

# Original Article: Modeling of Marital Intimacy Based on Attachment and Lovemaking Styles Mediated by Couples' Orientation in Isfahan


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## ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to model marital intimacy based on attachment styles and lovemaking styles mediated by the orientation of couples in Isfahan. From the target population, 276 people were selected by simple random sampling method and based on inclusion and exclusion criteria, questionnaires were provided to collect information. The questionnaires used in this study are Hendrik (1996), Love Styles Questionnaire, Loir Life Orientation Questionnaire (1994), Parents' Marital Intimacy Questionnaire (2006), and Collins-Vein Attachment Styles Scale (1990). Data analysis was performed using AMOS 24 software. The results showed that the model had a good fit in the sample after the necessary corrections. Before designing the structural equation model, the correlation between the research variables was investigated. The results indicate that the model of marital intimacy based on attachment style and lovemaking styles fits the mediating role of couple orientation in Isfahan. Results show that all fit indicators for the basic research model range from good to excellent; These results mean that the experimental data confirm the conceptual model of the present study. According to these results, the main hypothesis of the research is confirmed. 1- Lovemaking styles have a direct effect on marital intimacy of couples in Isfahan. 2- Marital intimacy has a direct and significant effect on attachment styles. 3- Attachment styles have a direct effect and has a significant effect on life orientation. 4- Lovemaking styles have a direct and significant effect on life orientation. 5- Marital intimacy has a direct and significant effect on life orientation.

## Introduction

Intimacy is a close, intimate, and usually loving relationship or a romantic and personal relationship with another person that requires having very detailed information or deep knowledge of him (Random House dictionary; quoted). Intimacy is also an interactive process and includes

interrelated dimensions. The core of this process is knowing, understanding, accepting, empathizing with other person's feelings, appreciating, and accepting his point of view. Intimacy is a broad concept that can include from discussing the details of life to revealing the most private feelings that no one can easily talk about [1].

Ten Hutton (2007) also defines intimacy as the ability to communicate with others and express emotions and considers it an inalienable right and one of the natural states of human beings [2].

Intimacy is one of the needs of a husband and wife's life, and at the same time, it is one of the characteristics of a successful and happy couple. Intimate relationship is defined by true self-disclosure and understanding of other person's needs in an equal relationship [3].

Other factors affecting the way of expressing intimacy in their belief are: the personality style of people, their communication style with each other and the evolutionary stage of relationship [4]. One of the most important relationships that people create throughout their lives and expect to satisfy their spiritual needs, the need to love and be loved, is love. Love has been discussed more than any other topic in the world literature throughout history. This issue is in the institution of a person to love and be loved [5]. Love is considered a basic necessity to create healthy and effective marital relationships and to achieve the mental health of couples, families, and society. The famous theorist of love, Sternberg considers love to be composed of three components: intimacy, passion, and commitment [6].

According to him, different combinations of these three components create different types of love. According to Sternberg's theory, those couples who have similar triangles have higher marital satisfaction. Lovemaking styles refer to how people define love or make love [7].

People use a certain style and method to love their spouse, and this style is influenced by mutual and continuous communication between husband and wife and their interpretation of their living environment. The stability of a love relationship stems from transitory intrapersonal and interpersonal factors [8]. Meanwhile, one of the factors affecting love instability is attachment. Attachment is a stable emotional bond between two people, so that one party tries to maintain proximity to the object of attachment and act in such a way as to ensure that the relationship continues. Attachment behavior is present in people from the starting point and it gradually becomes diverse and expands to certain faces

and persists throughout life and manifests itself in different forms [9].

In the framework of attachment theory, the term attachment is used to indicate emotional, cognitive, and behavioral processes involved in the development and maintenance of social intimacy. While people from childhood to old age usually strive for survival with the aim of establishing intimacy, each person has a distinctive attachment style that reflects individual differences influenced by the perception of their own and others' beliefs [10].

The theory of attachment and personal relationships, which is related to the effect of early experiences on growth and its connection to the later function of personality. According to the theory of Inworth *et al.* (1987), people with a secure attachment style are comfortable in establishing intimate relationships, tend to receive support from others, have a positive image of them, and have positive expectations from others. People with avoidant attachment style are considered emotionally cold and suspicious. They find it difficult to trust and rely on others and feel worried when others become too close to them. People with an ambivalent attachment style see themselves as misunderstood and lacking in self-confidence, and worry about being abandoned or not truly loved by others [11].

The review of the research background shows that knowing the role of attachment styles of couples as well as the results of the interaction of attachment styles on love can prevent the instability of love and carry out clinical interventions to prevent separation, justifying the necessity of conducting research in this field [12]. To what extent the belief and attitude of people before marriage towards abstract and emotional concepts such as love and their attachment styles can influence the formation of their values and choices in life. Since the criteria selection or the general values and criteria of a person regarding love style and marriage is one of the most important choices of people in the field of life, the necessity of research in this field is felt more than before.

On the other hand, based on the theory of Shiver, Hazen and Bershid [13], the style of love depends on the attachment style of the person to the caregiver, and also given that the initial

interactions in the field of attachment in different ways depend on the ability in adulthood. It is related to create successful relationships.

Optimistic perception and pessimistic perception, positively and negatively, are two spectrums of life orientation, which are part of the basic qualities of personality and how people adapt to life events, people's mental expectations when facing problems and their behavior when overcoming problems have an [14].

According to Shier and Carver's (1985) model, optimism and pessimism are defined as positive and negative pervasive expectations, respectively. According to this model, the expectation of comprehensive results is significantly related to the psychological adjustment of the young and elderly people.

If normal human perceptions are accompanied by a positive concept of self and personal control and an optimistic, even false, view of the future, it helps people not only in managing daily life, but also in dealing with very stressful and life-threatening events [15].

In general, people who are confident about the future, even when faced with serious adversities, continue to try. On the other hand, people who are hesitant may try to distance themselves from misfortunes [16].

The current research tries to answer the question whether the model of marital intimacy based on attachment style and lovemaking styles is suitable for mediating the life orientation of couples in Isfahan city? Bagaroozi (2001) considers intimacy as a basic need and defines it as closeness, similarity, and romantic personal relationships, often emotional, with another person, who requires deep knowledge and understanding of the other person, acceptance, and expression of thoughts and feelings, and it is a sign of the threshold of love.

Intimacy is an interactive process whose center is recognition, understanding, acceptance, rejection, empathy with other person's feelings, and appreciation of his unique view of the world (Kordava,2005), so intimacy means belonging to or having the deepest characteristic. which is characterized by very close relationships, contact, or familiarity [17].

In the evolutionary model of Sharp (2000), the intimate relationship of couples goes through five evolutionary stages during married life:

- (1) Romantic love,
- (2) Lack of agreement and incompatibility,
- (3) Differentiation and acceptance,
- (4) Coordination, and
- (5) Mature love.

In this regard, Campbell (2005) considers the stages of change in an intimate relationship to include mania, power struggle, acceptance of responsibility, commitment, and unconditional love. He believes that in this period, we take on some kind of creative work and establish intimate relationships with others and create marital bonds. He does not consider intimacy to be limited to sexual relations, but to the loyalty feeling and expressing oneself openly. People who are unable to establish such intimacy feel isolated and avoid social contacts [8].

Cox believes that intimacy is one of the basic human needs. Intimacy is a closeness, likeness, and loving personal relationship with another person that requires awareness, deep understanding, acceptance and expression of thoughts and feelings, compassion, and commitment [9]. Ata also believes that intimacy includes things such as commitment, emotional intimacy, cognitive intimacy, sexual intimacy, and behavioral contrast [18].

Studies have shown that the existence of intimacy among married couples is one of the important factors in creating a stable marriage [18] and avoiding intimate relationships is one of the factors that cause failure in family life [1].

In fact, intimacy is one of the fundamental factors in creating a person's satisfaction and dissatisfaction with married life, because it strengthens the couples' commitment to establish a relationship and is positively associated with marital happiness and compatibility [19]. Sternberg (1987) divides love into 3 parts: Desire, intimacy, and commitment. Intimacy refers to behaviors that increase emotional closeness, emotional closeness includes mutual support, understanding, communicating, and sharing oneself, activities, and possessions with another person.

Eshelman and Clark (1987) cited Stanley, Markman, Peters, and Leber (1995) stated that

intimacy refers to any relationship or friendship that includes warmth, openness, and informal sharing. Although the definitions are subjectively deduced, they have a relative basis. In this context, McAdams and Eden analyzed the subjects' subjective statements regarding the meaning of intimacy and compiled them into valid scale items in accordance with a multidimensional theory of concern [20].

Research was conducted by Akbari, Shafiei, and Haqshanas (2018) with the title of compiling the model of structural relations of gender roles on the meaning of life, life direction, and marital satisfaction. The results of the final structural equation model for measuring the relationship between gender role constructs with the meaning of life, life orientation, and marital relationships showed that gender role has a positive effect on the meaning of life. Gender role has a positive effect on life orientation and marital satisfaction. The results showed that gender role has an important effect on the meaning of life, life orientation, and marital satisfaction.

Research was conducted by Mostafai and Panishtegar (2015) with the title of prediction of love style based on the attachment style of married students of Azad University of Roudhen. The results showed that there is a significant positive relationship between attachment styles and Eros, Storg, Mania, and Agape styles. In other words, the love style was predictable based on the attachment style of married students. These results have important implications for clinical psychologists and counselors. Based on these results, knowing the attachment styles of students can predict their marital intimacy.

In research, Farah bakhsh, and Shafiabadi (2005) investigated the dimensions of love based on the three-dimensional theory of love in four groups of couples in the stages of engagement, marriage, marriage, and having children. The findings of this research, which were obtained from 500 couples in five regions of Isfahan City, show that there is a significant difference between the amounts of love making in different stages of married life. In addition, there is an interaction between the subjects' gender and the stages of marital life evolution in making love.

Vaezi *et al.* (2007) investigated the effect of love making on marital life satisfaction. The results of this research, which were obtained from 30 couples between the ages of 25-35 in Kashan City, showed that there is a significant relationship between lovemaking and marital satisfaction.

Abdi and Golzari (2010) investigated the relationship between lovemaking styles and personality traits in research. The findings of this research, which were obtained from 140 students of the faculty of psychology of Allamah Tabatabaei University and students of the Faculty of Hadith Sciences in Shahr Ray, showed that the relationship between lovemaking styles and personality traits is significant.

Lorig (2019) in research titled marital Intimacy and lovemaking styles on marital satisfaction, the results showed that the more marital intimacy and lovemaking styles are in a person, it can have a direct impact on marital satisfaction and there is a significant relationship. It was seen between the variables. Bank of Montreal, in research conducted in 2018, tried to show the relationship between marital intimacy variable and marital satisfaction in working women, the results showed that marital intimacy has a great impact on marital satisfaction and with higher intimacy, the satisfaction increases, and thereby marriage is more successful. Kawachi and Berkman (2017) investigated the relationship between marital satisfaction and making love.

The results of the research indicate that there is a direct effect on marital satisfaction and lovemaking and there is a significant relationship between the mentioned variables. McKenzie and Harpham (2016) in a book entitled: marital satisfaction and attachment styles in 2016, in addition to calculating how to measure marital satisfaction, attachment styles, and presenting different models and frameworks in how to measure marital satisfaction, international research have been investigated in this regard, and in fact, all of them have mentioned the relationship between these two variables.

### *The main hypothesis*

The model of marital intimacy based on attachment style and lovemaking styles is suitable for mediating the life direction of couples in Isfahan City.

### *Secondary hypotheses*

(1) Lovemaking styles have a direct effect on marital intimacy of Isfahan couples.

(2) Attachment styles have a direct effect on marital intimacy of Isfahan couples.

(3) Lovemaking styles have a direct effect on the marital intimacy of Isfahan couples through the mediation of life orientation.

(4) Attachment styles have a direct effect on the marital intimacy of Isfahan couples through the mediation of life orientation.

(5) Lovemaking styles and attachment styles have an effect by mediating the life direction of couples in Isfahan city.

### **Research objectives**

#### *The main goal*

Determining the fit of the marital intimacy model based on attachment style and lovemaking styles with the role of mediating life orientation in Isfahan City.

#### *Sub-goals*

(1) Determining the effect of lovemaking styles on marital intimacy of Isfahan couples.

(2) Determining the impact of attachment styles on the marital intimacy of Isfahan couples.

(3) Determining the effect of lovemaking styles with the mediation of life orientation on the marital intimacy of Isfahan couples.

(4) Determining the effect of attachment styles with the mediation of life orientation on the marital intimacy of Isfahan couples.

(5) Determining the effect of lovemaking styles and attachment styles by mediating the life orientation of couples in Isfahan City.

### **Type of research method**

This research is survey research. In this research, descriptive-correlation design is used.

### *Statistical society*

The statistical population is all 950 couples of Isfahan City.

### *Sample and sampling method*

The random sampling method is simple. According to Morgan's Table, the studied sample is 276 people.

### **Entry criteria**

Having consent to fill out the questionnaire, being married.

### **Exclusion criteria**

Not taking psychoactive drugs or having a mental disorder.

### **Data analysis method**

The obtained data are presented in two parts, descriptive and inferential data. In the inferential statistics section, the model fit indices are examined using AMOS software, and the hypotheses will be tested using analysis.

### **Results**

**Table 1** Descriptive characteristics of research variables

The highest score	The lowest score	Standard deviation	Average	Variables	
6	30	5.15	16.48	Rational intimacy	Marital intimacy
6	29	5.05	17.24	Intimacy of communication	
6	28	4.79	14.71	Spiritual intimacy	
6	29	4.69	18.59	Psychological intimacy	
8	30	4.51	19.87	Sexual intimacy	
15	69	9.89	41.18	Romantic	Lovemaking style
12	44	6.07	28.11	Avoidance	
4	20	3.34	10.49	Irresponsibility	
10	45	6.84	26.41	Expect confirmation	
5	20	3.20	11.37	Secure attachment	Attachment Styles
5	20	3.30	11.43	Avoidant attachment	
13	43	7.16	26.42	Ambivalent attachment styles	
17	10	11.98	44.15	Life Orientation (Mediation)	

**Research conceptual model test**

To investigate and test the mediation model of attachment styles in the relationship between love styles, marital intimacy, and the moderating role of life orientation, the two-stage approach proposed by Anderson and Gerbing (1988) was used. In this approach, the relationships between the observed variables and the underlying model were initially investigated using the confirmatory factor analysis method in the form of a measurement model. In this step, the measurement model, the basic model of the research is examined, and then the structural model and measurement of the research conceptual model (Figure1) were tested simultaneously using the structural equation modeling method [21].

*Examining assumptions of structural equation modeling*

Before entering the test of measurement and structural models of the research, the modeling assumptions of structural equations were

examined. In this section, three basic assumptions of structural equation modeling including missing data, outliers, and normality of variable distribution were examined.

*Missing data*

Although in the present study, an effort was made to collect complete data from the sample group. However, there were some missing data in the data file. In the present study, the missing data were replaced by mean values of the variables.

*Outliers*

To check the outliers in the present study, the Explorer command was used in the S program. The results of the investigation of outliers in the variables of the present study showed that there are 9 outliers in the data obtained from the sample, which were removed. Therefore, from this viewpoint, there is no problem for structural equation modeling analysis.

### Checking the normality of the distribution of the observed variables

To check the normality of distribution of the observed variables in the present study, two common indices were used to check the

**Table 2** Normality indices of the observed research variables

stretching	Crooked	Variables	
<b>-.664</b>	.025	Rational intimacy	Styles of intimacy
<b>-.302</b>	-.226	Intimacy of communication	
<b>-.651</b>	.272	Spiritual intimacy	
<b>-.258</b>	-.155	Psychological intimacy	
<b>-.171</b>	-.092	Sexual intimacy	
<b>-.141</b>	.002	Romantic	Lovemaking styles
<b>-.004</b>	-.257	Friendly	
<b>-.677</b>	.245	Realistic	
<b>-.201</b>	.045	Sensuality	
<b>-.521</b>	.155	Safe style	Attachment Styles
<b>-.570</b>	.268	Avoidant style	
<b>-.627</b>	.280	Ambivalent style	
<b>-.219</b>	.117	Life Orientation (Mediation)	

Table 2 indicates that the skewness and kurtosis indices for the research variables are all less than the absolute value of 1. In other words, all these indicators are in the range of 1 to -1. Therefore, the distribution of all research variables is normal. In addition, multivariate normality was checked from the output of EMOS software. These results showed that the size of the multivariate normality index for the total of research variables is 4.71 with a critical value of 1.44, which is not significant and the distribution of multivariate data is normal. In general, the results presented in this section show that all the basic assumptions of structural equation modeling analysis are in place and therefore there is no obstacle for this analysis.

normality, including skewness and elongation. If the size of these indices is between 1 and -1, it indicates the normality of distribution of the research variables. Table 2 presents these results.

### Examining the measurement model in research model

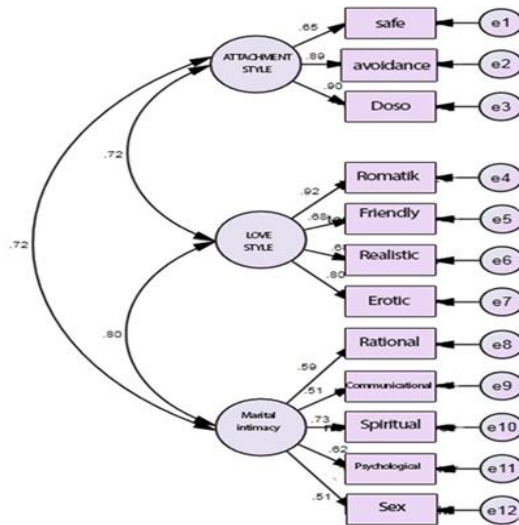
Confirmatory factor analysis method was used to check the measurement model in the research conceptual model (Figure 1). In this analysis, the subscales related to the underlying variables of the research were considered as markers or observed variables and the three variables of marital intimacy, lovemaking styles, and attachment styles were considered as underlying variables. Then, the analysis was done using the twenty-fourth version of AMOS software and using the maximum likelihood method. Table 3 lists the fit indices of the research measurement model.

**Table 3** Fit indices related to the confirmatory factor analysis of the measurement model

Good result	Observed size	Index limits for perfect fit	Index limits for good fit	Index limits for acceptable fit	Type of goodness of fit index
Good	97.111 (49)	The ratio of the x2 statistic to degrees of freedom is less than 2	The ratio of the x2 statistic to the degree of freedom is less than 3	The ratio of the X2 statistic to the degree of freedom is less than 5	Statistical value (df)x2
	0.001				p-value of x2 test
	2.29				The ratio of the x2 statistic to the degrees of freedom
Good	0.068	Less than 0.05	Less than 0.08	Less than 1.0	RMSEA
Excellent	0.048	Less than 0.05	Less than 0.08	Less than 1.0	SRMR
Excellent	0.96	More than 0.95	More than 0.9	More than 8.0	CFI
Good	0.94	More than 0.95	More than 0.9	More than 8.0	NFI
Excellent	0.95	More than 0.95	More than 0.9	More than 8.0	NNFI
Good	0.94	More than 0.95	More than 0.9	More than 0.8	GFI
Good	0.90	More than 0.95	More than 0.9	More than 0.8	AGFI

As indicated in Table 3, all fit indices for the measurement model of the conceptual model of the research are in the range of good to excellent. These results show the construct validity of all latent variables of the model presented in the present study. In the next step,

the parameters of measurement model of the research conceptual model were examined. Figure 1 displays the parameters estimated in this model, including factor loadings and correlations between the variables.



**Figure 1** Estimated parameters in the measurement model in the conceptual model of the research





As depicted in Figure 1, all the observed variables have a significant factor load on the corresponding current factor. These results also show the validity of the measurement model of the research conceptual model. Likewise, in this analysis, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) criterion was used to check the convergent validity of each of the variables. This measure represents the average shared variance between each construct with its indicators or indicators. The larger this index is, it indicates divergent validity and better fit of the conceptual model.

However, Fornell and Larcker (1981) proposed a critical value of 0.3 and stated that values higher than this value indicate divergent validity and a good fit of the conceptual model. According to the results of the confirmatory factor analysis, the AVE value for the underlying variable of attachment styles was 67.4, for lovemaking styles 64.6, and for marital intimacy 39.2, which indicates the divergent validity and good fit of the conceptual model. Finally, the Composite Reliability Index (CRI) was used to check the reliability of each of the underlying factors of the model.

This index is an ideal and alternative index for assessing the reliability of scales in structural equation modeling and confirmatory factor analysis, and its accuracy is higher than other reliability assessment methods such as Cronbach's alpha. This index can be calculated using the parameters estimated in the confirmatory factor analysis, including the size of the factor loading and the variance error of

each item. The interpretation of this index is the same as Cronbach's alpha coefficient (20).

The results of composite reliability analysis of Makun's variables showed that this index is 0.86 for Makun's attachment styles, 0.86 for lovemaking styles, and 0.74 for marital intimacy. These results indicate good reliability for these variables. According to the results presented in this section, the basic research model can be tested in the next step [21].

#### *Testing the mediation model of attachment styles in the relationship between lovemaking styles and marital intimacy with life orientation*

After confirming the factorial structure and construct validity of the underlying variables of the research conceptual model, in the second step, the structural model related to the research conceptual model along with the measurement model was examined in the form of a basic model.

Figure 1 demonstrates the basic conceptual model of the research. In the conceptual model of the research, the underlying variables of marital intimacy and lovemaking styles as exogenous variables, the underlying variable of attachment styles as intermediate dependent variable or mediating variable and the observed variable of life orientation as the final or endogenous dependent variable in were considered. [22]

Accordingly, the model was drawn in the graphical environment of Emos and analyzed using the maximum likelihood method. Table 4 provides the fit indices for the basic model of the current research [23].

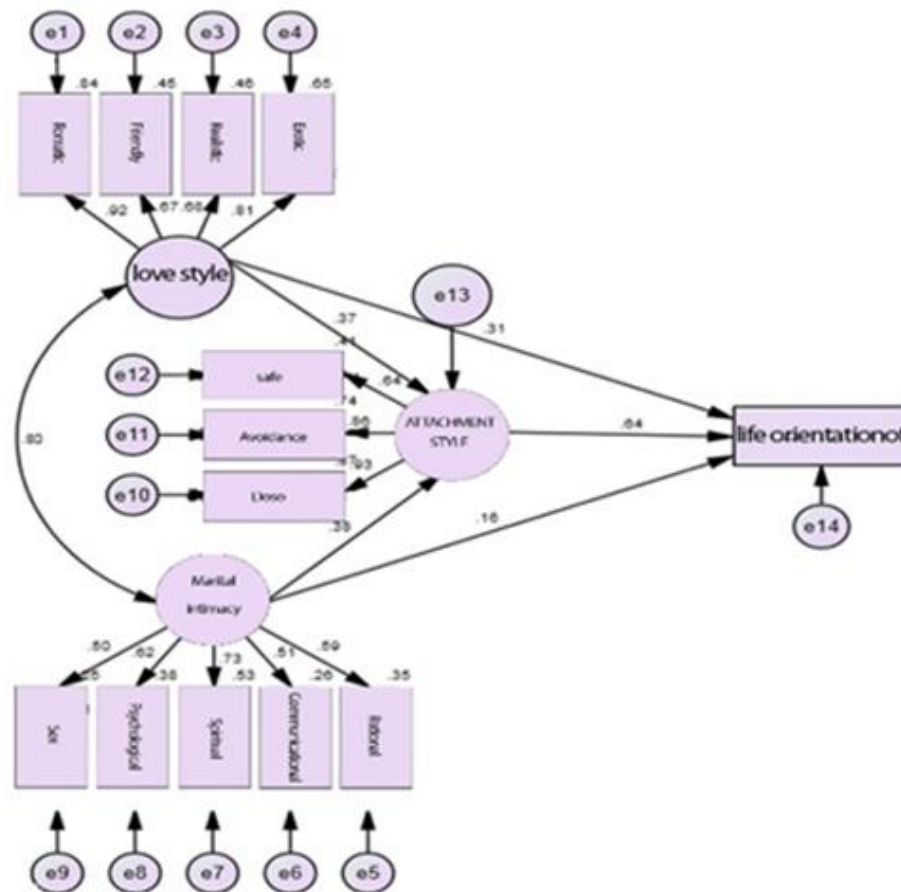
**Table 4** Fit indices related to the basic research model

Good result	Observed size	Index limits for perfect fit	Index limits for good fit	Index limits for acceptable fit	Type of goodness of fit index
Good	140.65 (58)	The ratio of the x2 statistic to degrees of freedom is less than 2	The ratio of the x2 statistic to the degree of freedom is less than 3	The ratio of the X2 statistic to the degree of freedom is less than 5	Statistical value (df)x2
	0.001				p-value of x2 test
	2.43				The ratio of the x2 statistic to the degrees of freedom
Good	0.072	Less than 0.05	Less than 0.08	Less than 0.1	RMSEA

Excellent	0.049	Less than 0.05	Less than 0.08	Less than 0.1	SRMR
Excellent	0.96	More than 0.95	More than 0.9	More than 0.8	CFI
Good	0.93	More than 0.95	More than 0.9	More than 0.8	NFI
Good	0.94	More than 0.95	More than 0.9	More than 0.8	NNFI
Good	0.93	More than 0.95	More than 0.9	More than 0.8	GFI
Good	0.90	More than 0.95	More than 0.9	More than 0.8	AGFI

Table 4 shows that all the fit indices for the basic research model are in the range of good to excellent. These results mean that the experimental data confirm the conceptual model of the current research. In the next step, Figure 2 illustrates the estimated parameters

for the mediation model of attachment styles in the relationship between lovemaking styles and marital intimacy with life orientation, including factor loadings, standard path coefficients, and correlations between exogenous variables of the model [24-26].



**Figure 2** Estimated parameters in the basic research model

Table 5 presents the estimated parameters of the model including factor loadings and their

significance, non-standard and standard direct path coefficients, and their significance.

**Table 5** The estimated parameters of the basic research model

Meaningful	Critical size	Non-standard path coefficient	Standard path coefficient ( $\beta$ )	Direct route
---		1	0.92	Romantic love style
0.001		0.45	0.67	Friendly love style
0.001		0.25	0.68	Realistic love style (reactive)
0.001		0.61	0.81	Sensual love style (factorial load)
---		1	0.59	Rational intimacy (factorial load)
0.001		0.92	0.51	Communication intimacy (factorial load)
0.001		28/1	0.73	Psychological intimacy (factorial load)
<b>0.001</b>		<b>02/1</b>	<b>0.62</b>	Sexual intimacy (factorial load)
---		<b>1</b>	<b>0.93</b>	Secure attachment style (factorial load)
0.001		0.31	<b>0.86</b>	Avoidant attachment style (factorial load)
0.001		0.43	0.64	Sexual attachment style (factorial load)
0.001		0.27	0.37	Lovemaking styles on marital intimacy (the first sub-hypothesis)
0.001		0.89	0.38	Attachment styles on marital intimacy (the second sub-hypothesis)
0.001		1/03	0.64	Lovemaking styles with the mediation of life orientation on marital intimacy (the third sub-hypothesis)
0.001		0.36	0.31	Attachment styles with the mediation of life orientation on marital intimacy (the fourth sub-hypothesis)
0.047	2.01	0.58	0.16	Lovemaking styles and attachment styles with the mediation of life orientation (the fifth sub-hypothesis)

Table 5 presents that all the factor loadings of the indicators on the variables related to them are meaningful [27]. In addition, these results show that all coefficients of the direct path of the model are significant at the alpha level of

0.05. Finally, to investigate the significance of the indirect effects of the variables of lovemaking styles and marital intimacy on the mediation of life orientation, the bootstrap method with 1000 times of resampling were

used using Emos 24 software, as indicated in Table 6.

## Research hypothesis test

### The main hypothesis

The model of marital intimacy based on attachment style and lovemaking styles is suitable for mediating the life direction of couples in Isfahan city. Table 4 shows that all the fit indices for the basic research model are in the range of good to excellent. These results mean that the experimental data confirm the conceptual model of the current research. According to these results, the main research hypothesis is confirmed [26-28]].

### Sub-hypotheses

(1) Lovemaking styles have a direct effect on marital intimacy of Isfahan couples. To test the first sub-hypothesis, the results of the structural equation modeling analysis of the basic research model were examined in Table 5. These results show that the direct effect of lovemaking styles on attachment styles is significant with a standard path coefficient ( $\beta$ ) of 0.37 at the alpha level of 0.01. Therefore, according to these results, the first sub-hypothesis is confirmed [29-31].

(2) Marital intimacy has a direct and significant effect on attachment styles. To test the second sub-hypothesis, the results of structural equation modeling analysis of the basic research model were analyzed in Table 5. These results show that the direct effect of marital intimacy on attachment styles is significant with a standard path coefficient ( $\beta$ ) of 0.38 at the alpha level of 0.01. Therefore, according to these results, the second sub-hypothesis is confirmed [32-34].

(3) Attachment styles have a direct and significant effect on life direction. To test the third sub-hypothesis, the results of structural equation modeling analysis of the basic research model were examined in Table 5. These results show that the direct effect of attachment styles on life orientation is

significant with a standard path coefficient ( $\beta$ ) of 0.64 at the alpha level of 0.01. Accordingly, the third sub-hypothesis is confirmed.

(4) Lovemaking styles have a direct and significant effect on the direction of life. To test the fourth sub-hypothesis, the results of structural equation modeling analysis of the basic research model were examined in Table 5. These results show that the direct effect of lovemaking styles on life orientation is significant with a standard path coefficient ( $\beta$ ) of 0.31 at the alpha level of 0.01. Therefore, the fourth sub-hypothesis is confirmed [35].

(5) Marital intimacy has a direct and meaningful effect on life direction. To test the fifth sub-hypothesis, the results of the analysis of structural equation modeling of the basic research model were examined in Table 5. These results show that the direct effect of marital intimacy on life orientation is significant with a standard path coefficient ( $\beta$ ) of 0.16 at the alpha level of 0.05. Hence, the fifth sub-hypothesis is confirmed [36].

## Conclusion

The current research was carried out with the aim of modeling marital intimacy based on attachment styles and lovemaking styles with the mediation of life orientation of couples in Isfahan City. The descriptive research method was of correlational type and the statistical population of the research consisted of all the couples of Isfahan City, from which 285 people were randomly selected and investigated. The research tools included a questionnaire of marital intimacy, attachment styles, lovemaking styles, life orientation, and the data obtained from the sample group were analyzed on two descriptive and inferential levels according to one main hypothesis and five sub-hypotheses. The results showed that all hypotheses were confirmed.

## Discussion and explanation of results

### The main hypothesis

The model of marital intimacy based on attachment style and lovemaking styles is suitable for the role of mediation in the life

direction of couples in Isfahan City. Table 4 shows that all the fit indices for the basic research model are in the range of good to excellent. These results mean that the experimental data confirm the conceptual model of the current research. Therefore, the main research hypothesis is confirmed.

### *The first hypothesis*

lovemaking styles have a direct effect on marital intimacy of Isfahan couples. To test the first sub-hypothesis, the results of the structural equation modeling analysis of the basic research model were examined in Table 5. These results show that the direct effect of lovemaking styles on attachment styles is significant with a standard path coefficient ( $\beta$ ) of 0.37 at the alpha level of 0.01.

Therefore, according to these results, the first sub-hypothesis is confirmed. The results of this research are in agreement with the research of Averbek, Camp Weingels (2007), Donlen, Lusen, Raif, and Conger (2005), Crawford, Fing, Fisher, and Diana (2003), Gonzaga *et al.* (2001), Acker and Davis (1992), Esainejad *et al.* (2008), Khoshnoisan *et al.* (2008), Wali Beigi *et al.* (2008), Rafiinia and Asghari (2007), Kamkar and Jabarian (2006), Sepah Mansour and Mazaheri (2006), Fatehizadeh and Ahmadi (2006), Danesh and Nejatian (2004).

God says in the Holy Quran: One of the signs of God is that He created a wife for you from your own kind so that you can find peace with her. The first duty of moral norms in the society is to regulate the relationship between men and women on proper bases. Freud believes that everything that people achieve in life is influenced by their personality and those who interact with them. Furthermore, Allport states that a healthy personality extends its sense to people and activities beyond, has intimate relationships with others, shows sympathy and patience, and develops personal skills. Marriage is the response to the highest innate human need and synchronization through perfection.

The ultimate goal of marriage is to achieve peace of mind, to improve existence, and achieve prosperity. Marriage is the most popular building of existence in front of the creator of the couple. One of the most

important index factors in marriage is the quality and type of relationship between husband and wife. A set of positive communication styles such as empathic and appropriate expression of feelings, perceptive ability is correlated with marital satisfaction, and while many couples who have differences in their married life, in dealing with their relationships, they only notice the problems and what they do not like, they see and are unable to understand what he has done to them to do their positive communication styles. Self-centered ways of thinking are born in early life in order to achieve independence and without paying attention to the needs of others, but in marriage, what causes resentment in married life is the desire for autonomy in couples.

The feeling of love is an emotion that is accompanied by sensual stimulation, but people may find each other unattractive after sexual connection and thus, genuine love requires commitment and the use of wisdom. To have a healthy relationship, intimacy is very important.

When close emotional feelings and affection are expressed between spouses, with the increase of time together, it can lead to creating intimacy, and when there is intimacy in the relationship, the relationship is strengthened, but when the relationship is defensive, cold and emotionless. If so, the relationship is weakened. The presence of commitment in the relationship leads to the formation of trust and confidence. The committed couple become one with each other as if they are one person.

A pathological marital relationship is a relationship in which each couple tries to achieve their personal goals and desires. Such behavior leads to selfishness and self-following of spouses, and maintaining the rights of the other party will not be important. The marital relationship of the couple should be a satisfactory relationship for them, so that they can satisfy their emotional and psychological needs, feel psychological security, and fulfill their sexual needs in this intimate space. People get married for different reasons.

The main reason for most of them to get married is to have a good life without conflict. Couples who report a high sense of satisfaction from their marital relationship have other

positive characteristics such as respect, listening, and paying attention to the needs of the other person.

Erikson describes love as mutual self-sacrifice, that is, the integration of a person into another person. Through interest and desire for another human being, establishing mutual communication in a decent manner and supporting each other, coordinating and satisfying sexual needs, fulfilling emotional needs, having skills related to creating understanding and ways of loving, and remaining loyal to the family and its members. The nature of love can be better understood through joy and sorrow and the pleasant and unpleasant events of life.

Erikson does not consider intimacy to be limited to sexual relationships, but rather to expressing his feelings of loyalty openly, and people who are not able to establish such intimacy feel isolated and avoid social contacts and may be aggressive towards others.

However, with the help of clear communication, husband and wife can help each other to mix their interests and desires with their spouse's desires, with the formation of new behavioral concepts, self-centered concepts gradually disappear. From the psychodynamics perspective, Freud believes that the ability to control impulses and self and plan and plan in behavior is the basis of conscientiousness, which plays a positive role in satisfaction and positive marital relationships.

The tolerance of men and women in their relations with each other leads to the improvement of relations, and couples accept each other's characteristics, as a result of which the friction and misunderstanding between them gradually fades away. Therefore, people themselves are not blameless in their satisfaction and dissatisfaction with life. In our marital relationships, we see relationships that probably will not be broken, but they are unhappy, which is not out of two situations:

Either it is too difficult for the husband and wife to form intimate relationships, or for some reason, they are trying to understand and improve. The relationships themselves have kept this important aspect away from the point

of view of what factors contribute to maintaining these marital relationships.

On the other hand, most of us can count relationships that are really happy that these couples have been able to achieve marital satisfaction by forming proper relationships in life and finding factors that are effective in maintaining these marital relationships and acting on them. Commitment, sensitivity, generosity, consideration, intimacy, loyalty, responsibility, trust, and confidence are required to maintain marital relations.

Husband and wife need cooperation, kindness, and good understanding. They should be flexible, accepting, and forgiving; they should tolerate each other's mistakes and value each other's qualities.

It is only if these qualities exist and strengthen them that over time, marriage reaches maturity and self-fulfillment. Marriage is different from other relationships in life, when a couple lives together and is committed to maintain a common life, they have expectations from each other and each expects to have intimacy, loyalty, and unconditional support from the other.

### *The second hypothesis*

Marital intimacy has a direct and significant effect on attachment styles. To test the second sub-hypothesis, the results of structural equation modeling analysis of the basic research model were analyzed in Table 5. These results show that the direct effect of marital intimacy on attachment styles is significant with a standard path coefficient ( $\beta$ ) of 0.38 at the alpha level of 0.01. Therefore, according to these results, the second sub-hypothesis is confirmed.

### *Explanation of the second hypothesis*

explicitly or implicitly, verbally or non-verbally, men and women have committed themselves to complying with these deep needs, and every action of husband and wife has concepts derived from these desires and expectations. Sometimes, in a relationship, spouses have different concepts and perceptions in the same actions and events,

which can be caused by different characteristics of people, which causes spouses to perceive phenomena in different ways.

Therefore, by tolerating each other's minor mistakes and valuing each other's characteristics, and by letting the husband and wife know that not all of their spouse's characteristics are necessarily "bad" and only because they do not match their characteristics, they will be seen as bad. that their relationships improve and in fact their personalities are formed in such a way that they accept each other's characteristics and as a result the misunderstanding between them fades. The presence of these characteristics and their strengthening over time leads to maturity, self-fulfillment, and satisfaction in marriage.

Bradshaw states that when people get married because of their shortcomings and lack of compensation, a relationship based on difficulties and problems is created. Before marriage, each of them is ready to donate themselves.

Because they think that the other party is encouraging them to eliminate their shortcomings. Both husband and wife get married under the influence of the illusion that the other will fix their shortcomings, which is one of the most important problematic factors in married life, but one of the problems of unsuccessful marriages is that the husband and wife They think that their relationship cannot be improved when marital discord occurs.

This belief stops any progress in marital relations by eliminating the motivation to correct behavior and constructive actions. Experience has shown that even if one of the parties, husband or wives, takes a constructive approach, it not only helps to improve their marital relationship, but also creates positive changes in the behavior of their spouse. The factors of marital satisfaction and constructive behavior can be expressed as follows: commitment, loyalty, trust, closeness, intimacy, and security of love and affection bonds. Maslow considered sexual desire as a way to express the need for love, and failure to fulfill the need for love was the main cause of emotional and marital incompatibility. With the help of love, a person can achieve excellence. Human love has such a miraculous power that

the natural law of stagnation on the battlefield is defeated. Afrooz mentions factors for satisfaction in marriage. In Islamic culture, one of the most basic criteria of sufficiency is equality and equality in purity and the soul immunity from sensual tendencies. Strengthening in faith and peace of heart, so that both people's existence is a source of peace and piety, and their hearts are free from any kind of unrest, insecurity and doubts. Similarity in morals, character, and individual and social behaviors, and also in the field of upbringing and family culture.

(3) Attachment styles have a direct and significant effect on life direction. To test the third sub-hypothesis, the results of structural equation modeling analysis of the basic research model were indicated in Table 5. These results show that the direct effect of attachment styles on life orientation is significant with a standard path coefficient ( $\beta$ ) of 0.64 at the alpha level of 0.01. Therefore, according to these results, the third sub-hypothesis is confirmed. Accordingly, it was clarified that there is a positive relationship between secure attachment style and life orientation of couples.

This result is consistent with the researches of Lemons *et al.* (2007), Bello *et al.* (2008), Bello, Brando, Brown, and Ragsdal (2007), Christianam, Philip Hwang-Vikberg (2006), Hashi and Jami (2006), and Bashart (2003). Positive perception and social support are two other characteristics of people with a secure attachment style that can explain the aforementioned findings. Scientific research has further confirmed that the attachment style has always had a meaning with the direction of life from the relationship. As expected, secure romantic attachment style has a positive relationship with life orientation from relationship and a negative relationship with insecure styles (Levik et al.,2008). Schachner *et al.* (2006) have also shown that one's own attachment style predicts life direction in men and women to a large extent. In other words, the reason why, for example, secure people report feeling more satisfied is because they have special personality traits. They applied these ideas directly to adult relationships and believed that the direction of life from the



relationship in the adult period depends to a large extent on satisfying the basic needs related to comfort, care, and sexual satisfaction.

In fact, the success of a particular relationship depends on whether each member of the couple believes that their partner can meet those needs, or not. Securely attached adults are able to rationally discuss the quality and effects of their attachment relationships and whether these relationships are positive or negative. They confirm the importance of the attachment relationship in childhood. Secure adults have a positive and universal image of the attachment source. This positive embodiment increases the sense of self-worth and mastery in these people and enables them to moderate negative emotions in a constructive way (Kassidi, quoted by Mehdi Zarei, 2016).

Thus, secure adults would be expected to report high life orientation, as research suggests.

(4) Lovemaking styles have a direct and significant effect on the direction of life. To test the fourth sub-hypothesis, the results of structural equation modeling analysis of the basic research model were examined in Table 5. These results show that the direct effect of lovemaking styles on life orientation is significant with a standard path coefficient ( $\beta$ ) of 0.31 at the alpha level of 0.01. Therefore, the fourth sub-hypothesis is confirmed.

(5) Marital intimacy has a direct and meaningful effect on life direction. To test the fifth sub-hypothesis, the results of the analysis of structural equation modeling of the basic research model were examined in Table 5. These results show that the direct effect of marital intimacy on life orientation is significant with a standard path coefficient ( $\beta$ ) of 0.16 at the alpha level of 0.05. Hence, the fifth sub-hypothesis is confirmed. There is a positive relationship between intimacy and life orientation. In other words, the more the couple's intimacy increases, the more their life orientation increases.

This result is in agreement with the researches of Eckert (2009), Fischer Weinhaus (2009), Cionelli *et al.* (2008), Patrick *et al.* (2007), Alan Currie (2006), Martin Washby (2004), Greif and Mall Herb (2001), Sanderson and Kantor (2001), and Kamkar and Jabarian (2005). To

explain this finding, we can point to the fact that life orientation theories often include the level of intimacy experienced by couples. The common conceptualization of intimacy is: The level of closeness of a spouse, sharing values and ideas, joint activities, sexual relations, knowing each other, and emotional behaviors such as caressing. As a result, intimate couples have high marital satisfaction, and in fact, a person should achieve a degree of personal growth to be able to establish an intimate relationship with others.

In a study, Kamkar and Jabarian (2015) investigated the effect of intimacy in marital disputes and showed that 57% of the disturbances in marital relations were due to disturbances in the emotional and intimate relations of couples. In fact, negative marital interactions without any love and affection are the strongest factor in creating marital dissatisfaction.

Therefore, the increase of intimacy and pleasure in the interactions of couples can cause more satisfaction in marital relationships (Sepah Mansour and Mazaheri, 2015). Sanderson and Cantor (2001, quoted by Bagheri, 2008) in a study investigated the relationship between intimacy, marital satisfaction, and patterns of marital interactions such as social support. Kantor's research sample included 44 couples. The results showed that marital satisfaction has a significant positive relationship with the intimacy level in both couples.

Furthermore, the findings indicated that spouses' perception of intimacy mediates marital satisfaction. Intimacy is defined as the ability to relate to others while maintaining individuality. Such self-based definitions imply that a person achieves a degree of personal growth to be able to establish intimate relationships with others. Intimacy can be seen as the ability to recognize oneself in the presence of others, that self-awareness and identity development are very necessary for a person's capacity for intimacy. The common conceptualization of intimacy is the closeness level to the spouse, sharing values and ideas, joint activities, sexual relations, knowing each other, and emotional behaviors such as caressing.

A person who experiences a higher level of intimacy is able to present himself in a more favorable way in relationships and express his needs more effectively to his partner and spouse. Marital satisfaction can be higher in couples, who have a higher degree of intimacy, or in other words, couples who have higher intimacy may have more ability to face problems and changes related to their relationship and, as a result, experience higher marital satisfaction (Patrick, Sells, Giordanovo Fullrad, 2007).

### Research limitations

(1) This research was conducted on couples in Isfahan City; therefore, due to the unique conditions of each city and couples, including local culture, geographic location, and other issues, it is necessary to be cautious in generalizing its results to other cities and couples.

(2) This study is dedicated to the couples of Isfahan City, so caution should be exercised in generalizing the results to other people.

(3) Due to practical considerations, it was not possible to implement the follow-up phase.

(4) Due to practical and operational considerations, it has not been possible to select more homogeneous samples in terms of matching different psychological and demographic variables.

### Suggestions for Further Research

(1) It is suggested that other variables such as anxiety and bipolar disorders be studied.

(2) It is suggested to conduct the research in other ages and strata and other variables of different modeling. Moreover, in future researches, the intervention methods in the present study should be implemented with other methods and in a combined manner to determine its efficiency compared to other methods.

### Practical suggestions

(1) Love-making styles have an effect on marital intimacy of couples, and for that reason, it is suggested that couples should use love-

making styles before marriage to improve intimacy in married life.

(2) Marital intimacy has a direct and significant effect on attachment styles. According to this hypothesis, it can be mentioned that marital intimacy can cause a secure attachment style and lack of intimacy can cause an anxious attachment style.

(3) Attachment styles have a direct effect on life direction. As a result, the anxious attachment style can cause a person to deviate from life, and the secure attachment style also has the correct life orientation for the person.

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