

## Relationship between Marital Satisfaction and Personality Characteristics on the basis of Myers-Briggs Inventory and Big Five Questionnaire

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**ABSTRACT:** Marital satisfaction is affected by many factors specially one of the most important that affect the issue is the personality characteristics of spouses. The aim of this study was to examine relationship between Marital Satisfaction and Personality Characteristics among couples. to study the relationship between Marital Satisfaction and Personality Characteristics, 50 couples (100 people), were selected by randomized cluster sampling and completed Enrich marital Questionnaire and Myers Briggs Type Inventory and Big Five Questionnaire. From subscales of Myers Briggs Type Inventory, there was a positive correlation between extraversion and judging with marital satisfaction. From subscales of Big Five Questionnaire, there was a positive correlation between agreeableness and conscientiousness with marital satisfaction and there was a negative correlation between neuroticism and marital satisfaction. There is significant correlation between some of the personality characteristics with marital satisfaction.

**Key words:** Personality Characteristics, Marital Satisfaction, Couples.

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### INTRODUCTION

The marital relationship always has been considered by authorities and experts of different sciences as an important part of human life and satisfaction of this relationship is the main topics in the studies. Winch (quoted from Soleimani, 1984) believes that the marital satisfaction adapt between current situation of individual and expected situation. He also considers the marital satisfaction as the objective feelings of happiness, satisfaction and joy experienced by the couple. Marital satisfaction is affected by many factors such as personal, social, economic and cultural factors. One of the most important factors that affect the issue is the personality characteristics of spouses. Some of the personality characteristics have a positive impact while the others have a negative impact on the marital relationships. Gottman (1993), Karney and Bradbury (1997) also have emphasized on this issue and believe that the personality characteristics have an important role in successful or unsuccessful marital relationship. On the other hand, one of the most fundamental aspects of human existence is the personality that is playing an important role in his life. Many of the behaviors, reactions, decisions and daily activities of individuals largely had influenced by the personality characteristics. Psychologists and theorists have proposed various definitions of the concept. Jung (1927) has been one of the first peoples in theorizing the concept of personality. He has presented the first typology in the context of personality with introducing features such as extraversion, introversion, sensing, intuition, thinking and feeling. In 1920, Briggs added another dimension called Judging - Perceiving. The

dimension indicates that how a person communicates with the outside world. People who judging and evaluating environment are Judging people and perceived people are those that behave according to their perceptual (Mahmoodian Dehkordi, 2007). Costa and McCrae (1989), have been introduced the five main characters that are known as the Big Five personality theory. The five dimensions are Neuroticism (vs. instability), extraversion (vs. introversion), empiricism or openness to new experiences (vs. dry), Agreeableness (vs. narcissism), and conscientiousness (vs. indifference). Important role of personality characteristics in the marital relationship has led to numerous researches. For instance Kelly and Conley (1987) in their study with the use of the Pearson correlation coefficient estimated the correlation coefficient between neuroticism and marital satisfaction in men was about -0/31 and women was about -0.19. Buss & Shackelford (1997) also showed that the women who have a higher Agreeableness consider their wives less warlike. The results confirm the idea that the spouses with Agreeableness have positive perceptions of each other's and it can lead to greater satisfaction to both spouses.

Harrington and Loffredo (2001) found that extroverts than introverts have higher life satisfaction and psychological relaxation. Also some studies in this field have been conducted in Iran. For example: Attari (2006) concluded that there is a negative relationship between the Neuroticism and marital satisfaction. They are also found that the factors of Extraversion, empiricism, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness is positively correlated with satisfaction. According to the little investigations has been done in Iran, there is

need for further doing research in this direction. Thus, this research intends to answer the question whether is there a relationship between marital satisfaction and personality Characteristics of couples?

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

This study was a correlational design. The statistical population was included all parents of an elementary school students in the city of Isfahan in academic year from 1387 to 1388. Sampling was done by randomized cluster.

**Research Tools**

**1. Myers-Briggs Type Indicator:** The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator or MBTI is an extremely popular personality inventory which has received widespread use over the last 30 years (Carlyn, 1977). The MBTI is a self-report questionnaire designed to quantify non psychopathological personality types as postulated in Jung's psychodynamic type theory (see Myers & McCaulley, 1985). Four dichotomous dimensions classify individuals either as extraverted (E) or introverted (I), sensing (S) or intuitive (N), thinking (T) or feeling (F), and judging (J) or perceiving (P). Combinations of the four preferences determine personality types. McCaulley (1981) has investigated the test-retest reliability (stability) of the MBTI. Estimates of the proportion of preferences reclassified into the same categories ranged from %61 to %90. For continuous scores, median stability coefficients are %78 (E-I), %78 (S-N), %69 (T-F), and %74 (J-P), over intervals from five weeks to 21 months.

**2. ENRICH scale:** ENRICH (Evaluation and nurturing relationship issues, communication and happiness) marital satisfaction questionnaire includes 47 questions with multiple items. Sanaii confirmed its validity as 0.95 Cronbach Alpha in Iranian population. This questionnaire assesses potentially problematic settings, and identifies power settings associated with marital relations. This questionnaire was used to identify those spouses who need to improve their relations and need counseling (Sanaii, 2007). This questionnaire in addition to conventional response questions measures marital satisfaction into the 10 following components: satisfaction, personality issues, marital relations, conflict solving, financial management, entertainment activities, side relations, offspring marriage, relatives and friends, and religious orientations. There are 5 items to each question and

they are as follows: Quite agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, and quite disagree. Scoring was done as 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 with higher scores showing more marital satisfaction (JanBozorgi and Ibrahimi, 2008).

**3. The Big Five Personality Inventory:** The Big Five is the most established and well-validated model of personality consisting of Extraversion, Neuroticism (vs. Emotional Stability), Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, and Openness to Experience (Costa and McCrae, 1989). The five factors are generally found across cultures have been shown to have strong predictive validity interpreter agreement and hereditability and children as early as in middle childhood can be characterized by them. An ever-increasing number of researchers incorporate the Big Five in their research, allowing them to compare their findings with other studies. However, time or space to include additional questionnaires is often limited, as is the motivation and attention of participants, so several short instruments to assess the Big Five have been developed (e.g., Gosling, Rentfrow and Swann, 2003). Kiamehr (2002) to check the reliability of the short form of the questionnaire used test- retest method and he obtained the correlation coefficient between the twice implementation of the test about %65 to %86.

**RESULTS**

Table 1 shows the means and standard deviations of demographic factors (age and duration of marriage).

As can be seen in Table 1, the mean of age is about 35.76 years and the mean duration of their marriage is about 13.03 years, and the sample size is 100 subjects (50 pairs).

Table 2 shows the correlation coefficients between personality characteristics and marital satisfaction based on the Myers - Briggs and five-factor questionnaires.

As can be seen in Table 2, in the Myers – Briggs questionnaire, extraversion and judging had a significant positive correlation with marital satisfaction. In the Five Factor questionnaire, neuroticism had a significant negative correlation while agreeableness and conscientiousness had a significant positive correlation with marital satisfaction.

**Table 1.** The means and standard deviations of demographic factors

| Variable                    | Women   |       |      | Men     |       |      | Total   |       |       |
|-----------------------------|---------|-------|------|---------|-------|------|---------|-------|-------|
|                             | Numbers | Mean  | S.D  | Numbers | Mean  | S.D  | Numbers | Mean  | S.D   |
| <b>Age</b>                  | 50      | 33.40 | 8.59 | 50      | 37.94 | 8.69 | 100     | 35.67 | 8.901 |
| <b>Duration of marriage</b> | 50      | 12.64 | 9.12 | 50      | 13.42 | 8.91 | 100     | 13.03 | 8.987 |

**Table 2.** The correlation coefficients between personality characteristics and marital satisfaction

| Variable                            | Subscales         | Numbers | Correlation coefficient | Level of significant |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|---------|-------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Myers - Briggs questionnaire</b> | Extraversion      | 100     | *0.406                  | 0.000                |
|                                     | Sensation         | 100     | 0.076                   | 0.43                 |
|                                     | Thinking          | 100     | 0.001                   | 0.99                 |
|                                     | Judging           | 100     | *0.29                   | 0.003                |
| <b>Five Factor questionnaire</b>    | Neuroticism       | 100     | *-0.36                  | 0.000                |
|                                     | Extraversion      | 100     | 0.19                    | 0.053                |
|                                     | Openness          | 100     | -0.06                   | 0.55                 |
|                                     | Agreeableness     | 100     | *0.407                  | 0.000                |
|                                     | Conscientiousness | 100     | *0.44                   | 0.000                |

\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

**DISCUSSION**

According to the statistical results it was found that there is a correlation between personality characteristics and marital satisfaction. Among the dimensions of the five factor questionnaire, there was a negative correlation between neuroticism and marital satisfaction. There are several possible explanations for this result such as: Neurotic individuals are less able to control their impulses (Garooosi Farshi, 2001) and the feature caused to frequent disputes and conflicts between couples and ultimately it will reduce marital satisfaction among them.

Another finding was that, there was a positive relationship between agreeableness and marital satisfaction. Agreeableness causes the couple have more positive perceptions to each other and also causes they have not imagination to each other as warlike (Buss & Shackelford, 1997). Thus, high level of agreeableness makes a person to have more positive attitude to his wife and will follow more marital satisfaction.

Another finding of this study was the positive relationship between conscientiousness and marital satisfaction. The possible explanation for this result is: Conscientious individual purposefully effort to maintain the stability of their marriage and this may be have an important effect on their marital satisfaction (Jarvis, 2006). Another finding of this study was that from the questionnaire Myers - Briggs, judging and extroversion were associated positively with marital satisfaction. The proposed analysis about the relationship between conscientiousness and marital satisfaction may be applied about this result too.

According to the results of this study and similar studies, the role of personality characteristics in marital relationship is featured more than before and the importance of this issue in premarital and marital counseling is more highlighted.

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