

## Rejection Sensitivity and Attachment Avoidance as Predictors of Intimacy Struggles in Romantic Relationships

Karina. Batthyany<sup>1</sup>, Carlos. Hernández<sup>2\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Psychology, Queen's University, Kingston, Canada

<sup>2</sup> Department of Educational Sciences, University of Guadalajara, Guadalajara, Mexico

\* Corresponding author email address: carlos.hernandez@udg.mx

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### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** This study aimed to investigate whether rejection sensitivity and attachment avoidance significantly predict intimacy struggles in romantic relationships.

**Methods and Materials:** A correlational descriptive research design was employed using a sample of 433 adults from Mexico, selected based on the Morgan and Krejcie sample size table. Participants completed standardized self-report measures assessing rejection sensitivity, attachment avoidance, and intimacy struggles. Data were analyzed using SPSS-27, including Pearson correlation to examine the relationships between the dependent variable and each independent variable, and multiple linear regression to assess the predictive power of the independent variables on intimacy struggles. All statistical assumptions were checked and met before performing the analyses.

**Findings:** Results indicated significant positive correlations between intimacy struggles and both rejection sensitivity ( $r = .51, p < .01$ ) and attachment avoidance ( $r = .46, p < .01$ ). Multiple regression analysis revealed that rejection sensitivity ( $\beta = .39, t = 7.75, p < .01$ ) and attachment avoidance ( $\beta = .33, t = 7.31, p < .01$ ) were both significant predictors of intimacy struggles. The overall model was statistically significant,  $F(2, 430) = 105.89, p < .01$ , with an  $R^2$  of .33, indicating that 33% of the variance in intimacy struggles was explained by the predictor variables.

**Conclusion:** The findings highlight that both rejection sensitivity and attachment avoidance are key psychological factors contributing to intimacy struggles in romantic relationships. These results underscore the importance of addressing underlying emotional vulnerabilities in relationship counseling and psychological interventions, particularly in culturally diverse populations such as adults in Mexico.

**Keywords:** Rejection sensitivity, attachment avoidance, intimacy struggles.

## 1. Introduction

Intimacy, defined as the emotional closeness and mutual vulnerability shared between romantic partners, is a cornerstone of satisfying and enduring romantic relationships. Yet, for many individuals, engaging in or sustaining intimacy is fraught with psychological barriers and interpersonal challenges. These struggles often manifest as difficulties in expressing emotions, fear of closeness, or discomfort with dependence on a partner, ultimately undermining relational well-being. Research suggests that such intimacy struggles may not stem solely from situational factors or partner compatibility, but are deeply rooted in individual psychological tendencies shaped by early attachment experiences and social-cognitive vulnerabilities such as rejection sensitivity and attachment avoidance (Ghasemi, 2023; Leite, 2025). As romantic relationships play a significant role in psychological development and emotional fulfillment in emerging and established adulthood, understanding the predictors of intimacy difficulties remains a critical area of psychological inquiry (Ercan, 2025).

One central psychological construct relevant to intimacy struggles is rejection sensitivity, which refers to the tendency to anxiously expect, readily perceive, and overreact to rejection in interpersonal contexts (Richter & Schoebi, 2021). Individuals with high rejection sensitivity are prone to misinterpreting ambiguous social cues as signs of impending rejection, leading to defensive or avoidant behaviors that can erode intimacy over time (Giovazolias & Paschalidi, 2022). Such individuals may experience heightened emotional reactivity, possess negative attributional styles, and oscillate between hypervigilance and emotional withdrawal, which cumulatively inhibit the capacity for sustained closeness in romantic relationships (Choi & Lim, 2023). The origins of rejection sensitivity are often linked to early relational environments marked by inconsistency, neglect, or critical parenting, which condition the individual to anticipate rejection as a protective strategy (Finzi-Dottan & Abadi, 2024; Norona et al., 2017). Within romantic contexts, this anticipatory anxiety can sabotage communication, escalate conflict, and diminish partner satisfaction, leading to a self-perpetuating cycle of intimacy disruption (Giovazolias & Paschalidi, 2022; Richter & Schoebi, 2023).

Another dispositional factor that has garnered empirical attention in the study of intimacy difficulties is attachment avoidance. Rooted in attachment theory, attachment

avoidance reflects a pattern of discomfort with closeness, emotional reliance, and relational interdependence (Ghasemi, 2023). Avoidantly attached individuals tend to minimize emotional expression, maintain interpersonal distance, and devalue relational intimacy as a defense against vulnerability (İyiydin et al., 2023). These tendencies are often cultivated in early developmental environments where caregivers were emotionally unavailable or dismissive of the child's emotional needs (Latack & Davila, 2016; Schacter et al., 2019). In adulthood, such individuals may present as independent and self-sufficient but often struggle with relational consistency, empathy, and emotional attunement. These difficulties become especially pronounced in romantic relationships, where mutual openness and responsiveness are essential for intimacy cultivation (Farajl et al., 2024; Richter & Schoebi, 2021). When faced with relational stress or emotional demands, avoidant individuals often withdraw, thereby disrupting the intimacy-building processes that sustain relationship satisfaction (Özabacı & Eryılmaz, 2015).

A growing body of research has highlighted the interactive and potentially compounding effects of rejection sensitivity and attachment avoidance on intimacy-related outcomes. While rejection sensitivity is characterized by a heightened vigilance to signs of exclusion or disapproval, attachment avoidance is marked by suppression of attachment needs and discomfort with closeness. When these two dispositions co-occur, individuals may find themselves caught in a psychological paradox—desiring closeness while simultaneously fearing both rejection and dependency (Farajl, 2024; Finzi-Dottan & Abadi, 2024). This internal conflict can lead to ambivalent relational behavior, communication breakdowns, and emotional disengagement from partners, all of which are known to contribute to intimacy struggles (Geçer et al., 2022). Moreover, individuals who perceive themselves as highly sensitive to rejection may engage in hypercritical self-monitoring or suppress self-disclosure in romantic contexts, fearing that authenticity may lead to judgment or abandonment (Farajl, 2024; Giovazolias & Paschalidi, 2022). These dynamics not only impair relational satisfaction but can also compromise psychological well-being by reinforcing cycles of self-doubt and emotional isolation (Graziano et al., 2024).

The relevance of these constructs is further amplified in contemporary relationship contexts, where social and technological factors influence the quality and depth of romantic interactions. The normalization of multitasking, constant digital connectivity, and superficial communication

has been linked to diminishing relational depth and emotional resonance (Amichai-Hamburger & Etgar, 2016). These environmental factors may exacerbate pre-existing vulnerabilities like rejection sensitivity and attachment avoidance, thereby intensifying intimacy-related challenges. For instance, digital miscommunication or perceived partner inattentiveness can trigger rejection-sensitive individuals, while avoidant individuals may increasingly rely on digital spaces to maintain emotional distance (Yahiaiev et al., 2020). Studies have shown that couples who report frequent technology-related interruptions in their intimate interactions also report lower relational satisfaction and intimacy, suggesting that external relational stressors may interact with dispositional factors to impair emotional bonding (Amichai-Hamburger & Etgar, 2016; Settegast, 2024).

Importantly, intimacy is not a static trait but a dynamic relational process that involves mutual responsiveness, emotional engagement, and trust-building over time (Ercan, 2025). When one or both partners struggle with high rejection sensitivity or attachment avoidance, the mutual co-regulation required for intimacy may be disrupted, leading to relationship dissatisfaction or dissolution (Ghasemi, 2023; Richter & Schoebi, 2023). This is particularly concerning for emerging adults and young couples who are navigating the developmental tasks of identity formation and emotional independence while also building romantic connections (Graziano et al., 2024; Uçar & Demir, 2022). Research indicates that intimacy difficulties during this developmental window can have long-lasting implications for mental health, relational expectations, and future attachment security (Latack & Davila, 2016; Norona et al., 2017).

Cultural considerations also shape how intimacy, rejection, and avoidance manifest and are experienced. For instance, cultural norms around emotional expression, relational independence, and gender roles can influence the development and expression of attachment patterns and sensitivity to rejection (Leite, 2025). In more collectivistic societies, where emotional restraint and interdependence are emphasized, avoidance of intimacy may be socially reinforced rather than viewed as a psychological deficit (Opekina & Saparovskaya, 2022). Similarly, rejection sensitivity may be heightened in environments where social approval is highly valued, or interpersonal harmony is prioritized over individual expression (İyiyaydın et al., 2023; Uçar & Demir, 2022). Understanding these contextual influences is critical for accurately interpreting the

predictors of intimacy struggles across diverse populations, including the current study's focus on adults from Mexico.

Despite the growing literature on intimacy and its predictors, few empirical studies have simultaneously examined rejection sensitivity and attachment avoidance as joint predictors of intimacy struggles in romantic relationships. Much of the existing research has focused on these constructs in isolation, overlooking the possibility that they may co-occur or interact to produce more profound intimacy disruptions. Additionally, while prior research has confirmed the individual associations of rejection sensitivity and attachment avoidance with lower relationship satisfaction, emotional disengagement, and communication problems (Choi & Lim, 2023; Finzi-Dottan & Abadi, 2024), there is limited research examining these factors in non-Western samples or in large-scale correlational designs that assess predictive validity.

This study addresses these gaps by exploring how rejection sensitivity and attachment avoidance predict intimacy struggles among adults in romantic relationships in Mexico.

## 2. Methods and Materials

### 2.1. Study design and Participant

This study employed a correlational descriptive research design to explore the predictive roles of internalized stigma and fear of evaluation on social withdrawal in women diagnosed with mental health conditions. The sample consisted of 397 participants recruited from various psychological counseling centers and mental health support groups across Turkey. The required sample size was determined using the Morgan and Krejcie (1970) sample size determination table, ensuring statistical adequacy for correlation and regression analyses. Inclusion criteria included identifying as female, being 18 years or older, and having received a formal mental health diagnosis within the past two years. Participants provided informed consent prior to participation, and ethical approval was obtained from the relevant institutional review board.

### 2.2. Measures

#### 2.2.1. Intimacy Struggles

This study employed a correlational descriptive design to explore the predictive role of rejection sensitivity and attachment avoidance on intimacy struggles in romantic relationships. The sample consisted of 433 adult participants

from Mexico, selected using a convenience sampling method. The sample size was determined based on the Morgan and Krejcie (1970) sample size table for a known population, ensuring sufficient power for statistical analysis. Participants included individuals who were currently in or had previously experienced romantic relationships, and data were collected via an anonymous self-report questionnaire distributed online. Participation was voluntary and informed consent was obtained from all respondents (Navabinejad et al., 2024; Nezamalmolki, 2024; Vakilian et al., 2024).

### 2.2.2. Rejection Sensitivity

Rejection sensitivity was measured using the Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire (RSQ) developed by Downey and Feldman in 1996. The RSQ includes 18 hypothetical scenarios that reflect situations in which rejection from others might be expected. For each scenario, participants rate both their level of anxiety or concern about the rejection (on a 6-point scale) and their expectation of acceptance or rejection (also on a 6-point scale). A rejection sensitivity score is calculated by multiplying the level of anxiety by the expectation of rejection across items and averaging the product scores. The RSQ captures a cognitive-affective processing pattern and has demonstrated excellent internal consistency (Cronbach's  $\alpha \approx 0.85$ ) and test-retest reliability. Validity has been supported through its correlation with interpersonal difficulties and emotional dysregulation in both clinical and non-clinical populations (Asad, 2025; Mishra & Allen, 2025).

### 2.2.3. Attachment Avoidance

Attachment avoidance was assessed using the Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised (ECR-R) questionnaire developed by Fraley, Waller, and Brennan in 2000. This widely used 36-item self-report measure evaluates adult romantic attachment along two primary dimensions: attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance. Each item is rated on a 7-point Likert scale from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." For this study, only the 18

items related to the avoidance subscale were analyzed. Higher scores on this subscale indicate a stronger tendency to avoid emotional closeness and dependence in relationships. The ECR-R has been shown to possess excellent psychometric properties, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients typically above 0.90 for both subscales, and its factorial structure and convergent validity have been replicated across diverse samples (Akhavan-Abiri et al., 2019; Davis et al., 2016; Li & Zhou, 2024).

### 2.3. Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS version 27. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the demographic characteristics of the participants. To examine the bivariate relationships between intimacy struggles and the independent variables (rejection sensitivity and attachment avoidance), Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated. Furthermore, a standard multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to assess the extent to which rejection sensitivity and attachment avoidance jointly predicted intimacy struggles. Before conducting regression analysis, the assumptions of normality, linearity, homoscedasticity, and multicollinearity were examined and confirmed.

## 3. Findings and Results

Of the 433 participants, 278 (64.2%) identified as female and 155 (35.8%) as male. The age of respondents ranged from 18 to 45 years, with the majority ( $n = 192$ , 44.3%) falling within the 25–34 age group, followed by 147 participants (33.9%) aged 18–24, and 94 participants (21.7%) aged 35–45. In terms of relationship status, 211 participants (48.7%) reported being in a committed relationship, 132 (30.5%) were married, and 90 (20.8%) were single but previously involved in a romantic relationship. Regarding education level, 174 participants (40.2%) held a bachelor's degree, 139 (32.1%) had completed some college or technical education, 83 (19.2%) possessed a graduate degree, and 37 (8.5%) had a high school diploma or less.

**Table 1**

*Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables (N = 433)*

Variable	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
Intimacy Struggles	76.38	12.74
Rejection Sensitivity	58.92	10.63
Attachment Avoidance	62.15	11.08

Participants reported a moderate level of intimacy struggles ( $M = 76.38$ ,  $SD = 12.74$ ). The average rejection sensitivity score was  $58.92$  ( $SD = 10.63$ ), and the mean score for attachment avoidance was  $62.15$  ( $SD = 11.08$ ), indicating a relatively elevated presence of both psychological tendencies among participants (Table 1).

Prior to conducting linear regression, all statistical assumptions were examined and met. The normality of residuals was verified through the Shapiro-Wilk test ( $p = .071$ ) and visual inspection of Q-Q plots, indicating an approximately normal distribution. Linearity was confirmed

using scatterplots of standardized residuals against predicted values, which showed no significant curvature. Homoscedasticity was assessed through the Breusch-Pagan test ( $\chi^2 = 1.87$ ,  $p = .171$ ), suggesting constant variance of residuals. Multicollinearity diagnostics revealed variance inflation factors (VIF) of  $1.37$  for rejection sensitivity and  $1.42$  for attachment avoidance, both below the critical value of  $5$ , indicating no multicollinearity concerns. These results validated the suitability of the data for multiple linear regression analysis.

**Table 2**

*Pearson Correlations Between Variables ( $N = 433$ )*

Variable	1	2	3
1. Intimacy Struggles	—		
2. Rejection Sensitivity	.51** ( $p < .01$ )	—	
3. Attachment Avoidance	.46** ( $p < .01$ )	.44** ( $p < .01$ )	—

There was a significant positive correlation between rejection sensitivity and intimacy struggles ( $r = .51$ ,  $p < .01$ ), as well as between attachment avoidance and intimacy struggles ( $r = .46$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Additionally, rejection sensitivity

and attachment avoidance were positively correlated with each other ( $r = .44$ ,  $p < .01$ ), suggesting that these variables may co-occur and jointly contribute to relational difficulties (Table 2).

**Table 3**

*Summary of Regression Analysis ( $N = 433$ )*

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	F	p
Regression	10972.64	2	5486.32	.57	.33	.33	105.89	< .01
Residual	21958.46	430	51.06					
Total	32931.10	432						

The regression model significantly predicted intimacy struggles,  $F(2, 430) = 105.89$ ,  $p < .01$ , with an  $R$  of  $.57$  and an  $R^2$  of  $.33$ , indicating that approximately 33% of the

variance in intimacy struggles was explained by rejection sensitivity and attachment avoidance. The adjusted  $R^2$  value ( $.33$ ) confirmed the model's generalizability (Table 3).

**Table 4**

*Regression Coefficients for Predicting Intimacy Struggles ( $N = 433$ )*

Predictor	B	SE	$\beta$	t	p
Constant	24.73	3.88	—	6.37	< .01
Rejection Sensitivity	0.62	0.08	.39	7.75	< .01
Attachment Avoidance	0.53	0.07	.33	7.31	< .01

Both rejection sensitivity ( $\beta = .39$ ,  $t = 7.75$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and attachment avoidance ( $\beta = .33$ ,  $t = 7.31$ ,  $p < .01$ ) were significant predictors of intimacy struggles. The unstandardized coefficients indicate that for each unit increase in rejection sensitivity, intimacy struggles increased by  $0.62$  units, and for each unit increase in attachment

avoidance, intimacy struggles increased by  $0.53$  units, holding the other variable constant (Table 4).

## 4. Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate whether rejection sensitivity and attachment avoidance predict



intimacy struggles in romantic relationships among adults in Mexico. Using Pearson correlation and multiple linear regression analyses, the findings revealed that both independent variables—rejection sensitivity and attachment avoidance—were significantly and positively associated with intimacy struggles. Furthermore, the regression model confirmed that rejection sensitivity and attachment avoidance each made a significant unique contribution to predicting intimacy difficulties, collectively explaining a notable proportion of the variance. These results provide empirical support for theoretical and clinical assumptions regarding the emotional and cognitive barriers to developing and maintaining intimacy in adult romantic relationships.

The positive association between rejection sensitivity and intimacy struggles found in this study aligns with earlier findings suggesting that individuals who are highly sensitive to rejection often interpret ambiguous relational cues as threatening, leading to defensive behaviors that hinder emotional closeness (Richter & Schoebi, 2023). This cognitive-affective style interferes with vulnerability and trust—two essential components of intimacy—and often causes individuals to withdraw or overcompensate during interactions, ultimately sabotaging the relational connection they seek (Giovazolias & Paschalidi, 2022). Previous research has shown that rejection sensitivity is rooted in early relational trauma and is associated with maladaptive patterns of emotion regulation and attachment insecurity, both of which directly undermine intimacy development (Choi & Lim, 2023; Finzi-Dottan & Abadi, 2024). These findings are consistent with the current results, highlighting that even in culturally diverse settings such as Mexico, the emotional implications of rejection sensitivity remain significant.

Moreover, this study's results regarding the predictive role of attachment avoidance in intimacy struggles are strongly supported by past literature. Avoidantly attached individuals typically prioritize emotional distance, autonomy, and self-reliance over emotional intimacy and connection (Ghasemi, 2023; İyiydin et al., 2023). The discomfort with closeness and the tendency to suppress attachment-related emotions prevent the formation of secure relational bonds. In this study, those scoring higher on attachment avoidance reported greater intimacy struggles, supporting previous findings that link avoidant attachment styles with lower levels of relational satisfaction and emotional engagement (Farají et al., 2024; Latack & Davila, 2016). Avoidant individuals are also more likely to disengage during conflicts and avoid emotional disclosure,

which contributes to reduced trust and closeness in romantic contexts (Richter & Schoebi, 2021). These relational dynamics were evident in the present study, reinforcing the theoretical proposition that attachment avoidance functions as a relational defense strategy that blocks the development of intimacy.

It is important to highlight that while both variables were significant predictors, rejection sensitivity exhibited a slightly stronger correlation with intimacy struggles than attachment avoidance. This finding suggests that anticipatory anxiety and fear of rejection may be more immediately disruptive to intimacy than generalized discomfort with closeness. Previous studies have proposed that rejection-sensitive individuals may initially seek closeness but become emotionally dysregulated when they perceive rejection cues, leading to erratic and confusing relational behavior that destabilizes intimacy (Giovazolias & Paschalidi, 2022; Norona et al., 2017). In contrast, avoidant individuals may consistently maintain emotional distance, which, while problematic, can result in more predictable relational patterns. This distinction may explain the stronger statistical weight of rejection sensitivity in the model and warrants further exploration in future research.

These findings also resonate with literature exploring the interplay between early attachment representations, rejection-related schemas, and relational functioning. For instance, individuals who experienced rejection or neglect from primary caregivers may internalize a worldview in which intimacy is unsafe or unreliable, leading to chronic difficulties with emotional closeness (Farají, 2024; Finzi-Dottan & Abadi, 2024). Such individuals may simultaneously crave intimacy and fear it, creating an ambivalent behavioral pattern that can be particularly disruptive to romantic relationships. The results of this study lend further support to the hypothesis that unresolved early relational wounds manifest as maladaptive emotional responses in adulthood, particularly when attempting to engage in intimate partnerships.

Additionally, the findings underscore the importance of considering cultural dynamics in understanding intimacy challenges. Although intimacy and attachment constructs have been widely studied in Western populations, their manifestations in Latin American contexts are comparatively under-researched. The current findings confirm that the psychological mechanisms associated with rejection sensitivity and attachment avoidance are also relevant among Mexican adults. Cultural expectations around gender roles, emotional expression, and relational

interdependence may influence how these constructs are expressed, but the underlying patterns remain consistent with those observed in other populations (Leite, 2025; Uçar & Demir, 2022). This suggests that while cultural factors can shape the expression of intimacy-related struggles, the core psychological predictors such as attachment and rejection-related schemas may have universal applicability.

The study also contributes to our understanding of how modern lifestyle factors intersect with intimacy challenges. For example, individuals who are already predisposed to emotional avoidance or rejection fears may be particularly vulnerable in today's fast-paced digital environment. Technology-mediated interactions can easily trigger misinterpretations and exacerbate emotional distance, especially among those who struggle with intimacy. Research has shown that multitasking with smartphones, for instance, disrupts emotional attunement and relational presence, further compounding intimacy struggles (Amichai-Hamburger & Etgar, 2016; Yahiaiev et al., 2020). Such findings suggest that technological influences may not only introduce new relational stressors but also interact with pre-existing psychological vulnerabilities in ways that amplify intimacy difficulties.

Moreover, the present findings provide support for the relational spillover hypothesis, which posits that unresolved individual psychological issues—such as attachment insecurity or sensitivity to rejection—spill over into the dyadic space, affecting relationship quality and partner satisfaction (Ercan, 2025; Graziano et al., 2024). In the context of the current study, it is likely that the intimacy difficulties reported by participants were not merely internal experiences but had real interpersonal consequences, such as emotional withdrawal, reduced self-disclosure, and increased conflict. These findings align with prior work demonstrating that intimacy deficits are closely tied to depressive symptoms, identity struggles, and relational dissatisfaction (Geçer et al., 2022; Graziano et al., 2024). Thus, understanding and addressing individual-level predictors of intimacy challenges could have far-reaching implications for relational health and psychological well-being.

The study also affirms the importance of considering intimacy as a developmental and identity-relevant construct, particularly in emerging adulthood. Individuals in this developmental stage are often negotiating identity, autonomy, and relationship formation simultaneously, making them particularly susceptible to intimacy-related vulnerabilities (Özabacı & Eryılmaz, 2015; Uçar & Demir,

2022). When rejection sensitivity and attachment avoidance are present during this critical period, they may impede the establishment of stable relational identities and undermine emotional resilience. The current findings emphasize the need for early interventions that address these psychological patterns before they become deeply entrenched and chronically impairing.

## 5. Limitations and Suggestions

Despite its contributions, the present study is not without limitations. First, the correlational design precludes any conclusions regarding causality between the variables. While rejection sensitivity and attachment avoidance were found to predict intimacy struggles, it is equally plausible that difficulties with intimacy could reinforce rejection fears and avoidance behaviors over time. Second, the use of self-report measures may have introduced response bias, as participants may have underreported or overestimated their intimacy difficulties or emotional vulnerabilities. Third, although the sample size was robust, the convenience sampling method may limit the generalizability of the findings to the broader Mexican population. Moreover, the cross-sectional nature of the data does not account for changes in intimacy or relational patterns over time. Finally, cultural-specific norms and values were not explicitly measured or controlled for, which may have influenced participants' perceptions and reporting of intimacy and attachment-related constructs.

Future studies should consider employing longitudinal designs to examine how rejection sensitivity and attachment avoidance influence intimacy development over time. This would help clarify potential causal relationships and track changes across different relational stages. Additionally, research should explore the moderating role of cultural norms, gender expectations, and emotional expression in the relationship between psychological vulnerabilities and intimacy. It would also be beneficial to include partner reports or observational data to reduce self-report bias and capture dyadic interaction patterns more accurately. Expanding the scope to include other psychological predictors, such as emotion regulation, self-esteem, or trauma history, could enrich the understanding of intimacy struggles. Finally, cross-cultural comparisons would help determine whether these predictors function similarly across different socio-cultural contexts or if cultural adaptations are needed.

Clinicians and relationship counselors working with individuals or couples struggling with intimacy should assess for underlying rejection sensitivity and attachment avoidance patterns. Interventions such as emotionally focused therapy, cognitive restructuring, and attachment-based approaches may help individuals develop healthier relational expectations and emotional responses. Psychoeducation around intimacy, emotional vulnerability, and the impact of early experiences on adult relationships could empower clients to break maladaptive cycles. Additionally, incorporating mindfulness and communication training can foster emotional presence and relational safety, helping individuals build and sustain deeper connections with romantic partners.

### Authors' Contributions

Authors equally 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.

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### Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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### Ethical Considerations

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

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