

Effect of Personality Styles and Marital Disillusionment on Relationship Satisfaction in Married Women

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ABSTRACT

Aim of the Study: The present study investigates the relationship between personality styles, marital disillusionment and relationship satisfaction in married women.

Methodology: The study was quantitative in nature and sample was recruited using purposive sampling (N=61). Brief Version of Big Five Personality Inventory (Rammstedt & John, 2007), The Marital Disillusionment Scale (Niehuis & Bartell, 2006) and Relationship Assessment scale (Hendrick, Dicke, & Hendrick, 1998) were employed as measures.

Findings: The correlation indicates that neuroticism and conscientiousness have significant positive correlation with marital disillusionment and negative correlation with relationship satisfaction. Extraversion and openness to experience have negative correlation with marital disillusionment and positive correlation with relationship satisfaction. Middle age adults are significantly high in conscientiousness and neuroticism. Working women are significantly high in agreeableness and relationship satisfaction. Married women living in nuclear family system is significantly high in marital disillusionment.

Conclusion: Study concluded that Females in middle age had a higher score on neuroticism and conscientiousness, which could be developmental stressors of care giving and life changes. Agreeableness and relationship satisfaction were also higher among working women, which indicates that occupational involvement can lead to autonomy, social competence and relationship balance. Moreover, women in nuclear families were found to be more disillusioned with marriage, which might have been caused by a lack of extended family support and a role strain. All in all, the research paper points to the multifaceted interaction between the personal characteristics and the situational influences on marital quality.

Keywords: Personality Styles, Marital Disillusionment, Relationship Satisfaction, Married Women.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Personality and marital life are deeply interconnected psychological constructs that shape an individual's emotional well-being and relationship satisfaction. Personality styles determine how people think, perceive and respond. In contrast, marital disillusionment refers to the gradual decline in affection, idealization and satisfaction that partners experience over time often leading to dissatisfaction and emotional withdrawal (Huston et al., 2001; Niehuis et al., 2015).

The study explores how personality traits and marital disillusionment impact relationship satisfaction. Personality traits have long been associated with marital satisfaction and relationship adjustment. Research based on the Big Five Model highlights that conscientiousness; extraversion and agreeableness are positively relation to marital satisfaction while neuroticism shows a negative correlation (Amiri et al., 2011; Claxton et al., 2012; Najarpourian et al., 2012). Couples with a high level of conscientiousness often exhibit cooperation, problem-solving ability and responsibility associated with marital relationships, whereas individuals with high neuroticism often experience emotional instability, insecurity and dissatisfaction (Caughlin et al., 2000; Khademi, 2017). Both partners' traits influence relationship outcomes; for instance, one spouse's agreeableness or conscientiousness can enhance the other's satisfaction (Weidmann et al., 2017; Costa & Mosmann, 2021).

Longitudinal studies further reveal that conscientiousness strongly predicts marital happiness, while neuroticism forecasts declining satisfaction or divorce (Claxton et al., 2012; Rosowsky et al., 2012). The effect of neuroticism appears early in marriage and remains consistent over time (Caughlin et al., 2002). positive attributes such as openness to experience, emotionality and honesty are linked to higher marital satisfaction (Shahi et al., 2023) whereas immaturity and incompatibility predict dissatisfaction (Khademi, 2017). Increase in neuroticism and decrease in conscientiousness over time negatively affect relationship satisfaction (Slatcher & Vazire, 2009; O'Meara & South, 2019).

Interpersonal and intrapersonal factors mediate the effect of personality on relationship satisfaction. The happiness in relationships depends on how partners perceive each other's personalities than on their self-perception (Furler et al., 2014). Personality traits influence conflicts and marital satisfaction; conscientious and neurotic people may experience lower satisfaction (Taggart et al., 2019). Couples who have traits like humor, flexibility and positive communication tend to have higher marital satisfaction (Cann et al., 2008). Personality styles also effect attachment patterns, which in turn influence marital outcomes. Secure and ambivalent attachment styles are linked with lower disillusionment, while avoidant attachment is associated with high disillusionment, instability and infidelity (Nazari et al., 2016). Marital disillusionment affects marital satisfaction, as it often begins in the initial stage of marriage, where the couple starts idealizing each other. Later, through unmet expectations and real-life differences, partners often experience a decline in affection and an increase in emotional distance over time (Niehuis et al., 2011; Huston et al., 2001). Studies indicate that disillusionment predicts separation likelihood and depressive symptoms (Niehuis et al., 2015, 2019).

Conflict and blame intensify the feelings of disillusionment (Weigel & Shrout, 2021) and negative communication reduces satisfaction (Sharabi & Dorrance-Hall, 2022). Cognitive and emotional factors such as diminished romantic perceptions and unrealistic expectations lead towards lower marital satisfaction (Niehuis et al., 2011; Johnson, 2015). Positive emotional regulation can lead to lower marital disillusionment and better relational outcomes (Khademi et al., 2021; Khatibi et al., 2021).

High disillusionment can lead to depression, anxiety and commitment (Niehuis et al., 2015; Scott & Stafford, 2022). Disillusionment can activate brain regions and it affects perception and decision making (Niehuis et al., 2019). Unattended disillusionment can result in dissatisfaction, detachment and even divorce (Huston et al., 2001; Karney & Bradbury, 1997).

Cultural and contextual factors also influence such dynamics. In collectivist societies like Pakistan, marital satisfaction is largely influenced by gender roles, family structure and education (Khan et al.,

2021; Lodhi et al., 2019). Studies suggest that the joint family system shows higher marital satisfaction as compared to the nuclear family system, which shows importance of cultural context in understanding marital conflict and marital satisfaction.

In sum, both personality traits and marital disillusionment independently predict relationship satisfaction. The interaction between personality styles and disillusionment can foster dissatisfaction, conflict and emotional withdrawal, particularly among married women.

1.1 Rational

Married women face many challenging situations in Pakistani culture (Munir et al., 2022). They have to face many social, physical, economic and psychological problems. A woman feels satisfied with her life if she has a perceived sense of satisfaction from her partner relationship. Satisfying relationships can be sources of individual and mutual comfort, well-being and fulfillment (Meunier & Baker, 2011), while unsatisfying relationships can result in emotional turmoil and ill health (Robles et al., 2014). The basic need for human beings is to participate in social contact and build their relationship network. For many adults, romantic relationships are a crucial part of the daily social web. A sufficient and a fulfilling love relationship can boost couple's pleasure and trust (Robles, et al., 2014). Many factors like personality styles and marital disillusionment affect relationship satisfaction. The present study therefore was designed to understand how personality styles and marital disillusionment affect relationship satisfaction among married women. Identifying traits such as excessive neuroticism or conscientiousness which increase exposure to disillusionment, can help professionals design personality focused programs, counselling that improves emotional regulation, conflict resolution and communication. These findings can also guide future research to explore preventive strategies and culturally sensitive approaches that promote marital satisfaction and long term relational stability among women in collectivist societies like Pakistan.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

1. To investigate the relationship between personality styles, marital disillusionment and relationship satisfaction in married women.
2. To investigate the difference of demographic variables (I.e., Age, occupation, Residential status and family systems) with personality styles, marital disillusionment and relationship satisfaction in married women.

1.3 Hypotheses of the Study

1. Neuroticism and conscientiousness will have positive correlation with marital disillusionment in married women.
2. Neuroticism and conscientiousness will have negative correlation with relationship satisfaction in married women.
3. Extraversion and openness to experience will have negative correlation with marital disillusionment in married women.
4. Extraversion and openness to experience will have positive correlation with relationship satisfaction in married women.
5. Agreeableness will have positive correlation with marital satisfaction and negative correlation with marital disillusionment.
6. Marital disillusionment will have negative correlation with relationship satisfaction in married women.

7. There would be demographic differences (I.e., Age, occupation, Residential status and family systems) in personality styles, marital disillusionment and relationship satisfaction in married women.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Participants

The sample was recruited using purposive sampling (N=61) from different areas of Pakistan. Sample was collected from different areas of Punjab as Gujranwala, Sialkot, Lahore, Wazirawala and Daska.

2.2 Research Design

Correlation research design was used in the present research to examine the relationship between Personality styles, marital disillusionment and relationship satisfaction. Personality styles and Marital disillusionment are an independent variables and Relationship satisfaction is a dependent variable.

2.3 Measures

Demographic sheet: Along with psychometric tests, to gauge age, occupation and family system etc, the participants were given a demographic sheet.

A Brief Version of the Big Five Personality Inventory: The scale consists of 10 items with five sub scales; Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism and openness to experience which are designed to predict the personality of an individual. The response range is 1-5 likert scale. Some of items are reverse coded: 1R, 5Agreeableness: 2,7R conscientiousness: 3R, 8 Neuroticism: 4R, 9 Openness to Experience: 5R, 10 (Rammstedt & John, 2007).

The Marital Disillusionment Scale: This scale was given by Sylvia Niehuis and Denise bartell (Niehuis & Bartell, 2006). This scale consists of 16 items. It is used as an analytical tool to diagnose whether treatment plans to mend a marriage still has a change to work out or if the client is no longer concerned about working on it.(Kayser, 1996).

Relationship assesment Scale: This scale is developed by Susan Hendrick, Amy Dicke, Clyde Hendrick in 1998. It is a self-reporting scale with seven items measuring love, needs, expectations in a relationship. Response ranges from 1(low satisfaction) to 5 (high satisfaction).Two of the items are reverse coded no. 4 and 7 (Hendrick, Dicke, & Hendrick, 1998).

2.4 Procedure

Married women were included in this study from different areas of punjab as Gujranwala, Sialkot, Lahore, Wazirawala and Daska. Consent was taken from the women before the research started. The purpose, consequences and importance of this study was clearly explained to the sample. They were guaranteed their data and private information was not to be exposed to others. Their data was used morally for research work. First inform consent form was given to the married women for permission. Then demographic information sheet was given to married women for their demographic information. Questionnaire was given after getting their Demographics and was taken back on time. Data was collected in a comfortable and suitable setting.

3. RESULTS

Results are calculated using IBM SPSS (Version 27). Demographics were calculated using descriptive analysis. Correlation was calculated using person product movement analysis.

Table 1: Alpha reliability of Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, Openness to Experience, Marital Disillusionment and Relationship Satisfaction among married women.

Variables	N	M	SD	A	Range		Skew
					Actual	Potential	
Extraversion	2	6.06	2.04	.62	2-10	2-10	-.01
Agreeableness	2	8.45	1.31	.70	5-10	2-10	-.73
Conscientiousness	2	7.88	1.83	.66	2- 10	2-10	-.72
Neuroticism	2	7.27	1.79	.52	3- 10	2-10	-.16
Openness to Experience	2	7.08	1.46	.68	4-10	2-10	.38
Marital Disillusionment	16	38.63	22.72	.96	16-97	16-112	.72
Relationship Satisfaction	7	28.05	5.06	.81	14-35	5-35	-.54

Table 1 indicates that Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, Openness to Experience, Marital Disillusionment, and Relationship Satisfaction has acceptable reliability coefficients.

Table 2: Mean, Standard Deviation and Correlation between Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, Openness to Experience, Marital Disillusionment and Relationship Satisfaction among married women.

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	M	SD
Extraversion	-							6.20	1.94
Agreeableness	.15	-						8.46	1.27
Conscientiousness	.08	.02	-					7.62	1.83
Neuroticism	-.04	-.01	.27*	-				6.90	1.78
Openness to Experience	-.10	.18	-.10	-.09	-			7.04	1.52
Marital Disillusionment	-.23	.01	.20*	.13*	-.22	-		36.02	20.82
Relationship Satisfaction	.34**	-.08	-.07	-.15*	.15*	-.78**	-	28.41	4.66

Table 2 indicates that extraversion has negative association with marital disillusionment and significant positive correlation with relationship satisfaction. Agreeableness has positive association with marital disillusionment and relationship satisfaction. Conscientiousness has significant positive correlation with Neuroticism and marital disillusionment and negative association with relationship satisfaction. Neuroticism has significant positive correlation with marital disillusionment and significant negative relation with relationship satisfaction. Openness to experience has negative association with marital disillusionment and positive relationship with relationship satisfaction. Marital disillusionment has significant negative correlation with relationship satisfaction.

Table 3: Mean standard deviation and t value of Extroversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, Openness to Experience, Marital Disillusionment and Relationship Satisfaction among married women in different age groups.

Variables	Adult (n=43)		Middle age adult (n=18)		t(59)	P	95% CL		Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD			LL	UL	
Extraversion	6.20	1.94	5.72	2.27	.84	.40	-.66	1.63	0.22
Agreeableness	8.46	1.27	8.44	1.42	.05	.95	-.72	.76	0.01
Conscientiousness	7.62	1.83	8.50	1.72	-1.72	.00	-1.88	.14	0.49
Neuroticism	6.90	1.78	8.16	1.54	-2.61	.01	-2.22	-.29	0.75
Openness to Experience	7.04	1.52	7.16	1.33	-.29	.77	-.94	.70	0.08
Marital Disillusionment	36.02	20.82	44.88	26.30	-1.40	.16	-21.52	3.71	0.37
Relationship Satisfaction	28.41	4.66	27.23	5.95	-.79	.42	-1.78	4.13	0.22

Table 3 indicates that middle age adults are significantly high in conscientiousness and neuroticism in different age groups.

Table 4: Mean standard deviation and *t* value of Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, Openness to Experience, Marital Disillusionment and Relationship Satisfaction among working and non-working married women.

Variables	Working (n=29)		Non-working (n=32)		<i>t</i> (59)	<i>p</i>	95% CL		Cohen's <i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>	
Extraversion	6.55	1.95	5.62	2.04	1.80	.07	-.10	1.85	0.46
Agreeableness	8.86	1.02	8.09	1.44	2.37	.02	.12	1.41	0.61
Conscientiousness	8.03	1.54	7.75	2.07	601	.55	-.66	1.23	0.15
Neuroticism	7.03	1.86	7.50	1.74	-1.00	.31	-1.38	.45	0.26
Openness to Experience	7.00	1.38	7.15	1.54	-.41	.68	-.91	.60	0.10
Marital Disillusionment	30.58	18.14	45.93	24.21	-2.77	.07	-26.40	-4.29	0.71
Relationship Satisfaction	29.57	5.00	26.73	4.80	2.16	.03	.21	5.47	0.57

Table 4 indicates that working women are significantly high in agreeableness and relationship satisfaction.

Table 5: Mean standard deviation and *t* value of Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, Openness to Experience, Marital Disillusionment and Relationship Satisfaction among married women in different family systems.

Variables	Nuclear(n=27)		Joint(n=34)		<i>t</i> (59)	<i>p</i>	95% CL		Cohen's <i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>	
Extraversion	5.55	1.90	6.38	2.11	-1.37	.17	-1.75	.32	0.41
Agreeableness	8.44	1.45	8.47	1.21	-.07	.93	-.70	.65	0.02
Conscientiousness	7.92	1.73	7.85	1.94	.15	.87	-.88	1.02	0.03
Neuroticism	7.25	1.63	7.29	1.94	-.07	.94	-.97	.90	0.02
Openness to Experience	6.77	1.31	7.32	1.55	-1.46	.15	-1.29	.20	0.38
Marital Disillusionment	44.85	25.67	33.70	19.04	1.94	.05	-.31	22.6	0.49
Relationship Satisfaction	27.44	5.51	28.54	4.69	-.81	.42	-3.84	1.62	0.21

Table 5 indicates that nuclear family system is significantly high in marital disillusionment. There is non-significant mean difference in conscientiousness, neuroticism, agreeableness, extraversion, openness to experience, and relationship satisfaction in different family systems.

4. DISCUSSION

The present study concludes that conscientiousness and neuroticism have significantly positive correlation with marital disillusionment and negative correlation with relationship satisfaction. In contrast extraversion and openness to experience have negative correlation with marital disillusionment and positive with relationship satisfaction. Middle age adults were found significantly high in conscientiousness and neuroticism while working women were significantly high in agreeableness and relationship satisfaction. Women living in nuclear families were significantly high in marital disillusionment. The findings are consistent with the previous literature indicating that neuroticism and conscientiousness were positively linked to marital disillusionment and negatively to relationship satisfaction. This support earlier studies that individual with high neuroticism leads to emotional instability and dissatisfaction (Caughlin et al., 2000; Khademi, 2017). Although conscientiousness is usually associated with responsibility and cooperation (Claxton et al., 2012). Excessive conscientiousness may foster rigidity or perfectionism, contributing to marital strain. Extraversion and openness to experience were negatively correlated with marital disillusionment and positively with relationship satisfaction consistent with previous studies that emotional expression and open minded individuals tend to maintain healthier communication and intimacy (Amiri et al., 2011; Shahi et al., 2023). Middle age adults were significantly higher in neuroticism and conscientiousness can be due to increase in life stress and responsibility (Rosowsky et al., 2012). Working women high in agreeableness and relationship satisfaction indicates how employment can enhance independence and emotional regulation (Costa & Mosmann, 2021). Women in necular families were found higher in marital disillusionment, consistent

with studies that joint family in collectivist cultures provide greater emotional and social support (Lodhi et al., 2019; Khan et al., 2021). The results align with the disillusionment model (Huston et al., 2001; Niehuis et al., 2015), which indicates that early marital idealization declines as partners face real life challenges. High neuroticism may accelerate this decline, whereas traits like agreeableness and extraversion may help maintain satisfaction through emotional regulation and positive communication (Cann et al., 2008; Khademi et al., 2021). Overall the results confirm that both personality and disillusionment altogether influence relationship satisfaction. In Pakistani cultural context where emotional stability and family cohesion are really prioritized, individual personality differences and family dynamics play significant role in marital outcomes. The research extends previous studies by emphasizing that emotional flexibility, constructive communication; social support can lessen effect of disillusionment and promote marital well-being.

5. CONCLUSION

The findings indicate that Extraversion has negative association with marital disillusionment and significant positive correlation with relationship satisfaction. Agreeableness has positive association with marital disillusionment and relationship satisfaction. Conscientiousness has significant positive correlation with Neuroticism and marital disillusionment and negative association with relationship satisfaction. Neuroticism has significant positive correlation with marital disillusionment and significant negative relation with relationship satisfaction. Openness to experience has negative association with marital disillusionment and positive relationship with relationship satisfaction. Marital disillusionment has significant negative correlation with relationship satisfaction. The findings indicate that middle age adults are significantly high in conscientiousness and neuroticism. Present results of study indicate that working women are significantly high in agreeableness and relationship satisfaction. Findings indicate that women living in nuclear family system is significantly high in marital disillusionment.

5.1 Implications

The findings of this study highlights important implications in both research and practice. Understanding personality styles and marital disillusionment impact on relationship satisfaction among married women can help psychologists, counselors and family therapists to develop more effective interventions. Identifying traits such as excessive neuroticism or conscientiousness which increase exposure to disillusionment, can help professionals design personality focused programs, counselling that improves emotional regulation, conflict resolution and communication. On a broader level, traits like agreeableness, openness and extraversion may boost relationship quality by predicting empathy and positive interaction. Moreover, the results highlights the need to strengthen marital education and emotional skills training, especially for women in nuclear families who may lack extended support. These findings can also guide future research to explore preventive strategies and culturally sensitive approaches that promote marital satisfaction and long term relational stability among women in collectivist societies like Pakistan.

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Conflict of Interest

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