



Relationship between Big Five Personality Factors Neuroticism, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Openness, Loyalty and Marital Adjustment

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ABSTRACT

The present research aimed to study the correlation between big five personality factors; Neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness, openness, loyalty and marital adjustment. The population is composed of all married employed teachers of the department of education in Nourabad, within the academic year 2014 - 2015. The sample size includes 154 married teachers (77 couples) who were chosen through simple random sampling. The instrumentation contains NEO-FF-I questionnaire, and twosome compatibility questionnaire (DAS). The data has been respectively collected through these two questionnaires which were related to five factors of personality and marital adjustment. The results of correlation coefficient show that among these five personality factors, Neuroticism has a meaningful and negative correlation with marital adjustment ($P < 0/001$) and, extraversion, agreeableness ($P < 0/001$), loyalty ($P < 0/005$) have a positive and meaningful correlation with marital adjustment. It is noted that there is no correlation between Openness and marital adjustment. Also, the obtained results of regression analysis reveal that among these five factors, Neuroticism and agreeableness are the strongest indicators of marital adjustment respectively which have the power of prediction to a significant level. Undoubtedly, personal features and factors are very essential in marital adjustment so that it must be considered by counselors before marriage. Evaluation of personality features in couples by counselors can play as a key role in selecting the proper spouse and prevent the marital incompatibility and unsatisfactory.

Key Words: Neuroticism, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Openness, Loyalty, Marital Adjustment

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63

Introduction

Family is the most important social unit in a society which is created by two people whom are married as a wife and husband. Marital satisfaction and adjustment are the most important factors in marriage. Compatible couples are the ones' who get satisfaction from their relationships and they agree on spending the pleasure time and financial issues together (Greef, 2000). Marital compatibility is the foundation stone of good performance of a family.

It's one of the most important predictors of mental health in married people. The accomplished studies depict marital compatibility can help a person to have general adjustment; it means that the couples whom have higher marital compatibility, have more self-esteem. They are compatible in their social relationships too. There's mobility and exhilaration in compatible couples' life which prevent the negative feelings about each other. These types of couples have an emotional and

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smart life (Gottman, 1999). The lack of compatibility in couples is the most important reason for their reference to counselors and family therapists. Raising divorce rates, the existence of conflicts and also confusion relations cause researchers to find some strategies against divorce phenomenon. Much studies show that unstable and unrest relationship between couples increase their physical and mental problems and make it increased in their children (Watson *et al.*, 2000; Azami *et al.*, 2017). The accomplished researches depict that the reason behind being weakening the marriage ties are economic issues, decreasing the income, unemployment, education level, religious, age and social- cultural challenges. It is obvious that the role of these factors cannot be ignored in increasing the marital compatibility but, the majority of researches ignore the fact that the characteristics features can effect on couples' compatibility and satisfaction in long term. The five factor models have been the most influential models in recent decades which absorbed many studies. These five factors which are known as big five are: Neuroticism, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Openness and, Loyalty (Pervin and John, 2008). Marital connection is the connection between two different characters. It is essential that the pathology of marital incompatibilities interpersonal reasons and failure in marriage should be considered and personal factors roles should be studied. Each of the spouses enters to marital connection with a development background, personality style and combination of biological, environmental and empirical agents. Research findings depict personality factors can predict the quality of marital relationship better than calendar variables such as age, education or separation background (Bentler and Newcomb, 1998). Since marriage experience in pre- marriage period is not possible in our culture, many couples are not able to recognize personality features of each other and it can be one of the reasons in marital incompatibility after a while in their common life. This question is presented to what extend each of the main behaviors of couples' personality characteristics are linked to marital compatibility? Fisher and Macknalti (2008) have shown a high level of Neuroticism in a person and his/ her spouse can predict low levels of marital compatibility in one year. In another research, it is proved that the couples who are involved in distraught relationships are more Neurotic temperament and more introspective than ordinary couples (Barelds *et al.*, 2006; Rahmati *et*

al., 2017). Many researches reveal that some especial personality factors can predict marital quality. For example, Bentler and NewComb (1998) show that personality factors can predict marital instability better than the demographic factors such as (age, education and etc.). Lester *et al.*, (1989) proved that when the extraversion in each the couples are high, their marital unsatisfactory will increase. The other researches show that there is a positive relationship between agreeableness, openness, loyalty and marital compatibility (10-13). The accomplished researches have shown that married young men has more stress than women, because marriage is an environment in which women have peace of mind, but men have more sense of responsibility. Marriage for women has an emotional aspect but for men, it relates to care, attention, sex relationship (Gholizadeh, 2010) by studying the divorcing couples, Kelley (1992) and Noller (1997) concluded that the lack of good relationship, marital unsatisfactory and emotional problems lead to increase divorce (Sadeghi, 1999). Appet *et al.*, (1996) and Yang *et al.*, (2000) found out that sexual relationships and love expression make marital compatibility increase (Gholizadeh, 2010; Mighavam *et al.*, 2016).

Regarding conflict conclusions in the accomplished research, we want to study the relationship between big five personality factors Neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness, openness, loyalty, and marital compatibility.

These studies have shown that marital compatibility is the most important predictor of mental health in married people. The marital compatibility can help person to have general adjustment. The lack of compatibility in couples is the most important reason for their reference to counselors and family therapists. These studies also show that personality factors can predict marital instability as well as marital quality. Therefore, this research is aimed to analyze the relationship between big five personality factors Neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness, openness, loyalty and marital adjustment.

Methods

Materials

The population is composed of all married employed teachers of department of education in Nourabad within the academic year 2014 - 2015. The sample size includes 154 married teachers (77 couples) who were chosen through simple random sampling. People who have 30- 35 years

old, are the most frequent (37%), couples, couples who have married for 3 to 4 years, are (24.1%), (%30.5) of couples have BA or BS degree and %52.9 of couples has no child.

Neo's personality questionnaire

In the present research, personality questionnaire of Neo is used. It has 60 items. The questionnaire can measure five personality factors Neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness, openness, loyalty and marital compatibility.

Each of them has 12 articles and subject selects its response in five Likert degree scales. Some articles are marked reversely. The minimum and maximum marks in each of these personality features are changing between 0 and 48 respectively. Robins *et al.*, (2002) have obtained coefficient of Chronbach Alpha as mentioned here: Neuroticism: 0.88, extraversion: 0.85, agreeableness: 0.84, openness: 0.70, loyalty 0.62. Becker (2006) measured these factors as Neuroticism: 0.86, agreeableness: 0.77, openness: 0.71, loyalty 0.84. All these coefficients are acceptable. Mohammad Zademolaei (2014) calculated validity of Neo's personality questionnaire by the use of simultaneous method in five personality feature as Neuroticism: 0.68, extraversion: 0.71, agreeableness: 0.67, openness: 0.67, loyalty 0.78. The calculated coefficients are acceptable. Alpha coefficient of internal consistency for the present research is obtained as: Neuroticism, 0.7; extraversion, 0.70; agreeableness, 0.57; openness, 0.68; loyalty, 0.79.

Doubles adjustment scale (DAS)

This scale has 32 questions and it evaluates the quality of marital relationship or double relationships. The scale was prepared by Spanear and Lewis (1979). It evaluates four dimensions of a relationship. These dimensions are: double satisfaction, double satisfaction, double solidarity, double agreement and love expression. The cognition of compatible and incompatible couples is feasible by the use of these results. Answering to 32 questions is done by Lickert scale. If their mark be 101 or less than 101, they are incompatible couples. Spanear, and Lewis in 1979; (Sanaei, 2000) reported the total scale validity by Chronbach alpha 0.96. It has significant internal consistency. Internal consistency of subscale is between good to excellent. Double satisfactory is 0.94, double correlation is 0.81, double agreement is 0.90 and love expression is 0.73. In another research, some researches obtained the high internal consistency (0.95) (Mollazade, *et al.*, 2002). Spanear (1979) determined content validity in compatible and incompatible (divorced or divorcing couples) couple's mark and they specified concurrent validity by correlation 0.86 between its results and "marital adjustment scale by Las and Valas".

Results

Table (1) shows the various statistical indexes such as frequency, minimal mark, mean, standard deviation of variables in male, female and all couples.

Table 1. Descriptive indexes of marital satisfaction variables and five personality factors in male, female and all couples

Variables	Number	The minimum mark			The maximum mark			Mean			Standard deviation		
		Male	Female	All couples	male	Female	All couples	Male	Female	All couples	Male	Female	All couples
Marital adjustment	77	38	51	38	142	152	148	88/5	96/3	90/8	1/084	1/155	1/854
Loyalty	77	11	14	11	48	48	48	35/12	32/68	3/404	6/96	6/08	6/56
Neuroticism	77	2	1	1	38	41	41	17/77	21/56	1/689	7/97	8/96	8/67
Extraversion	77	13	12	12	40	42	42	28/67	27/88	2/288	5/67	6/35	6/01
Openness	77	10	15	10	38	42	42	27/16	28/10	2/647	5/20	5/55	5/38
Agreeableness	77	14	19	14	43	47	47	32/10	32/97	3/542	5/17	5/39	5/28

Table 2. Correlation matrix between five personal factors as well as marital satisfaction

Variables Statistic indexes	Number	Pearson correlation	Sig
Neuroticism and marital adjustment	154	335/0-	0/000
extraversion and marital adjustment	154	0/21	0/006
agreeableness and marital adjustment	154	0/286	0/000
Openness and marital adjustment	154	0/122	0/109
loyalty and marital adjustment	154	0/183	0/016



Table 3. Regression of predictor agents in marital satisfaction

Variables Statistic indexes	B	B	R	R2	Sig
Neuroticism	-53/003	-0/335	0/335	0/112	0/001
Agreeableness	40/86	0/265	0/377	0/142	0/001

Table 4. Exit of predictor agents from regression equation

Variables Statistic indexes	B	T	Sig	Partial Correlation
First step				
extraversion	0/135	1/78	0/077	0/135
Openness	0/110	1/54	0/126	0/117
Agreeableness	0/187	2/44	0/015	0/184
Loyalty	0/048	0/61	0/54	0/046
Second step				
extraversion	0/109	1/44	0/151	0/110
Openness	0/108	1/52	0/128	0/116
Loyalty	0/029	0/369	0/713	0/028

The results of table (2) depict that the relationship between Neuroticism and marital adjustment is -%335 in significance level 0.01, this relationship is negative and meaningful ($p < 0.01$). People whom have high mark in Neuroticism, they have less marital adjustment and vice versa. There is a meaningful and positive relationship between extraversion and marital adjustment. Therefore, people who have a high mark in extraversion, they have more marital satisfaction and vice versa ($p < 0.01$). There is a positive and meaningful relationship between agreeableness and marital adjustment. The high agreeableness is, the more marital adjustment will be ($p < 0.01$). According to table (2), the relationship between openness to experiences and marital adjustment is positive, but it is not meaningful. The meaningful and positive relationship between loyalty and marital adjustment in the level of 0.05 has been observed. It can be concluded that persons who have the high mark in loyalty, they have more marital adjustment, too. To test the main hypothesis, step to step multi variable regression is used. According to the most and the least relationship, predictor variables are supposed to be analyzed. Regarding table (3), Neuroticism and agreeableness factors which have the meaningful relationship with marital adjustment, in the first and second step enter to regression equation ($p < 0.01$) respectively. Among all of the 5 factors, these two factors can predict the marital adjustment variable in the significance level.

The obtained results of predictors exit depicted in the first step, the four factors (extraversion, agreeableness, openness, loyalty) exit of regression equation and in the second step,

the three factors (extraversion, openness, loyalty) exit of equation (table 4).

Discussion

This research is aimed to analyze the relationship between the big five personality factors Neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness, openness, loyalty and marital adjustment. The obtained result depict that there is a negative meaningful relationship between Neuroticism and marital adjustment. It means that being high in Neuroticism and its components like anxiety, aggression, shyness, depression, vulnerability in one of the couples lead to decrease the marital adjustment in him/ her and his/ her spouse. If these components are low in couples, their marital adjustment will increase.

Fisher and McNulty (2008) concluded that Neuroticism in each of couples (husband or wife) can predict divorce possibility and marital incompatibility. They also found out that Neuroticism is the strongest personality variable. The obtained results of the present research have consistency with Botwin *et al.*, (1997); McCrae *et al.*, (1998); Gatis *et al.*, (2004); White *et al.*, (2004); Barelds, (2005); Zoby, (2005); Barelds & Bareldsdiijkestra, (2006). It is notable that high neuroticism in one of the couples can decrease life enjoying and marital adjustment in both. It leads to create the negative interactions and increase conflicts between couples. Neurotic people experience emotional turmoil such as failure, fear, guilty feeling chronically. Most probably, these negative features have negative impact on person in both intra-personal and extra-personal adjustment. Accordingly, high level of these factors can reduce marital adjustment (Bouchard



et al., 1999). The obtained results reveal that extraversion has a meaningful and positive relationship with marital adjustment. This hypothesis is confirmed. It means that high extraversion level and its components like intimacy, sociability, assertiveness, activity, excitant seeking and positive emotions in one of the couples can increase marital adjustment in couples and vice versa. Barelds, (2005) reported that there is a relationship between positive extraversion and marital life quality. Barelds & Barelds Dijkstra, (2006) pointed out spouses whom are involved in distraught relationships, are more introspective than the normal spouses. The obtained results of this research are consistent with Lester *et al.*, (1989), White *et al.*, (2004) studies. These results can be explained that having activity in people who are extraverted people, their tendency to presence of others can be related to their needs to social support and it can effect on marital adjustment indirectly (Bouchard *et al.*, 1999). Having extraversion features such as sociability, loving others, euphoria, having high energy and being optimist are related to happiness. As a result, these people have marital adjustment and satisfaction. Results about agreeableness show that there is a positive and meaningful relationship between agreeableness and marital adjustment. It is consistent with the accomplished studies by Botwin(1997), McCrae *et al.*, (1998), Gattis *et al.*, (2004), White *et al.*, (2004), Donnellan, Cangerand & Brynnett (2005), Zoby (2005), Shachelford, Biserand & Goatez (2008). They pointed out the existence of agreeableness feature in persons are useful for their marriage. This agent is one of the inter-personal tendency dimensions and considered to be one of the positive features. People whom have high level agreeableness, they are ore healthy and more social than the others. These findings may mean that spouses whom are more social, they are willing to have stable and happier marriage.

No relationship between openness to experience and marital adjustment has been observed in this research. Donnellan, Conger and Brynnett (2005); Zoby, (2005) and Botwin, (1997) concluded that there is a positive and meaningful relationship between openness to experience and marital adjustment. By explaining the inconsistent results in this research and the accomplished studies which have mentioned above, cultural factors are involved. In fact, some factors and features which are desirable and favorable (like

openness) in pluralist societies like Iran don't have a key role in inter-personal interactions and couples' relationship unlike individualist societies. The obtained results also proved that there is a positive and meaningful relationship between loyalty and marital adjustment. This hypothesis is confirmed, too. White *et al.*, (2004); Zoby, (2005); Shachelford *et al.*, (2008) had a similar conclusion and proved that the existence of high loyalty levels in couples can cause marital adjustment to be increased. High loyalty levels in persons arising from high levels of need to progress. Accordingly, people who have progress motivation, they are following success in their personal lives. They want to be successful in their married life.

At last, the main hypothesis is confirmed. Regression analysis results depicted there is a relationship between big five personality factors Neuroticism (as the strongest factor), extraversion, agreeableness (as the second predictor agent), openness, loyalty and marital adjustment. These factors can easily predict marital adjustment level in couples.

Conclusion

Undoubtedly, personal features and factors are very important in marital adjustment. It must be considered by counselors before marriage. Evaluation of personality features in couples by counselors can play a key role in selecting the proper spouse and prevent the marital incompatibility and unsatisfactory. Evaluation and awareness of each other's personality features by couples, whom want to marry, can be useful and helpful, too. It is recommended that all couples advocate a long period of time to know each other's personality features in order to have a good life in future. Regarding the negative relationship between Neuroticism and marital adjustment, the positive relationship between extraversion, openness, loyalty and marital adjustment, couples should concern these factors and counselors should pay attention, too.

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