

Identifying Factors Associated with the Occurrence of Marital Infidelity: A Systematic Review

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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

In the methodology paragraph beginning, “The present study was conducted with the aim of identifying factors associated with the occurrence of marital infidelity, using a documentary method and a systematic review approach,” the term “documentary method” needs clearer operational definition. In systematic review methodology, “documentary method” is broad and may be interpreted as non-systematic document analysis. Please clarify how this method differs from or complements the systematic review design, and explain whether the study is a systematic review, qualitative evidence synthesis, scoping review, or systematic qualitative content analysis.

In the paragraph stating, “The search for sources covered the period from the beginning of the publication of relevant studies up to 2026,” the search timeframe is too broad and insufficiently reproducible. Please specify the exact final search date, such as day, month, and year, because “up to 2026” does not indicate when the databases were searched. This is especially important because some references are listed as 2026 publications, and readers need to know whether these were already indexed, in press, online first, or projected publications.

In the database paragraph, “The national databases included IranDoc, the Scientific Information Database of Academic Center for Education, Culture and Research (SID), and Civilica. In addition, Scopus, PsycINFO, and Google Scholar were used,” the choice of databases is generally appropriate but incomplete for a psychology and family studies review. Please justify the exclusion of databases such as Web of Science, PubMed/MEDLINE, ProQuest Dissertations, ScienceDirect, and ERIC, or explain that the selected databases were sufficient for the review question. Also, Google Scholar should be described as a supplementary search engine rather than a formal bibliographic database, and the number of screened pages or records from Google Scholar should be reported.

In the findings paragraph, “The results obtained from the systematic review of documents are reported in three stages: the process of selecting sources, the extraction of initial codes, and the final coding structure,” the reporting is logically organized, but it lacks a quality appraisal stage. A systematic review should assess the methodological quality or risk of bias of included studies. Please add an appraisal procedure, for example using CASP for qualitative studies, JBI tools, MMAT for mixed designs, or another suitable checklist.

In the PRISMA flow description, “742 studies were retrieved at the initial identification stage. After removing 186 duplicate records, 556 studies remained,” the numbers are internally coherent, but the diagram should be revised to follow PRISMA conventions more closely. Specifically, the number of records identified from each database, records excluded by automation if any, reports sought for retrieval, reports not retrieved, full-text reports assessed, and reasons for full-text exclusion should be reported separately.

Authors revised and uploaded the document.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

In the paragraph listing keywords, “marital infidelity, extramarital affairs, marital satisfaction, predictors of infidelity, and consequences of infidelity,” the search strategy requires more technical detail. Please provide the complete search strings for at least the major databases, including Boolean operators, truncations, quotation marks, field tags, and equivalent Persian keywords. Without exact search strings, the review cannot be replicated, and the risk of selection bias remains unclear.

In the paragraph stating, “These keywords were combined in the databases using Boolean operators (AND, OR),” the use of Boolean operators is mentioned only generally. Please specify how terms were combined conceptually, for example whether “marital infidelity” OR “extramarital affairs” was combined with “risk factors” OR “predictors” OR “determinants.” It would also be useful to state whether controlled vocabulary terms were used in PsycINFO, because psychology databases often require thesaurus-based searches to ensure retrieval accuracy.

In the inclusion criteria section, “Research articles, theses, books, and scientific reports that examined factors associated with the occurrence of marital infidelity” is too heterogeneous. Combining peer-reviewed articles, theses, books, and reports may increase coverage but also introduces major differences in methodological rigor. Please justify this decision and specify whether grey literature was treated differently during screening, quality appraisal, and synthesis.

In the exclusion criteria sentence, “Duplicate documents or documents lacking sufficient scientific validity,” the phrase “lacking sufficient scientific validity” needs a measurable definition. Please specify the criteria used to judge scientific validity, such as peer-review status, methodological quality scores, sample adequacy, clarity of design, validity of instruments, or relevance to the research question. Otherwise, this exclusion criterion may appear subjective.

In the screening paragraph, “First, duplicate sources were removed, and then the titles and abstracts of the studies were reviewed,” the article does not state how many reviewers conducted screening. Please specify whether screening was performed independently by two reviewers, whether disagreements were resolved through discussion or a third reviewer, and whether inter-rater agreement was calculated. This is essential because systematic review screening is vulnerable to subjective inclusion and exclusion decisions.

In the sentence, “After selecting the final sources, information related to the research objective was extracted from each study,” the data extraction procedure is insufficiently described. Please add a data extraction table or appendix showing extracted variables such as author, year, country, design, sample, measures, type of infidelity examined, main findings, and methodological quality. A review that classifies factors should allow readers to trace each extracted factor back to the study characteristics.

In the methodology sentence, “The extracted data were then examined using thematic analysis and conceptual categorization,” the analytic procedure needs greater methodological rigor. Please specify which version of thematic analysis was used, whether coding was inductive, deductive, or hybrid, and how open, axial, and selective coding were performed. Since the findings later use grounded-theory terminology, the article should explain why grounded-theory coding terms are appropriate within a systematic review.

Authors revised and uploaded the document.

2. Revised

Editor’s decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.