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The relationship between interparental conflict and emotional insecurity in emerging adulthood: the moderator role of intrinsic religiosity

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ABSTRACT

Emotional security theory explains effects of interparental conflict (IPC) on family relationships. Further, relations between religiosity and marriage have been investigated. The aim of the current study is to establish a relationship between these two separate lines of research. We examined perception of IPC and emotional insecurity among emerging adults and how personal and perceived parental intrinsic religiosity (IR) moderated the association between IPC and emotional insecurity. First, the higher the IPC, the higher the scores on emotional insecurity. Second, moderator effects were found for both personal and perceived paternal IR. The findings implicated a protective role IR against IPC.

KEYWORDS

Emotional insecurity; interparental conflict; personal intrinsic religiosity; perceived parental internal religiosity; emerging adulthood

Since the 1930s, there has been a growing body of research on the relationship between marital adjustment and behavioral problems in children (Baruch, 1937). Researchers agree that children subjected to interparental conflict (IPC) are more likely to develop emotional and behavioral problems (Grych & Fincham, 1990). Research also shows that each IPC dimension (frequency, intensity, content, and resolution) affects behavior differently (Davies & Cummings, 1994).

Cognitive-Contextual Framework (CCF) adopts this approach and focuses on how children appraise conflict and its possible outcomes (Grych & Fincham, 1990). Another theory places emotional security at the center of the link between IPC and behavioral problems without neglecting children's cognitive assessment (Davies & Cummings, 1994). Harold and Sellers (2018) point out that theory complements the CCF.

Emotional security theory (EST; Davies & Cummings, 1994) proposes a critical mechanism that explains the impact of IPC on children's behavioral problems (e.g., aggression, incompatibility, depression, and anxiety). Conflicts evoke strong emotional and physiological reactions in children. Emotional insecurity is the most important mediator of the association between IPC and

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children's response, which is also affected by attachment security (Cummings & Davies, 2010). Children with secure attachments are better at regulating negative emotional stimulation and experience fewer emotional problems than those with insecure attachments (Bowlby, 1969). Emotional security theory also posits that what meaning family members ascribe to conflicts and whether they are resolved are also crucial for children. In other words, a conflict can be a positive experience for a child if she believes it does not jeopardize her family's unity. It can even help her learn how to resolve the conflicts she is likely to encounter in the future (Cummings & Davies, 2010).

Emotional security theory has also tested the relationship between emotional insecurity and behavioral problems in children for about three decades. Harold, Shelton, Goeke-Morey, and Cummings (2004), who were the first to put the theory to the longitudinal test, reported a relationship between emotional insecurity and cognitive representation in the face of IPC and adjustment problems (see also Davies, Forman, Rasi, & Stevens, 2002).

Some researchers have tested the external validity of EST by investigating whether the link between conflicts and children's problems holds across different cultures and ethnic groups. Some have found differences as well as similarities (e.g., Lindahl, Malik, Kaczynski, & Simons, 2004), whereas others have reported no differences (Buehler & Gerard, 2002). For example, Stutzman et al. (2011) found no significant difference in the relationship between overt and covert conflicts and youth outcomes between Latinos and European Americans living in the USA. They also suggested acculturation as the mechanism underlying this result. Munoz-Laboy (2008) also documented that Mexican families in the US were less patriarchal than those in Mexico.

On the other hand, Streit and Carlo (2020) investigated the role of familial (e.g., marital conflict) and nonfamilial variables on prosocial behavior and found differences between US-born and non-US-born Latinos/as. These results suggest that assimilation may be a confounding variable that makes minority cultures adopt the values and ways of the majority in the USA. Therefore, explaining IPC outcomes across different cultures may be a more valid way to delineate its impact through the lens of different perspectives.

Gohm, Oishi, Darlington, and Diener (1998) recruited young adults from 39 countries to investigate the relationship between culture, parental conflict, parental marital status, and subjective well-being. The researchers reported two important results. First, low to moderate-conflict families were more satisfied with life than high-conflict families. Second, the effect of conflict on young adults was prevalent regardless of gender and cultural orientation. Bradford et al. (2004) also looked into the effect of IPC on children and adolescents from 11 countries ($n = 9.000$) and documented similar associations between IPC and behavioral problems.

Some other researchers have reported differences as well as similarities. For example, Shamir, Cummings, Davies, and Goeke-Morey (2005) found that

although both Israeli and American children reacted negatively to conflicts, the former was less concerned about whether conflicts resulted in a resolution than the latter. The researchers attribute this result to Israeli children learning about the ongoing Palestinian-Israeli conflict from a very young age, even if they do not understand why. For them, a resolution is unimportant because the conflict continues uninterrupted for a long time. This indicates that different ecological variables affect the relationship between IPC and emotional insecurity.

A more universal cultural characteristic (cultural orientation) also affects the same relationship. For example, Cummings, Wilson, and Shamir (2003) focused on Chilean and American children and reported a relationship between conflict and child adjustment and children's sensitivity to conflict resolution. However, they found that Chilean children were more concerned about their parents' future relationships following unresolved conflicts than their American counterparts. According to the researchers, this difference is because Latin America rejects friend and family conflicts. Therefore, Chilean children experience higher levels of anxiety and maladjustment caused by daily IPC than their American counterparts. This study aimed to determine whether the relationship between IPC and emotional insecurity differed across the two cultures and appealed to a cultural characteristic to explain the difference.

Also, Li, Cheung, and Cummings (2016) hypothesized that a cultural characteristic would lead to a difference in the relationship between IPC and emotional insecurity. To that end, they predicted that adopting social harmony, one of the core values of Confucianism in China, would increase the adverse impact of conflict on emotional security. Social harmony encourages people to engage in positive relationships and discourages them from exhibiting aggressive behaviors. According to the researchers, adolescents who adopt social harmony use it as a framework to assess whether IPC threatens their families. Adolescents who consider social harmony important in interpersonal relationships are likely to experience more emotional insecurity because they will be more adversely affected by conflicts than those who do not. Therefore, their results confirmed the hypothesis that adolescents who endorse social harmony more strongly view IPC in a more negative light than those who endorse it less strongly.

According to Confucianism, children should be filial to their parents as it attaches great importance to family cohesion and social harmony. Aggression and self-assertiveness toward parents and older siblings are dangerous because they weaken authoritative family relationships (Bond & Wang, 1983). On the other hand, Islam has introduced a mechanism that takes social harmony out of social pressure and change and made it permanent: The wife should obey her husband, and the child will obey his elders, not for the sake of a relatively "distant" goal (e.g., for the

good of society) but for his benefit. Thus, a mechanism has emerged whereby harmony is perpetuated by linking obedience to self-interest. Therefore, we can argue that Islam offers a unique opportunity to evaluate EST from this perspective. Although researchers have never addressed personal and perceived parental religiosity from the perspective of EST, they have studied its effect on marital relationships and child/youth outcomes.

Religiosity as a cultural value: practices and outcomes

There is a body of research on the effect of religiosity on interparental relationships. Research shows that participating in religious rituals positively affects marital adjustment (e.g., McDonald, Olson, Lanning, Goddard, & Marshall, 2018) and facilitates coping with marital anger (e.g., Marsh & Dallos, 2000). Christianity helps improve marital commitment (e.g., Olson, Goddard, & Marshall, 2013) and reduce parenting stress (e.g., Henderson, Uecker, & Stroope, 2016). Religiosity is associated with higher marital harmony, less conflict and verbal aggression, and more verbal collaboration and communication about disagreements (Mahoney et al., 1999). Religious parents (mostly Christian participants) spend more time with their families than nonreligious families (e.g., Agate, Zabriskie, & Eggett, 2007). Researchers have documented similar results on the effect of religiosity on interparental relationships concerning Judaism (e.g., Klestzick, 2018) and Islam (e.g., Aman, Abbas, Nurunnabi, & Bano, 2019). Although they have reported mixed results (e.g., Şirin, 2018), they have mostly concluded that religiosity positively affects parental relationships. Albeit, with only modest correlations, religiosity results in reduced divorce rates (see for a review, Mahoney, Pargament, Tarakeshwar, & Swank, 2008).

The relationship of religiosity to inter-parental relationships and emerging adult outcomes will be explored within the framework of Islam. Islam organizes the lives of its followers in detail. Islamic law sets out inheritance rules that determine how a Muslim's estate will be divided between his or her heirs (Qur'an, 4:11). It also specifies what the relationship between parents should be like. It also has specific provisions to prevent IPC (e.g., Qur'an 4:34), which is vital for EST. Hadiths, the teachings of Muhammad the Prophet, are also considered second in authority to the Qur'an. Both the Qur'an and hadiths command that women obey their husbands and that children obey and respect their parents. A woman is supposed to obey her husband to maintain family harmony and be a good Muslim. For example, a hadith reads, "If a woman prays her five prayers, fasts her month (of Ramadan), obeys her husband and guards her chastity, then it will be said to her: 'Enter Paradise by whichever of its gates you wish.'" (as cited in Al-Hashimi, 2005, p. 72).

The present study

Most researchers looking into the relationship between religiosity and marital relationship focus on marital satisfaction and adjustment. However, they generally neglect to analyze in what way children are affected by their parents' religiosity. Since emotional security theory concentrates on parental relationships, we should expect that personal and perceived parental religiosity affects the perception of emotional insecurity by reflecting on children. Therefore, it would be unreasonable to separate interparental relationships from parent-child relationships. However, no researchers have investigated whether religiosity affects how emerging adults perceive emotional insecurity. Therefore, this paper examined the potential compensatory effect of religion on interparental conflict and its impact on how emerging adults perceive emotional insecurity.

In this study, only intrinsic religiosity will be examined within the scope of religiosity. Compared to extrinsic religiosity, intrinsic religiosity can serve as a buffer for the individual in the face of both environmental and emotional strains (e.g., interparental conflict). Individuals with high intrinsic religiosity tend to explain their lives in terms of religion-oriented instructions and therefore focus on finding meaning to the difficulties they experience in their current lives. In other words, they use religion as an inner guide beyond religious practices (Allport & Ross, 1967).

This paper aimed to establish a connection between two lines of research: (1) studies on EST and (2) studies on religion-marital satisfaction/marital adjustment. Research indicates a correlation between religiosity, interparental relationships, and marital adjustment. On the other hand, studies conducted within the framework of EST have found a relationship between interparental relationships and emotional insecurity. We addressed the gap between two separate research areas by seeking answers to two questions: (1) What is the relationship between IPC and emotional insecurity? and (2) Is the relationship between IPC and emotional insecurity moderated by personal self-religiosity and perceived parental religiosity. We hypothesized that there is a positive correlation between IPC and emotional insecurity and IPC is more strongly linked to emotional insecurity when emerging adults endorse low personal and perceived parental religiosity.

Method

Participants

The required sample size of the present study was calculated by the analysis of the G*Power software version 3.1.9.6, where the effect size was determined as .04, the alpha as .05 and the statistical power as .95 based on the literature. According to the results, the minimum sample size needed was 390.

Four hundred and forty-four Muslim undergraduates (M_{age} = 21.76, SD = 1.64, 87% female) from two universities in Istanbul participated in the study. The majority of the participants (89%) come from intact families. Fifty-four percent of the mothers and 67% of the fathers of the participants are at least high school graduates. Ninety-three percent of the participants reported their families' income level as at least moderate.

Procedures

The data of the study were collected after obtaining the necessary permissions from the Social Sciences Scientific Research Ethics Committee. The research link was sent to the undergraduates through the department e-mails of the universities. Consenting undergraduates were asked to complete the questionnaires detailed below. All data were collected via Google Forms. It takes approximately 20 minutes to fill out all the questionnaires. Counterbalancing was used to control for potential order effects.

Measures

Emotional insecurity

Security in the Interparental Subsystem Scale (SIS; Davies, Forman, Rasi, & Stevens, 2002) was used to measure the participants' perception of emotional insecurity. The Turkish adaptation of the scale was carried out by Sakız (2011). In the present study, the university students form of the scale, which was shown to be valid and reliable by Şendil (2016), was applied. The scale consists of 24 items that load on six factors: difficulty in emotion regulation, constructive family representations, dissemination of conflict, avoidance, emotional arousal and destructive family representations. Items were rated on a 4-point Likert scale (from 1 "*not at all true of me*" to 4 "*very true of me*"). Higher scores indicate higher levels of emotional insecurity. Internal consistency of the ESS in the present study as demonstrated by Cronbach's alpha was .87 (see Appendix A).

Perception of interparental conflict

To assess how the participants perceive their parents' conflict, the 27-item Children's Perception of Interparental Conflict Scale (CPIC; Grych, Seid, & Fincham, 1992) was used. The Turkish adaptation of the scale was performed by Ulu and Fışıloğlu (2004). The scale consists of 3 subscales, conflict properties, threat and self-blame, and these subscales are measured with 14, 7 and 6 items, respectively. Items were rated on a 3-point Likert scale ranging from 0 = *false* to 2 = *true*. Higher scores imply negativity in perception. The reliability and validity of the CPIC have been shown with Turkish emerging adults in previous research (Şendil, 2016). Cronbach's alpha for the present sample was .82 (see Appendix B).

Intrinsic religiosity motivation

Participants completed the Intrinsic Religious Motivation Scale (IRS; Hoge, 1972) to report on their personal, and perceived maternal and paternal intrinsic religiosity levels. Yılmaz and Bahçekapili (2015) adapted the scale into Turkish and reported a satisfactory reliability and validity. The scale consists of 10 items rated with a 4-point Likert scale (1 = *definitely wrong* to 4 = *definitely right*). Higher scores suggest higher levels of intrinsic religious motivation. In the present study, Cronbach alphas for personal, perceived maternal and paternal intrinsic religiosity motivation were .91, .89 and .92, respectively (see Appendix C).

Psychological distress

The Depression Anxiety Stress Scales 21 (DASS-21), developed by Henry and Crawford (2005) and adapted to Turkish by Yilmaz, Boz, and Arslan (2017), was filled out by participants to evaluate their psychological distress level. Depression, anxiety and stress were three subscales and each of them included seven items rated on a 4-point Likert scale (from 0 = *did not apply to me at all* to 3 = *applied to me very much or most of the time*). Total scale score was computed by averaging all items. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the total score was found to be .93 (See Appendix D).

Demographic characteristics

With the Demographic Form prepared by the researchers, it was aimed to obtain information on the age, gender, parental education level, monthly income, religion they belong to, and whether the parents were divorced (and divorce details).

Data analysis

The analyses of the present study were presented in three parts. First, descriptive statistics of the study variables obtained using the IBM SPSS 25.0 package program (IBM Corp, 2017) are included. Then, the relationships between demographic variables, psychological distress, perception of IPC, intrinsic religiosity and emotional insecurity were examined with the Pearson correlation coefficient. According to the accepted criteria of Cohen (1988), the correlation coefficients were defined as -/+.10 and around "low level," -/+.30 and around "medium level" and -/+.50 "high level." Lastly, the moderator role of intrinsic religiosity on the relationship between perception of IPC and emotional insecurity was analyzed using SPSS PROCESS Macro Model 1 (Hayes, 2022) on 5000 bootstrap samples. The absence of zero in the 95% confidence interval indicates that the effects are statistically significant (Hayes, 2022). Materials and analysis code for this study are available by emailing the corresponding author.

Results

Descriptive statistics

Before testing the hypotheses, the normality, linearity and homoscedasticity assumptions of the study variables were checked, and univariate and multivariate outlier analysis were performed. For univariate outlier analysis, *z*-score was examined and values outside the ±3.29 *z*-score range were accepted as outliers (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). No outliers were found in the data. Then, multivariate outlier analysis was performed with the Mahalanobis distance coefficients, and data with a χ^2 value below $p < .001$ were accepted as multivariate outliers (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). As a result of this analysis, no outliers were determined. All study variables were normally distributed and the descriptive statistics for these variables are presented in Table 1.

Correlations between the study variables

As shown in Table 1, bivariate correlations revealed no significant relationship between perception of IPC and demographic variables such as participant's age and gender and family SES, which was computed by standardizing and averaging mother's education level, father's education level and monthly income level. On the other hand, participants who reported higher psychological distress ($r = .34$, $p < .001$) or whose families were not intact ($r = -.23$, $p < .001$) had more negativity in perception of IPC. In addition, personal intrinsic religiosity was significantly and positively associated with perceived intrinsic religiosity of mother ($r = .59$, $p < .001$) and father ($r = .50$, $p < .001$), whereas it was significantly and negatively correlated with family SES ($r = -.15$, $p < .01$). Also, age ($r = -.10$, $p < .05$), family SES ($r = -.15$, $p < .01$), intactness of family ($r = .11$, $p < .05$) and perceived paternal intrinsic religiosity ($r = .60$, $p < .001$) were also found to be significantly related with perceived maternal intrinsic religiosity. Specifically, higher perceived maternal intrinsic religiosity was reported by participants who were older and had low SES, intact family or fathers with higher intrinsic religiosity. Besides, reported paternal

Table 1. Descriptive statistics and intercorrelations among study variables.

Variable	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Emotional insecurity	55.70	12.50	–									
2. NPIC	13.86	10.79	.48***	–								
3. IR-Personal	24.69	7.69	.24***	−.02	–							
4. IR-Maternal	30.48	6.80	.21***	.02	.59***	–						
5. IR-Paternal	27.84	7.91	.17***	−.01	.50***	.60***	–					
6. Psychological distress	2.06	0.68	.29***	.34***	−.05	.07	−.00	–				
7. Age	21.76	1.64	−.05	.05	−.01	−.10*	−.04	−.00	–			
8. Sex	0.90	0.35	.03	.05	.08	−.04	−.02	.02	−.01	–		
9. Family SES	0.00	0.76	−.12**	.01	−.15**	−.15**	−.09†	.05	.07	−.02	–	
10. Family intactness	0.90	0.31	−.19***	−.23***	.09†	.11*	.15**	−.10*	−.06	.01	−.01	–

Note. NPIC = Negative Perception of Interparental Conflict, IR = Intrinsic Religiosity, SES = Socioeconomic status. Sex was coded as 0 = male and 1 = female. Family intactness was coded as 0 = divorced and 1 = intact.
†$p < .10$. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

intrinsic religiosity was also significantly and positively related with intactness of family ($r = .15$, $p < .01$).

Lastly, it was found that emotional insecurity was significantly and positively correlated with negativity in perception of IPC ($r = .48$, $p < .001$), personal intrinsic religiosity ($r = .24$, $p < .001$), perceived maternal ($r = .21$, $p < .001$) and paternal intrinsic religiosity ($r = .17$, $p < .001$), and psychological distress ($r = .29$, $p < .001$). On the other hand, emotional insecurity was significantly and negatively associated with family SES ($r = -.12$, $p < .01$) and intactness ($r = -.19$, $p < .001$). That is to say, participants who reported more negative perception of IPC, higher personal, perceived maternal and paternal intrinsic religious motivation, higher levels of psychological distress, lower SES or whose families were not intact manifested more emotional insecurity.

The moderator role of intrinsic religiosity on the relationship between perception of interparental conflict and emotional insecurity

Three separate moderation analyses (Model 1; Hayes, 2022) were used to test the moderator role of intrinsic religiosity on the relationship between perception of IPC and emotional insecurity. In the analyses, the outcome variable was emotional insecurity, the predictor was perception of IPC and the moderator was intrinsic religiosity. Also, psychological distress, family intactness and SES that were statistically correlated with the predictor were added as control variables. The three analyses differed in that the moderator variable was personal, maternal and paternal intrinsic religiosity, respectively.

Personal intrinsic religiosity as a moderator

As shown in Table 2, all variables included in the analysis explained approximately 34% of emotional insecurity, $F\ (8,\ 435) = 28.25$, $p < .001$. When the main effects of the variables on emotional insecurity were examined, it was found that negative perception of IPC $b = .48$, $t\ (435) = 9.83$, $p < .001$, personal intrinsic religiosity $b = .33$, $t\ (435) = 4.08$, $p < .001$, and psychological distress $b = 2.75$, $t\ (435) = 3.58$, $p < .001$ had positive and significant effects. However, family SES $b = -1.50$, $t\ (435) = -2.31$, $p < .05$ and family intactness $b = -3.91$, $t\ (435) = -2.36$, $p < .05$ had negative and significant effects. After controlling for other variables, perceived maternal intrinsic religiosity $b = .06$, $t\ (435) = .55$, $p > .05$, and perceived paternal intrinsic religiosity $b = .08$, $t\ (435) = 1.05$, $p > .05$ were not found to be statistically significant predictors. In addition, the interaction between the negative perception of IPC and the personal intrinsic religiosity was found to be statistically significant, $b = -.01$, $t\ (435) = -1.98$, $p < .05$. Simple intercepts and slopes were estimated at low (−1 *SD* from mean), average, and high (+1 *SD* from mean) levels of personal intrinsic religiosity. As shown in Figure 1 and Table 3, the pattern of this

Table 2. Analysis findings regarding moderating role of personal intrinsic religiosity.

Predictors	*b*	*SE*	*t*	*p*	95% CI	
					LL	*UL*
Constant	49.50	3.38	14.65	.000**	42.86	56.14
NPIC	.48	.05	9.83	.000**	.39	.58
IR-Personal	.33	.08	4.08	.000**	.17	.49
NPIC x IR-Personal	−.01	.01	−1.98	.048*	−.02	−.00
IR-Maternal	.06	.10	.55	.579	−.14	.25
IR-Paternal	.08	.08	1.05	.295	−.07	.24
PD	2.75	.77	3.58	.000**	1.24	4.26
Family SES	−1.50	.65	−2.31	.021*	−2.78	−.22
Family Intactness	−3.91	1.66	−2.36	.019*	−7.16	−.65

Note. NPIC = Negative Perception of Interparental Conflict, IR = Intrinsic Religiosity, PD = Psychological Distress, SES = Socioeconomic status, CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.
$p < .05$, $^{**}p < .001$.

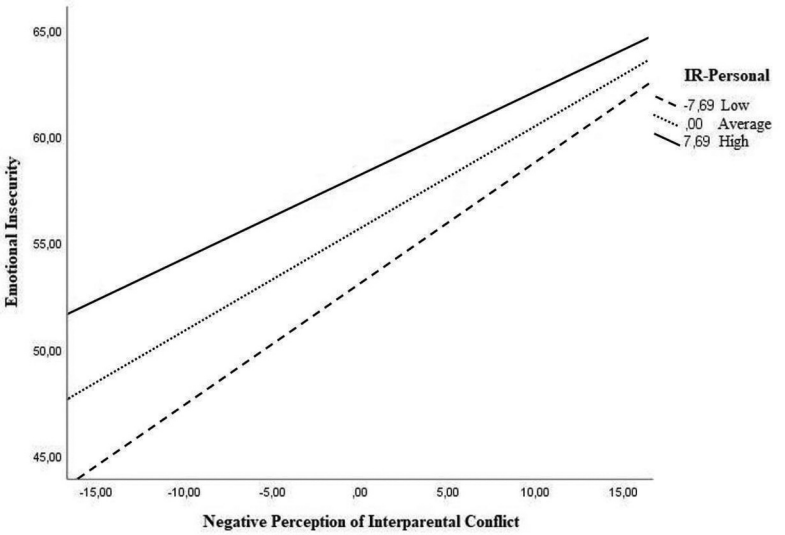


Figure 1. The moderator role of personal intrinsic religiosity on the relationship between negative perception of interparental conflict and emotional insecurity.

Table 3. Conditional effects of negative perception of interparental conflict at values of personal intrinsic religiosity.

Personal Intrinsic Religiosity	Effect	Boot SE	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI
Low	.57	.07	.44	.71
Moderate	.48	.05	.39	.58
High	.40	.06	.27	.52

interaction revealed that while negative perception of IPC positively predicted emotional insecurity for three cut-point of personal intrinsic religiosity, the role of negative perception of IPC on emotional insecurity tended to decrease for higher levels of personal intrinsic religiosity ($b_{low} = .57 > b_{mean} = .48 > b_{high} = .40$). This finding indicated that the negative effect of IPC on emotional insecurity was higher in participants who had low personal intrinsic religiosity.

Perceived maternal intrinsic religiosity as a moderator

As shown in Table 4, the model accounted for approximately 34% of variance in emotional insecurity, F (8, 435) = 27.59, $p < .001$. The results revealed that negative perception of IPC $b = .48$, t (435) = 9.65, $p < .001$, personal intrinsic religiosity $b = .32$, t (435) = 4.01, $p < .001$, and psychological distress $b = 2.68$, t (435) = 3.47, $p < .001$ had positive and significant effects. On the other hand, family SES $b = -1.53$, t (435) = −2.35, $p < .05$ and family intactness $b = -4.23$, t (435) = −2.53, $p < .05$ had negative and significant effects. However, after controlling for other variables, perceived maternal intrinsic religiosity $b = .06$, t (435) = .58, $p > .05$, and perceived paternal intrinsic religiosity $b = .09$, t (435) = 1.19, $p > .05$ were not statistically significant predictors of emotional insecurity. Also, the moderating role of the perceived maternal intrinsic religiosity was not significant on the relationship between negative perception of IPC and emotional insecurity, $b = -.00$, t (435) = −.65, $p > .05$.

Perceived paternal intrinsic religiosity as a moderator

As shown in Table 5, 35% of the variance of emotional insecurity was explained by the all variables included in the model, F (8, 435) = 29.73, $p < .001$. It was shown that negative perception of IPC $b = .49$, t (435) = 10.08, $p < .001$, personal intrinsic religiosity $b = .31$, t (435) = 3.84, $p < .001$, psychological distress $b = 2.69$, t (435) = 3.53, $p < .001$, family SES $b = -1.35$, t (435) = −2.10, $p < .05$ and family intactness $b = -3.76$, t (435) = −2.30, $p < .05$ predicted significantly emotional insecurity. After controlling for other variables, perceived maternal intrinsic religiosity $b = .04$, t (435) = .40, $p > .05$, and perceived paternal intrinsic religiosity $b = .11$, t (435) = 1.43, $p > .05$ were not found to be statistically significant predictors. Besides, the results indicated that the effect of interaction between negative perception of IPC and perceived paternal intrinsic religiosity was significant, $b = -.02$, t (435) = −3.43, $p < .001$, suggesting perceived paternal intrinsic religiosity moderated the role of negative perception of IPC on emotional insecurity. To illustrate and corroborate this interaction, simple intercepts and slopes analyses were performed. As Figure 2 and Table 6 show, the relationship between negative perception of IPC and emotional insecurity was significant for three cut-point of

Table 4. Analysis findings regarding moderating role of perceived maternal intrinsic religiosity.

					95% CI	
Predictors	*b*	*SE*	*t*	*p*	*LL*	*UL*
Constant	43.32	3.48	12.44	.000**	36.47	50.16
NPIC	.48	.05	9.65	.000**	.38	.58
IR-Maternal	.06	.10	.58	.579	−.14	.25
NPIC x IR-Maternal	−.00	.01	−.65	.516	−.02	.01
IR-Personal	.32	.08	4.01	.000**	.17	.48
IR-Paternal	.09	.08	1.19	.236	−.06	.25
PD	2.68	.77	3.47	.000**	1.16	4.20
Family SES	−1.53	.65	−2.35	.019*	−2.81	−.25
Family Intactness	−4.23	1.67	−2.53	.012*	−7.51	−.94

Note. NPIC = Negative Perception of Interparental Conflict, IR = Intrinsic Religiosity, PD = Psychological Distress, SES = Socioeconomic status.
CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.
*$p < .05$, **$p < .001$.

Table 5. Analysis findings regarding moderating role of perceived paternal intrinsic religiosity.

Predictors	*b*	*SE*	*t*	*p*	95% CI	
					LL	*UL*
Constant	44.70	3.48	12.83	.000**	37.85	51.55
NPIC	.49	.05	10.08	.000**	.40	.59
IR-Paternal	.11	.08	1.43	.153	−.04	.27
NPIC x IR-Paternal	−.02	.01	−3.43	.000**	−.03	−.01
IR-Personal	.31	.08	3.84	.000**	.15	.47
IR-Maternal	.04	.10	.40	.687	−.15	.23
PD	2.69	.76	3.53	.000**	1.19	4.19
Family SES	−1.35	.65	−2.10	.036*	−2.62	−.09
Family Intactness	−3.76	1.63	−2.30	.021*	−6.97	−.55

Note. NPIC = Negative Perception of Interparental Conflict, IR = Intrinsic Religiosity, PD = Psychological Distress, SES = Socioeconomic status, CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.
$p < .05$, $^{**}p < .001$.

perceived paternal intrinsic religiosity whereas the role of negative perception of IPC on emotional insecurity ended to decrease for higher levels of perceived paternal intrinsic religiosity ($b_{low} = .65 > b_{mean} = .49 > b_{high} = .34$). Therefore, if perceived paternal intrinsic religiosity was low, the role of negative perception of IPC on emotional insecurity was greater.

Discussion

There are two lines of research. Some researchers investigate the relationship between IPC and emotional insecurity, while others investigate the relationship between marital adjustment and religiosity. However, no researchers have studied the association of religiosity with emotional insecurity and its

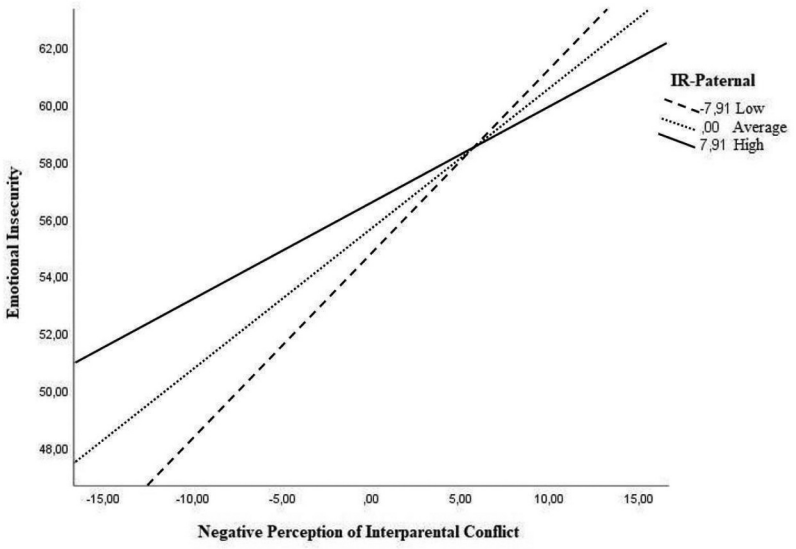


Figure 2. The moderator role of perceived paternal intrinsic religiosity on the relationship between negative perception of interparental conflict and emotional insecurity.

Table 6. Conditional effects of negative perception of interparental conflict at values of perceived paternal intrinsic religiosity.

Perceived Paternal Intrinsic Religiosity	Effect	Boot SE	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI
Low	.65	.07	.51	.79
Moderate	.49	.05	.40	.59
High	.34	.06	.21	.46

interaction with IPC. Given that emotional insecurity makes individuals more vulnerable to behavioral psychopathologies (e.g., adjustment problems) and affects their future relationship dynamics, this paper aimed to combine those two lines of research within the framework of EST. In other words, this study focused on religiosity as a possible familial factor that may affect emotional insecurity.

This section will discuss the key findings. First, the results showed a positive correlation between IPC and emotional insecurity. In moderator analyses that included intrinsic religiosity and the study's control variables (e.g., psychological distress, family intactness and SES), IPC remained a significant predictor of emotional insecurity. This result is consistent with earlier research (Davies & Cummings, 1994; Harold, Shelton, Goeke-Morey, & Cummings, 2004).

The results also showed a positive correlation between emotional insecurity and religiosity. We have stated earlier that EST is based on attachment theory. The attachment and religiosity literature proposes two opposing hypotheses: the correspondence hypothesis and the compensation hypothesis (Kirkpatrick & Shaver, 1990). The former is based on Bowlby's (1969) attachment theory. It suggests that securely attached people can establish a good relationship with God because they have consistent internal working models. The latter is based on Ainsworth's (1985) point of view and focuses on a different aspect of attachment theory. Our result is consistent with the emotional compensation hypothesis. In other words, insecurely attached adults focus on their relationship with God to compensate for this. Here, God is a new attachment figure. They both increase affect regulation and feel more secure by using this mechanism in distressing situations (Granqvist, 2002).

Maxwell, Davis, Miller, and Woolley (2020) also proposed Shared Working Models (SWMs) in this framework. The sense of security created by the relationship with God may affect other relational processes. Shared Working Models encompass the behaviors, feelings, and ideas one shares about God with one's spouse or partner. In this way, the relationship is nourished. Moreover, the relationship with God can also serve as a compensatory mechanism for someone insecurely attached to a parent. One who feels stressed and insecure can find security in one's relationship with God. For example, their religious feelings will likely weaken when they are in a good mood, and vice versa. On the other hand, they are likely to have a stronger

relationship with God, regardless of his/her attachment pattern, in a conflictual situation (Granqvist & Kirkpatrick, 2013).

Among all other religiosity variables, only personal intrinsic religiosity remained statistically significant in the moderator analysis when personal and perceived maternal and paternal intrinsic religiosity and the study's control variables (e.g., psychological distress, family intactness and SES) were considered independent predictors. This result indicates that the most crucial predictive religiosity factor for emotional insecurity is personal intrinsic religiosity. Religion provides a system of thought to interpret one's experiences (Homaei, Bozorgi, Ghahfarokhi, & Hosseinpour, 2016). The distinctive role of personal intrinsic religiosity can be evaluated within the framework of attachment theory. In attachment theory, one's goals, beliefs, experiences, and attachment strategies are organized into an internal working model. Further, internal working models are shaped and restructured along with emotions. From this perspective, a religious person's behavior, emotions, and ideas are organized in these.

We also tested the interaction of IPC and intrinsic religiosity on emerging adults' emotional insecurity and found statistically significant interactions. Our results showed that participants with low personal intrinsic religiosity experienced a more detrimental effect of IPC on emotional insecurity. In other words, personal intrinsic religiosity can be a protective factor. Although we know that religiosity positively impacts relationships, we should not underestimate the perspective that religion offers in the face of adversity. Religion also tells us how to evaluate and cope with negative experiences (Pomerleau, Pargament, & Mahoney, 2016). A believer needs to evaluate challenging situations from this perspective. Pomerleau, Pargament, and Mahoney (2016) argue that when a religious person encounters a challenging situation, he/she first emphasizes his/her belief that it will eventually pass. When we consider this finding from the perspective of Islam, we see how vital the divine meaning and attribution of difficulties and challenges are. One may regard a problematic situation (e.g., IPC) as a test or a challenge to find a new meaning. Consequently, one can believe one will become stronger at the end of that situation. The Qur'an has some verses that directly command this. It also advises patience in the face of adversity (Qur'an, 39:10). Also, Surah al-Baqarah contains the same theme (Qur'an, 2:286).

Our results also showed that perceived paternal intrinsic religiosity moderated the role of the negative perception of IPC on emotional insecurity. There was a negative correlation between perceived paternal intrinsic religiosity and the role of the negative impact of IPC on emotional insecurity. There may be multiple reasons why perceived paternal religiosity was a moderator. Firstly, the most frequent and collective religious ritual is the Friday prayer, apart from Ramadan and religious holidays (because these are a small part of the year). Only men perform Friday prayers collectively in mosques; men

close their shops and gather in. What is more, they socialize after the prayer. In other words, Friday prayers are performed only by men, that is, fathers. As mentioned earlier, Islam regulates the lives of its followers in remarkable detail, sets out inheritance rules that determine how a Muslim's estate is to be divided between family members (Qur'an, 4:11) and specifies in certain terms what the relationship between parents should be like. It also makes specific provisions to prevent IPC, which is vital for EST. It focuses on obedience and respect and provides its believers with commandments or principles of conduct to avoid IPC. For example, Surah An-Nisâ - verse 34 explains how men should proceed in case of disharmony between husband and wife.

Family harmony is important for our perception of emotional security. The Qur'an encourages wives and children to obey their husbands/fathers. The verses clearly state that the father is responsible for family functioning, because he is in charge of the family. Therefore, if the father is religious, the family becomes more harmonious, and children have more confidence in the continuity of the family. Secondly, although the role of maternal religiosity is stronger in the transmission of religion to the individual, paternal religiosity is influential in predicting psychological outcomes (Stearns & McKinney, 2017). This explanatory role is especially high in societies where traditional gender roles are accepted and for daughters (Bumpus, Crouter, & McHale, 2001). Considering that 87% of the participants of the current study were female, the moderating effect found for the perceived paternal religiosity is not unexpected.

Further, our results suggested that maternal intrinsic religiosity was not a statistically significant moderating variable. This finding is not consistent with previous research that demonstrates maternal religiosity has positive consequences for both parent-child relationships and family functioning (e.g., Goeke-Morey et al., 2013). However, those researchers neither focused on patriarchal societies nor recruited Muslim samples. Compared to that of the father, maternal religious attitudes and ideology predicted the religious ideology of emerging adults (Pearce & Thornton, 2007). The correlation coefficients in our study also support this finding. However, as stated in the paragraph above, paternal religiosity explains psychological outcomes (e.g., emotional insecurity) better than maternal religiosity (Stearns & McKinney, 2017). This is consistent with the non-significant results of the present study regarding the moderating role of perceived maternal intrinsic religiosity.

The current study must be viewed in the context of its limitations. First, the sample consisted only of undergraduates. Second, in the present study, intrinsic religiosity was measured because it was belief-based, not utilitarian (Reynolds, Smith, & Conway, 2022). To assess religiosity more comprehensively and to detect possible differential effects within the EST framework, other aspects of religiosity (e.g. extrinsic religiosity) should be taken into

account. Third, we did not address the religious dissimilarity with parents. Fourth, since our sample mainly consisted of female participants, we could not examine the effect of gender differences or investigate mother-son dyads. Fifth, in the present study, IPC and parental religiosity levels were reported by the participants. Therefore, the study variables were completely evaluated through the perceptions of the participants. The present study was based on the participants' perception of the parental intrinsic religiosity rather than how high it actually was. Obtaining more specific and unique information about both IPC and the perception of religion can even be considered as a contribution of the study. Another major limitation concerns the generalizability. The study sample came entirely from a non-Western and Muslim population. The findings might be influenced by differential role of religion in family dynamics. Hence, caution is needed when generalizing the results to other religions and cultural contexts. Last, only quantitative data were used in the present study. It is suggested that future research use a mixed-methods design with some qualitative data to see whether fathers with high-to-moderate levels of religiosity form a kind of anchor to protect the family, or to examine whether the rarity of mothers' religious rejection is a source of familial tension.

Despite these limitations, the present study makes several contributions to the literature. We identified new factors within the framework of EST. First, this study focused on emerging adults for several reasons. Emerging adults have observed and experienced the relationship between their parents from different perspectives (extensive history). Also, conflicts between one's parents become more prominent as one has more romantic relationships (David & Murphy, 2004). Further, it is thought that the perceptions of emerging adults may be more certain than those of children (Finley, Mira, & Schwartz, 2008). Since parental control decreases with age, their ideas and opinions may be more independent and valid. Second, we also recruited a sample from a non-Western and Muslim society. Therefore, we were able to test the generalizability of previous findings in a different sample.

Overall, this study demonstrated the moderating effect of personal and perceived parental religiosity on the relationship between IPC and emotional insecurity. These findings expand our understanding of the role of religiosity in family functioning as well as perceived emotional insecurity. Researchers should develop more effective intervention programs to protect emerging adults from the long-term effects of IPC. Given the protective role of intrinsic religiosity for emotional security, spiritual support groups may be beneficial for individuals experiencing interparental conflict.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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