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e-mail: letmepublish@rediffmail.com

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ROLE OF NEUROTICISM AND EXTRAVERSION FACTORS OF PERSONALITY ON LIFE SATISFACTION IN MARRIED COUPLES

Rashmi Rani

Department of Psychology,
Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapith, Varanasi

ABSTRACT

The aim of the study was to elucidate the life satisfaction in relation to 'similarity' and 'dissimilarity' (from the median cut points) on neuroticism and extraversion factors of personality in married couples. For this purpose, Three hundred (300) couples with at least Graduation qualification were sampled by following multi – stage sampling procedure and were administered Hindi version of NEO Personality Inventory (NEO PI – R) and Hindi version of satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), and four groups of spouses: both spouses (husband and wife) scoring low (Group – 1), husband scoring low and wife scoring high (Group – 2), husband scoring high and wife scoring low (Group – 3), and both the spouses (husband and wife) scoring high (Group – 4) on neuroticism and extraversion factor of personality (from the median cut points) were screened out and the total sum of scores (the sum of the scores of husband and wife on life satisfaction as a unit) was aimed for analysis. The data were analysed by one-way ANOVA post hoc mean comparisons were made by Tukey test. Results indicated non – significant between groups effect of neuroticism similarities/dissimilarity on life satisfaction, whereas significant between groups' effects was observed for extraversion similarities/ dissimilarity on life satisfaction. The results further indicated that high as compared to the low scorer couples on extraversion factor revealed higher life satisfaction.

Key Words: - life satisfaction, neuroticism, extraversion, Hindi version of NEO Personality Inventory (NEO PI – R) and Hindi version of satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)

INTRODUCTION

Plentiful studies explored a relationship between spousal personality similarity and marital satisfaction (Blum & Mehrabian, 1999; Bouchard, Lussier, & Sabourin, 1999; Kelly & Conley, 1987). Nemechek and Olson (1999) suggested that similar spouses are more prone to understand one another's. A longitudinal study on development of life satisfaction in couples revealed that both members influence each other and mutually affect the other partner's well-being (Hoppmann, Gerstorf, Willis, & Schaie, 2011). Evidence so far speaks for consistent effects of one's own personality on well-being (actor effects), such that being extraverted, agreeable, conscientious, emotionally stable and open to experience is positively related to a person's well-being (Steel, Schmidt, & Shultz, 2008), but it is not only one's own personality that affects wellbeing, it is also the partner's personality (partner effects). Being in an intimate relationship with someone who is extraverted, agreeable, conscientious, and emotionally stable is associated with higher well-being as well (Barelds, 2005; Dyrenforth et al., 2010; Headey, Muffels, & Wagner, 2010).

The existing body of research on the association between personality similarity and life satisfaction in couples does not provide a clear picture. So the study aimed to elucidate the life satisfaction exclusively in relation to 'similarity' and 'dissimilarity' of couples (from the median cut points) on neuroticism and extraversion factors of personality. For this purpose, four groups of spouses: both spouses (husband and wife) scoring low (Group – 1), husband scoring low and wife scoring high (Group – 2), husband scoring high and wife scoring low (Group – 3), and both the spouses (husband and wife) scoring high (Group – 4) on neuroticism factor of personality (from the median cut points) were screened out and the total sum of scores (the sum of the scores of husband and wife on each measure of the dependent variable as a unit) of the couples was aimed for analysis. Similarly, four groups of couples based on extraversion factor of personality were screened out and the total sum

of scores (the sum of husband and wife scorer on each measure of the dependent variable as a unit) was aimed for analysis.

METHODS AND PROCEDURE

Sample

Three hundred (300) couples with at least Graduation qualification were sampled by following multi – stage sampling procedure. A number of extraneous variables like age of both the spouses, length of marriage, educational qualification, job status (employed / unemployed), family structure (nuclear / joint), ecological background (rural / urban) and socio - economic status were recorded with the objective to equate / match the samples in order to find representative samples for the conduct of the study. The average length of marriage was observed to be 228 ± 6.57 months (almost 19 to 20 years).

BEHAVIORAL MEASURES

NEO Personality Inventory (NEO PI – R; Costa & McCrae, 1992)

The NEO PI – R Personality Inventory (Costa & McCrae, 1992), the inventory measuring five major domains of personality: Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness with six subtraits under the five major dimensions, and 8 items in each (and a total of 240 items in all) was employed for measurement purposes of personality of the spouses. A short version of the NEO PI – R (Costa & McCrae, 1992), based on factor analysis (selecting homogeneous and highly loading items of each factor), has been successfully standardized in the Indian cultural context – the Marital Adjustment Scale (MAS; Singh *et al.*, 2011).

Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS; Diener, *et al.*, 1985)

Life satisfaction is a 5-items scale in which participants are asked to indicate their agreement with the following statements: "In most ways my life is close to ideal", "I am satisfied with my life", "So far I have gotten the important things I want in life", "The conditions in my life are excellent", and

“If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.” Although life satisfaction and the affective components of SWLS are related, recent findings establish the discriminant validity of the different components (Lucas, Diener & Suh, 1996). The Satisfaction with Life Scale has been successfully standardized in the Indian cultural context (SWLS; Singh and Rani, 2011).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The study further aimed to elucidate the life satisfaction in relation to ‘similarity’ and ‘dissimilarity’ (from the median cut points) on neuroticism and extraversion factors of personality in married couples.

Table – 1: Mean and SD values for the on ‘neuroticism’ and ‘extraversion’ factor of personality on Life satisfaction

Mean and SD values for the on ‘neuroticism’							
HL /WL		HL /WH		HH/WL		HH / WH	
Low (N) =121		High (N) = 13		Low (N) = 25		High (N) = 126	
Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
47.537	12.582	55.769	4.969	50.04	10.358	47.294	10.999

Mean and SD values for the on ‘extraversion’							
Low (N) =129		High (N) = 28		Low (N) = 34		High (N) = 135	
Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
45.806	11.521	52.036	8.203	49.471	12.871	49.889	11.346

HL / WL = Husband scoring low / Wife scoring low,
 HL / WH = Husband scoring low / Wife scoring high
 HH / WL = Husband scoring high / Wife scoring low,
 HH / WH = Husband scoring high / Wife scoring high

Table – 2: Summary of One - Way ANOVA on life satisfaction

Variables	Sources of variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-ratio
neuroticism	Between Groups	977.343	3	325.781	2.475
	Within Groups	36991.485	281	131.642	
	Total	37968.828	284		
extraversion	Between Groups	1576.172	3	525.391	4.074**
	Within Groups	41524.923	322	128.959	
	Total	43101.095	325		

* Significant at .01 level

** Significant at .05 level

Mean and SD values for four groups as distinguished on the basis of neuroticism factor of personality on life satisfaction (the composite scores of husband and wife as a unit) are shown in Table - 1. One way ANOVA (vide Table – 2) revealed not

significant ‘between groups’ effects on neuroticism, whereas significant ‘between groups’ effects on extraversion. Tukey test applied to discern the patterns of mean differences. results revealed significantly more life satisfaction in husband scoring low and wife scoring high (M = 52.036) and the spouses (husband and wife) scoring high (M = 49.889) as compared to the spouses (husband and wife) scoring low (M = 45.806) on extraversion factor of personality.

Table – 3: Tukey Test revealing the patterns of mean differences in significant ‘between groups’ effects on measures of the dependent variables

	Means	HL / WL	HH / WL	HH / WH	HL / WH
Extraversion		45.806	49.471	49.889	52.036
	45.806	x	3.665	4.083*	6.230*
	49.471		x	.418	2.565
	49.889			x	2.147

* Significant at .01 level

* Significant at .05 level

A comparative evaluation of the ‘between groups’ effects with regards to the analysis of the effects of ‘similarity’ and ‘dissimilarity’ of spouses on ‘neuroticism’ and ‘extraversion’ factors of personality on life satisfaction provided complementary observations, that is, both the spouses (husband and wife) scoring low as compared to those scoring high on neuroticism uniformly emerged to exhibit higher index on life satisfaction, whereas high as compared to the low scorer spouses on extraversion factor revealed higher index on life satisfaction. These observations emerged in consonance with the theoretical expectations as set forth for the conduct of the study. These findings derive corroborative evidences with some previous research (Blum & Mehrabian, 1999; Bouchard, Lussier, & Sabourin, 1999; Kelly & Conley, 1987; Bentler & Newcomb, 1978). Bentler & Newcomb (1978) found significant degrees of similarity were found in married couples, while the divorced couples were for the most part neither similar nor complementary. Steel, Schmidt, & Shultz, (2008) explored consistent effects of one’s own personality on well-being, such that being extraverted, agreeable, conscientious, emotionally stable and open to experience is positively related

to a person's well-being. On the other hand present findings contrary to some previous findings, like Barelds (2005) explored on Dutch couples that personality similarity did not affect marital quality. In study using nationally representative panel data from Great Britain, Australia, and Germany revealed no or only small associations between personality similarity and relationship or life satisfaction and neither of these small effects was consistent across the three samples (Dyrenforth et al., 2010).

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