



## Research Paper

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## The Mediating Role of Sexual Self-Efficacy in the Relationship between Subjective Well-Being and the Quality of Sexual Life in Women

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Article Info.	Abstract
<b>Received:</b> 03.02.2023 <b>Accepted:</b> 15.07.2023	<b>Abstract</b> The quality of sexual life as one of the components of marital life can be influenced by psychological and sexual factors such as subjective well-being and sexual self-efficacy. In addition, subjective well-being can directly and indirectly affect the quality of sexual life. The current research study aimed to investigate the mediating role of sexual self-efficacy in the relationship between subjective well-being and women's sexual life quality. The current research method was correlational and structural equation modeling was used. The statistical population of the present study consisted of married women in Rasht in 2022. In the present study, 250 women were selected using the voluntary sampling method. They filled out the Sexual Quality of Life questionnaire, the Subjective Well-being scale, and the Sexual Self-efficacy questionnaire. Collected data were analyzed using Spss and Amos software. The research findings showed that all the indicators of the model had valid fit ( $\chi^2/df = 2.46$ , RMSEA = 0.01, GFI = 0.99, AGFI = 0.97, NFI = 0.99, IFI = 0.99, TLI = 0.99, CFI = 0.92) and sexual self-efficacy played a mediating role in the relationship between subjective well-being and the quality of women's sexual life ( $P < 0.01$ , $\beta = 0.14$ ). As the research findings supported the mediating role of sexual self-efficacy in the relationship between subjective well-being and the quality of women's sexual life, increasing the subjective well-being and sexual self-efficacy would result in the improved quality of women's sexual life. Thus, the family functioning would improve.
<b>Keywords:</b>  <i>Women,</i>  <i>sexual quality of life,</i>  <i>subjective well-being,</i>  <i>sexual self-efficacy</i>	
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## Introduction

Sexual Quality of Life includes an individual's perceived subjective evaluation of the positive and negative aspects of his sexual relationship, and the resulting emotional responses (Stephenson & Meston, 2010). If the perceived quality of sexual life is reported to be high, an increase in the stable married life is related to happiness, and improved quality of life (Dehghani Champiri & Dehghani, 2020; Setoudeh et al., 2019). Sexual activity, as one of the important aspects of human life, can be influenced by psychological characteristics such as well-being (Guleryuz & Altay, 2023). Research has shown that there is a positive correlation between subjective well-being and structures related to the quality of women's marital relationships (Fatehi et al., 2021). In addition, well-being is related to several aspects of mental health such as self-efficacy (Cattelino et al., 2021; Assarzadeh et al., 2019). Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in his ability to try to achieve goals (Bandura, 1997). On the other hand, sexual self-efficacy is one of the components of self-efficacy and includes an individual's belief in his ability to properly manage his sexual relationships (i.e., sexual self-concept) (Rostosky et al., 2008); it brings about sexual health (Hsu et al., 2015). The quality of sexual life can be influenced by psychological factors and sexual functioning (Guleryuz & Altay, 2023). Therefore, in the current research, the role of factors which could directly and indirectly affect the quality of sexual life was investigated. This study examined if sexual self-efficacy had a mediating role in the relationship between subjective well-being and the quality of sexual life of women.

## Methodology

The current research method was correlation and structural equation modeling was used. The statistical population included married women in Rasht in 2023. Two hundred and fifty women were selected through the voluntary sampling method. They were asked to fill out the Sexual Quality of Life Questionnaire (SQOL-F), the Subjective Well-Being Scale (SWS), and the Sexual Self-Efficacy Questionnaire (SSF). The inclusion criteria included not suffering from psychological disorders and chronic physical diseases, and not having severe marital conflicts. Ethical considerations in the present study were observed; before distributing the questionnaires, the participants were orally informed about the research nature of the questionnaires. In addition, to ensure that their answers would remain confidential, they were told that there was no need to write their names on the answer sheets. Finally, all participants voluntarily and consciously participated in the study. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS and Amos software.

## Results

The mean and standard deviation of sexual quality of life were 52.10 and 9.78, respectively. The mean and standard deviation of sexual self-efficacy were 21.77 and 4.85, respectively and the mean and standard deviation of the subjective well-being were 31.73 and 10.16, respectively. Moreover, the values of skewness and elongation of all research variables were in the range of -2 and 2, which indicated that the research data had a normal distribution. Furthermore, the Pearson correlation coefficient (0.61,  $P = .01$ ) showed that there was a positive and significant correlation between sexual self-efficacy and the quality of sexual life. There was also a positive and significant correlation between subjective well-being and the quality of sexual life ( $r = 0.58$ ,  $P = .01$ ). In addition, there was a positive and significant correlation between subjective well-being and sexual self-efficacy ( $r = 0.28$ ,  $P = .01$ ). Therefore, there was a linear relationship between predictor, mediator, and criterion variables. To evaluate the research model which sought to investigate the mediating role of sexual self-efficacy in the relationship between subjective well-being and quality of sexual life of women, structural equation modeling (in AMOS software) was used. Table 1 shows the fit indices of the model.

Table 1. Model fit indices

Indices	X <sup>2</sup>	df	X <sup>2</sup> /df	GFI	AGFI	CFI	NFI	TLI	IFI	RMSEA
Model	4.09	4	2.46	.99	.97	.99	.99	.99	.99	.01

As it is evident in Table 1, the X<sup>2</sup>/df index (i.e., the ratio of chi-square to the degree of freedom) was 2.46 which was in the range of 1 to 5; it confirmed the validity of the model. Moreover, Table 1 shows that the Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), Adjusted Goodness-of-Index (AGFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), the Normed Fit Index (NFI), and the Incremental Fit Index (IFI) were higher than 0.90, which indicated that the research model had valid fit. The Root Mean Squared Error of Approximation (RMSEA) was also estimated to be .01, which was smaller than 0.08; it indicated the valid fit of the model. Therefore, all the indices of the model had a valid fit.

Table 2. Indirect path of the model

Variable	Path	Lower limit	Upper limit	Sig.
Subjective well-being → sexual self-efficacy → the quality of sexual life	.14	.05	.24	.001

The bootstrap method in Table 2 shows that the indirect path of sexual self-efficacy in the relationship between subjective well-being and the quality of sexual life was equal to .14 with a lower limit of 0.05 and an upper limit of 0.24 at the significance level of 0.001. Therefore, sexual self-efficacy played a mediating role in the relationship between subjective well-being and the quality of women's sexual lives.

## Conclusion

The research findings showed that the indirect path of sexual self-efficacy was significant in the relationship between subjective well-being and the quality of sexual life. Moreover, sexual self-efficacy played a mediating role in the relationship between subjective well-being and the quality of sexual life of women. In this regard, research findings showed that in the relationship between neuroticism, extraversion, and marital satisfaction, sexual self-efficacy played a mediating role. In addition, a low level of neuroticism and a high level of extraversion could lead to an increase in sexual self-efficacy and an increase in marital satisfaction (Hazrati et al., 2021). Another research study showed that sexual self-efficacy could reduce the negative effects of sexual dysfunction on sexual satisfaction; when sexual self-efficacy increased, the negative effects of sexual dysfunction on sexual satisfaction of people were reduced (Saminfar & Vaziri, 2019). Another study also showed that the secure attachment style could positively increase sexual satisfaction by influencing sexual self-efficacy (Siyakamri et al., 2018).

These issues could be explained by referring to the fact that subjective well-being is associated with an increase in positive psychological states and a decrease in negative psychological symptoms such as depression, and anxiety. As a result, individuals enjoy higher self-efficacy because one of the sources of self-efficacy is an individual's perceived psychological state (Bandura, 1986). Thus, individuals who are chronically and intensely involved in tension and stress have lower self-efficacy. Studies also highlighted the mutual relationship between subjective well-being and self-efficacy. Increasing well-being and managing the stress and tensions of daily life led to the improvement of perceived self-efficacy (Prestwich et al., 2014; Ozer, 2023). In addition, considering the positive relationship between sexual self-efficacy and the quality of sexual life, subjective well-being can indirectly affect the quality of sexual life through its positive effect on sexual self-efficacy as one of the factors related to self-efficacy.

Considering the importance of subjective well-being in sexual self-efficacy and the quality of sexual life, it is suggested that counselors and family psychologists improve the subjective well-being of their clients in the interventions. The findings of this research study indicated the mediating role of sexual self-efficacy in the relationship between subjective well-being and the quality of women's sexual lives. Therefore, by increasing subjective well-being and sexual self-efficacy, the quality of women's sexual lives can be improved; as a result, family functioning would improve.

### Conflict of interest

There is no conflict of interest on the part of the authors in this article.

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