

Developing a Causal Model of Marital Relationship Quality Based on Dark Personality Traits and Communication Beliefs with the Mediating Role of Emotion Regulation in Women

Navid. Enfeal¹, Nadereh. Sohrabi^{1*}, Maryam. Zarnaghash¹, Sousan. Sahami²

¹ Department of Psychology, Marv.C., Islamic Azad University, Marvdasht, Iran

² Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Marv.C., Islami Azad University, Marvdasht, Iran

* Corresponding author email address: Nadereh.sohrabi@iau.ac.ir

Editor

Izet Pehlić
Full professor for Educational sciences, Islamic pedagogical faculty of the University of Zenica, Bosnia and Herzegovina
izet.pehlic@unze.ba

Reviewers

Reviewer 1: Zahra Yousefi
Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Isfahan Branch (Khorasgan), Islamic Azad University, Isfahan, Iran. Email: Z.yousefi1393@khuisf.ac.ir
Reviewer 2: Mohsen Golparvar
Professor, Department of Psychology, Isfahan (Khorasgan) Branch, Islamic Azad University, Isfahan, Iran. mgolparvar@khuisf.ac.ir

1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

In the second paragraph of the introduction, the sentence “Communication beliefs are among the most influential of these cognitive variables because they guide how spouses interpret disagreements...” would benefit from greater theoretical anchoring; consider explicitly linking this statement to a formal cognitive framework (e.g., Beck’s cognitive theory or schema theory) to strengthen theoretical coherence.

In the discussion of communication beliefs, the sentence “Dysfunctional communication beliefs...can intensify conflict and distort relational meaning-making” is conceptually sound but lacks specificity; it is recommended to provide at least one concrete example or empirical statistic from cited studies to enhance precision and evidential grounding.

In the paragraph introducing dark personality traits, the sentence “The Dark Triad—typically comprising Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy—captures tendencies toward manipulation...” is descriptive but could be strengthened by briefly distinguishing between the three traits in terms of their differential relational mechanisms, rather than treating them as a homogeneous construct.

In the Measures section, the description “Internal consistency reliability coefficients...were reported as satisfactory, with a value of 0.89” refers to previous studies; however, it is essential to report reliability coefficients (Cronbach’s alpha) calculated for the current sample to ensure internal consistency within the study context.

In the description of the Dark Personality Traits Scale, the sentence “The validity of the questionnaire has been confirmed through previous studies and expert evaluations” is vague; the authors should specify the type of validity (construct, convergent, discriminant) and provide quantitative indices where possible.

In the Data Analysis section, the statement “Data normality was assessed using skewness and kurtosis tests” is insufficiently detailed; the authors should report the actual values or thresholds used to determine normality, especially given the use of SEM techniques.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

In the same section, the statement “Developmental evidence suggests that these dark traits can consolidate in young adulthood...” requires clarification regarding whether this refers to stability, increase, or expression of traits; the authors should specify the developmental trajectory more precisely and cite longitudinal evidence if available.

In the emotion regulation section, the sentence “In couple relationships, emotion regulation is crucial because conflict...require adaptive management” would benefit from integrating dyadic regulation concepts (e.g., co-regulation) rather than focusing solely on individual-level processes, as marital interactions are inherently bidirectional.

The final paragraph of the introduction, specifically the sentence “Despite the growing literature, several gaps remain,” appropriately identifies research gaps; however, the justification would be stronger if the authors explicitly articulated why focusing exclusively on women in counseling centers provides unique theoretical or clinical value beyond convenience sampling.

In the Methods section, under “Study Design and Participants,” the sentence “Accordingly, the total sample included 250 married women selected through a multistage cluster random sampling method” raises concerns about representativeness; the authors should clarify whether the sampling frame (counseling centers) limits external validity and discuss potential selection bias.

The inclusion criterion “having at least five years of marital life (to ensure that participants had at least one child)” is methodologically problematic, as it conflates duration of marriage with parenthood; the authors should justify this assumption or revise the criterion to avoid introducing confounding variables related to parental status.

In the same section, the requirement “an age difference between spouses of at least 3 and at most 10 years” lacks theoretical justification; the authors should explain why this range was imposed and how it relates to marital quality or the studied constructs.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

2. Revised

Editor’s decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.