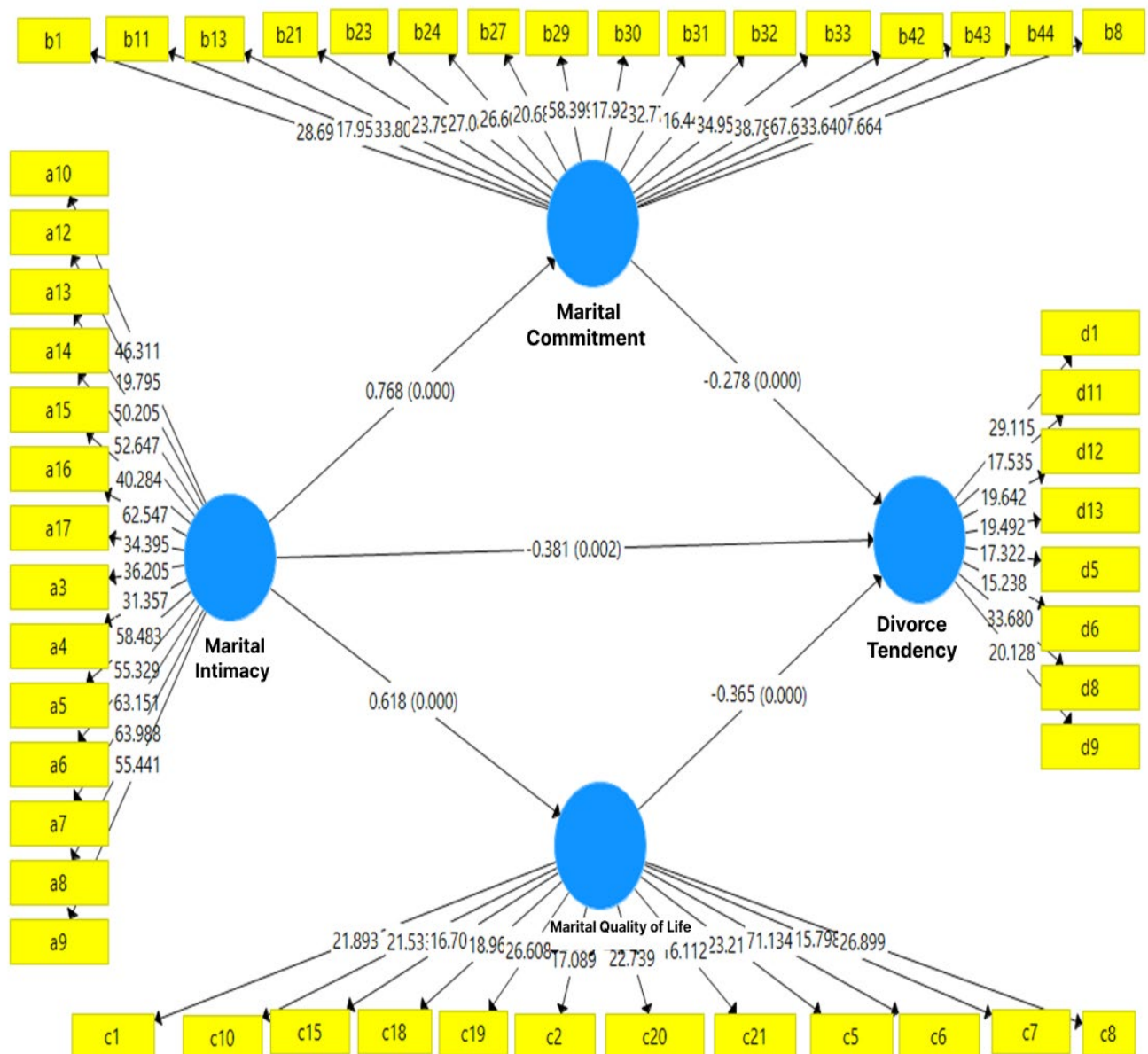
anxiety significantly decreased, and hope significantly increased at both posttest and follow-up in the experimental group compared to the control group.

According to Table 4, the  $R^2$  values of 0.590, 0.382, and 0.358 for the endogenous variables confirm the adequate fit of the structural model. The redundancy index ( $Q^2$ )

determines the model's predictive power; values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 indicate weak, moderate, and strong predictive power, respectively, for endogenous constructs. The obtained  $Q^2$  values of 0.352, 0.198, and 0.187 confirm the structural model's good fit.

**Figure 1**

*Final Model*



The output in Table 5 presents the path coefficients and significance levels for the direct and indirect paths of the estimated structural model.

**Table 5**
*Results of Partial Least Squares Analysis and Hypothesis Testing*

| Path in Model   | Path Coefficient | Standard Error | T Statistic | p-value | Result    |
|---|------------------|----------------|-------------|---------|-----------|
| Marital Commitment → Divorce Tendency                         | -0.278           | 0.060          | 4.603       | 0.000   | Supported |
| Marital Intimacy → Marital Commitment                         | 0.768            | 0.040          | 19.038      | 0.000   | Supported |
| Marital Intimacy → Marital Quality of Life                    | 0.618            | 0.046          | 13.381      | 0.000   | Supported |
| Marital Intimacy → Divorce Tendency                           | -0.381           | 0.119          | 3.191       | 0.002   | Supported |
| Marital Quality of Life → Divorce Tendency                    | -0.365           | 0.071          | 5.141       | 0.000   | Supported |
| Marital Intimacy → Marital Commitment → Divorce Tendency      | -0.313           | 0.055          | 5.723       | 0.000   | Supported |
| Marital Intimacy → Marital Quality of Life → Divorce Tendency | -0.736           | 0.117          | 6.676       | 0.000   | Supported |

**Table 6**
*Model Fit Indices*

| Index      | Description                            | Recommended Value | Estimated Value in Model |
|------------|--|-------------------|--------------------------|
| SRMR       | Standardized Root Mean Square Residual | < 0.10            | 0.065                    |
| RMS_theta  | Root Mean Square Theta                 | < 0.12            | 0.011                    |
| Chi-square | Chi-square Criterion                   | ---               | 2893                     |
| NFI        | Normed Fit Index                       | > 0.70            | 0.781                    |

Based on the index values in Table 6, the model demonstrates an acceptable level of fit, indicating that the conceptual model of the study has good adequacy and suitability. This confirms that the relationships established among the variables, based on the theoretical framework of the study, are logical. Therefore, the causal model of the relationship between marital intimacy, marital commitment, marital quality of life, and divorce tendency among married women fits the data well.

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

The present study aimed to examine a causal model in which marital intimacy influences divorce tendency both directly and indirectly through marital commitment and marital quality of life among married women in Shiraz. The structural equation modeling results revealed that all direct and indirect pathways were statistically significant, indicating that marital intimacy plays a critical role in shaping marital commitment and quality of life, which in turn significantly reduce divorce tendency. The model demonstrated good fit indices, suggesting that the hypothesized relationships are empirically supported and theoretically plausible.

The finding that marital intimacy had a significant negative direct effect on divorce tendency is consistent with prior research underscoring intimacy as a cornerstone of marital stability (Cordova et al., 2022; Gottman & Gottman, 2023). When spouses share emotional closeness, trust, and mutual understanding, they are more likely to develop

positive conflict resolution strategies, maintain affectionate behaviors, and preserve relational satisfaction over time (Kamrani Dashtjardi & Somayeh, 2022; Shahrouyi et al., 2020). Studies within Iranian cultural contexts have similarly confirmed that intimacy protects against dissolution tendencies by enhancing communication quality and fostering a deeper emotional connection (Panah-Pouri & Shahrazad, 2024; Pouya et al., 2025). In line with Gottman's theoretical framework, the ability of couples to maintain high emotional attunement reduces the likelihood of unresolved conflicts escalating into considerations of divorce (Gottman & Gottman, 2023).

Moreover, the present finding aligns with cross-cultural research showing that diminished intimacy is one of the strongest predictors of divorce considerations, even when controlling for other relational factors (Shakouh Novabi Nejad et al., 2023; Taziki et al., 2024). In particular, the mediating role of intimacy in buffering the effects of marital stress, betrayal, and midlife crises on divorce tendencies has been well documented (Shafiee Poravayi & Fatemeh Shahamat Deh, 2023; Taziki et al., 2024). These convergent findings suggest that intimacy is not only a relational outcome but also a proactive protective factor in marital sustainability.

The results demonstrated that marital commitment significantly mediated the relationship between intimacy and divorce tendency, such that greater intimacy was associated with higher commitment, which in turn reduced divorce inclination. This supports earlier findings that commitment—defined as the intention and determination to

maintain the marital relationship—is a central mechanism through which intimacy exerts its protective effects (Robinson & Smith, 2020; Zarei, 2020). Consistent with the Investment Model of Commitment, individuals who experience high intimacy perceive greater relational rewards, making them more willing to invest in and protect their relationship (Kamrani Dashtjardi & Somayeh, 2022; Lin et al., 2022).

Evidence from Iranian studies reinforces this pathway, demonstrating that interventions that enhance intimacy also tend to strengthen commitment levels, which subsequently improve marital stability (Famili Motaghi et al., 2022; Sanbal Moqimi et al., 2020). Furthermore, the observed mediating effect of commitment aligns with findings from Rutkin and Brown (Rutkin & Brown, 2019), who reported that marital forgiveness—a factor closely related to commitment—predicts reduced divorce tendencies when intimacy is high. This highlights the interdependence between emotional connection and the cognitive decision to remain in the relationship despite challenges.

Marital quality of life was also found to be a significant mediator between intimacy and divorce tendency. Higher intimacy was associated with better perceived quality of life, which in turn was linked to lower divorce inclination. This is consistent with prior work indicating that marital satisfaction and quality of life are intertwined constructs, each reinforcing the other over time (Chen & Wang, 2023; Martinez et al., 2020). A fulfilling marital relationship enhances overall life satisfaction by improving emotional well-being, reducing stress, and increasing social support (Mostajeran et al., 2022; Williams & Lawler, 2020).

Studies by Lee et al. (Lee et al., 2021) have demonstrated that marital quality of life mediates the link between relational stressors and divorce inclination, suggesting that enhancing couples' well-being can serve as a protective mechanism. In Iranian contexts, culturally tailored interventions such as mindfulness with Islamic enrichment have been shown to improve intimacy and subsequently increase life satisfaction (Fouladi et al., 2024; Khalatbari & Mohammad, 2021). The current findings extend this evidence by confirming the mediating role of marital quality of life in a model that simultaneously accounts for marital commitment.

Importantly, the study confirmed a dual mediation effect, where marital intimacy influenced divorce tendency indirectly through both commitment and quality of life. This supports integrated theoretical models that view marital functioning as a system of interrelated constructs rather than

isolated variables (Cordova et al., 2022; Girme et al., 2022). Such models propose that intimacy provides the emotional foundation upon which commitment is built and from which quality of life emerges, both of which jointly work to reduce divorce inclination.

The simultaneous significance of both mediators mirrors findings from Panah-Pouri and Shahrazad (Panah-Pouri & Shahrazad, 2024), who reported that marital self-disclosure mediated the intimacy-divorce link, with self-disclosure contributing to both greater commitment and life satisfaction. Additionally, research by Pouya et al. (Pouya et al., 2025) supports the premise that intimacy acts as a central node in marital well-being, influencing multiple downstream variables that affect stability.

The findings must also be interpreted in light of Iran's cultural and social dynamics. In traditional societies where marriage is highly valued and divorce carries social stigma, factors such as marital commitment may be strongly reinforced by cultural norms (Ebrahimi et al., 2021; Zare'i Rezaei et al., 2022). However, evolving social attitudes toward gender roles and increasing exposure to global cultural narratives may alter the balance between intimacy, commitment, and life satisfaction in shaping divorce tendencies (Yang et al., 2024). The present results suggest that while commitment remains a strong protective factor, the role of intimacy and quality of life is becoming increasingly salient as personal fulfillment gains importance in marital evaluations (Sprecher et al., 2021; Zhang & Jiang, 2021).

Furthermore, these results highlight the relevance of emotional and psychological dimensions in marital stability, even in contexts where structural and moral forms of commitment are traditionally emphasized (Kamrani Dashtjardi & Somayeh, 2022; Lammers et al., 2020). This reflects a broader global trend in which marital success is increasingly measured not only by longevity but also by the quality of the marital experience (Martinez et al., 2020; Williams & Lawler, 2020).

## 5. Limitations and Suggestions

Although the present study contributes to the literature by empirically testing a dual mediation model in a specific cultural setting, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the cross-sectional design limits causal inference, meaning that while the hypothesized directional relationships are theoretically grounded and supported by statistical modeling, longitudinal data are necessary to



confirm causality. Second, the sample consisted exclusively of married women in Shiraz, which restricts the generalizability of the findings to men, unmarried individuals, or populations in other regions and cultures. Third, all measures relied on self-report instruments, which are subject to social desirability bias and may not fully capture the complexity of the constructs. Finally, potential moderating variables such as personality traits, socioeconomic status, and religious commitment were not examined, and their inclusion could provide a more nuanced understanding of the observed relationships.

Future research should employ longitudinal or experimental designs to better establish the causal relationships among marital intimacy, commitment, quality of life, and divorce tendency. Including diverse samples that account for both genders, various age groups, and different cultural or socioeconomic contexts would enhance generalizability. Moreover, future studies should explore potential moderators such as attachment style, conflict resolution skills, and mental health status, which may influence the strength or direction of these relationships. Incorporating qualitative methodologies could also provide richer insights into how individuals perceive and experience intimacy, commitment, and marital quality in relation to divorce tendencies. Additionally, comparing these dynamics across cultures would shed light on the universality versus cultural specificity of the proposed model.

Practitioners working in marital counseling and family therapy should prioritize interventions that simultaneously enhance intimacy, strengthen commitment, and improve overall marital quality of life. Programs could integrate skills-based approaches, such as communication training and conflict resolution strategies, with experiential exercises aimed at deepening emotional connection. Incorporating culturally relevant values and practices can increase the acceptability and effectiveness of these interventions. Preventive education programs targeting couples early in their marriage could foster the development of intimacy and commitment before significant relational distress emerges. Finally, policymakers and community leaders should consider initiatives that support family well-being, such as accessible counseling services and public education campaigns promoting healthy relationship dynamics.

### Authors' Contributions

Authors contributed equally to this article.

### 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

According to the authors, this article has no financial support.

### Ethical Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants. The present study was approved by the Medical Sciences Ethics Committee on July 18, 2019, under the reference number IR.IAU.TMU.REC.1399.300.

### References

- Chen, F. F., & Wang, H. (2023). The interrelation of marital satisfaction and quality of life in couples: A longitudinal study. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 37(2), 234-245. <https://link.springer.com>
- Cherring, E. J., Tamers, F., & Moon, A. (2020). Predicting tendency to divorce based on interpersonal cognitive distortions and self-destruction in couples applying for divorce. *American College of Cardiology*, 53(6), 936-946. <https://rjms.iuums.ac.ir/article-1-7858-en.html>
- Cordova, J. V., Gee, C. B., & Warren, L. Z. (2022). Intimacy and psychological well-being in committed relationships: A dynamic framework. *Journal of marital and family therapy*, 48(1), 122-138. <https://journals.lww.com/>
- Dehghanidowlatabadi, S., Pallathadka, H., Ismail, S. M., Abdullaev, D., Ibrahim, F. M., & Prasad, K. D. V. (2025). Moderating Effect of Interpersonal Mindfulness Between Marital Conflict and Marital Intimacy Among Iranian Married Individuals. *Brain and Behavior*, 15(3). <https://doi.org/10.1002/brb3.70392>
- Ebrahimi, S., Najafi Pour, D., Mahmood Oghli, R., & Sadeghi Naqad, Z. (2021). A Sociological Study on the Impact of Social Networks on the Political Culture of Male Students at Teacher Training Universities in Western Iran. International Conference on Contemporary Studies in Social Sciences and Psychology, Tehran, Iran.

- Famili Motaghi, B., Mahmoud, G., & Kiwan, K. (2022). Determining the Effectiveness of a Protocol Derived from the Model of Marital Forgiveness on Couple's Intimacy, Marital Commitment, and Marital Conflicts. *Journal of Medical Faculty of Mashhad University of Medical Sciences*, 65(5), 2199-2210. <http://shenakht.muk.ac.ir/>
- Fouladi, E., Shida, A., Amir Ezzazi, B., Farzaneh Hashemian, N., Mehdi, S., & Mohammad Joayzi, S. (2024). The Effectiveness of Positive Mindfulness Therapy on Hidden Relational Aggression and Marital Quality of Life in Women Experiencing Marital Discord. *Psychological Dynamics in Mood Disorders*, 3(2), 122-132. <https://doi.org/10.61838/kman.pdmd.3.2.11>
- Girme, Y. U., Chopik, W. J., & Feeney, B. C. (2022). Close relationships and health: The interactive roles of attachment and relationship quality. *Current opinion in psychology*, 44, 101281. <https://psycnet.apa.org>
- Gottman, J. M., & Gottman, J. S. (2023). Gottman method couple therapy. In J. L. Lebow & D. K. Snyder (Eds.), *Clinical Handbook of Couple Therapy* (pp. 362-386). Guilford Press. <https://link.springer.com>
- Kamrani Dashtjardi, M. R., & Somayeh, S. (2022). Predicting Marital Commitment Based on Marital Intimacy, Differentiation Components, and Anxiety. *Journal of Advances in New Psychology, Educational Sciences, and Training*, 5(47), 120-135. <https://journals.atu.ac.ir>
- Khalatbari, M., & Mohammad, D. (2021). The Effectiveness of Mindfulness with Islamic Enrichment on Marital Intimacy. Ninth National Conference on Sustainable Development in Educational Sciences and Psychology, Social and Cultural Studies, Tehran.
- Lammers, J., Jordan, J., Stoker, J. I., Pollmann, M., & Knippenberg, D. V. (2020). Power increases infidelity among men and women. *Psychological Science*, 31(7), 741-748. <https://journals.sagepub.com>
- Lee, K., Chang, H., & Wang, J. (2021). Quality of life as a mediator between marital stress and divorce inclination. *Journal of marriage and family*, 83(1), 158-172. <http://socialworksreview.com>
- Lin, L., Wang, J., Liu, Y., & Zhang, H. (2022). Marital commitment, altruistic behavior, and marital quality among military couples. *Frontiers in psychology*, 13, 964167. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.964167>
- Mansouri Jalilian, H. (2022). The Relationship between Internal Criticism and Sensitivity to Rejection with Psychological Distress in Female Students: The Mediating Role of Self-Silencing. *Journal of Psychology and Mental Health*, 20(2), 127-155. <https://journal.alzahra.ac.ir>
- Martinez, L., Roberto, E., & Paz, F. (2020). Quality of life, marital satisfaction, and divorce inclination. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 37(7), 1981-1995. <https://dialnet.unirioja.es>
- Mostajeran, M., Rezvan Sadat, J., & Maryam Fatehi, Z. (2022). The Impact of Integrative Emotion-Focused Therapy (Greenberg) and Compassion-Focused Therapy on the Quality of Life of Married Women. *Journal of Cognitive and Behavioral Sciences Research*, 11(1), 85-106. <https://fcup.uok.ac.ir>
- Panah-Pouri, N., & Shahrzad, J. (2024). The Mediating Role of Marital Self-Disclosure in the Relationship between Intimacy, Sexual Functioning, and Divorce Tendencies among Couples on the Verge of Divorce: A Descriptive Study. *Journal of Rafsanjan University of Medical Sciences*, 23(4), 236-251. <https://doi.org/10.61186/jrums.23.4.237>
- Pouya, F. H., Gharamaleki, N. S., & Mirzahosseini, H. (2025). The Structural Model for Predicting Marital Burnout Based on Attachment Styles With the Mediating Role of Marital Self-Regulation and Marital Intimacy in Married Individuals. *Aftj*, 6(1), 29-36. <https://doi.org/10.61838/kman.aftj.6.1.4>
- Robinson, M. D., & Smith, L. J. (2020). Marital commitment and its role in relationship stability. *Journal of Marriage and Family Psychology*, 12(3), 215-230. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov>
- Rutkin, F. L., & Brown, Y. (2019). Marital forgiveness and intimacy with tendency to divorce in incompatible couples. *Kaohsiung Journal of Medical Sciences*, 26(7), 397-407. [https://jhms.uma.ac.ir/article\\_2444.html](https://jhms.uma.ac.ir/article_2444.html)
- Sanbal Moqimi, A., Somayeh, M., Seyed, a.-S., & Ahmadian, H. (2020). Developing a Structural Model of Marital Commitment Based on Forgiveness and Self-Differentiation with the Mediating Role of Marital Intimacy. *Journal of Family Counseling and Psychotherapy*, 10(1), 69-90. [https://fcup.uok.ac.ir/m/article\\_61655.html?lang=en](https://fcup.uok.ac.ir/m/article_61655.html?lang=en)
- Shafiee Poravayi, P. M. S., & Fatemeh Shahamat Deh, S. (2023). The Model of Self-Silencing and Divorce Tendencies with the Mediating Role of Marital Conflict in Married Women. *Ruyesh Psychology Journal*, 12(9), 169-178. <https://www.researchgate.net>
- Shahrouyi, S., Kamran Kazemian, M., Ali, K., & Mohammad Mehrabi Zadeh, H. (2020). The Mediating Role of Marital Intimacy in the Relationship between Communication Attributions, Sexual Self-Efficacy, and Marital Commitment with Couples' Compatibility. *Applied Counseling*, 10(2), 123-143. [https://pppls.ui.ac.ir/article\\_24536\\_en.html](https://pppls.ui.ac.ir/article_24536_en.html)
- Shakouh Novabi Nejad, M., Rostami, K., & Parsakiya. (2023). Examining the Mediating Role of Emotional Intelligence in the Relationship between Marital Conflicts and Infidelity Tendencies in Couples. *Journal of Assessment and Research in Applied Counseling*, 5(1), 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.61838/kman.jarac.5.1.1>
- Sprecher, S., Treger, S., & Landa, N. (2021). Romantic initiation strategies across settings. *Current Psychology*, 40(7), 3499-3509. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-019-00298-7>
- Taziki, Z., Choobforoushadeh, A., & Rezapour, Y. (2024). The Mediating Role of Marital Intimacy in Relation With Midlife Crisis With a Tendency Toward Infidelity in Middle-Aged Men. *Journal of counseling research*. <https://doi.org/10.18502/qjcr.v23i90.16071>
- Williams, K., & Lawler, E. (2020). Psychological well-being and marriage: A longitudinal study. *Journal of marriage and family*, 82(5), 1700-1715. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/019251302237296>
- Yang, J., Yang, H. J., Jung, S. C., Choi, C., & Bum, C.-H. (2024). Comparative Analysis of Stroke, Marital Intimacy, Marital Satisfaction and Divorce Intention According to the Type of Participation in Marital Leisure Sports Activities. *Behavioral Sciences*, 14(9), 757. <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs14090757>
- Zare'i Rezaei, M. H., Somayeh Fatemeh, K.-K., Soleiman, D., & Mehdi Mir, R. (2022). The Influence of René Descartes' Thought on the Emergence of Modern Secularism and the Undermining of Religious Institutions. *Research in Islamic Teachings and Education*, 2(3), 59-82. <https://www.sid.ir/filesserver/jf/10017714010304.pdf>
- Zarei, S. (2020). The Relationship between Moral Intelligence and Spiritual Intelligence with Marital Commitment of Women: The Mediating Role of Marital Intimacy. *Ruyesh Psychology*, 9(7), 45-54. [http://frooyesh.ir/browse.php?a\\_id=2016&sid=1&slc\\_lang=en](http://frooyesh.ir/browse.php?a_id=2016&sid=1&slc_lang=en)
- Zhang, L., & Jiang, Y. (2021). The role of communication in marital satisfaction. *Journal of Family Communication*, 21(3), 219-234. <https://www.researchgate.net>