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16PF Couple's Counseling Report: Gender Differences in Marital Satisfaction, Personality Similarity, and Relationship Adjustment of Couples in Marital Therapy

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by

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Bachelor of Science
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We the undersigned committee
Hereby approve the attached doctoral research project

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Relationship Adjustment of Couples in Marital Therapy

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Abstract

TITLE: 16PF Couple's Counseling Report: Gender Differences in Marital

Satisfaction, Personality Similarity and Relationship Adjustment of Couples in

Marital Therapy

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The present study uses the16 Personality Factor Couple's Counseling

Report (16PF-CCR) to contribute to the current limited understanding of how

gender differences, embedded in personality factors, influence marital satisfaction

and relationship adjustment. Results were derived from 80 heterosexual couples

(160 individuals) seeking marital counseling in a private practice setting.

Statistically significant gender differences were found in Primary Personality

Factors including Warmth, Sensitivity, Rule-consciousness, Privateness,

Emotional Stability, and Tension. Statistical significant gender differences were

observed within Global Personality Factors. Toughmindedness, most closely

related to the Openness component of the Five Factor Model of Personality,

accounted for a substantial amount of the difference in scores between males and

females, with men scoring higher than women. Gender differences were also

observed, to a lesser extent, within the Extraversion scale, with females scoring

higher than males. Furthermore, statistically significant gender differences were

noted on the validity scale, Impression Management. Limitations of this study,

clinical implications, and areas for further research were also discussed.

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Introduction

Marriage is a universal, steadfast cornerstone of past and current cultures. Marriage, as a social structure, has an enormous influence on society in both a broad sense (i.e. the global political landscape), as well as more narrow, individualistic consequences. When considering the implications of marriage from an individualistic approach, a crucial factor of impact begins and depends on one's satisfaction or dissatisfaction within their own marital relationship. One's satisfaction within their marriage has a ripple effect on many other areas of the couple's lives, including one's physical health, mental health, job performance, overall quality of life, as well as has financial implications. Furthermore, the level of satisfaction within one's marriage impacts more than just the individuals in the dyad in the relationship, especially if there are children. Given the pertinence and relevancy of this social structure, factors which contribute to marital satisfaction, and conversely, factors which yield marital dissatisfaction, have been of interest to the general public since marriages' emergence, and more recently has gained the interest of psychological scientists.

Inevitably, both members of the relationship have a subjective perspective, unique from their partners', regarding the quality of the marriage. "Satisfaction" has the prerogative nature of subjectivity, which means in order to study the concept of marital satisfaction, the subjective term must be transformed into objective, measurable concept. While this has been accomplished by previous scientists through various means (i.e. ranking and scales), there are nuances of marital satisfaction which get lost in this translation. For example, cultural and

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personality factors of individuals within the dyad certainly influence one's experience of marriage, as well as affect their partner's experience of the marriage. Furthermore, the implications of gender differences (fundamental differences in the way females and males think and behave as influenced by environmental, social, and biological factors) within the dyad would presumably influence the quality of relationship.

Examining gender differences in the nebulous concept of marital satisfaction is vital to achieving a more complete understanding of factors that impact the quality of a marriage. This study aims to study nuances, including personality factors and gender differences, which have been neglected in the current literature on marital satisfaction. Analyzing gender differences among personality satisfaction, and relationship adjustment is the logical next step in deepening the current understanding of the marital dyad. To contribute to the demand the current literature presents for further understanding marital satisfaction, this study examines gender differences in personalities of married couples.

The current study will examine a clinical sample, that is, will be collecting data from couples' seeking marital therapy. Unfortunately, the current literature primarily consists of research with a non-clinical sample. Due to a lack of empirical data available with information specific to a clinical population, the majority of the following literature review cites research from a non-clinical sample, unless otherwise indicated.

Literature Review

Marital Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction

To grasp the concepts of marital satisfaction and marital dissatisfaction one must understand they exist on a continuum (verses a dichotomy). The continuum of marital satisfaction is dynamic, that is, within the same marriage, we anticipate variability and constant change. Another fundamental aspect of marital satisfaction the multilayered nature of the construct; that is, the appraisal of satisfaction and dissatisfaction must be considered from both members of the relationship's point of view. In order to produce an objective representation of the satisfaction within a marriage, two individual and distinctive sentiments on the matter must be equally and singularly considered, then integrated. Hypothetically, one partner's 100 % approval of the relationship does not abrogate the 80% discontent the other partner is experiencing. Thus, measuring marital satisfaction, qualitatively or quantitatively, requires much more than the averaging of both partner's evaluations.

John Gottman, an esteemed researcher and major contributor to the current understanding of the inter-dynamics of relationships, also recognized the need to deepen the understanding of marriages. Though numerous studies, Gottman identified and described theories of factors which led to marital satisfaction, or the opposite (1993, 1999, 2011, 2015). Gottman's work often centered on studying individual differences between couples to determine which factors impact marital satisfaction, and how these individual/gender differences contributed to the dissolution of a marriage. Perhaps the most salient of Gottman's findings was the

identification of four major predictors of marriage dissolution (i.e. criticism, contempt, defensiveness, and stonewalling). He noted that all four predictors were not likely to occur in isolation of each other, but instead, often manifested in a domino-like effect which was determined to be especially detrimental to a marriage. When considering men and women's unique contribution to relationship dissolution, Gottman found that a primary factor was the wives' use of criticism, defensiveness, and contempt, in relation to their own satisfaction in marriages. This finding illuminated the importance of considering gender differences in marital satisfaction as the same effect was not observed for males.

Gottman's findings have since been replicated in research as seen in Faulkner, Davey, and Davey's study (2005), which emphasized the wives' impact of marital satisfaction is of particular importance as compared to men. Their research found the wives' experience of a marriage often predicts husband marital satisfaction and conflict, and therefore, wives' functioning was found to greatly influence the marriage as a whole (Faulkner et al. 2005).

Both Gottman and Faulkner et. al's research findings accentuate the importance of Chipperfield and Haven's findings that within a sample of stable marriages, the men's overall satisfaction remained predominately unchanged whereas the women's overall satisfaction significantly declined (2001).Putting Gottman et. al, Faulkner et. al, and Chipperfield and Haven's findings together, if a wife is employing criticism, defensiveness, and contempt within their marriage, the wife is more likely to be unsatisfied, and since satisfaction for women tends to decrease as a natural function of marital duration, this compounding dynamic

deserves attention in considering factors correlated with marital outcomes with couple's seeking treatment.

It is important to note, the populations in the above studies were non-clinical, thus the generalizability to the sample of the current study is unknown. Assuming at least some parallels exist for the clinical population from Faulkner et. al's findings, decreasing the amount of criticism, defensiveness, and contempt wives' use in their communication approach would appear to be paramount to effective marital satisfaction interventions. Nevertheless, changing the husband's interactions to elicit less of the above responses would be of equal importance.

Gottman's research ultimately identified the importance of a couple's ability to navigate the conflicts that inevitably arise in marriage (1994). Gottman coined the term "negative affect reciprocity" to describe the phenomena of which a spouse will typically respond with negative affect to their partner's negativity; thereby, engendering a cyclic destructive communication pattern. His work found negative affect reciprocity to be the best and most consistent predictor of marital dissatisfaction for both husbands and wives (Gottman & Levenson, 1999).

Gottman's evidence for the grave impact conflict has marital satisfaction, lead the way for future researchers to continue to examine this multi-faceted concept. Dush and Taylor, two of the said future researchers analyzed 20 years of data from the Marital Instability Over the Life Course study. Their work concluded that the greater the couple's cooperation, as well as their shared belief in the institution of marriage, the less conflict would exist. Dush and Taylor

(2012) found a correlation in low marital conflict and the couple's belief in a lifelong marriage.

Indeed, conflict, and its impact on marital satisfaction, has been a prominent theme in past couple literature, including the respective effect of gender differences. Findings from longitudinal analysis of marital interactions of couples in high conflict (Gottman & Krokoff; 1989,1991) are particularly relevant for the present study as the inclusion of a clinical sample is rare. Gottman and Krokoff found that within high conflict marriages, females more often assume the role as the "manager" of marital disagreement and males are prone to become defensive and inhibited. Furthermore, their work concluded males who exhibit defensiveness, stubbornness, and withdrawal during conflict produce greater influence on marriage dysfunction than the influence of the wives. In unhappy marriages, wives were labeled as conflict-engaging whereas husbands were described as withdrawn.

It is important to emphasize the above descriptions of gender differences have proven to negatively correlate with marital satisfaction. Unfortunately, much of the available literature focuses on factors that influence marital dissolution vs. marital satisfaction. Nonetheless, the same study by Gottman and Krokoff did find a component of conflict approach for couples which predicted greater marital satisfaction for both genders, including the wife's ability to maintain a positive tone and be perceived by the husband as compliant (Gottman & Krokoff, 1989, 1991).

Gottman, Levenson and Carstensen (1993) became intrigued by the gap in couple's research on long-term marriages, including protective factors for marital outcome. Gottman and his research team wanted to know what factors (i.e. age, gender, level of satisfaction) may have contributed to the longevity of their marriages. 156 couples whom had been married 20 or more years, participated in this extensive study. Each individual completed nine self-report inventories that measured marital satisfaction, physical, psychological, and functional health, alcoholism/alcohol consumption, sources of conflict, and sources of pleasures. In addition, marital history was obtained, and the couple participated in three laboratory sessions, which followed a protocol for studying emotion, behavior, and physiology during marital interaction. The study concluded satisfied couples had higher physical and psychological health when compared to dissatisfied couples. Interestingly, their findings did not suggest satisfied or dissatisfied couples differed in amount of alcohol consumption, signs of alcoholism or functional health.

In all ten areas of the sources of conflict assessed, dissatisfied couples reported significantly greater disagreement than satisfied couples. Among the 16 sources of pleasure assessed, dissatisfied couples reported to derive less joy than satisfied couples on eight topics including: things to do around the house, good times in the past, views on issues, plans for the future, accomplishments, radio/reading, things done together recently, and vacations; no statistical difference was found for topics including other people, casual and informal things, political and current events, things happening in town, silly and fun things,

children or grandchildren, family pets, and dreams. In the same study, income, education, age at marriage, time knowing each other before marriage, and number of children, thus demographic variables, all failed to distinguish satisfied and dissatisfied couples.

Gottman and his team found significant gender differences among long-term heterosexual marriages in relation to health when they followed-up with participants from the above-mentioned study four years later (Gottman, Levenson and Carstensen, 1993). They observed that while all wives, regardless of level of conflict in the marriage, endorsed overall greater signs of distress in physical, functional, and psychological health, a significant correlation was only found in the physical and psychological health of dissatisfied wives and their marital satisfaction. Thus, only in dissatisfied marriages did wives report more physical and psychological health concerns as compared to their respective husbands. Gottman and his team noted that such finding is consistent with the evidence suggesting men disproportionately benefit from marriage in regard to their mental and physical health. Such outcomes also support a previous study of Gottman and Levenson (1992) which concluded wives were more autonomically aroused than men when trying to resolve a marital conflict in marriages. The negative affect of increased autonomical response was hypothesized to have manifested in physical ailments as these wives, as compared to those wives not at high risk for marital dissolution, reported greater health problems than their respective husbands.

Faulkner, Davey, and Davey also contributed to the current understanding of the influence of gender-differences on aspects of marital satisfaction. Their

work (2005) found that men and women find differing components of marriage appeasing/undesirable, further postulating the two genders have a unique experience of marriage, highly variable from their opposite sex spouse.

Gender roles, as defined by a set of expectations about the ways which men and women are anticipated to think and behave respective to their identified gender, have been found to influence marital satisfaction. Often, such expectations are often unspoken and assumed. An example of a traditional gender role would include the idea that women take care of the upkeep of the inside of the home, whereas men are responsible for outside chores. Women, more so than men, were found to be dissatisfied with their relationship with the dissimilarly in gender role attitudes was larger. Interestingly, men were happier when they assumed a more modern, egalitarian stance on gender roles themselves, however were most satisfied when their female counterpart held more traditional gender role values (Keizer & Komter, 2015). Another study by Faulkner et. al's (2005) found that in first-time marriages, husbands who reported acting consistent with a more traditional gender role within the household, as well as worked a large amount outside of the home, were less satisfied in their marriages. On the other hand, for wives, gender role attitudes were not found to be predictive of satisfaction. Still, among women, a wives' job loss was found to be associated with decreased marital conflict and increased marital satisfaction.

Family values can be considered on a spectrum of traditional to progressive, much like gender roles. Family values might include the belief that divorce is not allowed if the couple has young kids, which would be considered

more of traditional family value. Alternatively, the belief that two men or two women can act as the head of a household/family would be considered more progressive. Also, like gender roles, disparities or similarities in family values have been found to impact marital satisfaction. For men, such pattern seen in the gender roles were consistent in regard to family values, in that embodying more progressive values themselves was more predictive of happiness, however, they were also happiest when their female counterpart held more traditional family values (Keizer & Komter, 2015). Nevertheless, Keizer and Komter also found that dissimilarity between family values was negatively correlated with relationship satisfaction for both men and women.

Additional factors, such as stress management and other external stressors, influence marital satisfaction as well. Marital satisfaction decreased for husbands when either partner displayed higher levels of depression or poor conflict management skills, but such factors were not significantly correlated to marital satisfaction for women (Faulkner et al. 2005). Furthermore, husbands who tend to become behaviorally withdrawn following an increased amount of daily stress were found as a statistically significant commonality among women whom maintained lower marital satisfaction (Schulz, Cowan, Cowan, & Brennan, 2004).

Personality and Marital Satisfaction

Recalling that marital satisfaction is a fluid concept, why is it that some marriages are able to withstand discouraging times, some even eventually swaying back toward the more content side of the spectrum, while other

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marriages fall apart, and, ultimately, end? Many researchers believe the answer could be found in examining the construct of one's personality and considering the implications of a personality within the dyad. Personality traits and their respective impact on marriage satisfaction as described by the current literature will be reviewed. Similarity of personality traits between partners in relation to marital satisfaction will also be explored. Given the importance to carefully consider gender differences when analyzing personality and marriage satisfaction, variances between men and women will be highlighted throughout this section.

Five Factor Model

In psychological literature exists an abundance of theories of personality. This literature review will focus on the Five-Factor Model (FFM). Much of the research in marital satisfaction and personality organizes their conceptualization of personality using the FFM. Reasoning for selecting this framework of personality includes the obligation to remain consistent with past literature in order to provide a cohesive overview of research on personality as it relates to marital satisfaction and relationship adjustment. Additionally, the primary measurement for this study, the 16 Personality Factor questionnaire, follows the FFM. While personality is multidimensional and infinitely complex, the FFM conduces the nebulous concept into objective components which past research has validated as an adequate representation of personality components. The FFM proposes that there are five main components of personality: Openness to experience, Neuroticism, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness (McCrae & John, 1992).

Clinical Population

It is important to remain mindful that a clinical population is being examined in the current study. Thus, awareness of fundamental personality differences between clinical (those in couple's therapy) and non-clinical individuals (those not in couple's therapy) is imperative to be able to accurately interpret the results of this study. Craig and Olson (1995) found that those seeking couple's therapy were significantly more tense, anxious, worrisome, suspicious, bold, and shrewd than the normal persons using the 16 Personality Factor Questionnaire. While evidence for gender differences in personality traits among couples is found throughout the relevant literature, interestingly, Craig and Olson's (1995) study of patients in marital therapy did not reveal any gender differences in the 16PF profiles.

Non-Clinical Population

Wiedmann, Ledermann, and Grob (2016) observed that research has consistently shown a relationship between personality factors and marital satisfaction. However, past research has also consistently supported that individual dimensions of personality vary greatly regarding the extent to which they influence marital satisfaction.

Najarpourian et al. (2012) examined a non-clinical sample with regard to marital satisfaction and personality type, using the NEO (Neuroticism-Extraversion-Introversion) Personality Inventory. They found the combination of low neuroticism, high extroversion and high conscientiousness showed the highest level of marital satisfaction in men and women. Indeed, less neuroticism

is consistently seen as favorable to the stability and satisfaction of relationships throughout the literature, regardless of gender differences. High neuroticism, characterized such as negative emotion, general nervousness, and pervasive experiences of negative affectivity such as fear, guilt, and irritation, has the strongest relation, negatively, with marital satisfaction (Caughlin et al., 2000; Kelly & Conley, 1987). In a review of longitudinal research on the topic of personality and marital satisfaction, Karney and Bradbury (1995) found that each partner's neuroticism accounted for roughly ten percent of variability in marital satisfaction.

Extroverted individuals are characterized by liveliness, high activity levels, sociability, dominance, energy, and cheerfulness. Several studies have shown positive correlations between extroversion and marital satisfaction (Bentler & Newcomb, 1978; Gattis et al., 2004; Karney & Bradbury, 1995) while other studies have shown non-significant correlations between these variables (Najarpourian et al. (2012), Schmitt et al., 2007). Thus, research on extroversion and marital satisfaction has produced inconsistent results.

Nonetheless, gender differences within extraversion have been noted in the literature. In a longitudinal study, Bentler and Newcomb (1978) administered personality questionnaires to newly married couples and followed up four years later to determine their marital status and satisfaction. The results indicated that for males, the more satisfied and adjusted the marriage, the less extraverted, as well more vulnerable and deliberate, they were. Whereas for females, the more

satisfied and adjusted the marriage was, the more extraverted, as well as less vulnerable, they were.

Conscientiousness describes individuals whom regard themselves as competent and responsible, value preparedness, are self-directed, and have a need for achievement. Results from Najarpourian et. al's (2012) study, suggested conscientiousness as the second-best variable, next to neuroticism, for predicting increased marital satisfaction. Previous research, also, supports a correlation of high conscientiousness with a high level of marital satisfaction (Karney & Bradbury, 1995).

Gattis et. al. examined personality, using the five-factor model, and marital satisfaction among two sample groups: 1) distressed couples, and 2) normal couples. Ultimately, this study found that neuroticism, agreeableness, and conscientiousness were all related to marital satisfaction. Interestingly they found this correlation to be smaller in magnitude within the sample of treatment-seeking couples (distressed couples). In terms of the impact of personality similarity and marital satisfaction, the happy couples were found to have partners with similar levels of agreeableness to a statistically significant extent, whereas no statistically significant similarity or divergence was found among the personality profiles within the distressed group. Notably, this is a rare study that found a correlation of agreeableness with marital satisfaction when comparing personality of distressed and non-distressed couples (Gattis et al., 2004).

In the same study, comparison of individual personality trait scores and satisfaction of the collective sample revealed less satisfied individuals were likely

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to exhibit significantly more neuroticism, as well as, significantly less agreeableness and conscientiousness. However, in the distressed group alone, no associations between either spouse's personality and marital satisfaction scores were found. Their findings suggest that while some personality traits are more common in distressed vs. non-distressed couples, among distressed partners, showing more or less of these traits (i.e. agreeableness, neuroticism, and conscientiousness) is not associated with a variance in satisfaction. Thus, discrimination of the extent of one's marital dissatisfaction is not possible to derive from his or her personality scores alone. There was no association found in gender and personality in this study, however, further gender differences were not explored (Gattis et al., 2004).

Similarity verses Complementarity

Assuming the position that personality does influence one's marital satisfaction and overall relationship adjustment, the consideration of *how* the partner's personality traits interact is necessary. This calls to question if the similarity of personality traits between partners is favorable in terms of marital satisfaction and adjustment, or, alternatively, could differences in personality traits be protective, as they exist as complementary? In 1967, Cattell and Nesselroade examined if the "likeness" (similarity of personality traits) or the "completeness" (complementary differences in personality traits) theory of personality traits in married partners was better predictive of marital outcome. Analyzation of data obtained from the administration of the16PF to 37 "stably" married couples and 102 "unstably married" revealed that, generally, "stably"

married couples were more likely to have similar personality profiles; thus,

suggesting support for the "likeness" theory. Specifically, a statistically

significant positive correlation was found between "stably married" partners on

the following scales of the 16PF: B) Warmth, C) Emotional Stability, F)

Liveliness, G) Rule-Consciousness, H) Social Boldness, M) Abstractedness, Q1)

Openness to Change, and Q3) Perfectionism. Alternatively, in the "unstable

marriages", only two personality factors were found to have a positive significant

correlation, with three having a negative significant correlation. No statistically

significant negative correlations were found in the "stably married" sample.

(Cattell & Nesselroade, 1967). The "unstably married" dyads would be better

representative of the current study's population.

     Bentler and Newcomb's (1978) longitudinal study of personality traits and

marital satisfaction and adjustment further supports the "likeness" theory, as

personality similarity was significantly greater between couples who remained

happily married after four years, than those marriages which terminated within

that time. Furthermore, no negative correlation was found among the happily

married sample, which discredits the premise of the "complementarity" theory. In

their extensive literature review, Karney and Bradbury (1995) also concluded to

that marital satisfaction was reliability associated with personality similarity.

     On the other hand, Singh, Asha Nigam, and Saxena found opposing

results. Their research suggested the similarity of personality traits is more

responsible for marital disharmony than dissimilarity of traits. They found that, on

average, happy couples differ on 6 out of 16 personality factors and unhappy

marriages differ on only 3 factors. Specifically, they hypothesized, difficulties reside in the neurotic personality and not in marital situations. That being said, they concluded spouses having complementary traits are likely to lead happier married lives as they have "Complementary needs" (Singh et al., 1976). Another study examined at personality and marital satisfaction in a clinical sample and found that partner similarity of personality traits did not predict relationship satisfaction. Further, they concluded that nonpathological variations in personality dimensions do not contribute to relationship satisfaction and that personality similarity is not associated with marital happiness (Gattis et al., 2004).

Findings from Ashby, Kutchins, and Rice's (2008) study on how "perfectionism" plays out in relationship satisfaction and functioning suggests that both similarity, as well as, complementary approach to analyzing personality traits of partners can be beneficial. Their study found that among 197 engaged couples, when both partners were maladaptive perfectionist, the relationship was more likely to be less functional, which does not support the "likeness" theory; however, couples were neither partner was found to be non-perfectionistic were significantly more likely to be in the functional grouping; which supports the "likeness" theory. Nevertheless, their results were also supportive of the "complementarity" theory as maladaptive perfectionism in one partner decreased the likelihood of higher quality relationships, except in the case of match with a non-perfectionist. In the later matching, the non-perfectionist and maladaptive perfectionist pairing had a similar chance of being in the functional grouping as a

partnership with two non-perfectionistic individuals. Thus, in this case, it is protective to have divergence in a personality trait.

While, Raymond Cattell, the father of the 16PF, appears to primarily support the "likeness" approach to analyzing couple's personality traits, his research finding: "those high on scale L (Vigilance) need a partner low on scale L" (Cattell,1967), also lends credence to the "complementarily" theory. Thus, competing research findings leaves the question of whether similar personalities within the dyad of a marriage is favorable, or not, inconclusive. Ultimately, it appears the debate of "likeness" or "complementary" is much more nuanced previous studies accounted for and requires attention in future research.

Relationship Adjustment

Relationship adjustment is a dynamic process in which individuals try their ability to adapt to their own behaviors, needs, and desires to meet those of their partners. Burgess, Cotrell, and Kilpatrick (1940) suggest relationship adjustment refers to ability of a couple to integrate (vs. merge or submerge) their distinct personalities to interact complementary to each other. Furthermore, their book "Predicting Success of Failure in Marriage" suggested "mutual satisfaction and the achievement of common objectives" as markers of relationship adjustment. While the literature offers a variety of definitions of "Relationship Adjustment", most operationalization's appear to assume the following two underlying suppositions in measuring Relationship Adjustment: 1) both partner's

subjective views are accounted for and 2) given the dynamic nature of the concept, the measurement is only relevant at that given point in the relationship.

Many clinical measurements of relationship adjustment exist today, including the Marriage Adjustment Scale (MAS) (Locke & Wallace, 1959) as well as the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) (Spainer, 1976). Research with the DAS found a variety of factors (i.e. personality, background context, demographics) contribute to individuals' abilities to adjust to relationships in a healthy process of development. While Spainer's research acknowledges the effects of other variables, many studies consistently suggest personality as the largest contributor to relationship adjustment. An exception to this would be the findings of Schmitt, Kliegel and Shapiro (2007) researched predicting marital satisfaction in long-term marriages in middle and older age couples. They examined how marital satisfaction was influenced by stable and dispositional factors, as well as marital interaction. Their findings emphasized the importance of having a high quality of dyadic interaction (particularly for women) and minimized the role which personality have in respect to marriage satisfaction.

Schmitt et al. (2007), as cited above, discredited the impact demographic factors (i.e. socio-economic factors) have on marital satisfaction, as did Bentler and Newcomb's study in 1978. Bentler and Newcomb's most salient finding was the conclusion that personality, as opposed to demographic variables, was significantly more accurate in predicting variation in marital outcome. Solomon and Jackson (2014), substantiated Bentler and Newcomb's findings, as their research concluded personality traits shape the overall quality of one's

relationship, which in turn influences the likelihood of the relationship

dissolution. Conclusively, the currently literature suggest personality and

relationship adjustment exist as an infinitely bi-directional dynamic in that the

outcome of both is influenced by the other.

A correlation between personality and marital stability was clearly

evidenced in Kelly and Conley's (1987) longitudinal study in which they

followed couples from their engagements from the 1930's through the 1980's.

Marital stability (measured by getting divorce or remaining married)

and marital satisfaction (within the group that remains married) were investigated.

They found the neuroticism of the husband, the neuroticism of the wife, and the

impulse control of the husband were the 3 aspects of personality most strongly

related to marital outcome. Attitudinal, social-environment, and sexual history

variables accounted for the remaining variance.

When studying how gender differences manifest in the relationship of

personality and relationship adjustment, it is important consider if one gender has

a larger impact than the other. Many studies have shown that that female's

personality and satisfaction has a significantly larger influence than the respective

male's personality and or satisfaction, in regard to the outcome of the marriage

(success or dissolution) (Bentler and Newcomb, 1978; Gottman, 1993).

Demographics and Marital Satisfaction

While conclusions from past research largely suggest that examining

varying demographics of couples would not be as informative as analyzing

similarities in their personality, regarding the prediction of relationship

adjustment and marital satisfaction, other studies have countered this notion. Just

as it is imperative to consider the unique aspects both men and women bring to

the marriage dyad, it is also important to consider how certain demographics

impact marriage satisfaction in order to understand the rich nuances of a

relationship.

Age

In a longitudinal study, being older, in both males and females, was found

to be predictive of marital adjustment (Bentler and Newcomb, 1978).

Additionally, another longitudinal study found that those who marry younger are

at a significant greater risk for marital dissolution (Clements, Stanley, &

Markman, 2004). The research team hypothesized that such increased risk for this

age cohort is likely attributed to the impulsivity, immaturity, and variable

personality traits which are associated with younger age ranges.

Gottman (1993) concluded gender differences found within reported

sources of conflict, as well as, sources of pleasure, were less pronounced for older

couples (ages: 60-70) as opposed to middle aged couples (ages: 40-50).

Additionally, his study concluded older couples reported lower levels of marital

disagreement. Gottman attributed such phenomena to the result of the processes

suggested by Socioemotional Selectivity Theory: adaptive aging includes the

active narrowing of one's social environment, selectively optimizing positive

experience with compensation in a narrow band of activity, ultimately increasing

achievement of emotional closeness in significant relationships. Additionally, an

increase in overall relationship satisfaction is seen in older couples, and such increase is linked with an increase in communication and a higher level of intimate psychological experiences (Gottman, Levenson, Carstensen, 1993).

Children

Across the literature regarding the impact of children on the quality of marital relationships, there is consistent agreement that introducing children to a marriage decreases marital satisfaction. The number of children a couple is parenting at a given time plays a role as well. In 2008, a study by Lucas et al., concluded marital satisfaction was negatively impacted by a higher number of children. Through a meta-analytic review, Twenge, Campbell, and Foster (2003), noted a negative correlation between marital satisfaction and the number of children within a family. An important gender difference was identified in their work, as they found mothers with infants were particularly likely to show a greater decline in marital satisfaction. Also consistent throughout the literature is the impact the age of child has on marital satisfaction, as noted by Johnsen's (2012) review of various studies. For example, the presence of a newborn is particularly taxing on the relationship and results in a larger decline in marital satisfaction as compared to early and mid-childhood for obvious reasons.

Nonetheless, literature does not suggest that childless parents avoid the impact the concept of having children has on their marital satisfaction. In fact, Heaton and Albrecht (1991), noted that childless couples run similarly higher risk of marital dissolution. Nevertheless, in comparison of parents with non-parents, marital satisfaction is higher among the latter group (Twenge, Campbell, and

Foster, 2003). Notably, having children from a previous marriage is a protective factor for relationship adjustment and satisfaction for females, but not for males who have previous children (Bentler and Newcomb, 1978).

Length of relationship

Supporting the idea that marital satisfaction is a fluid concept, the length of a relationship has been consistently correlated with the length of a relationship in research on Relationship Adjustment. Marital satisfaction tends to follow a uniform U-shaped pattern throughout its course, if marriages can make it past the downward slump which typically occurs following the birth of children. Levenson, Cartensen, & Gottman (1993) found that marital satisfaction typically reaches its lowest when the couple is parenting adolescents. Further, they found it to increase again as the children leave home, and to increase more as they reach retirement age. Such pattern is supported by Jose and Alfons's (2007) research which determined marital satisfaction tends to peak within the first 5 years of marriage, and again in the 30th year of marriage.

Education

Influences of education on marital satisfaction are inconsistent across the literature. On one hand, some studies, such as Blum and Mehrahian (1999), concluded that high marital satisfaction was correlated with a high level of education. Sharlin, Kaslow, and Hammerschmidt's (2000) findings that college education was related to marital satisfaction, support this notion as well. However, more recent studies (Peterson & Bush, 2013), suggest that women with higher levels of education also have higher rates of unstable marriages. Thus, the

research is largely inconclusive and will require further exploration in future studies. Recent research has emphasized importance of examining gender differences within this demographic variable.

Race and ethnicity

Differences in marital satisfaction among Caucasians and African Americans has been consistently noted in the literature, with African American marriages more likely to report dissatisfaction (Clarkwest, 2007; Bulanda & Brown, 2007). Specifically, African American couples reported lower marital quality, more extramarital affairs, more partner violence, and less likelihood of feeling loved by their partners in comparison to Caucasian couples. African Americans were also found to have higher rates of marital disruption when compared to Mexican Americans, as well as Caucasians (Bulanda and Brown, 2007). In the same study, Mexican Americans were found to have similar levels of marital quality as Caucasians.

Gender differences were noted in the comparison of African-American and Caucasian couples (Corra et. al., 2009). Whereas Caucasian's were identified to have an overall greater level of marital satisfaction, Caucasian husbands were found to report the highest levels of marital satisfaction, whereas African-American females reported the lowest levels of marital satisfaction. Nevertheless, the study noted that African-American females have experienced a significant increase in their marital satisfaction between the years of 1973 and 2006. It is unknown if such trend has sustained since and would be an important point for future research as such progression would have clinical implications.

Income

In a study conducted by Keizer and Komter (2015), both women and men were more satisfied in their lives (not relationship satisfaction) when the male earned more money than his female counterpart. Furthermore, as the disparity in partner's earnings increased, life satisfaction of both men and women did as well. The idea that a females' income is inversely related to marital satisfaction was also found in Karney and Bradbury's extensive literature review of marital satisfaction (1995). Current literature cautions that it would be unwise to infer much from the above findings as the underlying cause for this is unknown. Johnson (2012), for example, suggested such findings could simply be reflective of females whom have achieved financial independence are more likely to end an already dissatisfying marriage as opposed to these findings being a function of female's increased financial earnings negatively impacting their relationship satisfaction.

The 16 Personality Factor Questionnaire- Fifth Edition

The 16 Personality Factor Questionnaire (16PF) is published by the Institute for Personality and Ability Testing, Inc. (IPAT), and is the result of many decades of research in Dr. Raymond Cattell's attempt to create a detailed and systematic assessment representative of normal personality. The 16PF is a unique psychological assessment as it is non-pathological in nature and it is not used to make diagnostic impressions, but more, to provide more detailed insight of one's personality. Thus, the 16PF is able used in settings which psychopathology is not

of primary concern. The original 16PF was developed in 1949 by Dr. Cattell. He and his colleagues created this assessment during a time which the Big Five Factor model of Personality was a cornerstone of personality theory. While Dr. Cattell aligned with such ideology, he proposed that personality traits had a "multi-level, hierarchal structure" (Cattell, 1946). That is to say, he believed the main themes of one's personality should be examined at a deeper level in order to more fully understand one's internal make-up. Such belief provides the foundation for the 16PF as seen in the sixteen discrete personality characteristics which the test assesses, as well as the five global factors of personality also assessed. The five global factors are derived from the primary sixteen personality factors. The sixteen primary factors include Warmth (A), Reasoning (B), Emotional Stability (C), Dominance (E), Liveliness (F), Rule-Consciousness (G), Social Boldness (H), Sensitivity (I), Vigilance (L), Abstractedness (M), Privateness (N) Apprehension (O), Openness to Change (Q1), Self-Reliance (Q2), Perfectionism (Q3), and Tension (Q4). The five global factors include Extraversion (EX), Anxiety (AX), Toughmindedness (TM), Independence (IN), and Self-Control (SC). Descriptions of each of the primary personality traits, as well as the global factors, can be found on Table 1.

Each of the sixteen primary factors, as well as the five global factors, are scaled on a ten-point measure (1-10), and such scale is dichotomous in nature. Thus, within each primary or global factor, two dimensions of personality exist and where on the ten-point scale an individual falls indicates the extent to which he or she aligns with either of the dimensions. For example, Scale N (Privateness)

embodies the two poles of the construct (i.e. forthright, genuine, artless, or alternatively, private, discrete, non-disclosing). A score of 1-3 would indicate the individual is more likely to be forthright, genuine, or artless, whereas a score of 8-10 would indicate the later description. For all of the primary and global factors, a score of 5 would indicate a lack of proclivity towards either of the extremes of such trait, and scores within the range of 4-7 are considered within normal limits.

The assessment includes 185 items to which the participant responds "True, Unsure, or False", respectively, with the exception of items assessing Factor B (Reasoning). For these items, there is a single correct answer. Within the 185 questions are items which load onto three Response Style Indices: Impression Management (responding in a socially desirable manner), Infrequency (random responding), and Acquiescence (all-true or all-false response sets). These three indices assess the reliability and validity of an individual's responses, thus the likelihood the profile is an accurate representative of their personality. Additionally, the 16PF includes demographic questions, such as level of education, ethnicity, household income and current employment status.

The 16 Personality Factor Couple's Counseling Report

The 16 Personality Factor Couple's Counseling Report (16PF-CCR) is one of the many expansions of the 16PF. The 16PF-CCR consists of the most current version of the 16PF, in addition to questions addressing relationship history and degree of satisfaction. The 16PF-CCR uses both partners' individual scores to produce a computer-generated interpretation of the dynamics and impact of the pairs' personality factors, based on a wealth of literature concerning personality

variables and expected interaction effects. Unique to the 16PF-CCR is a Similarity score which calculates the similar personality factors of the couple based on their individual responses. The Similarity score falls within the range of low similarity (represented by the number 1) to high similarity (10).

The computer-generated report also analyzes areas of satisfaction within the relationship. Results have great clinical utility as the data obtained serves to help to efficiently illuminate areas of the relationship which are contributing to the couple's overall dissatisfaction. The Relationship Satisfaction Rating section of the 16PF-CCR questionnaire contains eleven independent areas of satisfaction, including their overall rating of satisfaction and their prediction of their partner's overall satisfaction rating. All areas of satisfaction are rated on a nine-point scale ranging from totally unsatisfied (1) to totally satisfied (9). Areas of satisfaction addressed include the themes of Alcohol and Drug Use, Division of Roles, Time Together, Children Sex, Extended Family, Caring and Affection, Finances, and Communication. The questionnaire also prompts each respondent to select one of the eleven areas which, if addressed, would most improve their respective overall relationship satisfaction. These results allow the couple and the clinician to clarify areas of the relationship which should be prioritized in order to preserve and restore the quality relationship. Furthermore, the results, potentially, highlight areas which the couple is experiencing success. The nuances, including approach and execution, of areas which both partners rated high satisfaction which could be examined to discover features of the area which contribute to their high satisfaction. The clinician may suggest that effective approach(s) as seen in areas

of higher satisfaction be implemented to improve the areas of their relationship lower in satisfaction.

The 16PF-CCR provides a Relationship Adjustment score for the couple as well. The Relationship Adjustment score is calculated from each partners' score on Scale C, Emotional Stability, and Q1, Openness to Change. The Relationship Adjustment Score ranges from a 1 (suggestive of low adjustment) to a 10 (suggestive of high adjustment). This score provides valuable information concerning the degree to which a couple is likely to be able to adapt to the collaborative element in the relationship. Factor C and Q1 have been noted in past research using the 16PF-CCR to best predict relationship adjustment (Russell & Karol, 1994). Emotional Stability (Factor C) is cited by the 16PF-CCR manual to be related to more adjustment indicators than the other 15 factors, whereas Openness to Change (Factor Q1) is more specifically related to relationship adjustment (Russell & Karol, 1994).

Dr. Richard T. Elmore, a tenured professor at Florida Institute of Technology, has chaired seven doctoral dissertations all of which examined personality similarity, relationship adjustment, and marital satisfaction among varying population samples, using the 16PF-CCR. Arnett's (2012) study found marital dissatisfaction increases as does Emotional Stability (Scale C) of either partner. Field's study (2013) also found such correlation with Scale C. Garofalo (2014), nor Arnett (2012), found a significant correlation in personality profile similarity between partners with marital satisfaction. Furthermore, Shah's (2009) findings did not note a significant correlation in personality similarity among gay

and lesbian couples. Most recently, personality similarity, marital satisfaction, and relationship adjustment was examined among combat veterans post deployment. Researcher's Alexander (2015), Mullholland (2015), and Moore (2015) looked at the above population in terms of gender differences, females, and males, respectively. Regarding gender differences in combat veterans post development, Alexander (2015) observed significant variability in the Reasoning scale (B), the Dominance scale (E), and the Social Boldness scale (H). Male combat veterans rated themselves as significantly higher on scale E and scale H. Female combat veterans scored higher on scale B, which suggests they are more abstract than male combat veterans. Furthermore, Alexander observed a significant gender difference on the Global Factor scale Independence (IN), as males rated themselves as higher on this personality factor than did females within a combat veteran population.

Statement of Purpose

This research offers a greater understanding of gender differences among personality factors which impact relationship adjustment, and ultimately, marital satisfaction. The current literature suggests that men and women have significantly disparate experiences in marriage; however, there is a shortage of data available to effectively outline such differences. The current lack of research on implications of gender differences within marital dyads is concerning. A better understanding of the nuances (i.e. gender and individual differences) in a couple's marital satisfaction is paramount to increasing the couple's ability to increase their satisfaction. Furthermore, research on this topic contributes to the therapist's ability to be effective in working with couples, as increased insight as to how individual differences interact within the relationship will allow for more targeted therapeutic interventions. Past research has been inconsistent in identifying personality factors which contribute to marital well-being, and furthermore, the studies tend to focus on factors which contribute to marital dissolution. The present study focuses on examining gender differences in personality factors and individual areas of satisfaction which influence the marital satisfaction of couples in therapy as assessed by the 16 Personality Factor Couple's Counseling Report.

Hypotheses

Based on the findings form the literature, the following hypotheses are proposed:

1. There will be a significant main effect of gender on the nine Individual Satisfaction items. This hypothesis was tested utilizing a one-way between groups multivariate analysis of variance.

2. There will be a significant main effect of gender on the sixteen Primary Personality Factors. This hypothesis was tested utilizing a one-way between groups multivariate analysis of variance.

3. There will be a significant main effect of gender on the five Global Personality Factors. This hypothesis was tested utilizing a one-way between groups multivariate analysis of variance.

4. There will be a significant difference between the Relationship Adjustment Score between men and women. This was tested utilizing an independent samples t-test.

5. There will be a significant difference in the Overall Satisfaction Score between men and women. This was tested utilizing an independent samples t-test.

6. There will be a significant main effect of gender on the validity scale scores. This hypothesis was tested utilizing a one-way between groups multivariate analysis of variance.

Method

Participants

All data was used for the current study was archival from the private clinical practice of Richard T. Elmore, Jr Ph.D. Participants for this research had entered marital therapy and completed the 16 PF CCR as an introductory requirement for treatment between May 2014, through January 2018. To control for variables related to gender and sexuality, only heterosexual couples were analyzed. Also, because the present analysis addresses issues of couples currently in relationship, those who classified their relationship status as "divorced" were not included in the sample. The final sample included 160 participants.

Instruments/Measures

The 16 Personality Factor Couples Counseling Report Questionnaire (16PF CCR), a non-clinical personality measure, was used for this research study. For all participants, the 16PF CCR was a required introductory component for marital therapy.

Design/Plan of Analysis

One-way between-groups multivariate analyses of variances were utilized to test for main effects of the independent variable, gender, on the mean scores of the various dependent variables including: the nine Individual Satisfaction items, the sixteen Primary Personality Factors, the five Global Personality Factors, and the validity scores. Gender differences (significant variance within men and women) on the Overall Satisfaction Score, and, in a separate analysis, Relationship Adjustment Score, were evaluated using independent samples t-test.

Procedure

  Participants were provided with access to the 16PF-CCR test online and given a unique login code, at their first marital therapy session. They were instructed to complete the 16PF-CCR independent from their spouses within the next week. IPAT (Institute for Personality and Ability Testing, Inc.) sent the score output and the narrative portion of the 16PF-CCR to Dr. Elmore electronically, immediately once both partners submitted their responses. At the following therapy session, the couple was provided with feedback regarding awareness of personality factors and how they may interfere with certain areas of marital functioning and satisfaction.

Results

  The descriptive frequencies and statistics of the sample are presented in Table 2 and 3. A total of 82 men and 82 women completed the 16PF CCR, however, after removing those who identified as divorced from the data set, 160 individual (80 couples) remained. A large majority of the sample of men identified as Caucasian or White (78%), with 11% identifying as Hispanic or Latino, 6.1% as African American or Black, 3.7% as Other, and 1.2% as Native American. A similar distribution of race/ethnicity was found in data collected by female participants. Most frequently, females in this study identified as Caucasian or White (84%). Following the same trend as males, the next largest race/ethnicity endorsed by females was Hispanic or Latino (8.6%), with African American or

Black following (3.7%), Other (2.5%) and Asian or Pacific Islander (1.2%) being the least represented.

Concerning the categorization of the couple's relationship, 62.2% of the males in this study endorsed being Married to the partner with whom they presented to counseling, with Cohabiting (20.7%) being the second most popular description of the relationship among males. Otherwise, 11% described their relationship as separated, with 4.9 % identifying as Engaged/Premarital, and 1.2% Divorcing/Divorced. Marginal differences were seen in the description of relationship by females in this study. 64.6% of females endorsed being Married, with 17.1% describing their current relationship as Co-habiting. Otherwise, 11% of females described their relationship as Separated, 4.9% as Premarital/Engaged, 1.2% as Divorced/Divorcing, and 1.2% as Other.

Regarding length of the current relationship 22% of men endorsed being in the relationship for 3-7 years, 20.7% endorsed being in the relationship for 15-25 years, 19.5% 0-2 years, 19.5% over 25 years, and 18.3% endorsed being in the relationship 8-14 years. For females, 22.2% endorsed being in the relationship for 3-7 years, 19.5% endorsed being in the relationship for 0-2 years, 15-25 years, and over 25 years, and 18.3% endorsed being in the relationship 8-14 years.

The majority of males reported their current relationship was their first or second committed relationship (36.6% and 35.4% respectively). 22% of males reported this was their third committed relationship, 4.9% reported it was their fourth, and 1.2% reported it was their fifth or more committed relationship. While the percentages were lower, the majority of females also reported this was their

first or second committed relationship (31.7% and 32.9% respectively). 25.6% of females reported this was their 3rd committed relationship, 4.9% reported it was their fourth, and 4.9% endorsed it being their fifth or more committed relationship.

When examining levels of education, 1.2% of females reported the completion of grade school, 15.9% high school or obtained a GED, and 26.8% an Associate's degree as the highest level of education at the time of completing the 16PF-CCR. 2.4% of males reported the completion of grade school, 22% high school or obtained a GED, and 24.4% an Associate's degree as their highest level of education. 24.4% of females indicated their highest level of education as a Bachelor's degree and 20.7% endorsed having a graduate degree, with 11% of females indicating they had completed graduate coursework without obtaining a graduate degree at the time of the study. 20.7% of males reported to have a Bachelor's degree and an equal percentage endorsed having a graduate degree, with 9.8% indicating they had completed graduate school coursework without obtaining a graduate degree.

Most women (47.6%) and men (56.1%) endorsed being employed full time at the time they were administered the 16PF-CCR. For males, the second most frequently endorsed response was being retired (26.8%) and for women, the second most frequently endorsed response was being a housewife (18.3%). Subsequently, for women, part-time employment (14.6%), retirement (13.4%), other (3.7%) unemployment (2.4%) followed. For men, part-time employment

(6.1%), unemployment (4.9%), other (3.7%), and househusband (2.4%)

accounting for the remainder of male participants.

In regard to reported income, the majority of men (56.1%) and women

(57.1%) indicated making $80,000 or more in a year. The second most common

income bracket endorsed by participants was $60,000-$79,999 for women

(18.3%) and men (20.7%). Other income amounts including $0-$9,999, $10,000-

$19,999, $20,000-$39,999, and $40,000-$59,999 were endorsed by 1.2%, 2.4%,

7.3%, and 11% of men, and 1.2%, ,2.4%, 8.5%, and 11% of women, respectively.

Hypothesis one

For the present study, it was hypothesized there would be a significant

main effect of gender on the nine Individual Satisfaction items. This hypothesis

was tested utilizing a one-way between groups multivariate analysis of variance.

Means and standard deviations for the satisfaction areas can be found in Table 4

and 5. The independent variable used was gender and the dependent variables

included the nine satisfaction items on the 16PF-CCR (time together, extended

family, children, problem solving communication, caring and affection, division

of roles, finances, sex, and alcohol or drug use). Preliminary assumption testing

was conducted with no serious violations noted. Unfortunately, there were no

significant results found between males and females and the combined dependent

variables $F(9,148) = .54$, $p = .84$; Wilks' Lambda = .97; partial eta squared= .03.

Hypothesis two

It was hypothesized there would be a significant main effect of gender on the sixteen Primary Personality Factors. This hypothesis was tested utilizing a one-way between groups multivariate analysis of variance. The independent variable was gender and the dependent variables were the 16 Primary Personality Factors of the 16PF-CCR (see Table 1 for a list of the 16 dependent variables). Preliminary assumption testing was conducted and other than a violation of equality of variance the personality factor of Dominance, no additional serious violations were noted. Given the robust nature of analysis of variance and the similarity in size of the two independent variable groups (equal number males and females) a violation of homogeneity of variance is not likely to invalidate statistically significant outcomes, therefore interpretation of all dependent variables is indicated (Pallant, 2010). Means and standard deviations for the Primary Personality factors can be found in Tables 6 and 7.

There was a statistically significant difference between males and females on the combined dependent variables, $F(16,147) = 4.82$, $p=.00$; Wilks' Lamda = .66, partial eta squared =.34. Results from the analysis can be found in Table 8.

When the results for the dependent variables were considered separately personality factor, Sensitivity (I), was statistically significant (F (1,162) = 30.61, $p= .00$, partial eta squared = .16). An inspection of the mean scores indicated females (M= 5.84, SD= 1.60) had a substantially higher score on the Sensitivity scale than men (M= 4.57, SD= 1.32), with a large effect size.

Warmth (A) was statistically significant (F (1,162) = 18.78, p= .00, partial eta squared = .10), as well. An inspection of the mean scores indicated females (M= 5.63, SD= 1.55) had a higher score on the Warmth scale than men (M= 4.56, SD= 1.61), with a medium effect size.

Gender differences were also statistically significant within scale C, Emotional Stability (F (1,162) = 5.70, p= .00, partial eta squared = .034). An inspection of the mean scores indicated males (M= 4.68, SD= 1.81) had a slightly higher score on the Emotional Stability scale than women (M= 4.07, SD= 1.44).

Rule-consciousness (G), was statistically significant (F (1,162) = 4.75, p= .03, partial eta squared = .028) as well. An inspection of the mean scores indicated females (M= 5.40, SD= 1.62) had a slightly higher score on the Rule-consciousness scale than men (M= 4.83, SD= 1.74).

Additionally, gender differences were also statistically significant within the Privateness (N) scale (F (1,162) = 20.70, p= .01, partial eta squared = .037). An inspection of the mean scores indicated males (M= 6.22, SD= 1.85) had a slightly higher score on the Privateness scale than women (M= 5.51, SD= 1.76).

Tension (Q4), was statistically significant (F (1,162) = 8.47, p= .004, partial eta squared = .050) as well. An inspection of the mean scores indicated males (M= 6.04, SD= 1.54) had a slightly higher score on the Tension scale than females (M= 5.35, SD= 1.46).

Hypothesis three

It was hypothesized that there would be a significant main effect of gender on the five Global Personality Factors. This hypothesis was tested utilizing a one-way between groups multivariate analysis of variance. Preliminary assumption testing noted Extraversion (EX), one of the five Global Personality Factors, violated the assumption of equality of variance. As in hypothesis two, the robust nature of analysis of variance and the similarity in size of the two independent variable groups (equal number males and females) suggests that a violation of homogeneity of variance is not likely to invalidate statistically significant outcomes from this analysis, therefore interpretation of all dependent variables was indicated (Pallant, 2010). Means and standard deviations of the Global Personality factors can be found in Tables 6 and 7.

There was a statistically significant difference between males and females on the combined dependent variables, $F(5,157) = 6.67$, $p= .00$; Wilks' Lambda= .83; partial eta squared = .18. When the results for the dependent variables were considered separately Toughmindedness ™ reached statistical significance $F(1,161) = 9.13$, $p= .00$, partial eta squared= .54. An inspection of the mean scores indicated males (M= 6.33, SD= 1.57) had a slightly higher score on the Toughmindedness scale than females (M= 5.55, SD= 1.74). Extraversion (EX) reached statistical significance as well, $F(1,161) = 4.52$, $p= .04$, partial eta squared= .027, however is interpreted with some caution given the violation of assumption of equality of variance within this scale. An inspection of the mean scores indicated females (M= 5.29, SD= 1.69) had a slightly higher score on the

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Extraversion scale than men (M= 4.67, SD= 2.06). Results from this analysis can be found in Table 8.

Hypothesis four

It was hypothesized that there would be a significant difference between the Relationship Adjustment scores between men and women. This will be tested utilizing an independent samples t-test. Means and standard deviations for Relationship Adjustment scores can be found in Tables 9 and 10. Assumption tests suggested that there were no outliers in the Relationship Adjustment score for men and women, and Relationship Adjustment score was normally distributed for men and women. Levene's test suggested that variances in Relationship Adjustment scores for men and women were statistically equivalent, $F(160) = 1.49$, $p = .23$. Results from 160 participants (80 male, 80 female) showed that men ($M = 4.46$, $SD = 1.92$) and women ($M = 4.16$, $SD = 1.59$) did not have a significant difference in relationship adjustment scores, $t(160) = 1.07$, $p > .05$; thus, this hypothesis was not supported.

Hypothesis five

Based on the literature, it was hypothesized that there would be a significant difference between the Overall Satisfaction scores between men and women. This was tested utilizing an independent samples t-test. Assumption tests suggested that there were no outliers in the Overall Satisfaction score for men and women, and the Overall Satisfaction score was normally distributed for men and women. Levene's test suggested variances in the Overall Satisfaction scores for

men and women were statistically equivalent, $F(162) = 0.001$, $p = .98$. Results

from 160 participants (80 male, 80 female) showed that men ($M = 5.21$, $SD =$

2.25) and women ($M = 4.61$, $SD = 2.23$) did not have a significant difference in

Overall Satisfaction scores, $t(162) = 1.71$, $p > .05$; thus, this hypothesis was not

supported. Means and standard deviations for Overall Satisfactions scores can be

found in Tables 9 and 10.

Hypothesis six

It was hypothesized there would be a significant main effect of gender on

the validity score scores between men and women. This hypothesis was tested

utilizing a one-way between groups multivariate analysis of variance. Three

dependent variables were used: Impression Management Scale, Infrequency

Scale, and Acquiesce scale. The independent variable was gender. Preliminary

assumption testing was conducted, and a violation of covariance was noted. Given

the large sample size (N) included within this study (large sample size as N > 30)

this violation does not suggest the results are uninterpretable as some inequality of

variance in expected within a larger sample size (Pallant, 2010). Means and

standard deviations in validity scale scores can be found in Tables 11 and 12.

There were statistically significant differences found between genders of

the combined dependent variables, $F(3,160) = 4.52$, $p = .01$; Wilks Lambda = .92 ;

partial eta squared =.08. When results for the dependent variables were

considered separately, the only difference to reach statistical significance, using a

Bonferroni adjusted alpha level of -.006, was Impression Management, $F(1,162) =$

13.52, $p = .00$. An inspection of the mean scores indicated that females (M=12.56, SD= 4.93) had higher scores on the Impression Management scale as compared to males (M= 9.94, SD=4.16). Results from this analysis can be found in Table 13.

Discussion

The present study investigated the gender differences in variables, including relationship adjustment and personality similarity, related to overall marital satisfaction. This purpose of this study was to illuminate the importance of considering gender differences when studying marital satisfaction, as often the impact of gender differences has been overlooked in past research. Moreover, this study served to add to the limited body of research on marital satisfaction within a clinical population. Many of the statistically significant findings from this study are useful in enhancing clinical practice and expanding areas for future research. The following includes a review and discussion of the results, limitations of the present study, and directions for continued exploration within the area of research.

Regarding individual satisfaction ratings, no gender differences to a statistically significant effect were found. This is not commensurate with a majority of the research using a non-clinical population (Faulkner et al. 2005; Chipperfield & Havens, 2001), which suggested that men typically report higher marital satisfaction when compared to their female counterparts. Thus, while the hypothesis of gender differences existing within the areas of satisfaction was not supported, significant clinical inferences may have emerged from this data set regarding gender differences within a clinical population versus a non-clinical.

The lack of gender differences within marital satisfaction in this study may refute the traditionally held, and research-supported, assumption that women are generally less satisfied within marriages. Less satisfaction in female counterparts could be a phenomenon occurring only in stable marriages. If accurate, such an inference could have broader implications, perhaps suggesting couples are more likely to seek counseling when the male is dissatisfied in addition to the female, whereas the female's lone dissatisfaction is not enough of a catalyst for the couple to seek treatment. This is an important topic for future research to investigate.

Significant gender differences were revealed among the Primary Personality Factors and Global Personality Factors. Factor I, Sensitivity, and Factor A, Warmth, explained the largest percentage of gender differences within the Primary Personality Factors. Females within this clinical sample endorsed items suggesting they were more sensitive, sentimental, and aesthetic, as well as more warm, outgoing, and attentive to others as compared to their male counterparts. Both Sensitivity (I) and Warmth (A) load onto the Global Personality Factor of Tough-Mindedness. Correspondingly, Tough-Mindedness was the primary Global Personality Factor which explained a significant amount of the variance between genders. Regarding the five Global Factors, Extraversion also explained some of the variation between male and female scores to a lesser effect size. Additionally, Warmth (A) is one of the Primary Personality Factors which loads onto the Extraversion Global Personality Scale. These findings are inconsistent with Bentler and Newcomb's (1978) conclusion that in well-adjusted marriages, females are more extraverted than males.

Other Primary Personality Factors, besides Sensitivity and Warmth, which explained a significant amount of the variance in scores of men and women include the following in the order of effect size: Tension (Q4), Privateness (N), Emotional Stability (C), and Rule-consciousness (G). Within this clinical sample, men were more tense, impatient, and high-energy (Q4), more likely to be private, non-disclosing, and discrete (N), and more emotionally stable and mature, as well as less reactive (C), on average, than their female counterparts. Alternatively, women endorsed items suggesting they were more rule-conscious and dutiful, as described by Factor G, than men.

Considering the many gender differences found between personality traits in this clinical population sample, one may feel inclined to inaccurately make the assumption such findings support the "likeness" theory regarding personality similarity's impact on marital satisfaction; however, such postulation would be circular and unfounded. While the nature of a clinical sample implies some degree of dissatisfaction and/or conflict within the marriage, the lack of similarity found within these couples' personality profiles, as measured by gender, does not by default, account for this dissatisfaction. Furthermore, the findings do not support nor refute the "complementary" theory regarding personality similarity and marital satisfaction. Past research has delineated to make an assertion of either the "likeness" or "complementary" theory being more predictive of marital outcome would require analysis of the interaction effect of all components (factors) of one's personality. Such analyses were unnecessary for the current study; however, in order to gain more understanding and insight into the "likeness" versus

"complementary" debate, future scientists should consider studying the nuances of personality trait interactions within the marital dyad.

As seen in the literature, researchers are divided on whether they believe high personality similarity within a couple is a protective or risk factor, or has no effect within the relationship, and still this remains unclear. The results from this analysis (i.e. significant variation among gender when examining individual personality factors) suggest that gender differences emerge as a potential defining factor, along with similarity or complementary effects, in considering how personality impacts marital satisfaction.

In the present study, no significant difference between Relationship Adjustment Score of men and women was found. Moreover, gender differences were not observed in Overall Marital Satisfaction Scores, either. While this is inconsistent with the research, the lack of statistical significance may be attributed the broad scope of factors encompassed by both the Relationship Adjustment and Marital Satisfaction Score. It appears the more specific analysis preformed, the more likely it is to observe significance in gender differences. Thus, in order to understand a construct as nebulous as the impact one's personality has within a relationship, the research question must be equally as nuanced.

In examining gender differences on the validity scales, a significant dissimilarity in response style was observed. Results suggested that within this clinical sample size, females responded in a manner endorsing social desirability more so than men did. This suggests females were more motivated to choose answers that parallel positive or acceptable behaviors. The theme of females

scoring statistically higher on the Impression Management scale supports findings

from Garofalo's study in 2014 when studying gender differences on the validity

scales of the 16PF-CCR. Such statistical observations may be a phenomenon of

an overarching variation in motivation of behaviors between genders (i.e. females

tend to value social acceptance more than males based on an evolutionary

perspective of social inclusion having more adaptive utility for females);

however, the difference in response style between genders could be suggestive of

an effect more germane to couples counseling regarding gender differences in

willingness to be open and forthcoming in the therapeutic relationship.

Furthermore, the validity of this study's findings hinges upon the capacity for the

16PF to accurately measure one's personality. This study's observation of gender

differences in scale sensitivity, and possible gender bias, is a pivotal point for

future research. Discrepancies within the validity scales regarding gender

responses should be addressed. If this effect continues to be replicated in future

studies, the publisher may consider norming the validity scales based on gender.

Limitations

While findings from this study offer important points of consideration for

clinicians working with couples, there are several limitations of the study which

must be acknowledged. Clinical practitioners and scientists should interpret the

findings in context with the following limitations. The use of data from only

heterosexual dyads is both a primary limitation, was well as a defining feature and

strength of this analysis. As this study focuses on the role of gender differences in

personality, relationship adjustment, and marital satisfaction, future studies may

focus on dynamic differences, within homosexual relationships, which impact these respective factors, as defined by a variable other than gender.

Furthermore, the data collected from this study was from couples seeking counseling in a private practice setting. It is assumed that some degree of intervention was needed in the relationships studied, thus, the personality structures of individuals within a stable relationship, as well as the degree of marital satisfaction, both in specific domains and overall satisfaction, and relationship adjustment within stable relationships, may be considerably different from the data represented in the present study. Therefore, it is cautioned to assume findings from this study are generalizable to a non-clinical population. Relatedly, regarding demographic constraints, the majority of participants in this study identified as Caucasian and making more than $80,000 yearly which lends caution to generalizing these findings to populations with varying demographic variables. Future studies should consider analyzing gender differences within personality and marital satisfaction in populations with lower socio-economic standing and minority couples.

Table 1
Personality Factor Scale Descriptions

Primary Factors	Low scores (1-3)	High scores (8-10)
A: Warmth	Reserved, Impersonal, Distant	Warm, Outgoing, Attentive to Others
B: Reasoning	Concrete	Abstract
C: Emotional Stability	Reactive, Emotionally Changeable	Emotionally Stable, Adaptive, Mature
E: Dominance	Deferential, Cooperative, Passive	Dominant, Forceful, Assertive
F: Liveliness	Serious, Restrained, Careful	Lively, Animated, Spontaneous
G: Rule-Consciousness	Expedient, Nonconforming	Rule-conscious, Dutiful
H: Social Boldness	Shy, Threat Sensitive, Timid	Thick-skinned, Venturesome
I: Sensitivity	Utilitarian, Objective, Unsentimental	Sensitive, Aesthetic, Sentimental
L: Vigilance	Trusting, Unsuspecting, Accepting	Vigilant, Suspicious, Skeptical, Wary
M: Abstractedness	Grounded, Practical, Solution-focused	Abstracted, Idea-oriented, Imaginative
N: Privateness	Forthright, Genuine, Artless	Private, Discrete, Non-disclosing
O: Apprehension	Self-assured, Unworried, Complacent	Apprehensive, Self-doubting, Worried
Q1: Openness to Change	Traditional, Attached to Familiar	Open to Change, Experimental
Q2: Self-Reliance	Group-oriented, Affiliative	Self-reliant, Solitary, Individualistic
Q3: Perfectionism	Tolerates Disorder, Unexacting, Flexible	Perfectionistic, Organized, Controlled
Q4: Tension	Relaxed, Placid, Patient	Tense, High-energy, Impatient

Global Factors	Low scores (1-3)	High scores (8-10)
EX: Extraversion	Introverted	Extroverted
AX: Anxiety	Low Anxiety	High Anxiety
TM: Tough-Mindedness	Receptive, Open-minded	Resolute, Tough-minded
IN: Independence	Accommodating, Agreeable	Independent, Persuasive
SC: Self-Control	Unrestrained	Self-controlled

Note: Adapted from the *16PF Couples Counseling Report Administrator's Manual* (p.18) by M.T. Russell and D.L. Karol, 1994, Champaign, IL: Institute for Personality and Ability Testing, Inc. Copyright by IPAT, Inc.

Table 2

Demographics for Men

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Race		
African American	5	6.1
Asian or Pacific Islander	64	7.8
Caucasian/White	9	11.0
Hispanic or Latino	1	1.2
Other	3	3.7
Marital Status		
Cohabiting	17	20.7
Engaged	4	4.9
Married	51	62.2
Separated	9	11.0
Other	1	1.2
Relationship Length		
0-2 years	16	19.5
3-7 years	18	22.0
8-14 years	15	18.3
15-25 years	17	20.7
25 + years	16	19.8
Number of Previous Relationships		
First	30	36.6
Second	29	35.4
Third	18	22.0
Fourth	4	4.9
Fifth or more	1	1.2
Education		
Grade School	2	2.4
High School/ GED degree	18	22.0
Associate's or Technical degree	20	24.4
Bachelor's degree	17	20.7
Graduate coursework w/o degree	8	9.8
Graduate degree	17	20.7
Occupation		
Full Time	46	56.1
Part Time	5	6.1
Househusband	2	2.4
Unemployed	4	4.9
Retired	22	26.8
Other	3	3.7
Income		
$0-$9,999	1	1.2
$10,000-$19,999	2	2.4
$20,000-$39,999	6	7.3
$40,000-$59,999	9	11.0
$60,000-$79,999	17	20.7
$80,000	46	56.1

Table 3
Demographics for Women

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Race		
African American	3	3.7
Asian or Pacific Islander	1	1.2
Caucasian/White	68	82.9
Hispanic or Latino	7	8.5
Other	2	2.4
Marital Status		
Cohabiting	14	17.1
Engaged	4	4.9
Married	53	64.9
Separated	1	1.2
Other	1	1.2
Relationship Length		
0-2 years	16	19.5
3-7 years	18	22.0
8-14 years	15	18.3
15-25 years	16	19.5
25 + years	16	19.5
Number of Previous Relationships		
First	26	31.7
Second	27	32.9
Third	21	25.0
Fourth	4	4.9
Fifth or more	4	4.9
Education		
Grade School	1	1.2
High School/ GED degree	13	15.9
Associate's or Technical degree	22	26.8
Bachelor's degree	20	24.4
Graduate coursework w/o degree	9	11.0
Graduate degree	17	20.7
Occupation		
Full Time	39	47.6
Part Time	12	14.6
Housewife	15	18.3
Unemployed	2	2.40
Retired	11	13.4
Other	3	3.70
Income		
$0-$9,999	1	1.2
$10,000-$19,999	2	2.4
$20,000-$39,999	7	8.5
$40,000-$59,999	9	11.0
$60,000-$79,999	15	18.3
$80,000 +	47	57.3

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics for Satisfaction Ratings for Men

Satisfaction area	Mean	SD
Time Together	5.30	2.39
Communication	3.90	2.31
Caring and Affection	4.90	2.45
Divisions of Roles	5.76	2.19
Finances	5.35	2.54
Sex	4.75	2.84
Extended Family	5.20	1.99
Children	5.88	2.29
Alcohol and Drug Use	6.68	2.34
Overall Marital Satisfaction	5.21	2.25

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics for Satisfaction Ratings for Women

Satisfaction area	Mean	SD
Time Together	4.95	2.49
Communication	3.56	2.29
Caring and Affection	4.38	2.55
Divisions of Roles	5.09	2.48
Finances	4.81	2.66
Sex	4.61	2.78
Extended Family	5.43	2.29
Children	5.86	2.37
Alcohol and Drug Use	6.53	2.61
Overall Marital Satisfaction	4.62	2.26

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics for Personality Traits for Men

Personality Trait	Mean	SD
GLOBAL		
Extraversion (EX)	4.67	2.06
Anxiety (AX)	6.50	1.87
Tough-mindedness (TM)	6.33	1.57
Independence (IN)	5.43	1.78
Self-Control (SC)	5.33	1.60
PRIMARY		
Warmth (A)	4.56	1.61
Reasoning (B)	5.11	1.67
Emotional Stability (C)	4.68	1.81
Dominance (E)	5.29	2.11
Liveliness (F)	5.01	1.82
Rule-Consciousness (G)	4.83	1.74
Social Boldness (H)	5.50	2.11
Sensitivity (I)	4.57	1.32
Vigilance (L)	5.99	1.98
Abstractedness (M)	5.52	1.58
Privateness (N)	6.22	1.85
Apprehension (O)	5.72	1.68
Openness to Change (Q1)	5.28	1.72
Self-reliance (Q2)	6.32	2.11
Perfectionism (Q3)	5.41	1.78
Tension (Q4)	6.04	1.54

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics for Personality Traits for Women

Personality Trait	Mean	SD
GLOBAL		
Extraversion (EX)	5.29	1.69
Anxiety (AX)	6.22	1.83
Tough-mindedness (TM)	5.55	1.74
Independence (IN)	5.21	1.66
Self-Control (SC)	5.63	1.43
PRIMARY		
Warmth (A)	5.63	1.55
Reasoning (B)	5.21	1.83
Emotional Stability (C)	4.07	1.44
Dominance (E)	4.98	1.76
Liveliness (F)	5.27	1.60
Rule-Consciousness (G)	5.40	1.62
Social Boldness (H)	5.65	1.93
Sensitivity (I)	5.84	1.60
Vigilance (L)	5.50	1.91
Abstractedness (M)	5.32	1.78
Privateness (N)	5.51	1.76
Apprehension (O)	6.01	1.75
Openness to Change (Q1)	5.26	1.83
Self-reliance (Q2)	6.13	1.77
Perfectionism (Q3)	5.76	1.82
Tension (Q4)	5.35	1.46

Table 8

MANOVA Statistics for Gender Differences in Personality Traits

Personality Factor	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Global				
EX	15.969	4.519	.035*	.027
AX	.240	.070	.791	.000
TM	25.082	9.130	.003**	.054
IN	2.059	.697	.405	.004
SC	3.687	1.609	.207	.010
Primary				
A	47.220	18.878	.000**	.104
B	.390	.127	.722	.001
C	15.244	5.699	.018*	.034
E	4.122	1.093	.297	.007
F	2.689	.921	.339	.006
G	13.470	4.751	.031*	.028
H	.878	.214	.644	.001
I	65.951	30.613	.000**	.159
L	7.470	1.967	.163	.012
M	1.762	.620	.432	.004
N	20.512	6.311	.013*	.037
O	3.512	1.196	.276	.007
Q1	.024	.008	.930	.000
Q2	1.372	.362	.548	.002
Q3	4.780	1.475	.226	.009
Q4	19.122	8.472	.004**	.050

Note. * Denotes statistical significance at .05

** Denotes statistical significance at .00

Table 9
Descriptive Statistics for Continuous Variables for Men

Variable	Mean	SD
Overall Marital Satisfaction	5.21	2.25
Personality Similarity	6.83	2.14
Relationship Adjustment	4.46	1.92

Table 10
Descriptive Statistics for Continuous Variables for Women

Variable	Mean	SD
Overall Marital Satisfaction	4.62	2.26
Personality Similarity	6.76	2.17
Relationship Adjustment	4.16	1.59

Table 11
Descriptive Statistics for Validation scales for Men

Validity Scale	Mean	SD
Impression Management	9.94	4.16
Infrequency	1.55	5.14
Acquiescence	55.62	10.31

Table 12
Descriptive Statistics for Validation scales for Women

Validity Scale	Mean	SD
Impression Management	12.56	4.93
Infrequency	1.20	2.08
Acquiescence	55.62	8.58

Table 13
MANOVA Statistics for Gender Differences in Validity Scales

Validity Scale	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Impression Management	281.860	13.522	.000*	.077
Infrequency	5.128	.333	.565	.002
Acquiescence	8.805	.098	.755	.001

Note. * Denotes statistical significance at .00

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