



The relationship between sexual performance and feelings of loneliness with the mediating role of marital boredom

Mitra. Nezamolmolki¹

Maryam. Nasri^{2*}

Seyed Abdulmajid. Bahrainian³

Fatemeh. Shahbazizadeh⁴

Sahar. Farahmandpour⁵

1. PhD student, Department of Psychology, Birjand Branch, Islamic Azad University, Birjand, Iran
2. *Corresponding author: Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Birjand Medical School, Islamic Azad University, Birjand, Iran
3. Professor, Department of Psychology, Birjand Branch, Islamic Azad University, Birjand, Iran
4. Associate Professor of Psychology Department, Birjand Branch, Islamic Azad University, Birjand, Iran
5. M.A of Clinical Psychology, Ahvaz Branch, Islamic Azad University, Ahvaz, Iran

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Abstract

Aim: This research was conducted with the aim of investigating the relationship between sexual performance and loneliness with the mediating role of marital boredom. **Methods:** The research method was correlation type. The statistical population of the present study was all married women with family differences who referred to counseling centers in Tehran in 2022. The sample of the research was 200 of these married women, which was done in the form of two-stage cluster and simple random sampling of the lottery type. The research tools were: Pines Marital Boredom Scale (1996), Social Emotional Loneliness Questionnaire of DiTomaso et al. (2004) and Rosen et al. Sexual Performance Questionnaire (2000). The obtained information was analyzed using the method of path analysis and path analysis. **Results:** Path analysis results showed that there is a direct and significant relationship between sexual performance and marital boredom, between loneliness and marital boredom, and between sexual performance and loneliness ($P < 0.001$). Also, the results indicated that marital boredom plays a mediating role in the relationship between sexual performance and loneliness ($P < 0.001$). **Conclusion:** It can be concluded that the model of the relationship between sexual performance and loneliness with the mediator role of marital boredom has a good fit.

Keywords: sexual function, loneliness, marital boredom.

Introduction

Marriage is a complex, delicate, and dynamic relationship. The existence of a strong, warm, intimate, and mutually respectful family is one of the consequences of a successful marriage (Parsakia, Rostami, & Saadati, 2023), which can lead to physical and mental health, comfort, peace, and safety for spouses and family members (Panahfar, Yousefi, & Amani, 2014). Marriage, which creates shared experiences between spouses, can sometimes lead to differences in the quality of marital relationships (Bim et al., 2018). The sexual relationship between couples is one of the essential factors for a strong and stable marital relationship, and it is a two-way process that can create the groundwork for problems and the destabilization of the family unit if any disturbances happen (Goodwin, Berggren, & Johnson, 2018). Women's sexual performance is influenced by the complexity and balance of physical, psychological, hormonal, and genetic factors (Clayton & Ramirez, 2010). Ignoring each other's sexual needs, which is related to impotence, lack of desire, or frigidity, damages marital relationships, makes them angry and disappointed with their spouse and life, and leads to aggressive behavior and depression. On the other hand, any stress, emotional disturbances, and ignorance of physical conditions and sexual dysfunction can also negatively affect the individual's sexual performance (Mirzaei Jahed & Saberi, 2019).

Each of these factors plays a significant role in reducing family performance, disrupting family functioning, and causing loneliness in each spouse (Goodarzi, 2013). Loneliness refers to a condition in which an individual experiences or perceives a lack of relationships with others and can be recognized by two characteristics: social isolation and emotional isolation (Hesse & Haukka, 2018). Loneliness is an unpleasant negative emotion that affects people's attitudes toward themselves and the meaning of life, and it causes individuals to feel hopeless, useless, and inefficient and to attach less importance and value to their lives (Amoozadeh, 2014). Individuals who experience loneliness react to relationships with others with a feeling of being alone, psychological and behavioral withdrawal (Hesse & Haukka, 2018). The results of Asbara's (2015) study indicated that incorrect communication and marital dissatisfaction lead to feelings of loneliness between spouses, which damages marital satisfaction in the long run. The results of various studies show a relationship between loneliness and marital dissatisfaction (Zare-azadini, Jafari, & Ghamari, 2021; Zolfaghari et al., 2021), sexual performance and marital dissatisfaction (Mirzaei Jahed & Saberi, 2019; Akbari & Samani, 2018; Goodwin et al., 2018; McNulty et al., 2016), sexual performance and loneliness (Jafari Rezaei, Arvin, Nikrouy, & Ghaforian, 2021). However, no research has yet been conducted on the relationship between sexual performance and loneliness with the mediating role of marital dissatisfaction. Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between sexual performance and loneliness with the mediating role of marital dissatisfaction. The research question is whether the model of the relationship between sexual performance and loneliness with the mediating role of marital dissatisfaction is a good fit.

Method

The research method was correlation type. The statistical population of the present study was all married women with family differences who referred to counseling

centers in Tehran in 2022. The sample of the research was 200 of these married women, which was done in the form of two-stage cluster and simple random sampling of the lottery type. The research tools were: Pines Marital Boredom Scale (1996), Social Emotional Loneliness Questionnaire of DiTomaso et al. (2004) and Rosen et al. Sexual Performance Questionnaire (2000). The obtained information was analyzed using the method of path analysis and path analysis.

Results

Path analysis results showed that there is a direct and significant relationship between sexual performance and marital boredom, between loneliness and marital boredom, and between sexual performance and loneliness ($P < 0.001$). Also, the results indicated that marital boredom plays a mediating role in the relationship between sexual performance and loneliness ($P < 0.001$).

Conclusion

It can be concluded that the model of the relationship between sexual performance and loneliness with the mediator role of marital boredom has a good fit.

If sexual dysfunction or problems occur, it can lead to feelings of deprivation, failure, and insecurity in spouses. This sexual deprivation often leads to significant damage to marital relationships, including blaming the spouse, expressing dissatisfaction with life, conflict, anger, and threats of divorce, all of which are signs of marital dissatisfaction. Additionally, if couples are unable to identify and express their feelings and fantasies, their sexual satisfaction decreases, and as a result, they become disillusioned with each other (Zolfaghari et al., 2021). Individuals who suffer from marital dissatisfaction feel distraught in life, have a pessimistic view of their spouse, feel they cannot change these conditions, and as a result, feel lonely.

In addition to expanding theoretical areas, the results of this study can also be useful for practitioners in the field of family counseling and couples therapy to reduce marital dissatisfaction and teach necessary skills for sexual performance as a useful tool to reduce feelings of loneliness in life and consequently promote well-being and a healthy, stable life. Limitations of the study include its execution in Tehran and in married women, which makes it difficult to generalize the results to men, other cultures, and other cities. Another limitation of the research is the lack of control over some interfering variables, so caution must be exercised in interpreting the relationships between variables.

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