

# The Mediating Role of Communication Beliefs in the Relationship Between Personality Traits and Emotional Empathy with Marital Stability in Women


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## 1. Round 1

### 1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The manuscript reports Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.57 for agreeableness and 0.58 for extraversion in the NEO Personality Inventory. These reliability coefficients fall below commonly accepted psychometric thresholds and raise concerns regarding measurement precision and construct validity. The authors should discuss the implications of these weak reliability values for interpretation of the findings and consider whether item-level analysis or removal of problematic indicators is warranted.

The paragraph describing the Emotional Empathy Scale includes inconsistent information regarding reverse-scored items. Specifically, the manuscript states that 16 items are reverse-scored, but only 15 items are listed explicitly. This discrepancy creates ambiguity regarding scoring procedures and threatens methodological transparency. The authors should carefully revise this section and verify the scoring protocol used in data analysis.

The operationalization of "marital stability" requires greater conceptual clarification. The study uses the Marital Instability Index, which primarily measures proneness to divorce and instability, yet throughout the manuscript the construct is discussed positively as "marital stability." The authors should explain whether scores were reverse-coded or interpreted inversely,

because higher scores on instability indices generally indicate poorer relationship functioning. Without clarification, the interpretation of regression coefficients becomes difficult.

The fit indices reported in Table 6 appear unusually perfect for a psychosocial mediation model (CFI = 1.00, GFI = 0.99, RMSEA = 0.01). Such values may indicate an oversimplified or underidentified model rather than exceptional explanatory adequacy. The authors should provide the full structural model specification, degrees of freedom justification, and possibly alternative models for comparison.

Figure 1 presents the final structural model; however, several path coefficients displayed in the figure differ in interpretability from those discussed in the text. In particular, the directionality and magnitude of some associations are difficult to interpret visually because standardized and unstandardized coefficients are not clearly distinguished. The figure should be redesigned with improved readability and complete statistical labeling.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

## 1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The paragraph “The skewness and kurtosis values indicated that the distributions of the variables were within an acceptable range for parametric analyses” is not sufficiently rigorous because one variable, conscientiousness, demonstrates a skewness value of 3.83, which substantially exceeds accepted thresholds for normality in SEM analyses. The authors should explain why this distribution was considered acceptable and report whether transformation procedures or robust estimation methods were considered.

Table 3 reports that emotional empathy had a negative relationship with marital stability, which contradicts a large body of established literature on empathy and relationship quality. While the authors later discuss the possibility of “excessive empathy,” the manuscript lacks differentiation between adaptive empathy and empathic overarousal. The study would benefit significantly from theoretical refinement distinguishing empathic concern from emotional contagion or co-rumination processes.

The manuscript repeatedly refers to “communication beliefs” as a mediating construct, yet no detailed conceptual definition or dimensional structure is adequately presented. The paragraph introducing the Relationship Beliefs Inventory lists five beliefs but does not explain how these dimensions operate theoretically in the mediation model. The authors should clarify whether mediation was tested using a total score or subscales and justify this decision theoretically and statistically.

The regression model reported in Table 4 contains several inconsistencies between correlation results and regression coefficients. For example, neuroticism demonstrates a significant bivariate correlation with marital stability but becomes non-significant in regression analysis. The authors should discuss whether multicollinearity or suppression effects were present and provide diagnostics such as tolerance or variance inflation factor (VIF) values.

The manuscript does not adequately report SEM estimation procedures. Although AMOS-24 was used for path analysis, there is no information regarding estimation method, bootstrapping procedures, handling of missing data, or assumptions testing. Since mediation analyses are highly sensitive to estimation strategy, the manuscript should include a more detailed statistical methodology section.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

## 2. Revised

Editor’s decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.