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Developing a Predictive Model of Emotional Divorce Based on Character Strengths and Personality Traits Mediated by Psychological Capital

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study aimed to develop a structural model for predicting emotional divorce based on character strengths and personality traits with the mediating role of psychological capital.

Methods and Materials: The research method was applied in terms of purpose and descriptive-correlational in terms of data collection. The statistical population consisted of all couples who sought counseling and psychological services in centers supervised by the Iranian Psychological Association and the Welfare Organization in Tehran in 2022. A total of 360 individuals were selected using a multistage random sampling method. The research utilized the following instruments: Emotional Divorce Scale (Gottman, 1995), Character Strengths Inventory (Peterson & Seligman, 2004), Personality Traits Inventory (Costa & McCrae, 1989), and Psychological Capital Questionnaire (McGee, 2011). Descriptive and inferential statistics (structural equation modeling and Sobel test) were used for data analysis through SPSS and AMOS software.

Findings: The findings revealed that the proposed model had a good fit. The results confirmed the direct effect of character strengths on emotional divorce among couples attending counseling centers. Moreover, the indirect effects of courage and temperance on emotional divorce through the mediation of psychological capital were also supported. The direct effects of neuroticism, agreeableness, and conscientiousness on emotional divorce among these couples were confirmed. In addition, the indirect effects of neuroticism, openness to experience, and agreeableness on emotional divorce through the mediating role of psychological capital were confirmed.

Conclusion: Therefore, considering these variables can assist researchers and therapists in prevention efforts and the development of more effective interventions.

Keywords: Emotional divorce, character strengths, personality traits, psychological capital

1. Introduction

Emotional divorce, a phenomenon that precedes or accompanies legal separation, reflects the psychological and relational breakdown between spouses while formal marriage remains intact. Unlike legal divorce, emotional divorce is marked by the erosion of affection, trust, and mutual understanding, resulting in emotional distancing, communication deficits, and psychological disengagement (Alijani et al., 2022; Basharpour et al., 2021). The complexity of this phenomenon lies in its invisibility and persistence, often remaining unacknowledged while contributing significantly to individual and familial dysfunctions (Jomenia et al., 2021). A growing body of research has examined the psychological mechanisms underlying emotional divorce, with a particular emphasis on personality traits, character strengths, and psychological capital as central explanatory constructs (Mosadegh et al., 2023; Spikic & Mortelmans, 2021).

The Five-Factor Model (FFM) of personality—comprising neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness—has long been recognized as a reliable framework for understanding personality dimensions that influence interpersonal relationships and marital stability (Hong et al., 2020; Spikic & Mortelmans, 2021). Neuroticism, characterized by emotional instability and vulnerability to stress, has been associated with higher susceptibility to marital dissatisfaction and emotional disengagement (Jafari & Nobavehvatan, 2022; Khosravi & Sepahmansour, 2024). In contrast, traits like agreeableness and conscientiousness promote harmony, responsibility, and emotional regulation, acting as protective factors against relationship breakdowns (Sharifi et al., 2022). Empirical findings demonstrate that low agreeableness and conscientiousness are linked with conflictual interactions, rigid interpersonal schemas, and reduced empathy, all of which are predictors of emotional divorce (Sadeghkhani et al., 2023).

In addition to personality traits, character strengths—positive and morally valued traits such as hope, gratitude, forgiveness, and courage—have gained attention for their role in fostering marital resilience and satisfaction (Ataimehr et al., 2023). These strengths contribute to effective communication, conflict resolution, and emotional intimacy, thereby buffering against emotional divorce. Seligman and Peterson's classification of 24 character strengths under six core virtues—wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance, and transcendence—offers a

comprehensive structure for understanding how positive individual capacities may mitigate relational deterioration (Samani et al., 2022). For instance, virtues such as justice and temperance are linked to fairness and emotional self-regulation, essential elements in navigating marital conflicts constructively (Pouri, 2016). Courage and humanity facilitate vulnerability and empathy, allowing partners to remain emotionally engaged even amidst relational strain (Alijani et al., 2022).

Character strengths, however, may not function independently in influencing marital outcomes. Emerging evidence suggests that their effects are mediated by broader psychological constructs such as psychological capital—a multidimensional construct encompassing self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience (Almurumudhe et al., 2024; Hong et al., 2020). Psychological capital enhances individuals' capacity to adapt to adversities, sustain motivation, and maintain positive expectations about future relational outcomes (Madresi & Shomali Askuei, 2023). In this regard, psychological capital acts as a reservoir of psychological resources that modulates the influence of personality traits and character strengths on emotional divorce (Alijani et al., 2022; Samani et al., 2022).

Research findings underscore the mediating role of psychological capital in buffering the adverse effects of maladaptive personality traits on relational dynamics. For instance, individuals high in neuroticism may experience lower marital satisfaction due to heightened emotional reactivity; however, those with strong psychological capital may regulate these tendencies more effectively and sustain relational harmony (Abaie & Bagheri, 2024; Khosravi & Sepahmansour, 2024). Similarly, self-efficacy and resilience facilitate constructive problem-solving and emotional endurance in the face of persistent marital challenges (Almurumudhe et al., 2024). The ability to maintain hope and optimism also enhances relational satisfaction by encouraging a positive reinterpretation of conflictual situations and fostering mutual support (Mosadegh et al., 2023).

In practical terms, emotional divorce can manifest through various behavioral indicators such as decreased verbal and physical affection, avoidance of joint activities, emotional withdrawal, and indifference to the partner's needs (Jomenia et al., 2021). These behavioral patterns are often accompanied by cognitive distortions, such as selective attention to negative aspects of the relationship or attribution of malevolent intent to the partner's actions (Asl et al., 2022). The interplay between cognitive-emotional

vulnerabilities and personality pathology can lead to a self-perpetuating cycle of detachment and dissatisfaction, especially in the absence of adequate psychological capital (Basharpour et al., 2021; Sadeghkhani et al., 2023).

Studies have also emphasized the impact of early maladaptive schemas and personality disorders on emotional distancing within marriage. Dysfunctional belief systems, developed during formative years, often manifest in adulthood as relational insecurity, fear of abandonment, or hypercritical attitudes—all of which contribute to emotional disconnection (Navabifar et al., 2021; Sharifi et al., 2022). In this context, interventions aimed at strengthening psychological capital and character strengths may serve as effective mechanisms for reducing the influence of these maladaptive schemas (Almurumudhe et al., 2024; Khajovand Khoshel & Ghurbannejad, 2019).

Gender also plays a crucial role in the experience and expression of emotional divorce. While men may externalize dissatisfaction through withdrawal or aggression, women often internalize relational stress, manifesting in anxiety, depressive symptoms, or psychosomatic complaints (Jafari & Nobavehvatan, 2022; Khosravi & Sepahmansour, 2024). Such differences necessitate gender-sensitive approaches in both assessment and intervention. Research comparing divorced and non-divorced women shows that psychological capital significantly correlates with post-divorce well-being and the readiness for future relational commitments (Abaie & Bagheri, 2024; Pouri, 2016). This further highlights the importance of psychological resource development in therapeutic and preventive efforts.

Moreover, contextual variables such as socioeconomic status, cultural expectations, and social support systems influence the development and expression of emotional divorce (Jomenia et al., 2021; Navabifar et al., 2021). In collectivist cultures where divorce is stigmatized, emotional divorce may persist for extended periods without formal separation, causing chronic psychological distress and undermining family cohesion (Mosadegh et al., 2023). Therefore, identifying and enhancing protective psychological variables such as self-efficacy and hope within such contexts is critical (Abaie & Bagheri, 2024; Madresi & Shomali Askuei, 2023).

Despite growing scholarly attention, the mechanisms through which personality traits and character strengths interact with psychological capital to predict emotional divorce remain underexplored. Recent models advocate for a more integrative approach, suggesting that psychological capital may serve as both a mediator and moderator in these

relationships (Alijani et al., 2022; Samani et al., 2022). For example, individuals with high levels of agreeableness may naturally engage in prosocial behaviors, but the presence of strong psychological capital determines the consistency and effectiveness of these behaviors under stress. Conversely, individuals with low conscientiousness may compensate for their deficits through heightened self-efficacy and goal orientation provided by psychological capital (Almurumudhe et al., 2024; Madresi & Shomali Askuei, 2023).

From a clinical standpoint, interventions aimed at reducing emotional divorce should prioritize the cultivation of character strengths and psychological capital alongside addressing maladaptive personality traits. Approaches such as strength-based couple therapy, positive psychology interventions, and psychological capital enhancement programs can provide meaningful improvements in relational functioning (Almurumudhe et al., 2024; Ataeimehr et al., 2023). Moreover, pre-marital and marital counseling programs should integrate assessments of personality traits and psychological capital to offer personalized support for relational development (Asl et al., 2022; Khajovand Khoshel & Ghurbannejad, 2019).

In summary, emotional divorce emerges from a confluence of personality vulnerabilities, absence of psychological resources, and insufficient character strength application. By situating these factors within an integrative framework, this study seeks to model the direct and indirect pathways linking personality traits and character strengths to emotional divorce through psychological capital. This approach not only contributes to the theoretical understanding of emotional detachment in intimate relationships but also offers practical implications for intervention and prevention across diverse sociocultural contexts.

2. Methods and Materials

2.1. Study Design and Participants

The present study employed a descriptive-correlational design using structural equation modeling (SEM) for data collection and analysis. In terms of purpose, the research is applied, and in terms of approach, it is quantitative. Additionally, it is retrospective in terms of temporal perspective, but cross-sectional regarding the time of data collection. The statistical population included all couples who sought counseling and psychological services from

centers under the supervision of the Iranian Psychological Association and the Tehran Welfare Organization in 2022.

Sampling was conducted using a combination of multistage random and purposive non-random methods within Tehran. Considering the socio-cultural and socio-economic disparities across the city, Tehran was divided into five zones: north, south, east, west, and central. From each zone, five counseling centers were randomly selected, and from each center, 15 individuals were randomly recruited, totaling 75 participants per zone. The total sample comprised 375 individuals.

Inclusion criteria for participation in the study included: being between the ages of 25 and 45, not having experienced a major stressful life event (e.g., divorce, death of close relatives, job loss, or accidents) in the past six months, and having been in a marital relationship for at least one year and at most ten years. Exclusion criteria involved having a history of neurological or psychiatric disorders, past hospitalization due to mental illness, and incomplete or invalid questionnaire responses.

There are various opinions on appropriate sample size for correlational research involving structural equation modeling. However, there is consensus that SEM, similar to factor analysis, requires large sample sizes for reliable implementation (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). Boomsma (1983, as cited in Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001) considered a sample size of approximately 200 to be sufficient for model fit. Accordingly, to enhance generalizability and account for participant attrition, the sample size was determined to be 375, with 360 complete questionnaires ultimately collected and analyzed.

2.2. Measures

2.2.1. Emotional Divorce

The Emotional Divorce Scale developed by Gottman (1995) was translated into Persian for the first time by Jazayeri (2008) and subsequently used in Iranian studies. This 24-item scale includes statements regarding various aspects of marital life, to which participants respond with “yes” (scored 1) or “no” (scored 0). The total score ranges from 0 to 24. Scores between 0–8 indicate a low probability of separation, 8–16 indicate a moderate probability, and scores above 16 suggest a high likelihood of emotional divorce. Thus, higher scores reflect greater risk of emotional divorce. The original version of the scale reported a reliability coefficient above 0.70. In the Iranian version, Cronbach’s alpha was reported as 0.83 (Mami & Asgari,

2014). Bayat Mokhtari (2013) reported satisfactory content validity for the scale (Mosadegh et al., 2023).

2.2.2. Character Strengths

This self-report questionnaire includes 24 items measuring individual character strengths. It was developed by Furnham and Lester (2012) based on the original Values in Action Inventory of Strengths (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Scores are normally distributed and range from 55 to 145. Exploratory factor analysis using orthogonal and oblique rotation methods confirmed that the 24 strengths map onto six core virtues: wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance, and transcendence, with internal consistency coefficients of 0.66, 0.55, 0.52, 0.50, 0.55, and 0.76 respectively. The scale consists of six subscales: wisdom (6 items), courage (3 items), humanity (2 items), justice (3 items), temperance (3 items), and transcendence (7 items). In the study by Shokri (2013), confirmatory factor analysis indicated a chi-square value of 542.19, a comparative fit index (CFI) of 0.89, and a goodness-of-fit index (GFI) of 0.86, supporting the six-factor structure. Internal consistency coefficients were reported as 0.66, 0.55, 0.52, 0.48, 0.55, and 0.76 (Jabbari et al., 2021).

2.2.3. Personality Traits

The Revised NEO Personality Inventory (NEO-PI-R) is based on trait theory and assesses healthy personality dimensions, although it also provides insight into tendencies toward psychological maladjustment. The NEO Five-Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI) is a brief version designed to measure neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. It consists of five 12-item subscales and can be administered individually or in groups. Cronbach’s alpha values for NEO-FFI domains were 0.86 (N), 0.77 (E), 0.68 (O), and 0.81 (A) (Dwan, Unsworth, Donovan, & Lu, 2017). Item selection was based on the validation and factor analysis of the NEO-PI-R (Costa & McCrae, 1989; cited in Overett-Walker et al., 2020). The five principal factors were extracted, and items with the highest positive and negative loadings were selected. Correlation coefficients ranged from 0.75 for conscientiousness to 0.89 for neuroticism. Correlations between the NEO-FFI and NEO-PI-P subscales in the ABLSA sample were 0.92, 0.90, 0.91, 0.77, and 0.87 for N, E, O, A, and C, respectively (Khosravi & Sepahmansour, 2024).

2.2.4. Psychological Capital

Psychological capital was assessed using a 24-item questionnaire developed by McGee (2011), comprising four subscales: self-efficacy, hope, resilience, and optimism. A six-point Likert scale was used (1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree). The reliability and validity of this questionnaire were evaluated along with its 25-item and 12-item versions. McGee (2011) reported significant positive correlations between psychological capital and its components: self-efficacy (0.48–0.54), hope (0.40–0.61), resilience (0.48–0.55), and optimism (0.47–0.50). Face validity was also confirmed. Exploratory factor analysis with varimax rotation in the same study confirmed the four-

factor structure. Cronbach's alpha values were reported as 0.91 (self-efficacy), 0.89 (hope), 0.83 (resilience), and 0.70 (optimism) (Saadati & Parsakia, 2023).

2.3. Data Analysis

In line with the nature of the research question, structural equation modeling was employed to analyze the findings. Data were analyzed using SPSS version 24 and AMOS version 7.80.

3. Findings and Results

Table 1 presents the mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis for the research variables.

Table 1

Descriptive Findings of the Study's Subscales

Statistical Index	Scale	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Emotional Divorce		12.37	5.73	0.12	-0.58
Wisdom		16.23	4.68	-0.51	-0.30
Courage		8.85	2.86	-0.37	-0.67
Humanity		5.84	1.78	-0.10	-0.57
Justice		6.78	2.48	0.32	-0.78
Temperance		8.68	2.43	-0.22	-0.45
Transcendence		19.51	4.61	-0.45	-0.26
Character Strengths		65.89	13.75	-0.39	-0.62
Neuroticism		34.02	5.46	0.05	-0.20
Extraversion		35.80	5.75	-0.19	-0.43
Openness to Experience		32.91	6.30	-0.32	-0.07
Agreeableness		27.25	7.62	0.19	-0.63
Conscientiousness		27.07	7.26	0.16	-0.51
Self-Efficacy		17.48	3.70	-0.80	0.04
Hope		17.09	5.56	-0.09	-1.06
Resilience		16.48	5.04	-0.18	-0.64
Optimism		14.72	3.65	0.05	-0.07
Psychological Capital		65.77	13.09	-0.22	-0.33

The results of Table 1 indicate that among personality dimensions, the highest mean pertains to Extraversion, and the lowest to Conscientiousness. Within psychological capital components, Self-Efficacy has the highest mean, and

Optimism the lowest. Among the dimensions of Wisdom, Transcendence has the highest mean.

Model fit indices for the research model are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Model Fit Indices

Index Name	Value	Acceptable Threshold
Chi-square/df (χ^2/df)	2.51	Less than 3
RMSEA	0.06	Less than 0.10
CFI (Comparative Fit Index)	0.95	Greater than 0.90
NFI (Normed Fit Index)	0.94	Greater than 0.90
GFI (Goodness-of-Fit Index)	0.95	Greater than 0.90

In AMOS, each individual index alone is not sufficient to judge model fit; all indices should be interpreted together.

The results in Table 2 indicate that overall, the model demonstrates an acceptable fit.

Measurement model indicators are reported in Table 3.

Table 3

Standardized Factor Loadings and Significance in the Measurement Model

Variable	Component	Standardized Weight	t-value	p-value
Psychological Capital	Self-Efficacy	0.63	9.73	0.001
	Hope	0.57	8.58	0.001
	Resilience	0.53	8.13	0.001
	Optimism	0.43	6.77	0.001
Character Strengths	Wisdom	0.59	8.70	0.001
	Courage	0.38	6.19	0.001
	Humanity	0.62	8.87	0.001
	Justice	0.50	7.90	0.001
	Temperance	0.44	6.84	0.001
	Transcendence	0.42	6.68	0.001

As indicated in Table 3, all components of both constructs have significant factor loadings at the 99% confidence level.

The paths between variables in the tested models correspond to the study's hypotheses.

Table 4

Standardized Coefficients and Significance of Direct and Indirect Effects of Character Strengths on Emotional Divorce

Dependent Variable	Predictor Variable	Effect Type	Standardized β	Sobel Test Statistic	p-value
Emotional Divorce	Character Strengths	Direct	-0.24	-3.99	0.001
		Indirect	-0.16	-3.12	0.001
		Total	-0.40	-3.45	0.001

According to Table 4, the hypothesis concerning the direct effect of character strengths on emotional divorce among couples attending counseling centers is confirmed

with 99% confidence ($p < 0.01$). Similarly, the indirect effect through psychological capital is also confirmed with 99% confidence ($p < 0.01$).

Table 5

Standardized Coefficients and Significance of Direct and Indirect Effects of Personality Traits on Emotional Divorce

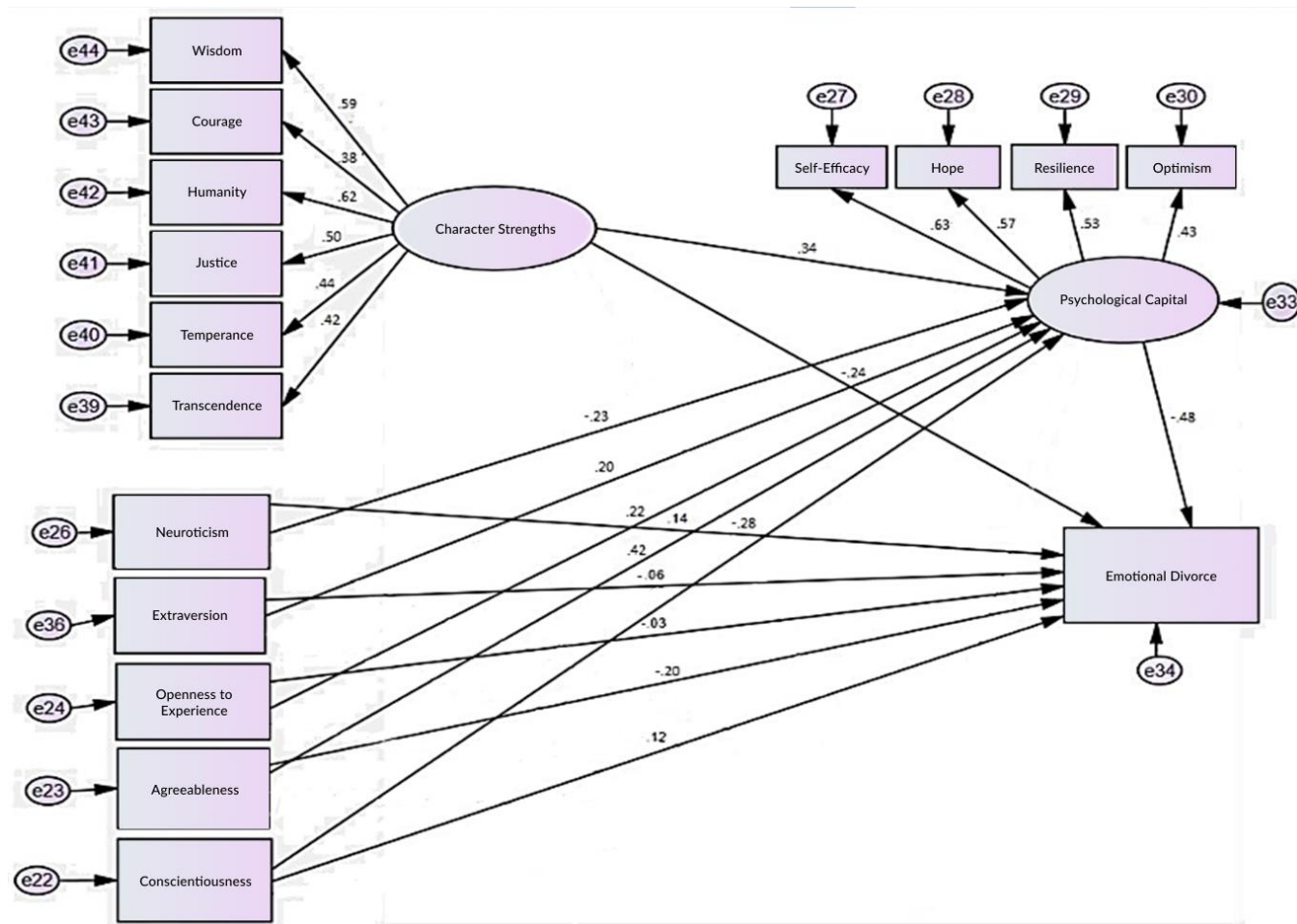
Dependent Variable	Predictor Variable	Effect Type	Standardized β	Sobel Test Statistic	p-value
Emotional Divorce	Neuroticism	Direct	0.22	3.20	0.001
		Indirect	0.11	2.13	0.029
		Total	0.33	2.48	0.014
Emotional Divorce	Extraversion	Direct	-0.06	-0.69	0.07
		Indirect	-0.08	-1.79	0.07
		Total	-0.14	-1.23	0.07
Emotional Divorce	Openness to Experience	Direct	-0.03	-0.36	0.78
		Indirect	-0.10	-2.00	0.04
		Total	-0.13	-1.56	0.65
Emotional Divorce	Agreeableness	Direct	-0.20	-3.05	0.001
		Indirect	-0.22	-3.26	0.001
		Total	-0.42	-3.11	0.001
Emotional Divorce	Conscientiousness	Direct	-0.12	-2.10	0.03
		Indirect	-0.03	-0.39	0.73
		Total	-0.15	-1.73	0.48

As shown above, the hypothesis regarding the direct effects of Neuroticism, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness on emotional divorce among couples attending counseling centers is confirmed with 95%

confidence ($p < 0.05$). Additionally, the indirect effects of Neuroticism, Openness to Experience, and Agreeableness on emotional divorce through psychological capital are also supported with 95% confidence ($p < 0.05$).

Figure 1

Final Model of The Study



4. Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of the present study was to propose a structural model predicting emotional divorce based on personality traits and character strengths, with psychological capital as a mediating variable. The findings supported both the direct and indirect hypotheses, suggesting that character strengths and personality traits significantly predict emotional divorce, and that psychological capital serves as a critical mediating factor in these relationships. Specifically, the results demonstrated that character strengths exert both direct and indirect effects on emotional divorce among counseling-seeking couples, with psychological capital partially mediating these effects. Furthermore, among

personality traits, neuroticism, agreeableness, and conscientiousness had significant direct relationships with emotional divorce, while neuroticism, openness to experience, and agreeableness also demonstrated significant indirect paths through psychological capital.

The finding that character strengths directly reduce emotional divorce aligns with theoretical frameworks emphasizing the role of positive individual traits in marital functioning. Character strengths such as courage, temperance, and justice help spouses manage conflict, regulate emotions, and sustain prosocial interactions—all of which are critical in preserving emotional intimacy (Alijani et al., 2022; Ataimehr et al., 2023). This is consistent with findings by Peterson and Seligman, who proposed that

individuals possessing and utilizing these strengths are more likely to experience relational satisfaction. The current results affirm that strengths like courage and temperance have meaningful indirect effects on emotional divorce through their enhancement of psychological capital, a resource reservoir that supports self-regulation, optimism, and relational resilience (Hong et al., 2020; Samani et al., 2022). These results support the idea that character strengths function not only as stable personality resources but also as facilitators of dynamic psychological processes that preserve emotional bonds within marriages.

Additionally, the significant direct effect of neuroticism on emotional divorce confirms well-established findings in the literature. Neurotic individuals tend to exhibit emotional instability, hypersensitivity to stress, and negative affectivity, all of which contribute to marital dissatisfaction and emotional withdrawal (Basharpour et al., 2021; Khosravi & Sepahmansour, 2024). In contrast, traits like agreeableness and conscientiousness appear to serve as protective factors. High agreeableness fosters empathy, trust, and cooperative problem-solving, while conscientiousness enhances responsibility, impulse control, and goal-directed behaviors—all critical elements for relationship maintenance (Sharifi et al., 2022; Spikic & Mortelmans, 2021). These results are aligned with previous research indicating that agreeable and conscientious individuals are more committed to resolving conflicts and fulfilling their relational roles, thereby reducing the likelihood of emotional detachment (Jafari & Nobavehvatan, 2022).

Moreover, the indirect effect of openness to experience through psychological capital adds nuance to our understanding of this trait. While openness itself may not directly influence emotional divorce, its association with adaptability, cognitive flexibility, and creativity may enhance psychological capital—particularly hope and optimism—which in turn support relational satisfaction and conflict resolution (Almurumudhe et al., 2024; Madresi & Shomali Askuei, 2023). The mediating role of psychological capital was also evident in the indirect paths from neuroticism and agreeableness to emotional divorce. These findings underscore psychological capital's role as a buffering construct that mitigates the adverse effects of maladaptive personality traits on relational outcomes.

The results also highlight the predictive power of psychological capital as a core psychological mechanism that can reduce emotional divorce. Couples with higher psychological capital, including dimensions such as self-

efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience, are better equipped to navigate stress, regulate affect, and maintain commitment in the face of relational adversity (Alijani et al., 2022; Mosadegh et al., 2023). This aligns with Luthans' conceptualization of psychological capital as a state-like resource that promotes adaptive functioning and well-being. The present study extends this framework into the domain of marital functioning, suggesting that psychological capital may serve as a mediator between internal dispositions (traits and strengths) and relational outcomes.

Furthermore, the current findings corroborate the study by Asl et al. (2022), which found that emotional divorce could be predicted by personality traits and job self-efficacy mediated by perceived social support. Both studies underscore the importance of psychological mediators that bridge the gap between stable traits and dynamic relational outcomes. In this study, psychological capital not only mediated the effects of personality and strengths but also emerged as an independent predictor of emotional resilience in marital contexts. This is consistent with the findings by Pouri (2016) and Abaie and Bagheri (2024), who demonstrated the association between psychological capital and post-divorce adaptation, suggesting its role in relational continuity as well.

Also noteworthy is the alignment of the present findings with those of Khajovand Khoshel and Ghurbannejad (2019), who reported that cognitive-behavioral interventions effectively enhanced psychological capital among couples at risk of divorce. Similarly, Madresi and Askuei (2023) found significant differences in psychological capital between spouses of recovered addicts and non-addicts, indicating that variations in psychological resources affect marital outcomes across diverse populations. The current study contributes to this literature by elucidating the interactional pathways through which character strengths and personality traits shape psychological capital and, in turn, influence emotional disengagement in marriage.

Gendered dimensions of emotional divorce also emerge in the data. Women often internalize stress through emotional withdrawal and psychosomatic symptoms, while men may externalize distress through detachment or behavioral avoidance (Jafari & Nobavehvatan, 2022; Khosravi & Sepahmansour, 2024). These gendered patterns necessitate differential assessment and intervention strategies. Moreover, personality configurations such as high neuroticism or low agreeableness may present differently across genders in marital contexts, emphasizing

the importance of gender-sensitive clinical frameworks (Jomenia et al., 2021; Sadeghkhani et al., 2023).

The role of early maladaptive schemas and dark personality traits further enriches our understanding of emotional divorce. As noted in the work of Sharifi et al. (2022), personality distortions contribute to vulnerability in interpersonal relationships, especially when coupled with maladaptive coping styles. The integration of schema-based therapy approaches with psychological capital development may offer a more comprehensive intervention model. Additionally, considering the mediating role of sexual satisfaction, as highlighted by Mosadegh et al. (2023), future models could benefit from incorporating intimacy variables to provide a fuller picture of emotional disconnection.

Finally, the findings support a layered model in which stable dispositions (traits and strengths) influence dynamic, modifiable resources (psychological capital), which in turn shape long-term relational outcomes (emotional divorce). This model provides theoretical clarity and practical utility by identifying leverage points for intervention. Personality traits may be less amenable to change, but psychological capital and character strengths can be enhanced through structured interventions, offering viable pathways to improve marital quality and reduce emotional estrangement (Ataimehr et al., 2023; Navabifar et al., 2021).

One of the primary limitations of this study was the reliance on self-report instruments for data collection. While self-reports are useful for assessing subjective psychological experiences, they are susceptible to social desirability bias and inaccuracies stemming from limited self-awareness. Furthermore, a portion of participants failed to return completed questionnaires, potentially introducing response bias. The cross-sectional design also restricts causal inferences, limiting the ability to observe how variables influence emotional divorce over time. Additionally, cultural norms surrounding divorce and emotional expression may have influenced participant responses, particularly in a collectivist society where marital dissolution is stigmatized. These factors should be considered when generalizing the findings.

Future studies should employ longitudinal designs to examine changes in psychological capital and its relationship with emotional divorce over time. Such designs could illuminate developmental trajectories and causal pathways that cross-sectional methods cannot capture. Incorporating observational methods, such as behavioral coding of couple interactions, or semi-structured interviews would also enrich the data and mitigate self-report

limitations. Furthermore, research should explore the moderating effects of gender, socioeconomic status, and cultural values to determine how these contextual variables influence the pathways identified in this model. Expanding the sample to include couples in different marital stages, such as newlyweds or long-term marriages, could also yield insights into temporal dynamics of emotional disconnection.

Based on the findings, practitioners should consider incorporating psychological capital enhancement programs into marital counseling and divorce prevention efforts. Interventions that strengthen self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience can empower couples to manage conflict more constructively and reduce emotional detachment. Pre-marital education programs should also include modules on personality awareness and character strength development to foster relational preparedness. Furthermore, couple therapy models may benefit from integrating positive psychology techniques, such as strengths-based dialogues and resilience training, to address the emotional and psychological dimensions of marital dissolution. These approaches can create emotionally robust partnerships and contribute to the overall health and stability of families.

Authors' Contributions

All authors significantly contributed to this study.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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Ethical Considerations

In this study, to observe ethical considerations, participants were informed about the goals and importance of the research before the start of the interview and participated in the research with informed consent.

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