

## Relationship between personality factors and marital satisfaction among working married doctors: Moderating role of gender

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**Objective:** To investigate the relationship between personality factors and marital satisfaction among working married doctors and underlying moderating role played by gender.

**Methodology:** This cross sectional study was carried out at Armed Forces Post Graduate Medical Institute, Rawalpindi from September to October, 2018. A purposive sample of 100 working married doctors was included from Rawalpindi. They were administered Big Five Inventory (BFI) and Marital Satisfaction Scale. Data were analyzed on SPSS version 23 using bivariate correlation, *t* test and moderation analysis was done using Process-Macro.

**Results:** Marital Satisfaction had significant positive correlation with personality factors

(agreeableness and conscientiousness). It had significant negative correlation with Neuroticism personality factor. Significant gender differences were found on subscale neuroticism of BFI and marital satisfaction. Females had less marital satisfaction as compared to males. Gender moderated the relationship between marital satisfaction and personality traits (i.e. agreeableness and neuroticism).

**Conclusion:** The result of this study showed that Neuroticism lead to marital dissatisfaction. Outcomes of current study will add into the data regarding the risk factors of marital dissatisfaction. (Rawal Med J 202;45:144-147).

**Keywords:** Marital satisfaction, personality traits, medical doctors.

### INTRODUCTION

Marriage is the main source of individual happiness and contentment. These happiness will be possible only when the relationship between couples is smooth and satisfactory. Due to the inflow of women into the paid jobs in the last half-century, the balance of family dynamics has shifted expressively. The impact of both spouses working increases the number of stressors in the marital satisfaction. Moreover, marital dissatisfaction occurs due to the interaction of personality traits, stressful experiences and adaptive processes.<sup>1</sup> In Pakistan, marriages are vastly inclined by religion.<sup>2</sup> Personality is generally associated with marital satisfaction.<sup>3</sup> Personality characteristics found among satisfied couples are different from those found among dissatisfied couples.<sup>4</sup>

Considerable evolvement toward gender working equality has been made in the past few decades.<sup>5</sup> Professional obligations among doctors frequently conflict with their personal and family life. Heavy workload and demanding patients can lead dissatisfaction. Much of stressors are apparent to be

intrinsic to the medical profession like personality trends, experience of emotional intensity, fear, failure, death, doctor's exposure to critical and life threatening situations and the feeling that doctor's probable slipups may have a profound impact on the patient's life.<sup>6</sup>

Women are more prone to issues of marital dissatisfaction. Men have been found to be more likely to withdraw from negative marital interactions, while women are more likely to pursue the conversation or conflict. Men and women married to people with these characteristics complain that their spouses are condescending, jealous, possessive, dependent, neglectful, unreliable, unfaithful, sexually promiscuous, alcoholic and emotionally constricted and self-centered.<sup>7</sup> There is a need to understand the conditions leading to a marital dissatisfaction. No significant attention has been paid to gender differences in relation to marital satisfaction and personality. Current study focused on working married army doctors.

## METHODOLOGY

This study was carried out at Armed Forces Post Graduate Medical Institute, Rawalpindi, Pakistan from September 2, to November, 10, 2018. A purposive and convenient sample of 100 participants with age range 30 to 50 years (mean  $34.56 \pm 5.96$ ) was gathered from working married doctors. All had children and at least 5 years of marriage and both partners were working doctors. Big Five Inventory (BFI)<sup>8</sup> and The Marital Satisfaction Scale (MSS) were used for data collection.

**Statistical Analysis:** SPSS Version 23 was used to analyze data.<sup>9</sup> Descriptive analysis and item total correlations were computed to check internal consistency of the scales. To find relationship between variables bivariate correlation analysis was used. To find out mean differences across demographic variable independent sample t-test was applied. For moderation analysis process, Macro Hayes 2.16 version was used.  $P < 0.05$  level was set as level of significance.

## RESULTS

Out of 100 Doctors, 47 were males and 53 female. Marital Satisfaction had significant positive correlation with personality factors (agreeableness and conscientiousness). Marital Satisfaction had significant negative correlation with Neuroticism personality factor (Table 1). The results of Independent Sample *t* test revealed gender had significant difference on the subscale of BFI i.e., neuroticism. There was a significant gender difference on marital satisfaction among male and female doctors. Female doctors had more neuroticism and less marital satisfaction as compare to males (Table 2).

**Table 1. Correlation of Working Hours, Monthly Income, Marital Satisfaction and sub scales of BFI (N=100).**

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Extraversion	-	.34**	.28**	-.25*	.31**	-.13	.14
Agreeableness	-	-	.61**	-.54**	.38**	.05	.48**
Conscientiousness	-	-	-	-.49**	.37**	-.00	.27**
Neuroticism	-	-	-	-	-.18	.21*	-.42**
Openness	-	-	-	-	-	.05	.18
Gender	-	-	-	-	-	-	-.28**
Marital Satisfaction							-

Note. \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .000$

**Table 2. Gender differences on BFI, Sub scales of BFI and marital Satisfaction (N=100).**

Variable	M	S.D	M	S.D	T	P	95% CI		Cohen's
	Male Doctors (n = 47)		Female Doctors (n= 53)				LL	UL	
Extra	26.94	4.48	25.81	4.66	1.23	.86	-.23	3.60	-
Agree	35.61	5.51	36.19	6.29	-.54	.44	-1.5	2.22	-
Consci	33.68	4.89	33.62	6.33	.05	.96	-.33	3.07	-
Neuro	19.13	4.89	21.13	4.85	-2.05	.04	-4.41	-.46	0.51
Openness	35.15	3.57	35.55	4.81	-.47	.63	-2.08	.43	-
BFI T	150.52	10.01	152.30	15.63	0.63	0.51	-.64	5.07	-
Satisfaction	104.74	9.40	96.26	17.74	3.03	<0.001	.99	4.75	0.42

Note. M = Mean, S.D = Standard deviation, \* $p > .05$  Extra= Extraversion Personality Factor, Agree= Agreeableness Personality Factor, Consci= Conscientiousness Personality Factor, Neuro= Neuroticism Personality Factor, Open= Openness Personality Factor, Marital Satis= Marital Satisfaction, CI= confidence interval, LL= lower limit, UL= upper limit.

**Table 3. Moderating Role of Gender in Relationship between Marital Satisfaction, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, Openness and sum of Personality Factors.**

Predictor	Marital Satisfaction			
	B	p	LL	UL
Constant	100.28**	<.001	97.41	103.16
Gender	-8.09**	<.001	-13.68	-2.51
Extraversion	.35	.40	-.47	1.17
Gender x Extraversion	.13	.88	-1.41	1.71
R <sup>2</sup>	.09			
F	2.96			
ΔR <sup>2</sup>	.02			
ΔF	.02			
Constant	100.07**	<.001	97.66	102.48
Gender	-9.19**	<.001	-13.91	-4.4
Agreeableness	1.19**	<.001	.85	1.5
Gender x Agreeableness	1.11**	.01	.42	1.79
R <sup>2</sup>	.38			
F	23.51**			
ΔR <sup>2</sup>	.05			
ΔF	10.24			
Constant	100.25**	<.001	97.41	103.09
Gender	-8.44**	<.001	-13.92	-2.96
Conscientiousness	.69**	<.001	.22	1.15
Gender x Conscientiousness	.12	.78	-.79	1.04
R <sup>2</sup>	.15			
F	7.59			
ΔR <sup>2</sup>	.00			
ΔF	.07			
Constant	100.89**	<.001	98.35	103.43
Gender	-6.33**	.01	-11.31	-1.36
Neuroticism	-1.15**	<.001	-1.64	-.65
Gender x Neuroticism	-1.28**	.01	-2.26	-.31
R <sup>2</sup>	.26			
F	8.80**			
ΔR <sup>2</sup>	.04			
ΔF	6.83			
Constant	100.17**	<.001	97.30	103.03
Gender	-8.68**	<.001	-14.24	-3.13
Openness	.56	.10	-.11	1.24
Gender x Openness	.83	.21	-.49	2.17
R <sup>2</sup>	.13			
F	4.58			
ΔR <sup>2</sup>	.01			
ΔF	1.56			

There was non-significant effect of moderator (gender) in relationship between marital satisfaction and personality factors extraversion. Main role presented by gender on marital satisfaction was positively significant for agreeableness. Effect of moderator in the relationship between marital satisfaction and personality factor conscientiousness was positively non-significant. Moreover, the main effect presented by gender on the relationship between neuroticism personality factor and marital satisfaction is in negative direction. It shows that neuroticism negatively predicts marital satisfaction (Table 3).

## DISCUSSION

In this study we investigated the relationship between personality factors and marital satisfaction among working married doctors. The results indicated that personality factors extraversion was positively non-significant. In addition, relationship of marital satisfaction and personality factors (agreeableness and conscientiousness) was positively significant. Relationship between marital satisfaction and neuroticism personality factor was negatively significant. In other words, neuroticism or high neuroticism was related to marital dissatisfaction. However, the relationship between openness personality factor and marital satisfaction was positively non-significant. There was significant gender difference on neuroticism and marital satisfaction among males and females doctors. Females had more neuroticism and less marital satisfaction.

These findings are consistent with studies which predicted that individual differences that couples bring to the marriage, such as personality traits affect marital satisfaction. We found that the only characteristic that has a potential power of prediction of marital dissatisfaction was the neuroticism. The neuroticism is related to affective instability and negative affect as fear, sorrow, angry, guilt feeling, and embarrassment.<sup>10,11</sup> In an empirical study, it was found that neuroticism trait, of the personality questionnaire had a negative and significant relationship with marital satisfaction; while the four other factors, i.e., agreeableness, conscientious, extraversion and openness to

experience, had a significant and positive relationship with marital satisfaction.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, it has been found that wives' openness, agreeableness and conscientiousness were each positively related to marital satisfaction.<sup>13,14</sup> The individuals with higher levels in the scales of extraversion, openness to experience, conscientiousness and agreeableness show lower level in neurosis related to marital divorce.<sup>15</sup> Our results are similar.

We found that there was non-significant effect of moderator (gender) in relationship between marital satisfaction and personality factors extraversion. In addition, main role presented by gender on marital satisfaction is positively significant for agreeableness. Moreover, the main effect presented by gender on the relationship between neuroticism personality factor and marital satisfaction is in negative direction. It shows that neuroticism negatively predicts marital satisfaction and reflected gender as a moderator is significant in the relationship between neuroticism personality factor and marital satisfaction.

However, gender as a moderator was found to be positively non-significant in the relationship between openness personality factor and marital satisfaction. Gender so far has not been studied as a moderator. Likewise, the marital satisfaction depends upon the person's intimacy, expectations, and responsibility. Moreover, we are living updated and technologically advanced world and both males and females are economically self-reliant and confident in decision making. This is an important factor to focus for marital satisfaction and was also noticed in a previous study.<sup>15</sup> Personality temperaments such as neuroticism created 'enduring vulnerabilities' that affected how couples adapted to stressful experiences and that this adaptation impacted general satisfaction in the relationships.<sup>13,15</sup> It appears that cultural and other factors also play roles in the relationship of marital satisfaction and personality characteristics.

Several factors nevertheless limit interpretations of the current findings. First, data were from forces, limited sample size and self-reported questionnaire may have limited our findings and generalizability. Research with qualitative nature may help this limitation. Second, a larger sample size would have

provided greater power. Third, study was conducted in a short period of time. Future research examining the effects of personality over more substantial lengths of time and data from couples and a comparison group may demonstrate stronger links between personality and changes in marital satisfaction.

## CONCLUSION

The neuroticism had a significant negative relationship with marital satisfaction. Females had more neuroticism and less marital satisfaction. Moderation analysis showed that gender, specifically females moderated the relationship between personality traits (i.e. agreeableness and neuroticism) and marital satisfaction.

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