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## Role of Relationship Quotient and Conscientiousness on Marital well-being

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### Abstract

Relationships play a primary role in people's lives and their well-being and they are shaped by both partners' personality and by dyadic effects. Because relationship characteristics are less stable, enduring personality traits are thought to have a greater chance to influence change in relationship characteristics than relationships have to influence personality change. People bring their personality to relationships. Personality contributes to the "psychological infrastructure" of enduring relationships and are key predictors of relationship success and/or dysfunction. The central focus of the study is to explore the role of Relationship Quotient and Conscientiousness on Marital well-being as marriage is considered as intimate and enduring relationship. The study was conducted among 467 married people which were randomly drawn from various districts of Kerala. The tool included Relationship Quotient Inventory (Sreelatha & Jayan, 2010), Big-Five Inventory (John, Donahue, & Kentle, 1991) and Marital well-being Inventory (Fashiya & Jayan, 2018) for the purpose of collecting data. Two-way ANOVA was done for analysing data. It was found that the interaction effect of Relationship Quotient and Conscientiousness could produce a change on Marital well-being.

**Key words** :- Conscientiousness, Relationships, Relationship Quotient, Marital well-being, Personality.

Relationships play a primary role in people's lives and their well-being (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Gere & MacDonald, 2010). People are aware of the importance of relationships in life. Research also shows that most people feel that their personal happiness is based chiefly on the quality of their close relationships rather than the satisfaction of work, financial gain, or religious faith. People who perceive their relationship partners as responsive feel close, satisfied, and committed to those relationships (Reis, Clark, & Holmes, 2004). There is nothing people consider more meaningful and essential to their mental and physical well-being than their close relationships with other people (Berscheid & Reis, 1998). More satisfying intimate relationships are associated with well-being (Ross, 1995). High quality close relationships contribute to mental and physical well being (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). As we develop our relationship intelligence, we can change our relationship habits. Relationship quotient (RQ) comprises measure of an ability, capacity, or skill to perceive, assess, and manage one's relationships (Jayan & Sreelatha, 2010).

Relationships can be defined as dyadic interaction patterns between at least two people that continue over time. These interaction patterns are unique and at least intermediately stable over time, they represent consistent differences between relationships. Thus, personality reflects relatively stable differences between people

(i.e., individual differences) whereas relationships refer to persistent differences in the connection between two persons (i.e., dyadic differences). Relationships are shaped by both partners' personalities and by dyadic effects (Neyer & Voigt, 2004).

Two features of personality are the individual particularities of a person compared with other individuals, and the temporal consistency of this particularity. Individual differences in the traits reflect the dispositional signature of personality. People bring their personality to relationships. This statement reflects that social relationships are shaped by the personality of relationship partners and their interactional history. Relationships differ as a function of enduring characteristics of actors and their partners.

The intrapersonal perspective views personality dispositions as a major influence on marital functioning, whereas the interpersonal perspective views interactions between spouses as a major influence on marital functioning. An individual's level of relationship satisfaction is primarily a function of his or her own trait characteristics (e.g., as assessed by the Big- Five), rather than the characteristics of the partner, or a combination of the both (Neyer & Voigt, 2004; Watson, Hubbard, & Weise, 2000). Studies have consistently found that personality traits have been linked to relationship outcomes over time. The personality traits that spouses bring into their relationships can sometimes place those relationships at greater risk for discord and divorce (Neyer & Wrzus, 2009). Contextual and personality factors might affect someone's conflict resolution style preference (Sternberg & Soriano, 1984). Negative marital interactions are partially rooted in the individual personalities of wives and husbands.

A more recent and more widely accepted trait model is the *Big- Five Personality Factor Model* which is based on the early work on traits by Allport and Odbert (1936). It proposes that personality can be factored into five domains such as neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness, and each individual falls between the two extremes of each dimension. Five factor model of personality has been widely used in understanding intimate relationships. The Big-five personality traits contribute even to favourable perceptions of touch from a relational partner (Dorros, Hanzal, & Segrin, 2008).

Fashiya and Jayan have established (2015) the role of Relationship Quotient on Marital well-being. Marital well-being can be defined as a dynamic state of perceiving reasonable amount of gratification in couple relationship which is characterised by *Communication, Intimacy, Concern for relation, Commitment, Personal characteristics, and Romanticism* which will be facilitated by cognitive, behavioural, and affective domains.

### **Significance of the study**

Researchers have focused on how the individual personalities that husbands and wives bring to relationships affect marital outcomes. Personality creates the stable

intrapersonal context of marriage and that its effect is constant over time (Karney & Bradbury, 1995). They argued that personality forms part of the intrapersonal environment of marital relationships. Huston and Houts (1998) suggest that personality contributes to the “psychological infrastructure” of enduring relationships and are key predictors of relationship success and/or dysfunction. Some people believe that relationships are easy to get into but difficult to get out of, whereas other individuals hold that people must work to maintain their relationships or they will fall apart. Knowing ourselves is important to start a relationship. It is about understanding certain personal traits, which determine the success or failure of a relationship. The present study was an attempt to find out the role of Relationship quotient and Conscientiousness on Marital well-being.

### **Objective of the study**

1. To explore the role of Relationship quotient and Conscientiousness on Marital well-being.

### **Hypothesis of the study**

1. There will be significant interaction between Relationship quotient and Conscientiousness on Marital well-being.

## **METHOD**

### **Sample**

Sample for the study included 467 married people from various districts of Kerala who were randomly drawn. Their age ranged from 20 years to 60 years. Their longevity of marriage included six months to 35 years.

### **Measures used**

Relationship quotient inventory (Jayan & Sreelatha, 2010), Big- Five Personality Inventory (John, Donahue, & Kentle, 1991) and Marital well-being Inventory (Fashiya & Jayan, 2018) were the tools used for collecting data.

### **Administration and Scoring**

After establishing a good rapport with the participants, they were advised to follow the instructions in the tools. 25, 44 and 70 items were included for Relationship quotient inventory, Big- Five Personality Inventory and Marital well-being Inventory respectively, all of which were in a five-point Likert scale format. All the items of Relationship quotient inventory and Marital well-being Inventory were positive in nature whereas for Big- Five Personality Inventory, reverse scoring was done for item numbers 2, 6, 8, 9, 12, 18, 21, 23, 24, 27, 31, 34, 35, 37, 41, 42, and 43. Separate scores were calculated for the sub variables Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism.

### Reliability and Validity

The Cronbach’s alpha of the Relationship Quotient inventory was found to be .96. The face validity of the Relationship Quotient inventory was found out.

The alpha reliabilities of Big -Five scale typically range from .75 to .91 with an average of .80. Three months test-retest reliabilities range from .80 to .90 with a mean of .85 (John, Hampson, & Goldberg,1991). The inventory has substantial convergent and divergent relations with other Big- Five inventories as well as with peer ratings (John, Hampson, & Goldberg, 1991). Convergent validity was established with Goldberg’s TDA and Costa and McCrae’s NEO Personality inventory (1992). The mean of convergent validity correlation was found to be 0.75 across all five factors. The BFI and TDA showed the strongest convergence ( $r = .81$  followed by the BFI and NEO-FFI ( $r = .73$ ). The BFI is found to have sufficient external or predictive validity as the BFI has been shown to predict peer ratings.

The reliability of the Marital well-being inventory was established and the Cronbach’s alpha was found to be .979. The inventory has content validity, face validity and predictive validity.

For each responses, a score ranging from five to one were given for both Relationship Quotient and Marital well-being Inventory whereas Big - Five inventory was scored on the responses ranging from 1 to 5 for positive items.

### Statistical analysis used

Two-way ANOVA was done for statistical purposes.

### Results and Discussion

Two-way ANOVA was carried out to find out the interaction effect of Relationship Quotient and Conscientiousness on marital well-being and its dimensions.

**Table 1: Results of two-way ANOVA of Relationship Quotient (RQ) and Conscientiousness on Marital well-being (MW) and its dimensions**

Variables	Main effects interaction		
	RQ (A)	Conscientiousness(B)	A-B
	F-value	F-value	F-value
Communication	41.10**	2.28	4.63**
Intimacy	40.36**	0.12	1.69
Concern for relations	44.98**	0.56	4.12**
Commitment	36.96**	0.66	0.84
Personal characteristics	20.75**	2.05	1.06
Romanticism	16.82**	0.25	2.55*
Overall MW	49.38**	0.54	3.05*

\*\* Significant at 0.01 level; \*Significant at 0.05 level

Significant F-values were found for the main effects of Relationship Quotient on marital well-being. F-value could not be found to be significant for Conscientiousness on marital well-being. F-values of two-way interaction of RQ and Conscientiousness on Material well-being were also found to be significant on some dimensions such as Communication (F=4.63; p < .01), Concern for relation (F=4.12; p < .01) and Romanticism (F=2.55; p < .05). The interaction effect of RQ and Conscientiousness on Marital well-being were also found to be significant (F = 3.05; p < .05).

For the main effect, variables were classified into two. They are:-

**(a) Relationship Quotient on marital well-being**

The results of mean and standard deviation of RQ on MW and its dimensions are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: Mean and S.D of Relationship Quotient (RQ) on Marital Well-being (MW) and its dimensions**

RQ Level		MW and its dimensions						
		Communication	Intimacy	Concern for Relations	Commitment	Personal characteristics	Romanticism	Overall MW
Low (n=105)	Mean	47.84	48.95	72.09	30.93	20.01	15.35	235.17
	SD	12.52	12.51	21.82	9.69	6.06	4.77	60.59
Medium (n=69)	Mean	55.59	60.36	91.39	38.23	23.01	19.46	288.06
	SD	7.32	6.81	11.25	5.13	4.77	3.80	30.84
High (n=293)	Mean	62.19	64.86	99.85	42.28	26.06	20.85	316.09
	SD	6.21	5.25	9.73	3.74	3.96	4.21	26.65

The entire sample was divided into three groups based on the RQ scores (low group-scores below 83, medium group - 83 to 125 and high group-above 125). Their mean and standard deviations were computed with respect to the dimensions of marital well-being. While analysing the result it was found that the group with high levels of Relationship Quotient (N = 293) showed significantly higher mean value (M = 316.09) on overall Marital Well-being and its dimensions such as Communication (62.19), Intimacy (64.86), Concern for relation (99.85), Commitment (42.28),

Personal characteristics (26.06) and Romanticism (20.85) than other groups. It indicates that people with high level of RQ showed a significant difference on Communication ( $F = 117.11, P < 0.01$ ), Intimacy ( $F = 158.17, P < 0.01$ ), Concern for relations ( $F = 154.98, P < 0.01$ ), Commitment ( $F = 137.82, P < 0.01$ ), Personal characteristics ( $F = 64.18, P < 0.01$ ), Romanticism ( $F = 61.35, P < 0.01$ ) and overall Marital well-being ( $F = 171.85, P < 0.01$ ). From the result it is clear that a high level of Relationship Quotient could have an impact on Communication, Intimacy, Concern for relations, Commitment, Personal characteristics, Romanticism and overall Marital well-being.

The relationship between communication and relationship satisfaction have been emphasized by many researches (Bradbury & Karney, 1993; Caughlin & Huston, 2002; Christensen & Shenk, 1991). Women’s self-perceived relationship satisfaction was more determined by the openness of men (Neyer & Voigt, 2004). A high correlation was found between one’s sexual relationship and overall relationship satisfaction (Henderson-King & Veroff, 1994; Sprecher & Cate, 2004; Young, Denny, Luquis, & Young, 1998).

**(b) Conscientiousness on Marital well-being and its dimensions**

Conscientiousness was divided into three levels such as low level (scores below 28), medium level (scores between 28 & 40), and high level (scores above 40) on Marital well-being and its dimensions.

**Table 3: Mean and S.D of Conscientiousness on Marital Well-being (MW) and its dimensions**

Conscientiousness		MW and its dimensions						
		Communication	Intimacy	Concern for Relations	Commitment	Personal characteristics	Romanticism	Overall MW
Low (n=86)	Mean	54.50	56.20	86.00	35.90	21.92	17.99	272.50
	SD	9.75	10.75	16.83	8.08	5.35	4.85	48.71
Medium (n=301)	Mean	58.03	60.82	92.24	39.40	24.45	19.53	294.47
	SD	10.31	10.12	18.41	7.44	5.24	4.74	51.18
High (n=80)	Mean	61.59	64.61	99.64	41.61	26.01	20.45	313.91
	SD	8.36	6.71	12.32	5.13	4.32	4.83	36.21

Table 3 shows the mean and Standard deviation of Conscientiousness on Marital well-being and its dimensions. The results were as follows: People with high Conscientiousness showed advanced Marital well-being (M = 313.91; S D =36.21) than people with low or medium level of Conscientiousness. F-value was not found to be significant for Conscientiousness which indicates that Conscientiousness could not have an impact on overall Marital well-being. Hence there was no significant difference among the three groups of Conscientiousness on Marital well-being.

**Two-way Interaction**

F-values (Table 1) of two-way analysis show significant difference between RQ and Conscientiousness on some of the dimensions such as Communication, Concern for relations and Romanticism. Hence to find out the mean difference, the interaction effect of these two variables on Marital well-being were divided into three groups; low, medium and high. The mean and standard deviation for each group under combination are listed on Table 4.

**Table 4: Mean and S.D. of RQ and Conscientiousness on Marital well-being and its dimensions**

Variables	MW and its dimensions (n = 467)																					
	Communication			Intimacy			Concern for relations			Commitment			Personal characteristics			Romanticism			Overall MW			
RQ	Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High	
Conscientiousness	n=	42	15	29	42	15	29	42	15	29	42	15	29	42	15	29	42	15	29	42	15	29
Low n = 86	Mean	50.81	55.87	59.14	50.31	58.20	63.69	77.60	90.07	96.07	31.52	37.53	41.38	20.12	20.93	25.03	16.40	17.53	20.52	246.76	280.13	305.83
	SD	10.80	5.46	7.69	11.24	5.52	6.19	17.23	10.47	12.25	8.67	5.82	3.11	5.44	5.41	3.68	4.37	3.83	5.04	50.19	27.58	30.98
Medium n=301	n=	61	49	191	61	49	191	61	49	191	61	49	191	61	49	191	61	49	191	61	49	191
	Mean	46.21	55.86	62.36	48.23	60.55	64.91	68.90	91.24	99.95	30.61	38.73	42.38	20.02	23.69	26.05	14.74	19.84	20.99	228.70	289.92	316.63
	SD	13.18	7.51	5.82	13.26	7.12	5.06	23.69	11.68	9.41	10.47	4.35	3.78	6.49	4.38	4.03	4.96	3.76	3.83	65.58	31.58	25.25
High n=80	n=	2	5	73	2	5	73	2	5	73	2	5	73	2	5	73	2	5	73	2	5	73
	Mean	35.00	52.20	62.96	42.50	65.00	65.19	53.50	96.80	101.10	28.50	35.40	42.40	17.50	22.60	26.48	12.00	21.60	20.60	189.00	293.60	318.73
	SD	15.56	10.66	6.28	19.09	5.34	5.36	33.23	9.31	9.20	9.19	9.29	3.85	7.78	5.68	3.85	4.24	1.52	4.81	89.10	34.92	27.84

While analysing the mean and standard deviation for each group under combination, mean difference was found to be high for the group with high RQ and high Conscientiousness (M=318.73; S.D = 27.84) than the other groups. The least mean difference was found for the group with low RQ and low Conscientiousness.

Furler, Gomez, and Grob (2014) analysed that perceiving one's partner and being perceived by one's partner as highly conscientious is beneficial for couple's well-being. The sample of the present study also might have perceived the same. It has also been reported that the disposition to forgive may be strongly related to Conscientiousness (McCullough, Root, Tabak, & Witvliet, 2009). In the couple relationship when the partner was perceived as communicative and open, that might have lead to forgiveness from the other partner in the present study. It can be supported by the work of Neyer and Voigt (2004) in which women's self-perceived relationship satisfaction has been reported as determined by the openness of men.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

The objective of the study was to explore the role of Relationship quotient and Conscientiousness on Marital well-being. Relationship Quotient alone did produce an impact on Marital well-being whereas Conscientiousness alone did not. But while both Relationship Quotient and Conscientiousness came under combination, they could produce a noticeable change on Marital well-being. That is, as RQ and Conscientiousness increased, MW also increased.

New understanding and new adjustments continue to be necessary at each stage of life, and each stage will have its own special requirements, pressures and reward. A high relationship quotient helps to develop a feeling of "we" in between the couples. The confusion or unawareness of people regarding the characteristics that are important in a mate can be eradicated by the present study.

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