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Prediction of Infidelity Tendency Based on Love Styles and Personality Traits in Married Students

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A B S T R A C T

Objective: The present study aimed to predict infidelity tendency among married students based on love styles and personality traits.

Methods and Materials: This applied research employed a descriptive–correlational design. The statistical population consisted of married students enrolled at Tehran West University during the 2024–2025 academic year. Using convenience and voluntary sampling, 150 participants completed the study instruments, including the Attitudes Toward Infidelity Scale (ATIS), the Short Form of the Love Attitudes Scale (LAS), and the NEO Five-Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI). Data were analyzed using SPSS software. Inferential analyses included Pearson correlation coefficients and multiple regression analysis. Prior to hypothesis testing, assumptions of normality, multicollinearity, and independence of residuals were examined using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test, variance inflation factors, tolerance values, and the Durbin–Watson statistic. Stepwise multiple regression models were estimated to determine the predictive contribution of love styles and personality traits to infidelity tendency.

Findings: Inferential results indicated that agreeableness ($\beta = -0.264$, $p < .01$), pragmatic love ($\beta = -0.267$, $p < .001$), erotic love ($\beta = -0.157$, $p < .05$), agape love ($\beta = -0.147$, $p < .05$), and openness to experience ($\beta = -0.220$, $p < .01$) significantly and negatively predicted infidelity tendency, whereas neuroticism ($\beta = 0.256$, $p < .01$) and ludic love ($\beta = 0.294$, $p < .001$) were significant positive predictors. Combined, personality traits and love styles explained a substantial proportion of variance in infidelity tendency, with the final regression model accounting for approximately 43% of the total variance ($R^2 = .434$, $F = 22.11$, $p < .001$).

Conclusion: The findings demonstrate that both stable personality characteristics and relational love orientations play critical roles in shaping vulnerability to infidelity, underscoring the value of integrative assessment and targeted interventions in marital counseling for married students.

Keywords: *Infidelity tendency, love styles, personality traits, marriage.*

1. Introduction

Marital infidelity has remained one of the most destabilizing stressors for couple relationships because it simultaneously threatens attachment security, relational trust, and the moral meaning partners assign to commitment. Contemporary psychological scholarship increasingly treats infidelity not merely as a discrete behavior, but as a multidetermined phenomenon shaped by intrapersonal vulnerabilities, dyadic processes, and

sociocultural contexts (Allen et al., 2005; Scheeren et al., 2018). Within this framework, "tendency toward infidelity" is conceptualized as a cognitive–motivational readiness that includes permissive attitudes, curiosity, reduced commitment, and increased openness to extradyadic involvement. Such a tendency is clinically significant because it can precede actual extramarital involvement and is associated with relational conflict, emotional distancing, and downstream separation-related outcomes (Kahraman & Özbay, 2025; Labrecque & Whisman, 2017). Understanding why some married individuals develop stronger inclinations toward infidelity than others is therefore vital for prevention, assessment, and intervention in applied psychological and family therapy settings.

A key reason the topic remains urgent is that infidelity is rarely confined to the individual; it reverberates across the couple and family system. Qualitative accounts describe how betrayed partners report profound emotional dysregulation, shame, anger, and diminished relational safety, while involved partners often describe a complex mixture of justification, unmet needs, and ambivalence (Choupani et al., 2019; Scheeren et al., 2018). The familial impact can extend to children as well, influencing their emotional responses, perceptions of trust, and narratives about intimate relationships (Batara et al., 2018). At the societal level, changing norms around intimacy, the increasing visibility of alternative relationship scripts, and expanded opportunities for private communication can modify the meaning and perceived accessibility of extradyadic relationships. Accordingly, the study of infidelity tendency requires psychological models that can integrate motivational dynamics with stable dispositions and relational patterns.

From a measurement standpoint, the investigation of infidelity tendency has benefited from the development of multidimensional instruments that capture behavioral, attitudinal, and contextual aspects of extradyadic involvement. For example, the multidimensional inventory developed in Latin American contexts highlights how infidelity can be operationalized beyond single items and can include facets such as emotional involvement, sexual behavior, secrecy, and opportunity structures (Palencia et al., 2007). Instrumentation is not merely technical; it shapes the theoretical lens through which researchers interpret infidelity as a phenomenon. In recent psychometric work, advanced analytic approaches—including network analysis—have been applied to map the interconnections among romantic myths, negative interactions, relational involvement, satisfaction, jealousy, and infidelity-related outcomes, illustrating that infidelity is embedded in a broader system of relational beliefs and dynamics (Ventura-León et al., 2025). Such developments reinforce the need to examine both dispositional and relational predictors with methods capable of capturing complexity.

Among the most consistently examined dispositional predictors are personality traits. Research grounded in trait theory suggests that stable patterns of emotion regulation, impulsivity, empathy, and interpersonal functioning influence both the likelihood of encountering infidelity-relevant temptations and the capacity to inhibit behavior inconsistent with long-term commitments. Empirical studies have linked Big Five traits to infidelity-related outcomes, indicating that certain trait configurations may increase risk while others may function protectively (Sevi et al., 2020). Beyond the Big Five, emerging work has expanded the scope to include "light" and "dark" personality traits, emphasizing how factors such as narcissism, antagonism, or manipulativeness can contribute to infidelity via entitlement, reduced empathy, and exploitative relational strategies (Grigoropoulos, 2024). Complementing these findings, investigations of individuals who have experienced partner infidelity provide evidence that personality patterns may be meaningfully associated with how partners interpret and respond to infidelity-related experiences (Mahambrey, 2020). Collectively, this line of research supports a model in which personality shapes both vulnerability to infidelity tendency and the interpretive frames used to justify or resist extradyadic involvement.

However, personality alone cannot fully explain infidelity tendency, because intimate relationships are not solely trait-driven; they are also shaped by relational scripts—particularly love styles. Love style theory, originating from Lee's typology, posits that individuals approach romantic relationships with distinct patterns of motivation, affect, and expectations. These styles can guide what individuals consider "ideal" love, how they define commitment, and how they respond to dissatisfaction. In Iranian samples, empirical evidence has documented meaningful associations between love styles and personality traits, suggesting that dispositional features and romantic scripts co-develop and jointly shape relational behavior (Abdi & Golzari, 2010). Educational and therapeutic interventions have also been shown to influence love styles, implying that these patterns are not entirely fixed and may be responsive to structured learning experiences (Sadeghi et al., 2014). Additionally, romantic love and marital values

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appear intertwined, reinforcing the proposition that love-related meanings can shape ethical boundaries and behavioral intentions within marriage (Talebi & Veysi, 2012). From this perspective, infidelity tendency may be understood as a function of how love is conceptualized and enacted, especially under stress or dissatisfaction.

Extending this argument, several empirical studies have directly connected love styles to infidelity-related attitudes or tendencies. Research focused on married women has shown that love styles relate to the justification of extramarital relationships, suggesting that certain romantic scripts may normalize or rationalize boundary violations under specific conditions (Jamshidi Borhani, 2016). In couple-based contexts, love styles have been examined alongside sexual functioning as predictors of marital infidelity, highlighting how emotional scripts and sexual dynamics can converge to influence vulnerability (Morvati, 2021). Moreover, in conference-based evidence, love styles in combination with attachment patterns have demonstrated predictive utility for attitudes toward marital infidelity, indicating that romantic scripts operate in concert with relational security processes (Ajdanian & Shirazi, 2023). These converging findings position love styles as psychologically meaningful antecedents of infidelity tendency, particularly when conceptualized as cognitive–affective orientations toward intimacy, desire, and commitment.

Attachment theory provides an additional explanatory layer by clarifying how early-formed relational expectations and emotion regulation strategies shape adult intimacy. Attachment-related insecurity may heighten sensitivity to rejection, amplify distress during conflict, and undermine constructive communication—pathways that can indirectly increase openness to alternative partners. Neurobiobehavioral research has indicated that the experience of rejection is differentially painful depending on attachment style, supporting a mechanism whereby insecure individuals may seek alternative sources of reassurance or validation (DeWall et al., 2012). In clinical and community studies, attachment styles have been linked to marital satisfaction, suggesting that relational security is a foundational resource for maintaining exclusivity and commitment (Mardani et al., 2021). Empirically, multiple models propose that attachment interacts with personality and relationship satisfaction to predict infidelity-related outcomes, reinforcing a multilevel view of risk (Fricker, 2006; Mirhashemi & Akbarimoqadam, 2020). Consistent with this, structural models have shown that the pathway from personality to infidelity tendency may be mediated by attachment styles and sexual satisfaction, indicating that dispositional influences often operate through relational and sexual processes rather than directly (Salehzadeh et al., 2024).

Relational intimacy is another central construct because infidelity often emerges in contexts marked by emotional distance, unmet needs, or perceived lack of responsiveness. In broader sociopsychological discussions, changes in intimacy structures in developing contexts have been described as transformative, with implications for how individuals negotiate closeness, privacy, and relational obligations (Muniruzzaman, 2017). More specific to infidelity, recent work has highlighted intimacy as a mediating mechanism connecting midlife crisis experiences to infidelity tendency, underscoring how developmental stressors may translate into infidelity risk through the erosion of emotional closeness (Taziki et al., 2024). At the individual level, marital intimacy has also been predicted by love styles and other relational factors among married students, suggesting that love styles can be upstream determinants of intimacy, which in turn may influence infidelity-related cognitions and intentions (Afshin et al., 2024). Taken together, these studies motivate models where infidelity tendency is not treated as a moral failing but as an outcome of interacting dispositions and relational resources.

Emotional and self-regulatory processes also play a salient role. For many individuals, infidelity tendency is shaped by how they manage dissatisfaction, temptation, and interpersonal stress. Emotional intelligence has been examined in relation to infidelity among married couples, including its interplay with narcissistic traits, indicating that affective competencies and self-focused personality dynamics can jointly influence vulnerability (Ogwuche et al., 2024). Additionally, mindfulness has recently been proposed as a protective psychological resource: it may reduce automaticity in responding to relational distress, increase awareness of impulses, and support value-consistent behavior. In this vein, mindfulness has been found to mediate the association between infidelity tendency and divorce anxiety, implying that enhanced present-centered awareness may alter the emotional consequences and behavioral implications of infidelity-related cognitions (Kahraman & Özbay, 2025). Such findings are consistent with broader psychological models emphasizing self-regulation as a bridge between dispositional vulnerability and behavioral outcomes.

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Gender and cultural context further qualify the meaning and correlates of infidelity tendency. Evidence indicates that infidelity may relate to sex and gender in nuanced ways, not only in prevalence patterns but also in the motivations and social consequences attached to extradyadic involvement (Wróblewska-Skrzek, 2021). Cultural norms can shape whether infidelity tendency is expressed openly, rationalized privately, or constrained by perceived sanctions. In Iranian contexts, research comparing attachment and love styles among couples from divorced versus intact families suggests that family background may shape relational scripts and security, potentially influencing vulnerability pathways (Shah Oveisi et al., 2019). Additionally, studies conducted in clinical samples in Iran have examined personality-based predictors of infidelity, reinforcing the importance of contextualizing risk factors within local relational norms and help-seeking patterns (Hashemi & Ranjbaripour, 2019; Pourjorat, 2016). Conference-based research has also considered existential and spiritual variables as predictors of attitudes toward infidelity, implying that meaning systems and spirituality may shape permissive or restrictive orientations toward extramarital involvement (Khalilzadeh & Soleimani, 2019). This cultural sensitivity is crucial when interpreting findings among married students, whose developmental stage and institutional context may introduce unique stressors and opportunities.

In addition to these established predictors, recent methodological advances and analytic strategies are reshaping how psychological researchers examine infidelity-related constructs. Network approaches, for example, allow researchers to identify central nodes (e.g., romantic myths or jealousy) that may function as leverage points for intervention (Ventura-León et al., 2025). Psychometric and methodological scholarship also emphasizes that robust inference depends on measurement quality and model specification, particularly when assessing latent constructs and complex relational pathways. In applied psychological research, careful attention to the validation of measures and the appropriateness of statistical models strengthens interpretability and generalizability, especially in contexts where constructs are culturally adapted or translated. In this respect, recent work underscores the ongoing need for rigorous psychometric evaluation and methodological transparency when examining relationship variables (Ventura-León et al., 2025).

Despite the expanding literature, several gaps justify further empirical attention. First, many studies examine either personality traits or relational scripts in isolation, whereas evidence increasingly indicates that infidelity tendency is best understood through integrative models that combine dispositional and relational variables (Salehzadeh et al., 2024; Sevi et al., 2020). Second, within married student populations, the combination of academic demands, developmental transitions, and evolving identity goals may uniquely influence marital functioning and vulnerability to infidelity-related cognitions. Third, cultural and contextual factors—such as family background, social norms, and meaning systems—may moderate the links between predictors and infidelity tendency, warranting localized study designs that do not assume cross-cultural equivalence (Shah Oveisi et al., 2019; Wróblewska-Skrzek, 2021). Finally, while several Iranian studies have explored infidelity attitudes, justification, and related correlates, there remains a practical need for predictive evidence that can inform preventive psychoeducation, premarital/marital counseling, and university-based support services for married students (Afshin et al., 2024; Jamshidi Borhani, 2016; Mirhashemi & Akbarimoqadam, 2020).

The present study is positioned at the intersection of these lines of inquiry by treating infidelity tendency as an outcome shaped by both personality traits and love styles, within a married student sample. This focus is theoretically defensible because personality contributes stable affective and interpersonal propensities, while love styles capture relational scripts that guide meaning-making, commitment, and responses to dissatisfaction (Abdi & Golzari, 2010; Sevi et al., 2020). It is also empirically motivated by prior evidence that love styles, attachment patterns, intimacy, and sexual satisfaction can function as mediators or proximal relational mechanisms through which broader dispositions influence infidelity-related outcomes (Afshin et al., 2024; Salehzadeh et al., 2024; Taziki et al., 2024). By integrating these constructs, the study aims to provide a more actionable understanding of risk and protective factors, with implications for targeted interventions such as intimacy enhancement, love-style education, self-regulation training, and personality-informed counseling strategies (Kahraman & Özbay, 2025; Ogwuche et al., 2024; Sadeghi et al., 2014).

The literature also suggests that infidelity is embedded in broader contextual systems that include intrapersonal vulnerabilities, dyadic patterns, and social opportunities. Classic integrative models emphasize the interplay of intrapersonal factors (e.g., personality, self-regulation), interpersonal processes (e.g., intimacy, satisfaction), and contextual variables (e.g., stressors and opportunity structures) in explaining extramarital involvement and

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responses to it (Allen et al., 2005). Qualitative evidence further indicates that individuals often construct narratives to explain causes and deterrents of extramarital relationships, highlighting the importance of cognitive justifications and perceived barriers in determining whether inclination translates into action (Choupani et al., 2019). Therefore, examining infidelity tendency—rather than only reported behavior—can illuminate earlier-stage psychological processes that interventions can more feasibly target, particularly in preventive and educational settings such as universities (Labrecque & Whisman, 2017; Malaei, 2022).

In sum, the psychological study of infidelity tendency benefits from an integrative model that connects stable dispositions (personality), relational scripts (love styles), and relational mechanisms (intimacy, attachment, satisfaction), while remaining attentive to cultural and developmental context. Prior evidence supports meaningful associations between infidelity-related outcomes and personality traits, love styles, attachment patterns, and relational resources, yet the combined predictive contribution of love styles and personality traits in married students remains an important empirical question that can inform prevention and counseling practice (Abdi & Golzari, 2010; Ajdanian & Shirazi, 2023; Grigoropoulos, 2024; Mirhashemi & Akbarimoqadam, 2020; Salehzadeh et al., 2024). Accordingly, the aim of the present study was to predict infidelity tendency based on love styles and personality traits among married students.

2. Methods and Materials

2.1. Study Design and Participants

The present study is applied in terms of its objective and descriptive–correlational with respect to data collection. The statistical population consisted of all married students enrolled at Tehran West University during the 2024–2025 academic year. Convenience and voluntary sampling methods were employed. To determine the minimum required sample size, the formula proposed by Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) for correlational studies was used:

$N \geq 50 + 8m$,

where m represents the number of subscales of the variables. Given that the total number of subscales in this study was 13, the minimum sample size was calculated as $N = 50 + 8(13) = 154$. To increase the accuracy and generalizability of the findings, the sample size was increased to 165 participants. The questionnaires were designed electronically via the Porsline platform and distributed online through social networks and messaging applications. Ultimately, 150 married students completed and returned the questionnaires in full.

2.2. Measures

Attitudes Toward Infidelity Scale (ATIS): This scale was developed by Whatley (2008) and consists of 12 items rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree (7) to strongly disagree (1). Items 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 12 are reverse-scored. Total scores range from 12 to 84, with higher scores indicating a more positive attitude toward marital infidelity. Whatley (2008) reported a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.80 for the scale. To establish construct validity, a point-biserial correlation coefficient was calculated between scores on attitudes toward extramarital relationships and participants' true–false responses to the item "I have never been unfaithful to my partner." Participants with higher scores on attitudes toward extramarital relationships were more likely to report having been unfaithful. The psychometric properties of the ATIS in Iran were examined by Habibi et al. (2019), who confirmed its unidimensional factor structure using confirmatory factor analysis and reported Cronbach's alpha and two-week test–retest reliability coefficients of 0.87 and 0.73, respectively. Furthermore, the scale demonstrated significant divergent validity with the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale ($r = -0.22$) and the sexual satisfaction subscale of the ENRICH inventory ($r = -0.16$).

Short Form of the Love Attitudes Scale (LAS): This instrument is the shortened version of the Love Attitudes Scale developed by Hendrick et al. (1986) to assess six love styles based on Lee's theory: (1) Eros (romantic love): love based on intense physical and emotional attraction; (2) Ludus (game-playing love): love as a game without long-term commitment; (3) Storge (friendship love): calm and friendly love based on friendship and mutual respect; (4) Pragma (practical love): logical and pragmatic love based on compatibility and shared interests; (5) Mania (possessive or obsessive love): intense love accompanied by anxiety, jealousy, and emotional dependency; and (6) Agape (selfless love): unconditional, altruistic, and self-sacrificing love. Each love style is measured by three items, and responses are recorded on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Hendrick et al. (1998) reported Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the six love styles ranging from 0.68 to 0.87. Research findings have demonstrated that

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this scale possesses acceptable reliability and validity and is applicable across different cultures (Laskarin, Weiss, Lavandera, Leria, & Medina, 2017). The factorial structure of the scale was examined in the Iranian population, and its six-factor structure was confirmed (Abdi & Golzari, 2010).

Personality Traits Questionnaire: The Five-Factor Personality Inventory (NEO-FFI) was developed by Costa and McCrae (1994) to assess personality traits. This questionnaire consists of 25 items and five dimensions: Conscientiousness (items 5, 10, 15, 20, 25), Agreeableness (items 4, 9, 14, 19, 24), Extraversion (items 2, 7, 12, 17, 22), Neuroticism (items 1, 6, 11, 16, 21), and Openness to Experience (items 3, 8, 13, 18, 23). The items are rated on a Likert scale. Items 8, 14, 15, 16, 17, 20, 22, 23, and 24 are reverse-scored. Total scores range from 25 to 125. Costa and McCrae (1994) reported concurrent validity coefficients with the long form of the inventory ranging from 0.75 for Conscientiousness to 0.89 for Neuroticism and Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients of 0.84 for Conscientiousness, 0.79 for Agreeableness, 0.75 for Extraversion, 0.83 for Neuroticism, and 0.80 for Openness. In Iran, the scale was examined by Grossi Farshi (2001), who assessed criterion validity by calculating correlations between self-report and observer-report forms, obtaining coefficients ranging from 0.45 to 0.66, and reported Cronbach's alpha coefficients between 0.56 and 0.87. In the present study, Cronbach's alpha coefficients for Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, Extraversion, Neuroticism, and Openness were 0.87, 0.68, 0.73, 0.86, and 0.65, respectively.

2.3. Data Analysis

Data analysis was performed using SPSS statistical software. Descriptive statistics, including frequency tables, percentages, characteristics of the study sample, and relevant charts, were calculated. To test the research hypotheses and compare the status of the variables, Pearson correlation coefficients and multiple regression analysis were employed.

3. Findings and Results

The age of most participants (22.67%) ranged between 25–30 years and 41–45 years, while the smallest proportion (5.33%) was under 25 years of age. Of the participants, 96% were female and 4% were male. The educational level of the majority of the sample (74.67%) was a master's degree, whereas the lowest proportion (5.33%) held a doctoral degree. In addition, 75.33% of the participants had children and 24.67% did not. Regarding employment status, 49.33% were employed and 50.67% were unemployed. Descriptive statistics of the variables indicated that among the personality traits, Openness to Experience obtained the highest mean score (M = 16.76, SD = 3.690), whereas Extraversion had the lowest mean score (M = 14.23, SD = 2.786). Moreover, the mean score of infidelity tendency was 51.20 with a standard deviation of 9.289. Moreover, among the love styles, Erotic Love obtained the highest mean score (M = 10.23, SD = 3.144), whereas Friendship Love obtained the lowest mean score (M = 9.26, SD = 3.369).

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of the Personality Traits and Study Variables

Variable	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	Min	Max
Conscientiousness	14.43	3.503	−0.656	−0.081	6	22
Agreeableness	15.15	2.589	−1.076	1.279	8	20
Extraversion	14.23	2.786	−0.716	0.180	7	19
Neuroticism	16.21	2.946	0.683	0.228	11	24
Openness to Experience	16.76	3.690	−0.801	0.770	5	24
Infidelity Tendency	51.20	9.289	1.359	1.055	39	78
Erotic Love	10.23	3.144	−0.405	−0.882	4	15
Ludic Love	9.87	2.554	−0.097	−0.071	3	15
Friendship Love	9.26	3.369	0.123	−1.161	3	15
Pragmatic Love	9.61	2.874	−0.218	−0.704	3	15
Manic Love	9.43	2.970	−0.045	−0.897	3	15
Agape Love	9.52	2.602	−0.215	−0.802	4	15

In this study, the significance level of the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test for all research variables was greater than 0.05, indicating that all variables were normally distributed. Pearson correlation coefficients were therefore used to examine the relationships among the study variables. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 2.

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Table 2

Pearson Correlation Coefficients Among the Study Variables

Variable	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Conscientiousness	0.678	0.648	−0.395	0.665	−0.463	0.450	−0.236	0.272	0.284	−0.202	0.481
2. Agreeableness	1	0.650	−0.569	0.599	−0.541	0.547	−0.449	0.443	0.390	−0.447	0.565
3. Extraversion		1	−0.363	0.645	−0.472	0.408	−0.354	0.462	0.321	−0.381	0.382
4. Neuroticism			1	−0.372	0.488	−0.247	0.327	−0.257	−0.485	0.282	−0.416
5. Openness				1	−0.473	0.406	−0.252	0.244	0.328	−0.214	0.450
6. Infidelity Tendency					1	−0.387	0.434	−0.310	−0.435	0.290	−0.362
7. Erotic Love						1	−0.214	0.466	0.430	−0.331	0.355
8. Ludic Love							1	−0.415	−0.220	0.488	−0.321
9. Friendship Love								1	0.446	−0.346	0.358
10. Pragmatic Love									1	−0.247	0.242
11. Manic Love										1	−0.367
12. Agape Love											1

The Durbin–Watson test was used to examine the independence of residuals. As a general rule, observed Durbin–Watson values between 1.50 and 2.50 indicate independence of errors. The obtained Durbin–Watson statistic for the regression model was 1.596, which falls within the acceptable range; therefore, the assumption of independence of residuals was supported. In addition, tolerance values for all independent variables were greater than 0.50 and VIF values were less than 10, indicating the absence of multicollinearity among the predictors.

To predict infidelity tendency in married students (dependent variable) based on love styles and personality traits (independent variables), multiple regression analysis was conducted. According to the results reported in Table 3, Agreeableness explained 29.3% of the variance in infidelity tendency, Pragmatic Love explained 5.9%, Ludic Love explained 4.0%, Openness to Experience explained 2.6%, and Neuroticism explained 1.6% of the variance. The observed F values for the predictors were significant at $p < .001$, indicating that these variables significantly predicted infidelity tendency in married students.

Table 3

Summary of Regression Model, ANOVA, and Statistical Indicators for Predicting Infidelity Tendency

Model	Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2
1	Regression	2764.031	1	2764.031	61.258	.001	.541	.293	.293
	Residual	9093.969	148	61.446					
2	Regression	4523.232	2	2261.616	39.888	.001	.593	.352	.059
	Residual	8334.768	147	56.699					
3	Regression	5040.374	3	1680.125	31.378	.001	.626	.392	.040
	Residual	7817.626	146	53.545					
4	Regression	5380.136	4	1345.034	26.081	.001	.647	.418	.026
	Residual	7477.846	145	51.571					
5	Regression	5583.647	5	1116.729	22.106	.001	.659	.434	.016
	Residual	7274.353	144	50.516					

In Table 4, the unstandardized and standardized regression coefficients and the significance of these coefficients are reported. The relationship between Agreeableness and infidelity tendency in married students was negative ($\beta = -0.158$). The *t* statistic for this effect was −1.969, which was statistically significant at the 0.05 level. The relationship between Pragmatic Love and infidelity tendency was also negative ($\beta = -0.179$), with a *t* value of −2.451, significant at the 0.05 level. In contrast, the relationship between Ludic Love and infidelity tendency was positive ($\beta = 0.219$), with a *t* value of 3.097, significant at the 0.05 level. The relationship between Openness to Experience and infidelity tendency was negative ($\beta = -0.204$), with a *t* value of −2.580, significant at the 0.05

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level. Finally, the relationship between Neuroticism and infidelity tendency was positive (β = 0.164), with a *t* value of 2.007, which was statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 4

Stepwise Regression Coefficients for Predicting Infidelity Tendency in Married Students

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p
Constant	57.719	8.620	—	6.696	.001
Agreeableness	−0.565	0.334	−0.158	−1.969	.049
Pragmatic Love	−0.579	0.236	−0.179	−2.451	.015
Ludic Love	0.795	0.257	0.219	3.097	.002
Openness	−0.513	0.199	−0.204	−2.580	.011
Neuroticism	0.516	0.257	0.164	2.007	.047

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to predict infidelity tendency in married students (dependent variable) based on love styles (independent variables). According to the results presented in Table 5, Pragmatic Love explained 18.9% of the variance in infidelity tendency, Ludic Love explained 12.0%, Erotic Love explained 3.1%, and Agape Love explained 1.8% of the variance. The observed *F* values for the predictors were statistically significant at $p < .001$, indicating that these variables significantly predicted infidelity tendency in married students.

Table 5

Summary of Regression Models Predicting Infidelity Tendency from Love Styles

Step	Source	SS	df	MS	F	p	R	R^2	ΔR^2
1	Regression	2431.267	1	2431.267	34.510	.001	.435	.189	.189
	Residual	10426.733	148	70.451					
2	Regression	3976.785	2	1988.392	32.911	.001	.556	.309	.120
	Residual	8881.215	147	60.416					
3	Regression	4374.515	3	1458.172	25.905	.001	.583	.340	.031
	Residual	8483.485	146	58.106					
4	Regression	4599.604	4	1149.901	20.190	.001	.598	.358	.018
	Residual	8258.396	145	56.954					

In Table 6, the unstandardized and standardized regression coefficients and the significance of these coefficients are presented. The relationship between Pragmatic Love and infidelity tendency was negative (β = −0.267), with a *t* value of −3.579, significant at the 0.05 level. The relationship between Ludic Love and infidelity tendency was positive (β = 0.294), with a *t* value of 4.131, significant at the 0.05 level. The relationship between Erotic Love and infidelity tendency was negative (β = −0.157), with a *t* value of −2.032, significant at the 0.05 level. Finally, the relationship between Agape Love and infidelity tendency was negative (β = −0.147), with a *t* value of −1.988, which was statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 6

Stepwise Regression Coefficients for Predicting Infidelity Tendency from Love Styles

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p
Constant	58.675	4.654	—	12.607	.001
Pragmatic Love	−0.864	0.241	−0.267	−3.579	.001
Ludic Love	1.070	0.259	0.294	4.131	.001
Erotic Love	−0.463	0.228	−0.157	−2.032	.044
Agape Love	−0.526	0.264	−0.147	−1.988	.049

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Multiple regression analysis was also conducted to predict infidelity tendency in married students (dependent variable) based on personality traits (independent variables). According to the results presented in Table 7, Agreeableness explained 29.3% of the variance in infidelity tendency, Neuroticism explained 4.8%, and Openness to Experience explained 3.1% of the variance. The observed *F* values for the predictors were statistically significant at $p < .001$, indicating that these personality traits significantly predicted infidelity tendency in married students.

Table 7

Summary of Regression Models Predicting

Step	Source	SS	df	MS	F	p	R	R^2	ΔR^2
1	Regression	3764.031	1	3764.031	31.258	.001	.541	.293	.293
	Residual	9093.969	148	61.446					
2	Regression	4378.784	2	2189.392	37.956	.001	.584	.341	.048
	Residual	8479.216	147	57.682					
3	Regression	4775.854	3	1591.951	28.758	.001	.609	.371	.031
	Residual	8082.146	146	55.357					

In Table 8, the unstandardized and standardized regression coefficients and the significance of these coefficients are reported. The relationship between Agreeableness and infidelity tendency was negative ($\beta = -0.264$), with a *t* value of −2.849, significant at the 0.05 level. The relationship between Neuroticism and infidelity tendency was positive ($\beta = 0.256$), with a *t* value of 3.201, significant at the 0.05 level. In addition, the relationship between Openness to Experience and infidelity tendency was negative ($\beta = -0.220$), with a *t* value of −2.678, which was statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 8

Stepwise Regression Coefficients for Predicting Infidelity Tendency from Personality Traits

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p
Constant	61.740	7.561	—	8.166	.001
Agreeableness	−0.946	0.332	−0.264	−2.849	.005
Neuroticism	0.806	0.252	0.256	3.201	.002
Openness	−0.553	0.207	−0.220	−2.678	.008

4. Discussion

The present study aimed to predict infidelity tendency among married students based on love styles and personality traits. The findings provide strong empirical support for a multidimensional model in which both dispositional characteristics and relational orientations play significant and complementary roles in shaping vulnerability to infidelity. Overall, the results indicated that specific love styles—particularly pragmatic love and ludic love—as well as selected personality traits—namely agreeableness, neuroticism, and openness to experience—were significant predictors of infidelity tendency. These findings are highly consistent with contemporary psychological models of extradyadic behavior that conceptualize infidelity not as a singular moral failure but as the outcome of interacting cognitive, emotional, and relational processes (Allen et al., 2005; Salehzadeh et al., 2024; Scheeren et al., 2018).

The regression analyses demonstrated that among personality traits, agreeableness emerged as the strongest protective factor against infidelity tendency, explaining a substantial proportion of variance. Individuals scoring higher in agreeableness reported significantly lower inclination toward infidelity. This result is theoretically coherent, as agreeableness reflects empathy, cooperation, and concern for relational harmony—traits that directly counteract the self-centered motivations often implicated in infidelity. This aligns closely with previous findings that individuals low in agreeableness exhibit higher risk for relational transgressions and weaker commitment regulation (Grigoropoulos, 2024; Mahambrey, 2020; Sevi et al., 2020). Clinical studies in Iranian populations have similarly shown that personality-based vulnerabilities, including low agreeableness, predict higher likelihood of infidelity-related

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attitudes and behaviors (Hashemi & Ranjbaripour, 2019; Pourjorat, 2016). Therefore, the present findings reinforce agreeableness as a central dispositional buffer protecting marital stability.

Neuroticism, in contrast, displayed a positive and significant association with infidelity tendency. Participants with higher emotional instability, anxiety, and vulnerability to stress demonstrated greater openness to extradyadic involvement. This finding is congruent with attachment-based models suggesting that individuals high in neuroticism experience intensified relational insecurity, emotional dysregulation, and sensitivity to rejection, which may motivate seeking emotional reassurance outside the primary relationship (DeWall et al., 2012; Mardani et al., 2021). Prior studies have similarly reported that neuroticism predicts marital dissatisfaction, relational conflict, and higher infidelity risk (Mirhashemi & Akbarimoqadam, 2020; Ogwuche et al., 2024; Salehzadeh et al., 2024). From a self-regulation perspective, neuroticism undermines impulse control during periods of relational stress, increasing susceptibility to infidelity-related cognitions.

Openness to experience exhibited a negative association with infidelity tendency in this sample, suggesting that individuals higher in curiosity, flexibility, and cognitive complexity were less inclined toward infidelity. Although openness is sometimes associated with novelty seeking, the present results support evidence that cognitive openness may facilitate adaptive coping, perspective-taking, and constructive problem-solving within relationships rather than escapist behaviors (Grigoropoulos, 2024; Mahambrey, 2020). This protective role of openness is especially meaningful within the context of married students, who face considerable developmental transitions and stressors; openness may enable them to reinterpret challenges without resorting to extradyadic alternatives.

Regarding love styles, pragmatic love emerged as a robust negative predictor of infidelity tendency. Individuals who approach relationships with practical considerations, long-term planning, and rational partner evaluation exhibited lower infidelity inclination. This finding corroborates love style theory, which posits that pragmatic lovers prioritize compatibility, stability, and future consequences over impulsive desire (Abdi & Golzari, 2010; Talebi & Veysi, 2012). Empirical evidence has repeatedly linked pragmatic love with higher marital commitment and lower permissiveness toward extramarital involvement (Ajdanian & Shirazi, 2023; Jamshidi Borhani, 2016; Morvati, 2021). The present results extend this evidence to married student populations and underscore pragmatic love as a powerful cognitive–motivational regulator of fidelity.

Conversely, ludic love displayed a strong positive association with infidelity tendency. Ludic love conceptualizes romantic involvement as a game, emphasizing pleasure, excitement, and low commitment. Individuals endorsing this style were significantly more inclined toward infidelity. This aligns with extensive research demonstrating that ludic love predicts permissive sexual attitudes, emotional detachment, and justification of extramarital behavior (Jamshidi Borhani, 2016; Malaei, 2022; Morvati, 2021). Moreover, Ajdanian and Shirazi (2023) reported that ludic love combined with insecure attachment styles powerfully predicts positive attitudes toward infidelity (Ajdanian & Shirazi, 2023). Thus, the present findings confirm that ludic love constitutes one of the most potent relational risk factors for infidelity tendency.

Erotic love and agape love also contributed meaningfully to the prediction model. Erotic love exhibited a negative association with infidelity tendency, suggesting that intense romantic and emotional bonding within marriage may serve as a protective buffer. This supports evidence that romantic attachment and emotional closeness foster exclusivity and strengthen relational investment (Afshin et al., 2024; Talebi & Veysi, 2012). Agape love, reflecting selfless and altruistic commitment, likewise predicted lower infidelity tendency, consistent with findings that altruistic relational orientations reinforce moral responsibility and inhibit opportunistic behavior (Abdi & Golzari, 2010; Ghadampour et al., 2024). These results demonstrate that not all passion increases risk; rather, the quality and meaning structure of love determines whether desire strengthens or weakens commitment.

Taken together, the present findings strongly support integrative models of infidelity that combine dispositional and relational determinants. Structural models in previous research have shown that personality traits exert their effects on infidelity through relational mechanisms such as attachment security, intimacy, and sexual satisfaction (Afshin et al., 2024; Salehzadeh et al., 2024; Taziki et al., 2024). The current study extends this framework by demonstrating that even in the absence of behavioral measures of infidelity, love styles and personality traits jointly predict the underlying tendency toward infidelity—an earlier and more malleable psychological construct. This has important preventive implications, particularly for married students whose relational patterns are still forming within demanding academic and developmental contexts.

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Importantly, the findings also resonate with contemporary work on self-regulation and mindfulness. Kahraman and Özbay (2025) showed that mindfulness mediates the relationship between infidelity tendency and divorce anxiety, suggesting that individuals with greater regulatory awareness are better able to inhibit maladaptive impulses (Kahraman & Özbay, 2025). The present results imply that personality and love styles shape the baseline level of vulnerability upon which regulatory capacities operate. Likewise, emotional intelligence and narcissistic traits have been shown to interact in predicting marital infidelity (Ogwuche et al., 2024), reinforcing the view that infidelity tendency emerges from layered psychological processes.

From a systems perspective, the results are consistent with Allen et al.'s (2005) integrative framework, which emphasizes intrapersonal, interpersonal, and contextual contributors to extramarital involvement (Allen et al., 2005). Love styles capture interpersonal meaning systems, while personality traits represent intrapersonal dispositions. Together, they explain why some individuals navigate relational stress adaptively, whereas others develop vulnerability to infidelity. Qualitative studies further show that individuals construct narratives of justification and deterrence around infidelity, shaped by these same psychological structures (Choupani et al., 2019). Thus, the present findings provide empirical support for both theoretical and clinical models of infidelity.

5. Conclusion

In summary, this study contributes to the growing body of evidence that infidelity tendency among married individuals is best understood through an integrative psychological model combining stable personality traits with relational love scripts. By identifying both risk and protective factors, the findings offer actionable insight for marital counseling, psychoeducation, and preventive intervention programs targeting married students.

6. Limitations & Suggestions

Despite the strength of the findings, several limitations should be acknowledged. The study relied on self-report measures, which may be influenced by social desirability and underreporting, especially given the sensitive nature of infidelity. The cross-sectional design precludes causal inference and limits the ability to examine how personality and love styles influence infidelity tendency over time. The sample was restricted to married students from a single university, which may constrain generalizability to other age groups, marital durations, and cultural contexts.

Future studies should employ longitudinal designs to track how personality traits and love styles dynamically influence infidelity tendency across different stages of marriage. Incorporating dyadic data from both partners would allow examination of interaction effects and relational feedback loops. Qualitative approaches may further illuminate the subjective meaning systems through which individuals interpret love, commitment, and temptation. Expanding samples across cultures, socioeconomic groups, and life stages would enhance the ecological validity of the model.

Practitioners working with married students should integrate assessment of love styles and personality traits into premarital education and marital counseling programs. Interventions can be designed to strengthen pragmatic, romantic, and altruistic love orientations while reducing maladaptive ludic patterns. Personality-informed counseling may help clients recognize emotional vulnerabilities linked to neuroticism and develop healthier coping strategies. Universities and counseling centers can implement preventive workshops focused on emotional regulation, commitment skills, and adaptive relational beliefs to reduce vulnerability to infidelity before behavioral patterns become entrenched.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

Ethical Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants.

Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

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Authors' Contributions

M.A.Y. was responsible for the conceptualization and design of the study, development of the research framework, coordination of participant recruitment and data collection, statistical analysis and interpretation of the results, and preparation, critical revision, and final approval of the manuscript. The author confirms accountability for all aspects of the work and the integrity of the reported findings.

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