The Relationship Between Love Style and Emotional Divorce With the Mediating Role of Resilience and Social Support in Couples With Experience of Emotional Divorce

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A r t i c l e   I n f o

A B S T R A C T

Purpose: The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between love style and emotional divorce with the mediating role of resilience and social support in couples who have experienced emotional divorce.

Methods and Materials: The statistical population of this correlational-descriptive study included all couples with emotional divorce experience who referred to counseling and psychological service centers in District 5 of Tehran in 2023. For this purpose, 300 individuals were selected through purposive voluntary sampling as the statistical sample. The research method was descriptive and correlational in nature, utilizing a path analysis design. To measure the research variables, the following instruments were used: Sternberg's Triangular Love Scale (1986), the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (Zimet et al., 1988), the Emotional Divorce Scale (Gottman, 1994), and the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC) (Connor & Davidson, 2003). The collected data were analyzed using the Sobel test and processed with SPSS and AMOS software.

Findings: The research findings indicated that love style, resilience, and social support were significantly and negatively correlated with emotional divorce (p < .01). Moreover, resilience and social support served as mediating variables in the relationship between love style and emotional divorce in couples (p < .01).

Conclusion: Based on these findings, it can be concluded that love style, resilience, and social support play a significant role in couples' emotional divorce.

Keywords: Emotional Divorce, Love Style, Resilience, Social Support

1. Introduction

Emotional divorce is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that reflects a deep rupture in the emotional connection between spouses while the legal and formal aspects of the marriage remain intact. Unlike formal divorce, emotional divorce is often an invisible and prolonged process, characterized by emotional detachment, lack of intimacy, and the gradual erosion of empathy and affection in the marital relationship (Damo & Cenci, 2021).

In recent years, the phenomenon of emotional divorce has drawn increasing attention from researchers and practitioners due to its destructive implications for the mental health of individuals and the stability of families (Mirzaei et al., 2022). In the Iranian context, several studies have underscored the rising prevalence of emotional divorce, particularly in urban areas, where social, psychological, and cultural shifts have altered traditional marital roles and expectations (Navabinejad et al., 2024; Ramazani Far et al., 2021).

One of the central psychological frameworks for understanding emotional divorce lies in the domain of love styles. Love, far from being a uniform and universal experience, manifests in distinct patterns or styles that influence how individuals experience intimacy, passion, and commitment within their relationships (Ghaeibi Panah & Keshavarzi Arshadi, 2021). Sternberg's triangular theory of love remains one of the most influential models, proposing that love consists of three essential components—intimacy, passion, and commitment—which interact to shape romantic behaviors and satisfaction. Empirical studies show that disruptions in any of these components can forecast relational dissatisfaction and emotional estrangement (Gholami Hooyda, 2022; Salayani et al., 2020). In particular, couples who lack emotional intimacy or mutual commitment are more vulnerable to falling into patterns of alienation, silent resentment, and emotional withdrawal.

Resilience, or the capacity to adapt positively in the face of adversity, has emerged as a crucial psychological buffer in marital dynamics. Resilient individuals demonstrate higher emotional regulation, problem-solving capabilities, and interpersonal effectiveness, all of which contribute to healthier marital functioning (Mostafa et al., 2021; Rastgar Nasab & Hajiloo, 2022). Previous research indicates that resilience can mitigate the harmful effects of stress, conflict, and dissatisfaction in marital relationships, thereby acting as a protective factor against emotional divorce (Noori & Ali Mardani, 2022). Moreover, resilience not only enhances individual coping strategies but also promotes dyadic adaptability in navigating the challenges of long-term partnerships.

Another important factor closely associated with emotional divorce is perceived social support. Social support refers to the perception or experience of being cared for, valued, and assisted by others, including family, friends, and significant others (Potter, 2021). Social support has been found to moderate the effects of stress on marital quality and plays a key role in enhancing relationship satisfaction, reducing isolation, and fostering emotional intimacy (Seyed Salehi et al., 2021). For couples undergoing emotional turmoil, perceived social support can serve as a resource for emotional validation and problem-solving, helping to restore weakened relational bonds. Furthermore, studies have highlighted that low levels of perceived support are significantly correlated with higher degrees of emotional divorce, especially among women facing psychological or economic distress (Mosadegh et al., 2023; Nahar et al., 2020).

The role of love styles as both predictors and mediators in emotional outcomes has also been the focus of recent investigations. Some researchers have emphasized the mediating function of love styles in the relationship between personality traits and marital distress, showing that specific love styles may either reinforce or buffer the trajectory toward emotional detachment (Kashanifar & Hadipour, 2023; Salayani et al., 2020). For example, intimacy-based love styles are often associated with higher levels of emotional resilience and social support, whereas passion-dominated or commitment-averse styles may correlate with impulsivity, emotional dysregulation, or avoidance patterns that escalate emotional distance. Other studies suggest that love styles are shaped by deep psychological factors such as early maladaptive schemas or emotional schemas, which in turn affect interpersonal functioning and marital satisfaction (Entazarkheir et al., 2022; Fakouri Azarki, 2022).

Notably, the interplay between love styles, resilience, and perceived social support is a topic that remains underexplored in the Iranian cultural setting. Although individual constructs such as emotional literacy, maladaptive schemas, and coping styles have been examined in prior research, few studies have integrated these variables into a coherent structural model to explain emotional divorce in couples (Alaqband et al., 2020; Barati, 2020). For instance, Ghaeibi Panah and Keshavarzi Arshadi (2021) found that specific love styles such as mania and ludus were directly linked to emotional divorce through the mediating role of cognitive distortions. Likewise, Kashanifar and Hadipour (2023) argued that love styles themselves serve as mediators in the relationship between maladaptive cognitive structures and emotional estrangement, pointing to the layered complexity of relational dynamics.

In light of these findings, the current study seeks to develop and test a conceptual model that explores the mediating roles of resilience and perceived social support in the relationship between love styles and emotional divorce. Drawing from empirical research and theoretical models, the

study assumes that love styles are not only directly associated with emotional divorce but also influence it indirectly through psychological and social pathways. Specifically, it posits that intimacy, passion, and commitment may strengthen or weaken marital resilience and perceived social support, which in turn affect the likelihood of emotional detachment. This model is grounded in the broader literature on dyadic coping, emotional regulation, and attachment theory, all of which highlight the importance of both intrapersonal and interpersonal factors in marital functioning (Asl et al., 2022; Shirzadi et al., 2021).

This study gains further importance given the increasing number of couples in Iran who remain in legally intact but emotionally disintegrated marriages. In many cases, sociocultural pressures, financial dependency, or concern for children prevent couples from pursuing formal divorce, despite enduring deep emotional disconnection (Mortelmans, 2020; Navabinejad et al., 2024). This phenomenon imposes long-term psychological costs on both partners and often perpetuates intergenerational cycles of dysfunction and emotional disengagement. A more nuanced understanding of how resilience and perceived social support function as mediating variables could offer practical implications for intervention and therapy, particularly in culturally sensitive settings where open communication about marital dissatisfaction is stigmatized or discouraged.

In conclusion, the present study aims to fill a critical gap in the literature by providing a multi-dimensional model that links love styles, resilience, and perceived social support to emotional divorce in couples with lived experience of emotional detachment.

2. Methods and Materials

2.1. Study Design and Participants

The present study was conducted with the aim of investigating the relationship between love styles, social support, and resilience with emotional divorce in couples. The research adopted a descriptive-correlational design using path analysis within the structural equation modeling (SEM) framework. The statistical population included all couples with a history of emotional divorce who had referred to counseling and psychological service centers located in District 5 of Tehran during the year 2023. A total of 300 participants were selected through purposive voluntary sampling. The inclusion criteria for participation in the study were having a minimum of two years of marital life, being

between the ages of 20 and 50, possessing at least a high school diploma, and not being formally divorced.

2.2. Measures

One of the data collection instruments used in the study was the Sternberg Triangular Love Scale, developed in 1986. This self-report questionnaire is designed to assess three components of love: intimacy, passion, and commitment. It consists of 45 items, each rated on a 9-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 9 (extremely true). The scale yields a total score as well as subscale scores for each component of love. In Iranian studies, this scale has shown acceptable reliability and validity. For instance, in a psychometric evaluation conducted by local researchers, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were reported above 0.80 for all subscales, confirming internal consistency. Content and construct validity have also been supported through confirmatory factor analysis in Iranian samples.

The Emotional Divorce Scale developed by John Gottman in 1994 was used to assess the extent of emotional separation between spouses. This scale includes 24 items scored on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). It measures emotional distancing, lack of intimacy, and psychological withdrawal. The total score indicates the severity of emotional divorce, with higher scores reflecting greater emotional detachment. The Persian version of this instrument has been standardized and validated in prior research in Iran. Reliability studies conducted domestically reported a Cronbach's alpha of 0.87, indicating high internal consistency. Its validity was confirmed through convergent validity with related constructs such as marital satisfaction and conflict frequency.

The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS), developed by Zimet and colleagues in 1988, was used to assess perceived social support from three sources: family, friends, and significant others. The scale includes 12 items rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (very strongly disagree) to 7 (very strongly agree). Scores are calculated separately for each subscale as well as a total score, with higher scores indicating greater perceived support. The Persian version of the MSPSS has demonstrated strong psychometric properties. In validation studies conducted in Iran, Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the subscales ranged from 0.85 to 0.91, and the total scale reliability exceeded 0.90. Factor structure and content

validity have also been supported in several Iranian psychological research projects.

The fourth instrument employed was the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC), developed in 2003 to assess psychological resilience in individuals. The CD-RISC includes 25 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale from 0 (not true at all) to 4 (true nearly all the time), with total scores ranging from 0 to 100. Higher scores indicate greater resilience. This instrument has been widely used in Iranian psychological research and has shown high reliability and validity. Local studies have confirmed a Cronbach's alpha of approximately 0.89 for the total scale. The construct validity of the CD-RISC has been supported through correlations with measures of coping skills, optimism, and stress tolerance among Iranian samples.

2.3. Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 24 and AMOS version 29. Descriptive statistics were initially computed to summarize demographic characteristics and variable distributions. Path analysis, based on structural equation modeling, was employed to examine both direct and indirect effects of the predictor variables (love style, resilience, and social support) on the dependent variable (emotional divorce). The Sobel test was used to determine the significance of the mediating roles of resilience and social support. Model fit was assessed using indices such as the Chi-square/df ratio, RMSEA, CFI, and TLI to ensure the adequacy of the proposed mediation model. All statistical tests were conducted at a significance level of $p < .01$.

3. Findings and Results

The demographic data of the study participants (N = 300) revealed that the majority of the respondents were female (n = 226, 75.3%), while male participants accounted for 25.7% (n = 74). In terms of educational attainment, 34.3% (n = 103) held a high school diploma, 29.3% (n = 88) had a bachelor's degree, 31.3% (n = 94) had a master's degree, and 5% (n = 15) possessed a doctoral degree. Regarding the number of children, 12% (n = 36) had no children, 35% (n = 105) had one child, 38.3% (n = 115) had two children, 9.3% (n = 28) had three children, and 5.3% (n = 16) reported having four or more children. The age distribution showed that 9.7% (n = 29) were between 20 and 30 years old, 39.7% (n = 119) were between 31 and 40 years old, and the largest group, 50.7% (n = 152), were between 41 and 50 years old. In terms of marriage duration, 17% (n = 51) had been married for 1 to 5 years, 22% (n = 66) for 6 to 10 years, 12.7% (n = 38) for 11 to 15 years, 17.7% (n = 53) for 16 to 20 years, and 30.7% (n = 92) had been married for more than 20 years.

In Table 1, the descriptive statistics for the variables under study, including the mean and standard deviation, are presented for the research sample.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Emotional Divorce	300	1	24	13.33	6.56
Intimacy	300	24	133	75.59	33.07
Passion	300	10	131	63.72	34.74
Commitment	300	14	126	72.89	35.52
Resilience	300	26	93	64.43	19.71
Social Support	300	12	58	37.38	10.32

To examine the normal distribution of data, skewness and kurtosis values were assessed. If the absolute values of skewness and kurtosis fall outside the range of -2 to +2, the assumption of normality is rejected. Table 2 presents the skewness and kurtosis values for the study variables. Based on this table, since all absolute values fall within the acceptable range, the distribution of variables can be considered normal.

Table 2

Skewness and Kurtosis of Study Variables

Variable	Skewness	Kurtosis
Emotional Divorce	0.181	0.067
Intimacy	-0.417	-0.201
Passion	-0.260	-0.116
Commitment	-0.652	-0.416
Resilience	-0.135	-0.132
Perceived Social Support	-0.425	-0.236

One of the fundamental and preliminary methods used in predictive research is calculating the correlation coefficient between predictor variables and the criterion (predicted) variable. Given that the scales used were interval-level, Pearson's correlation test was applied, and the analysis was conducted at a 95% confidence level. The results are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3

Correlation Matrix of Research Variables

No.	Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Emotional Divorce	1					
2	Intimacy	-.666**	1				
3	Passion	-.462**	.731**	1			
4	Commitment	-.604**	.777**	.737**	1		
5	Resilience	-.571**	.317**	.218**	.379**	1	
6	Social Support	-.530**	.524**	.360**	.386**	.220**	1

The results of the correlation matrix between the research variables serve as the statistical basis for conducting the path analysis.

Table 4

Durbin–Watson Test Results for Error Independence

| Predictor Variables	Durbin–Watson (Autocorrelation)
Love Styles	1.941

According to Table 4, if the Durbin–Watson statistic lies between 1.5 and 2.5, the assumption of independence of residuals is accepted, allowing for the application of Pearson correlation and multivariate regression. The concept of independence means that the outcome of one observation does not affect the outcome of others. In regression analysis, this assumption is especially relevant when the dependent variable is measured over time, as non-independence among errors—known as autocorrelation—may occur. When autocorrelation is present in the residuals, linear regression analysis becomes invalid. However, since the Durbin–Watson value in this study falls between 1.5 and 2.5, the absence of autocorrelation in residuals is confirmed, and the data are suitable for multivariate regression and path analysis. Thus, the statistical test results are considered reliable.

To evaluate the hypotheses, the structural model of the study was analyzed. As previously mentioned, data analysis was conducted through path analysis using AMOS version 29 software. Figure 1 presents the results of the standardized model.

Figure 1

Conceptual Model of the Study in Standardized Form
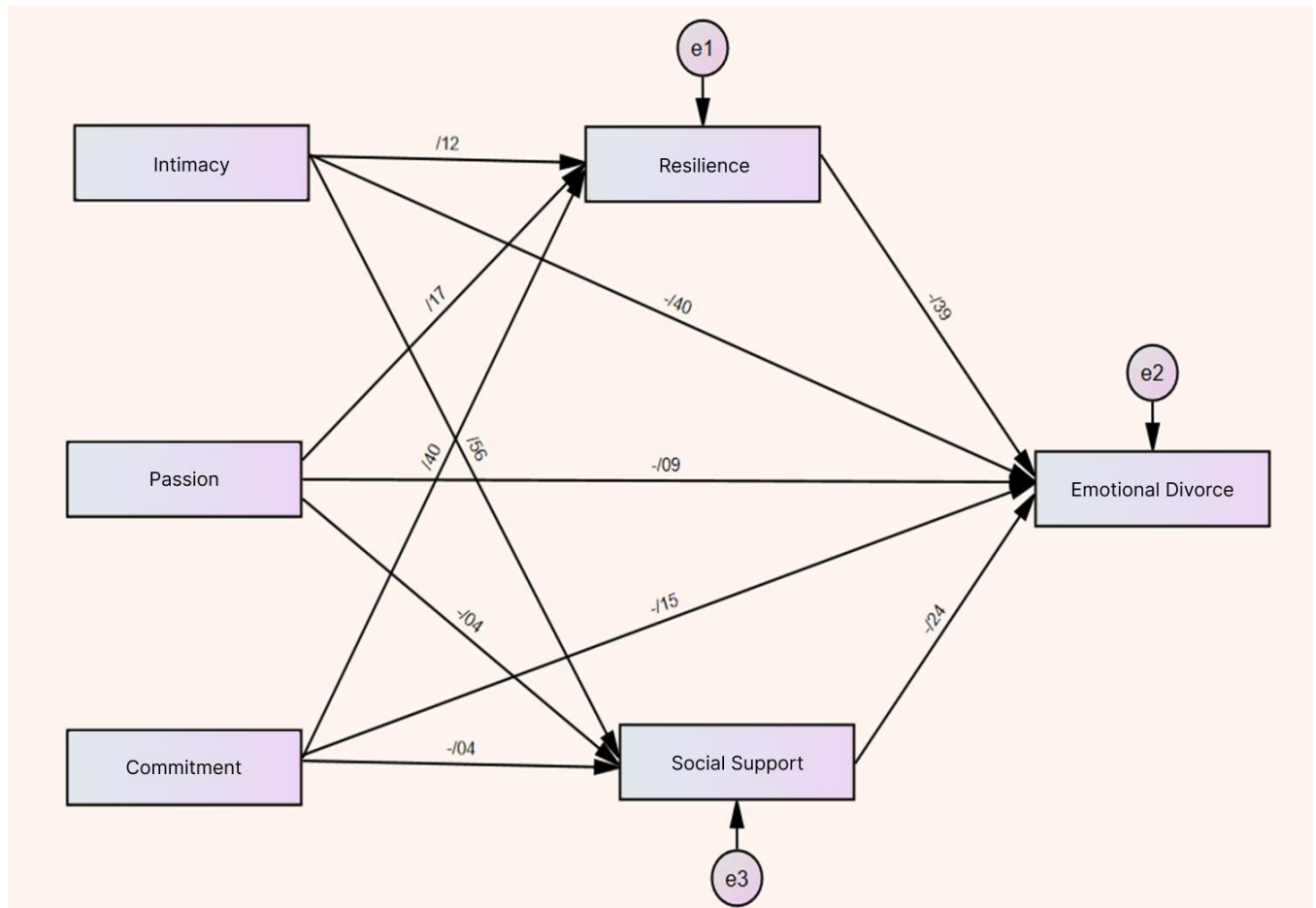
In the present study, to assess the quality of model fit, path analysis was employed, utilizing various goodness-of-fit indices. These included the Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI) and Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI) as absolute fit indices; the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Normed Fit Index (NFI), and Incremental Fit Index (IFI) as comparative fit indices; and the Chi-square divided by degrees of freedom (CMIN/df) and the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) as overall indicators of model adequacy. The chi-square index is widely recognized as one of the principal and most commonly used measures of fit in structural equation modeling. A CMIN/df ratio between 1 and 3 is considered optimal (Hooman, 2014). In the current model, the CMIN/df value was 2.021, indicating an acceptable level of fit.

Comparative indices such as GFI, AGFI, IFI, Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), CFI, and NFI are based on comparisons between the proposed model and a baseline model. In AMOS software, these indices are calculated by comparing the chi-square values of the specified and baseline models. All these indices range from 0 to 1, with values closer to 1 indicating a better fit. A value between 0.90 and 0.95 is generally interpreted as acceptable, while values above 0.95 reflect an excellent fit. Conversely, values below 0.90 suggest the need for model revision, and values approaching zero indicate an unacceptable model.

Table 5

Goodness-of-Fit Indices for the Structural Model

Fit Index	CMIN/df	GFI	CFI	IFI	NFI	RMSEA
Acceptable	1–3	>0.90	>0.90	>0.90	>0.90	<0.08
Final Model	2.021	0.909	0.896	0.921	0.902	0.077

As seen in Table 5, the final model meets the acceptable thresholds for fit indices, particularly with most values exceeding the 0.90 criterion. One of the additional indices used to assess model fit is the RMSEA, introduced by Steiger (1990), which measures the discrepancy between the observed and estimated models. Values below 0.08 indicate good model fit. In the present model, RMSEA was reported as 0.077, which is within the acceptable range. Thus, Table 6 confirms that the proposed structural models—both the initial and final versions—show an adequate fit with the observed data.

Table 6

Results of Hypothesis Testing Using Structural Equation Modeling (Direct Effects)

Hypothesis	Standardized Coefficient	Standard Error	t-value	p-value	Result
Intimacy → Emotional Divorce	-0.397	0.008	-8.983	0.001	Confirmed
Passion → Emotional Divorce	-0.087	0.007	-2.354	0.019	Confirmed
Commitment → Emotional Divorce	-0.147	0.007	-3.685	0.001	Confirmed
Intimacy → Social Support	0.563	0.015	11.790	0.001	Confirmed
Passion → Social Support	0.036	0.015	0.750	0.453	Rejected
Commitment → Social Support	0.036	0.014	0.761	0.447	Rejected
Intimacy → Resilience	0.124	0.032	2.406	0.016	Confirmed
Passion → Resilience	0.174	0.030	3.373	0.001	Confirmed
Commitment → Resilience	0.400	0.029	7.764	0.001	Confirmed
Social Support → Emotional Divorce	-0.239	0.026	-5.427	0.001	Confirmed
Resilience → Emotional Divorce	-0.388	0.013	-9.522	0.001	Confirmed

The results in Table 6 show that intimacy, passion, and commitment as love styles are all significantly and negatively associated with emotional divorce in couples, with standardized path coefficients of -0.397, -0.087, and -0.147 respectively. Furthermore, intimacy was found to have a significant and positive effect on perceived social support (β = 0.563), whereas passion and commitment were not significantly related to perceived social support. Additionally, intimacy, passion, and commitment were all positively and significantly associated with resilience in couples, with standardized coefficients of 0.124, 0.174, and 0.400 respectively.

Moreover, perceived social support was found to be significantly and negatively related to emotional divorce (β = -0.239), indicating that greater support is associated with reduced emotional detachment. Finally, resilience also showed a significant and negative association with emotional divorce (β = -0.388), highlighting the protective role of resilience in marital emotional connection.

Additionally, the Sobel test was used to assess the mediating role of resilience in the relationship between love style and emotional divorce.

Table 7

Mediation Effects of Resilience and Perceived Social Support Between Love Styles and Emotional Divorce

Love Style	Mediator	Direct Path 1	Direct Path 2	Sobel Test (z)	p-value	Mediation Confirmed
Intimacy	Resilience	Intimacy → Resilience = 0.124, t = 2.406, p < .001	Resilience → Emotional Divorce = –0.402, t = –9.474, p < .001	3.980	.001	Yes
Commitment	Resilience	Commitment → Resilience = 0.400, t = 7.764, p < .001	Resilience → Emotional Divorce = –0.402, t = –9.474, p < .001	17.888	.001	Yes
Passion	Resilience	Passion → Resilience = 0.174, t = 3.373, p < .001	Resilience → Emotional Divorce = –0.402, t = –9.474, p < .001	5.610	.001	Yes
Intimacy	Social Support	Intimacy → Social Support = 0.563, t = 11.790, p < .001	Social Support → Emotional Divorce = –0.269, t = –5.380, p < .001	8.564	.001	Yes
Commitment	Social Support	Commitment → Social Support = 0.036, t = 0.761, p = .447	Social Support → Emotional Divorce = –0.269, t = –5.380, p < .001	2.834	.004	Yes
Passion	Social Support	Passion → Social Support = 0.030, t = 0.750, p = .453	Social Support → Emotional Divorce = –0.269, t = –5.380, p < .001	2.834	.004	Yes

The results from above table indicate that resilience significantly mediates the relationship between all three love styles—intimacy, passion, and commitment—and emotional divorce. For all three pathways, the Sobel test statistic exceeded the critical threshold ($|z| > 1.96$), and all effects were statistically significant ($p < .001$). Likewise, perceived social support also emerged as a significant mediator between intimacy and emotional divorce, and surprisingly, also between commitment and passion with emotional divorce, despite their nonsignificant direct paths to social support. In all cases, the Sobel test confirmed the mediating role of the variable, supporting the conclusion that both resilience and perceived social support play significant indirect roles in reducing emotional divorce through various dimensions of love styles.

4.   Discussion and Conclusion

The results of the present study revealed that love styles—specifically intimacy, passion, and commitment—are significantly and negatively associated with emotional divorce in couples. Among these components, intimacy demonstrated the strongest inverse correlation with emotional detachment, indicating that emotional closeness plays a pivotal role in marital cohesion. Path analysis further confirmed that both resilience and perceived social support significantly mediated the relationship between love styles and emotional divorce. In particular, intimacy and commitment were positively associated with resilience, which in turn reduced the probability of emotional divorce. Likewise, perceived social support served as a partial mediator, especially in the relationship between intimacy and emotional divorce. These findings offer robust empirical support for the multidimensional model proposed in the study, which posits that love styles influence marital outcomes not only directly but also through psychological and social mediators.

The strong negative association between intimacy and emotional divorce aligns with prior research emphasizing the importance of emotional connection in maintaining marital satisfaction. Ghaeibi Panah and Keshavarzi Arshadi (2021) demonstrated that women with higher scores on intimacy-based love styles reported lower levels of cognitive distortions and emotional detachment (Ghaeibi Panah & Keshavarzi Arshadi, 2021). Similarly, Gholami Hooyda (2022) found that marital intimacy was positively predicted by social support and love styles, confirming the critical role of emotional closeness in relational durability (Gholami

Hooyda, 2022). The present study expands on this literature by identifying resilience as an underlying psychological process that transforms intimacy into emotional protection against divorce. This is consistent with the findings of Mostafa et al. (2021), who showed that resilience acts as a buffer between spousal control and emotional estrangement in women (Mostafa et al., 2021). Therefore, individuals who exhibit greater intimacy are likely to be more emotionally resilient and better equipped to navigate marital conflict, reducing the risk of emotional divorce.

The mediating role of perceived social support, particularly in the relationship between intimacy and emotional divorce, reinforces the idea that relational networks provide essential emotional scaffolding for couples. Potter (2021) reported that American couples with high levels of perceived social support experienced lower levels of marital stress and divorce rates, emphasizing the universal nature of this protective factor (Potter, 2021). The current findings also resonate with the work of Seyed Salehi et al. (2021), who identified social support as a key predictor of marital adjustment in Iranian women (Seyed Salehi et al., 2021). Furthermore, the results of the Sobel test demonstrated that both resilience and social support play statistically significant mediating roles in explaining how love styles influence emotional divorce. These dual pathways highlight the interplay of personal and social resources in buffering the effects of relational dysfunction, a model that has been echoed in recent family systems research (Asl et al., 2022; Rastgar Nasab & Hajiloo, 2022).

Interestingly, the passion component of love styles showed a relatively weaker relationship with emotional divorce compared to intimacy and commitment. This may reflect the transient and emotionally charged nature of passion, which is often less stable over time and more susceptible to external stressors. However, the positive association between passion and resilience suggests that this component may still contribute to emotional engagement and coping when it is balanced with intimacy and commitment. This interpretation is consistent with the findings of Salayani et al. (2020), who noted that love styles mediate the relationship between personality traits and marital satisfaction, indicating that different love components can have distinct relational outcomes depending on how they interact with internal traits and external resources (Salayani et al., 2020). Similarly, Kashanifar and Hadipour (2023) found that early maladaptive schemas influenced emotional divorce through love styles, underscoring the importance of underlying psychological

patterns in shaping relational dynamics (Kashanifar & Hadipour, 2023).

The significance of commitment as a predictor of emotional divorce is also supported by previous studies. Alaqband et al. (2020) identified commitment, along with emotional literacy and coping styles, as a key protective factor against emotional divorce in young married women (Alaqband et al., 2020). In the current study, commitment was positively associated with both resilience and perceived social support, which subsequently reduced emotional divorce. This finding aligns with Entazarkheir et al. (2022), who noted that emotional intelligence and emotional schemas influence emotional divorce through their impact on psychological resilience and support systems (Entazarkheir et al., 2022). The broader implication is that commitment not only signifies long-term orientation but also fosters psychological stability and social responsiveness, which are essential in maintaining emotional bonds.

Another noteworthy finding is that even when direct associations between some love styles (e.g., commitment and passion) and social support were not statistically significant, the overall mediation model still demonstrated indirect effects through resilience. This suggests a layered mechanism whereby different love styles exert influence through multiple pathways, which may or may not be direct. Fakouri Azarki (2022) explored similar dynamics by examining the mediating role of psychological flexibility in the relationship between love styles and resilience (Fakouri Azarki, 2022). Our findings also support the structural model proposed by Mirzaei et al. (2022), which linked mental health and perceived support to marital discontent through the mediating effect of individual resilience (Mirzaei et al., 2022).

Moreover, the findings corroborate studies emphasizing the complex socio-emotional dimensions of emotional divorce. For instance, Damo and Cenci (2021) highlighted that emotional divorce is often influenced by role asymmetry and perceived inequality in emotional labor, leading to silent disengagement even in formally intact marriages (Damo & Cenci, 2021). Navabinejad et al. (2024) also confirmed that family structure and emotional intimacy are key variables explaining emotional divorce, reinforcing the conceptual significance of the intimacy component in the present study (Navabinejad et al., 2024). Additionally, economic and psychological stressors such as those discussed by Mortelmans (2020) and Nahar et al. (2020) may further exacerbate emotional withdrawal, making resilience and social support even more essential as protective mechanisms (Mortelmans, 2020; Nahar et al., 2020).

Taken together, the findings of this study support a multifactorial understanding of emotional divorce, one that integrates intrapersonal (resilience), interpersonal (social support), and relational (love styles) dimensions. The structural equation model tested in this research not only aligns with but also extends prior empirical models by demonstrating the dual mediating roles of resilience and social support. Furthermore, the data suggest practical implications for marital counseling and preventive interventions that focus on enhancing emotional intimacy, building resilience, and strengthening social networks.

Despite its contributions, this study is not without limitations. First, the cross-sectional design limits the ability to infer causality between variables. Longitudinal studies are needed to establish the directionality and temporal stability of the observed relationships. Second, the reliance on self-report questionnaires may have introduced response biases such as social desirability or recall inaccuracies, particularly in a culturally sensitive topic like emotional divorce. Third, the sample was limited to couples in one district of Tehran, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other regions or cultural contexts. Finally, the study did not examine potential moderating variables such as gender, economic status, or cultural attitudes toward divorce, which could influence the observed patterns.

Future research should consider longitudinal designs to track changes in love styles, resilience, and emotional divorce over time. Expanding the sample to include diverse geographic regions and socio-economic backgrounds would enhance the external validity of the findings. Additionally, qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews or focus groups could be employed to capture the nuanced lived experiences of emotionally divorced couples. Future studies may also explore the role of cultural and religious norms, digital communication habits, or parenting responsibilities as moderating factors. Investigating the effectiveness of interventions designed to enhance love components, build resilience, and foster social support could also offer practical benefits for clinicians and policymakers.

Practitioners working with couples at risk of emotional divorce should prioritize the assessment and strengthening of emotional intimacy, commitment, and resilience. Structured therapeutic approaches such as emotionally focused therapy or schema-based interventions can help clients develop healthier love styles and adaptive coping strategies. Social support interventions, including

community-based counseling or couple support groups, can also buffer emotional strain. Marriage counselors are encouraged to address emotional disconnection before it solidifies into a chronic pattern of emotional divorce. Preventive education on love styles, emotional resilience, and communication skills could be incorporated into premarital and early marriage counseling programs to promote long-term relational health.

Authors' Contributions

All authors significantly contributed to this study.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

Acknowledgments

Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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Ethical Considerations

In this study, to observe ethical considerations, participants were informed about the goals and importance of the research before the start of the study and participated in the research with informed consent. All ethical considerations were strictly observed, and the study was approved by the Ethics Committee under the code IR.IRU.SRB.REC.1402.127.

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