



Prediction of Marital Dissatisfaction Based on Personality Characteristics and Social Relations in Couples of Students and Non-Students

Ali Khademi*

Department of Psychology, Islamic Azad University, Urmia Branch, Urmia, Iran

**Corresponding e-mail: mohamad_khaleidian22@yahoo.com*

ABSTRACT

The aim of this research was to study the prediction of marital dissatisfaction based on personality characteristics and social relations in couples of students and non-students. For this purpose, using Cluster sampling, 350 participants from the cities of Mahabad, Khoy, and Urmia were selected. Data were collected by ENRICH, NEO and social relations questionnaires and were analyzed by t test, correlation, and regression analysis. The results showed that there is significant correlation between marital dissatisfaction with neuroticism, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and immaturity in social relations. Also, neuroticism, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and immaturity in social relations can predict marital dissatisfaction in couples of students and non-students. Also, data showed that the average in couples of students is higher significantly than non-students. In general, it can be concluded that the abnormalities in personality characteristics and social relations in couples can predict marital dissatisfaction.

Keywords: Couples, marital dissatisfaction, personality, social relations

INTRODUCTION

Marriage is an emotional-social covenant. This covenant gets formal, with male and female contract [1]. Many studies show that many of contemporary couples have less marital satisfaction compared to past decade couples [2]. Almost at the beginning of their married life, couples often have a high level of marital satisfaction, but over time in many couples' relationship satisfaction decreases [3]. As in recent years, marital dissatisfaction and divorce rates are increasing, some of the studies have focused on factors associated with marital satisfaction, on the one hand, studies show that level of education may, in some populations predict marital satisfaction [4], so some studies in the area of marital satisfaction have focused on literacy during marriage [5].

Saroukhani, on the role of demographic factors in the incidence of divorce, suggests that socioeconomic factors can lead to the formation of the special atmosphere in every status which the human behaviour get particular form within [6]. In his view, family living conditions and financial situation have in evitable effect on the reaction of members of family and their relationships. In his view, any level of education, creates special social status and naturally people considered it as an important criterion in selecting a spouse. Each level of education, creates the special intellectual atmosphere and even the approach to world, which influence couples tastes and ideas. Usually with higher educational levels, people be more accurate and more sensitive to issues. In other words, literacy acts as an informing factor that makes individuals more aware of the issues and get more understanding power. In the situation of imbalance of education, individuals who have higher education assets on the opposite side to compensate them. In support of this explanation, Ahmadi and RaeisPoor, in their study showed that high levels of education, had significantly positive correlation with marital satisfaction in wives [7].

Barongo, et al. in a study entitled correlation between literacy levels and marital satisfaction, found that 41% of those who have education progress have marital satisfaction, and in 33% of them marital life remains stable [8]. Alder, in a study in which 60 Dutch couple were examined, showed that there was a significant relationship between level of education and marital satisfaction [4]. Mihalcea, et al. in a research in Romania found that couples who are more educated have higher level of adjustment [9]. On the other hand, a brief searching in theories and models in marital

area, reveals the role and importance of personality characteristics, social skills and demographic characteristics in stability and instability of marital relationship [10]. The results of researches show that personality factors are experimental predictors of marital satisfaction. The relationship between personality factors and marital satisfaction using different cross-sectional and longitudinal studies have confirmed [11-16].

Due to the issues, we have mentioned, we are not yet capable of determine complexity of human relationships and the exact causes of the failure or success of a relationship, especially in the marital system. Therefore, in this study we are looking to see are personality characteristics and social relations can predict marital dissatisfaction in couples of students and non-students?

RESEARCH METHOD

Population, sample sampling methods

This study was correlation study. Statistical population consisted of all couples in the province of West-Azərbayjan that in 2014 at least had 6 months of married life and were aged up to 40 years. The sample selection was purposive sampling method. In terms of geographical distribution, in the first stage of the cities, three of Urmia, Khoy, and Mahabad cities were selected and in the second stage from married 40 years old, 350 people were selected. According to the objectives and nature of the research, the best way to gather information is questionnaire, so three questionnaires were used in this study.

Tools

Enrich marital satisfaction questionnaire: the questionnaire validated in several studies as a research tool for the study of marital satisfaction and its opposite is used for emotional divorce. The main form of Enrich marital satisfaction questionnaire is consist of 12 scale (115 items) which are other than the first scale that is 5 items, all measures including 10 questions. Answers are based on the Likert scale (strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree). The original form of the questionnaire's validity has been reported with alpha 0.92. Soleimanian has standardized its original form in Iran and the number of questions from 115 questions, were reduced to 47 questions [17]. The short form questionnaire reliability using alpha, is reported 0.95 [18]. Soleimanian in a study entitled "Intelligence irrational thoughts on the cognitive approach to marital satisfaction" about the reliability and validity of the questionnaire states, the questionnaire was translated, then, questions were studied by Nawabi and Naderi, two psychology experts and the questionnaire's content validity have been confirmed [17]. In the next step, the questionnaire completed by a group of 11 people to run its reliability through Cronbach's alpha coefficient which was calculated 0.93. Due to the excessive number of questionnaire items (115 items) that causes fatigue of the subjects, it was decided to prepare a short form. For this purpose, the correlation of each question with the whole questionnaire (via the correlation coefficient) was calculated. Then the 47 questions that had relatively high correlation, were selected. This selection was equally out of all different scales of questionnaire. Thus, a total of 47 questions were selected. Again, the reliability of 47 questions form on a group of 11 people (with alpha coefficient) was calculated which reliability coefficient was 0.95 [18].

NEO questionnaire: NEO questionnaire used to assess the personality traits of neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. NEO questionnaire validated by experts and researchers to assess the personality traits of confirmed and its validity has been proven 0.90 [19].

social relations questionnaire: social relations questionnaire used to assess the social skills, external disturbing factors, negative family friends, relationships with others and social comparisons. The reliability of this questionnaire using Cronbach's alpha, obtained 0.69.

RESULTS

Table 1 shows the mean and standard deviation of marital satisfaction in couples being in educational environments and other couples. This table shows that the average in couples of students is higher than non-students.

Table 1 The mean scores of students and non-students in marital satisfaction

Index	Group	Mean	Standard Deviation
Marital satisfaction	Student	175.18	24.44
	Non-student	163.49	22.91

Table 2 shows the correlation between personality characteristics and social relations marital satisfaction. This table shows that there is significant correlation between marital dissatisfaction with neuroticism, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and immaturity in social relations.

Table 2 The correlation between personality characteristics and social relations marital satisfaction

Factors	Correlation	Sig
Neuroticism	-0.59	0.001
Extraversion	0.22	0.056
Openness	0.17	0.071
Agreeableness	0.39	0.009
Conscientiousness	0.52	0.003
Immaturity in social relations	0.43	0.007

Table 3 shows the neuroticism, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and immaturity in social relations can predict marital dissatisfaction significantly in couples of students and non-students.

Table 3 The regression coefficients of criterion and predictor variables in regression model

Factors	Beta	t	sig
Neuroticism	-0.29	6.29	0.001
Extraversion	0.057	1.11	0.26
Openness	0.12	2.14	0.11
Agreeableness	0.21	5.17	0.027
Conscientiousness	0.27	6.01	0.017
Immaturity in social relations	0.28	6.18	0.008

Table 4 shows the t-test results. To compare the mean scores of marital satisfactions in couples being in learning environments with other couples, t-test was used. The results in Table 4 show that there is a significant difference ($p < 0.05$) in marital satisfaction between couples.

Table 4 The results of t test between couple of students and non-students in marital satisfaction

Dependent variable	t	df	Sig.
Marital satisfaction	5.01	348	0.042

The results showed that there are significant differences between couple of students and non-students in marital satisfaction and the average in couples of students is higher significantly than non-students.

DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was investigating of the prediction of marital dissatisfaction based on personality characteristics and social relations in couples of students and non-students. In results, neuroticism has a negative significant relationship with marital satisfaction, or high neuroticism were related to marital dissatisfaction. These findings are consistent with studies which predicts that individual differences that couples bring to the marriage, such as personality traits, affect marital satisfaction [20]. The neuroticism is related to affective instability and negative affect as fear, sorrow, angry, guilt feeling, and embarrassment. Watson and Hubbard found neuroticism to be associated with passive, emotion-focused forms of coping, whereas extraversion and conscientiousness were associated with social support seeking and positive reappraisal coping styles [21]. The use of more adaptive coping styles (i.e. active, problem-focused strategies rather than passive, emotion-focused strategies), in turn, was associated with higher levels of well-being [22]. Individuals who score high on neuroticism are more likely than the average to experience such feelings as anxiety, anger, envy, guilt, and depressed mood. These characteristics affect in marital satisfaction [23].

In results, agreeableness has a positive significant relationship with marital satisfaction, or high agreeableness were related to marital dissatisfaction. Agreeableness is a personality trait manifesting itself in individual behavioural characteristics that are perceived as kind, sympathetic, cooperative, warm, and considerate. People who score high on this dimension are empathetic and altruistic, while a low agreeableness score relates to selfish behaviour and a lack

of empathy. Those who score very low on agreeableness show signs of dark triad behaviour such as manipulation and competing with others rather than cooperating. These characteristics affect in marital satisfaction positively [24].

In results, conscientiousness has a positive significant relationship with marital satisfaction, or high conscientiousness were related to marital dissatisfaction. Conscientiousness is the personality trait of being thorough, careful, or vigilant. Conscientiousness implies a desire to do a task well. Conscientious people are efficient and organized as opposed to easy-going and disorderly. They exhibit a tendency to show self-discipline, act dutifully, and aim for achievement; they display planned rather than spontaneous behaviour; and they are generally organized and dependable. It is manifested in characteristic behaviours such as being neat and systematic; also, including such elements as carefulness, thoroughness, and deliberation (the tendency to think carefully before acting). These characteristics affect in marital satisfaction positively [24].

Social relations derived from individual agency form the basis of social structure and the basic object for analysis by social scientists. Fundamental inquiries into the nature of social relations feature in the work of sociologists such as Max Weber in his theory of social action.

Social skills include the ability to express thoughts in social exchange, knowledge of the roles and social values, social skills, understanding, skills, problem solving skills and social roles. Social skills would be based on community interaction lead to understanding your inner spirit and others and deal properly and in accordance with them. Couples who are social capabilities can deal with their emotions and wife as well and these characteristics affect in marital satisfaction positively.

The results showed that there are significant differences between couple of students and non-students in marital satisfaction and the average in couples of students is higher significantly than non-students.

Education and literacy level are always seen as components of personal and social development and changes [25]. Therefore, considering this factor and its role in marital satisfaction is remarkable. The results showed that marital satisfaction was higher in the academic environment. This finding is consistent with the findings of Bani Jamali and Mohammad Zadeh [26]. This finding, that is the relationship between education and marital satisfaction, can be derived from improved social functioning and communication after increasing the level of education. It is expected that the level of education leads to improved social skills of educated people, and lead to decrease in marital satisfaction problems. The importance of this issue becomes more clear when previous studies, for example Bani Jamali and Mohammad Zadeh [26] and Ghadiri Shekari [27] emphasized on the relationship between this factors with marital satisfaction. Today, education has led to a mutual opening of peoples from different socio-economic status groups. One study suggests that complementary and same like pairs are more successful [28].

Research evidence shows that participation in learning environments can help couples to better solve their marital conflicts and showed that personality and marital satisfaction can help to predict that marriage is likely to lead to failure or will be healthy survival and strength [29-31].

According to the results of this study it is recommended that counsellors and therapists emphasize on the importance of education and awareness in pre-marriage counselling.

REFERENCES

- [1] Bahari, F. "Marriage and the tumult of contemporary." Midwife magazine, Tehran 2012.
- [2] Hall, Scott S. "Marital meaning exploring young adults' belief systems about marriage." *Journal of Family Issues* 27.10 (2006): 1437-1458.
- [3] Barazande, H., et al. "The relationship of communication criteria with marital adaptation." *Iran Psychol* 8 (2005): 319-330.
- [4] Emily, S.A. Age, education level, and length of courtship in relation to marital satisfaction. Diss. A dissertation submitted to School of Professional Psychology. Paper 145 (2010).
- [5] Heaton, Tim B. "Factors contributing to increasing marital stability in the United States." *Journal of Family Issues* 23.3 (2002): 392-409.
- [6] Saroukhani, B. Divorce, research to understand the reality and its agents. Tehran University Press, 1997.
- [7] Ahmadi, J., and Raeispour, H. Marriage and family regional conference, Shahr-e Kord: Explore the relationship between marital satisfaction and couple's communication skills, gender, number of children and spouse's education level. 1997.

- [8] Barongo, Samson, et al. "Correlates between levels of education in relation to marital satisfaction in KISII township of KISII county, Kenya." *International Journal of Innovation and Applied Studies* 9.1 (2014): 387.
- [9] Mihalcea, Alexandru, Dragos Iliescu, and Margareta Dincă. "The influence of the educational level on couple relationships." *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences* 78 (2013): 41-45.
- [10] Shokrkon, H., et al. "Personality characteristics, social skills, attachment styles, and demographic characteristics as predictors of success or failure in marital relationship among divorce seeking and normal couples in Ahvaz." *Journal of Education and Psychology, Shahid Chamran University* 1 (2006): 30-31.
- [11] Read, S. J., Jones, D. K., and Miller, L. C. "Traits as goal-based categories: The importance of goals in the coherence of dispositional categories." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 58 (1990): 1048-1061.
- [12] Gottman, John Mordechai. *What predicts divorce?: The relationship between marital processes and marital outcomes*. Psychology Press, 2014.
- [13] Karney, Benjamin R., and Thomas, N. Bradbury. "Neuroticism, marital interaction, and the trajectory of marital satisfaction." *Journal of personality and social psychology* 72.5 (1997): 1075.
- [14] Nemechek, Stephanie, and Kenneth R. Olson. "Five-factor personality similarity and marital adjustment." *Social Behavior and Personality: An international Journal* 27.3 (1999): 309-317.
- [15] Pruett, M. K., and Sandler, I. (2004) "Research for family court professionals: Prevention interventions for children of divorce", paper presented at the 41st Annual conference of the association of family and conciliation courts, San Antonio, Texas, 13 May 2004.
- [16] Robins, Richard W, Avshalom Caspi, and Terrie E. Moffitt. "Two personalities, one relationship: Both partners' personality traits shape the quality of their relationship." *Journal of personality and social psychology* 79.2 (2000): 251.
- [17] Soleimani, A. S. *Intelligence irrational thoughts on the cognitive approach to marital satisfaction*. Tehran: 1994.
- [18] Ahadi, B. "The relationship between personality and marital satisfaction." *Contemporary Psychology* 2.4 (2008).
- [19] Garosi, Farshi M. T. "New approach in personality assessment: The use of factor analysis in personality research." *Tabriz: Published by Jamee Pajoh & Danial* 2001.
- [20] Stroud, Catherine B., et al. "Normal and abnormal personality traits are associated with marital satisfaction for both men and women: An actor-partner interdependence model analysis." *Journal of Research in Personality* 44.4 (2010): 466-477.
- [21] Watson, David, Brock Hubbard, and David Wiese. "General traits of personality and affectivity as predictors of satisfaction in intimate relationships: Evidence from self-and partner-ratings." *Journal of personality* 68.3 (2000): 413-449.
- [22] McCrae, Robert R., and Oliver P. John. "An introduction to the five-factor model and its applications." *Journal of personality* 60.2 (1992): 175-215.
- [23] Matthews, Gerald, Ian J. Deary, and Martha C. Whiteman. *Personality traits*. Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- [24] Thompson, Edmund R. "Development and validation of an international English big-five mini-markers." *Personality and individual differences* 45.6 (2008): 542-548.
- [25] Bakhshayesh, A., and Mortazavi, M. (2009). relationship satisfaction, sexual health and marital satisfaction in couples. *Applied Psychology*, 3, 85-73.
- [26] Bani Jamali, S. S., and Mohammad Zadeh, S. "The effect of intellectual disabilities on marital satisfaction." *Quarterly New Thoughts on Education* 74 (2005): 61.
- [27] Ghadiri, Shekari A. *The relationship between emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction and Marital compatibility of Yazd city couples*. Bachelor's dissertation of Psychology, Faculty of Educational Sciences and Psychology, Yazd University (2007).
- [28] Eshaghi, M., Mohebi, S. F., Sattar, P., and Mohammadi, F. "Social factors affecting divorce in women of Tehran." *Women in Development and Policy* 10.3 (2012): 124-197.
- [29] Todd K. Shackelford, Avi Besser, and Aaron, T. Goetz. "Personality, Marital Satisfaction, and Probability of Marital Infidelity." *Individual Differences Research* 6.1 (2008): 13-25.
- [30] Garcia, Stella D., and Semilla M. Rivera. "Perceptions of Hispanic and African-American couples at the friendship or engagement stage of a relationship." *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* 16.1 (1999): 65-86.
- [31] Karney, Benjamin R., and Thomas N. Bradbury. "The longitudinal course of marital quality and stability: A review of theory, methods, and research." *Psychological bulletin* 118.1 (1995): 3.