





Examining the Role of Social Networks and Subjective Norms within Rusbult's Investment Model Framework to Predict the Stability of Marital Relationships in Divorce-Seeking Couples

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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The introduction provides a strong contextual foundation, but it would benefit from a clearer articulation of the research gap. For example, you mention that "many researchers intensely seek answers to questions about what contributes to marital satisfaction and longevity," but it would strengthen the argument to explicitly state what is missing from the current body of research that your study addresses. Consider expanding on the specific limitations or contradictions in existing studies, particularly in relation to divorce-seeking couples in Iran.

In the methods section, you describe the use of convenience sampling. While this is common in certain research contexts, it would be helpful to justify why this method was appropriate for your study. A brief discussion of the potential limitations of convenience sampling, and how they were mitigated or why they were acceptable, would strengthen the methodological rigor.

The inclusion of participants from divorce-seeking couples in Ilam during 2019–2020 is noted, but more details about the inclusion criteria would be beneficial. For example, were there any demographic or psychological characteristics that determined eligibility for inclusion? The clearer the inclusion/exclusion criteria, the more replicable the study becomes.

The results section begins with a good summary of the model's effectiveness, but it would benefit from more precise statistical reporting. For example, "the model was well-fitted" is vague. Could you include specific fit indices such as RMSEA, CFI, or TLI? This would provide readers with more confidence in the robustness of the model.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The discussion of the relationship between commitment and satisfaction in marriage is interesting, but it would be helpful to clarify the "extent of learning" you mention. The sentence "The relationship between commitment and satisfaction in marriage is influenced by the extent of learning" is vague. Does "learning" refer to relationship education, adaptation, or something else? A brief definition or clarification of "learning" in this context would improve clarity.

You reference two important theories (adult attachment theory and the investment model), but the transition between them could be smoother. The sentence "Two key theoretical perspectives have guided much of this research..." introduces the theories, but there is no explicit comparison or contrast between them. Briefly explaining why these two theories are complementary or how they interact in your study would make the discussion more cohesive.

You mention that "commitment is a direct and robust predictor of many critical relationship-maintenance behaviors" (Givertz, 2016). While this is a useful claim, the citation appears somewhat general. Can you provide more specific studies or data that support this assertion? Additionally, it would help to explain how these "maintenance behaviors" relate to marital stability, as this connection isn't fully developed here.

You state, "Research has also examined how other individuals influence couples' motivation to continue their relationships." This statement is significant, but the reader would benefit from more details. How do these individuals (e.g., friends, family) influence the commitment process? Are there specific studies or theories that describe this influence? A more in-depth explanation would enrich this section.

The direct effects of marital satisfaction and relationship investment on commitment are stated as "positive and significant," but no effect sizes or confidence intervals are reported. Including these details would allow the reader to evaluate the practical significance of these effects. Statistical reporting should go beyond significance levels.

You state that "commitment significantly mediated the relationships between marital satisfaction, quality of alternatives, relationship investment, and subjective norms regarding the relationship." This is a crucial finding, but the mediation analysis process could be explained in more detail. For example, did you use bootstrapping or other specific methods to test mediation? Further details on how the mediation was tested would increase the transparency of your analysis.

The connection between Social Exchange Theory and the study's findings is discussed briefly, but this could be expanded. How do the specific variables in the Investment Model align with the concepts of rewards and costs in Social Exchange Theory? A more in-depth synthesis of the two theories would provide a stronger theoretical foundation for your findings.

You mention that "those with a high comparison level expect high rewards and low costs," but this idea is not fully integrated into the context of divorce-seeking couples. How do these theoretical predictions manifest in your sample? A direct application of this concept to your results could make this theoretical explanation more relevant and clear.

The discussion of how social networks "create or alter norms, values, and laws" is fascinating, but this claim needs further elaboration. How specifically do social networks influence marital instability in your study? Are there particular social networks (e.g., family, friends, online networks) that play a more significant role? A more nuanced examination would be useful.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

2. Revised

Editor's decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief's decision: Accepted.