



# The mediating role of sexual satisfaction in the relationship between personality traits and emotional divorce in men

Hanieh. Mosadegh<sup>1</sup>  
*Seyed Ali. Darbani*<sup>2\*</sup>  
Kamdin. Parsakia<sup>3</sup>

1. MSc, Department of Psychology and Counseling, South Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran
2. \*Corresponding author: Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology and Counseling, South Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran
3. Department of Psychology and Counseling, KMAN Research Institute, Richmond Hill, Ontario, Canada

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## Original research article

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### Abstract

**Aim:** The purpose of this study was to investigate the mediating role of sexual satisfaction in the relationship between personality traits and emotional divorce in men. **Method:** The current research was correlational and descriptive. The statistical population of this research was the men of Tehran in 2022-23. In this study, 263 married men of Tehran were selected as the statistical sample of the research. The measurement tools include Larson's Sexual Satisfaction Questionnaire (1998), Gottman's Emotional Divorce Questionnaire (1998) and the short form of the NEO Questionnaire. Finally, the data collected through the questionnaire was analyzed using the structural equation model and SPSS and AMOS software. **Results:** The research findings showed that the research model had a good fit and all paths in the research model had significant coefficients. The results of the statistical analysis of the data collected through the questionnaire showed that the mediating role of the marital satisfaction variable in the relationship between personality traits and emotional divorce is significant at the 0.01 level ( $P < 0.01$ ). **Conclusion:** In general, based on the findings in the field of emotional divorce, personality characteristics and sexual satisfaction of couples, it can be said that these three variables are related to each other. Examining the relationship between these three in the form of a structural equation model showed that personality traits can help predict emotional divorce and better examine the state of the marital relationship. Therefore, by considering marital satisfaction as a mediating variable, since according to the results obtained in this research, it can strengthen the existing relationship between personality traits and emotional divorce, we can predict emotional divorce with more accuracy and confidence. Therefore, the result obtained from this research can be useful in examining couples' relationships.

**Keywords:** *sexual satisfaction, emotional divorce, personality traits*

## Introduction

One of the essential components of emotional divorce is marital sexual satisfaction. Sexual satisfaction is widely considered to be a vital aspect of human life and the main influential factor on the overall quality of life (Mallory, 2021). Humans usually perceive sexual relationships as a means of expressing emotions, intimacy, anger, love, and also a calming and enjoyable activity. Personal and private sexual experiences are unique to individuals, and desirable and effective sexual life is considered an important part of marriage, with a strong relationship between sexual satisfaction and marital satisfaction (Verhallen et al., 2019). Among the individual characteristics, one of the factors that can affect marital relationships and also predict marital stability is individual personality traits that form the basis of communication. Based on this, the aim of the present research was to answer the following question: Is the mediating role of sexual satisfaction significant in the relationship between personality traits and emotional divorce in men?

## Method

The current research was correlational and descriptive. The statistical population of this research was the men of Tehran in 2022-23. In this study, 263 married men of Tehran were selected as the statistical sample of the research. The measurement tools include Larson's Sexual Satisfaction Questionnaire (1998), Gottman's Emotional Divorce Questionnaire (1998) and the short form of the NEO Questionnaire. Finally, the data collected through the questionnaire was analyzed using the structural equation model and SPSS and AMOS software.

## Results

The research findings showed that the research model had a good fit and all paths in the research model had significant coefficients. The results of the statistical analysis of the data collected through the questionnaire showed that the mediating role of the marital satisfaction variable in the relationship between personality traits and emotional divorce is significant at the 0.01 level ( $P < 0.01$ ).

## Conclusion

In explaining the mediating role of sexual satisfaction in the relationship between personality traits and emotional divorce, it can be acknowledged that the occurrence of any sexual problems may have detrimental effects on other areas, and it is obvious that sexual satisfaction has a close relationship with the overall relationship between husband and wife (Roshani et al., 2019; Zarean & Sadidpour, 2016). Numerous studies have shown that sexual issues are among the most important issues in life (Ghavami et al., 2023). If couples can establish a healthy emotional relationship and satisfaction with each other, sexual satisfaction will also follow, and sexual relations alone cannot be the cause of a collapse in life. It can also be said that a lack of sexual satisfaction can cause a lot of tension (Verhallen et al., 2019). In fact, sexual satisfaction can lead to positive emotions, closeness and intimacy to the spouse, forgiveness, and an increase in marital communication, and as a result, the continuity of it and the increased ability to resolve conflicts between couples, prevent emotional divorce (Ghavami et al., 2023). In explaining the more meaningful mediating role of sexual satisfaction, it can be said that sexual life should be a satisfying relationship for individuals so that they can meet their emotional and psychological needs and each of them, in addition to having mental security, can fulfill their sexual needs in an intimate space (Mallory, 2021). Sexual satisfaction is a very important component in loyal relationships, and generally, primary satisfaction with sexual relationships is a strong

predictor for satisfaction and continuity of the relationship in subsequent times (Kheybari Pouya et al., 2022). Therefore, it can be argued that marital satisfaction itself is not a primary determinant of emotional divorce, but it can act as a mediating variable based on the aforementioned content. The relationship between sexual satisfaction and personality traits is explained further.

In general, based on the findings in the field of emotional divorce, personality characteristics and sexual satisfaction of couples, it can be said that these three variables are related to each other. Examining the relationship between these three in the form of a structural equation model showed that personality traits can help predict emotional divorce and better examine the state of the marital relationship. Therefore, by considering marital satisfaction as a mediating variable, since according to the results obtained in this research, it can strengthen the existing relationship between personality traits and emotional divorce, we can predict emotional divorce with more accuracy and confidence. Therefore, the result obtained from this research can be useful in examining couples' relationships.

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