



## Examining the personality traits and attachment styles in students with traditional marriage

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**Abstract:** *The objective of this study was to examine the personality traits and attachment styles in students with a traditional marriage. Design of this research is causal-comparative and it includes all Tehran University students with traditional marriages studying in the academic year 2016-2017. Among them, 50 students were selected using cluster sampling method, which 25 of them were female and 25 of them were male. Taking into consideration the factors of gender and education, subjects were matched. The total number of sample was 50 people. NEO's personality traits questionnaire has the content validity and alpha value of 0.60. In the investigation of attachment styles, Collins and Reid questionnaire with the factor analysis validity and alpha of 0.616 was used. SPSS software was used to analyze the data. Information was examined in two descriptive and inferential statistics parts. In descriptive statistics, mean, frequency, and percentage were used. In addition, inferential statistical methods of ANOVA and multi-variable analysis of variance (MANOVA) were used. There results showed that there was difference between personality traits and attachment styles in students with traditional marriage. In investigating personality traits components, only the component of extroversion became significant. In addition, there was no difference in components of attachment styles.*

**Keywords:** *traditional marriage, personality traits, attachment styles, students*

### INTRODUCTION

A healthy marriage depends on its success. Success in attachment of marriage depends on many factors such as the preparation for marriage, education, background and family of the person, crises experienced, the quality type of the power governing on the previous family, age, health, personality, income, and traits such as commitment, sensitivity, generosity, consideration, sincerity, loyalty, responsibility, trust and reliability (Beck, Gharachedaghi, 1999). Personality means a set of thinking behaviors and its practices in everyday life characterized with features such as stability and predictability (Allport, 1937). Personality can have great impact on our performance and compatibility (Mohammadi, Magsudi, 2011). In previous research, the relationship between five dimensions of personality and mental health has been studied. It has been found that neuroticism and extraversion are highly associated with psychological problems such as anxiety and depression, for example, neuroticism is positively associated with depression and anxiety, which this could be a risk factor for the onset or exacerbation of marital conflicts. Five main factors involved in development of personality include: noisy extraversion, compromising compatibility, conscientiousness, emotionally stable, and experienter. Investigation of personality traits is one of the important factors that can cause a lot of problems including social disorders and problems (Alport, 1937). The personality in the sense of organized and unified set consists of relatively constant and stable traits that make a person to be distinct from the other person, which it can be a base for measurement of the person (Shamloo, 2003). The American Psychiatric Association defines the personality as a special way of thinking, feeling, personal behavior and rooted behavioral plan that each person shows consciously and unconsciously as life style or method in accordance with his environment. In simple terms, personality is overall sum of external and internal plans and patterns as well as adapting with life (Rad, 1984). Allport

(1961) who is founder of modern studies according to many people defines personality as dynamic organization of psychosomatic systems of the person that determine his specific thoughts and behaviors. In this definition, an important factor in that is organization of the constituent elements of personality has been referred. However, the behavioral and thought aspects of human have been distinguished, while it is inconsistent with the concept of behavior in terms of psychology (Sheldon, 1962). He defines the personality as dynamic and vibrant organization of perceptual and reactive aspects and physical freedom (the body and the vital functions of the body) of human (Fadaei Dolat, 2010). Without doubt, personality is one of the major and key issues in psychology and it is the ultimate goal of all investigations related to human. Personality can be described as identified emotional traits and personal behaviors of everyday life that is relatively stable and predictable. Whenever one of the traits emerges, the person shows particular personality, and this is physical, mental and behavioral traits distinguish an individual from other people (Garusi, 2001). Personality is perhaps the most fundamental issue in psychology, because the major issues of personality are in the area of learning, motivation, perception, thinking, feelings and emotions. The concept of personality is formal and social image and it is drawn based on the role that the person plays in the community. In fact, the person gives a personality to his community that community evaluates him based on it (Gardner 1997 and Hill 1998; quoted in Jamalifar, 2009). Attachment is a special emotional relationship that involves an exchange of pleasure, care and welfare services. In general, attachment can be defined as emotional atmosphere governing on the relationship between child and his caregiver. The major result of the interaction between the child and the mother is creation of an emotional attachment to the mother, so that it makes feeling joyfulness (Burke, 2009). Bowlby described it as lasting psychological link between two humans (Bowlby, 1969). Johnson and Vifen defined attachment as a behavior control system that aims to maintain a secure and predictable environment, so that physical balance to be possible. In attachment theory, people communicate with others with three different communication ways. Secure people have often comfortable, reliability, and trust to others, and they show intimacy, warmth and loving to others. Anxious people are in search of intimacy. They always concerned with disconnection with others and predict it. Avoidant people consider intimacy equal with loss of independence and they are always trying to create intimacy with others. According to statistics, he places at least 5% of people in the first group, and places 25% and 35% of people in anxious and avoidant people, respectively and between 3 and 5% of people are anxious-avoidant. It means that they have traits of both groups. When one of the spouses is avoidant and the other one is anxious, the worst condition occurs, since one of them is looking for intimacy while the other one is looking for avoidance. The attempt of this couple to close each other mainly leads to failure (Zarei et al., 2014). The results of the studies indicate the association between secure attachment and positive communicative traits including intimacy and pleasure, avoidant attachment and sustainable levels of intimacy and commitment, ambivalent attachment and excitement and concern about relations on relations with low pleasure (Finney and Noler 1990). In a study conducted by Teimuri (2008), the results showed that here is a significant negative correlation between ambivalent anxiety style and marital conflict both in women and in men. This means that people with ambivalent anxious attachment style is associated with more marital conflict. In this study, it was also shown that there is high correlation between avoidant attachment style and marital conflicts and significant correlation was found between secure attachment styles and marital conflicts. This means that people with secure attachment styles have fewer conflicts in their marriage. Mazaheri (2000) investigated the role of adult attachment in the marriage act and showed a high correlation between attachment style, family structure, and marital adjustment. Hazan and Shaver (1987) stated that adult attachment styles are significantly associated with factors of attitude, personality and excitement in adults. Zarei et al (2014) conducted a study to predict five-factor personality traits of students based on adult attachment styles. The statistical sample of study included 240 students in Hormozgan University selected by convenience sampling from among all students and they responded to attachment style questionnaire (RSQ) and five-factor personality traits (NEO) questionnaire. Regression analysis showed that secure attachment style can predict the trait of neuroticism negatively and predict the traits of extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness directly. Preoccupied attachment style also played role in predicting agreeableness reversely. Additionally, conscientiousness was predictable directly by fearful attachment style and reversely by denying attachment style. Besharat (2013) conducted a study to determine the mediating role of cognitive emotion regulation strategies in the relationship between attachment styles and alexithymia. In the mentioned study, 256 Iranian men and women (115 men, 141 women) volunteered to participate in this study. Participants were asked to complete adults' attachment style inventory of Besharat, Toronto alexithymia scale, and cognitive emotion regulation questionnaire of Karaych and Karnofsky. The results of the regression analysis of this study indicated that both adaptive and maladaptive cognitive emotion regulation strategies have the mediating role in the relationship

between attachment styles and alexithymia. Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded the meditating impact of cognitive regulation strategies of emotion is negligible in the relationship between attachment styles and alexithymia. Hu, Chang and Chang (2010) revealed that optimism is associated directly with welfare and attachment is indirectly affected through social support and optimism. According to these findings, we can conclude that optimism has a direct relationship with attachment styles and insecure attachment styles lead to depression and pessimism in people. Joyce and Meredith (2007) conducted a study entitled personality and emotional performance: extroversion, neuroticism and self-control. The results showed that personality plays an important role in emotional function.

**Methodology**

This study is descriptive study based on data collection method and as it aims to identify the possible causes in a given event or phenomenon, it is considered as causal – comparative type of study. The population consisted of 50 students from the University of Tehran (25 females and 25 males) who are studying in academic year of 2016-2017 and had a traditional marriage. Random cluster sampling method was used in this study. In the first stage, cluster sampling method was used to select subjects from the University of Medical Sciences, PNU, Humanities and Faculty of Languages in North Tehran Branch. Then, five classes were selected from each university and a total of 150 people were selected that 25 women and 25 men were selected after matching. A questionnaire was used to collect data. NEO Personality traits Inventory (PIR) had content validity and alpha value of 0.60. In the studies on attachment styles, questionnaire of Collins and Reid (RAAS) with alpha factor analysis validity and alpha value of 0.616 was used. In this study, our tool is NEO Personality Inventory (PIR), and as personality has a great impact on people's tendencies in the relations, this test was used to measure five personality traits (neuroticism, extraversion, flexibility, agreeableness and conscientiousness) and six traits in each factor (Haghshenas, 1999). These two aspects of the test that is five major factors and thirty subsidiary traits make it possible to have a comprehensive assessment of adult personality. Attachment Styles Questionnaire has three subscales which include anxiety style (A), which is corresponded with ambivalent attachment style. Closeness style (C), which is corresponded with secure attachment style, and attachment style (D) that is almost the reverse of avoidant attachment style. SPSS software was used to analyze the data. To respond to research questions and to analyze the data, descriptive statistics of mean, frequency, and percentage and inferential statistical methods of ANOVA and multi-variable analysis of variance (MANOVA) were used.

**Findings**

The description of data based on the age of students with traditional marriage is as follows:

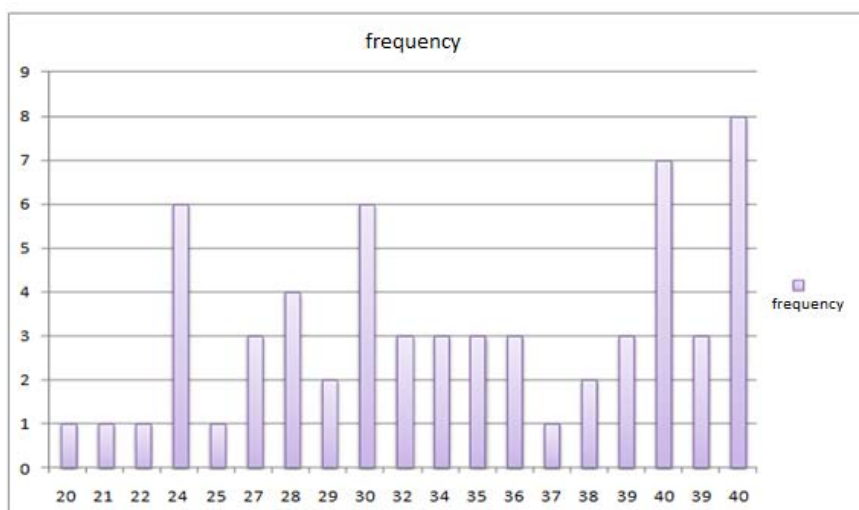


Figure 1: frequency distribution of subjects by age in students with traditional marriage

The results in Chart 1 on the frequency distribution of students with traditional marriage by age show that among 50 respondents to the questionnaire, the highest frequency related to people at the age of 40 years with 14% (n = 7) and the lowest frequency related to people at the age of 20, 21, 22, 25, 37 years, each with 2 percent (1 in every age).

Describing the data in terms of education in students with traditional marriage is as follows:

Table 1: frequency distribution of subjects in terms of education in students with traditional marriage

education	f	frequency percentage	Accumulative frequency percentage
High school	8	16.0	16.0
Associate degree	5	10.0	26.0
Bachelor	22	44.0	70.0
Master	3	6.0	76.0
PhD	2	4.0	80.0
Unknown	10	20.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	-----

The results in Table 1 on frequency distribution of students with traditional marriage in terms of education show that among 50 respondents to the questionnaire, the highest frequency related to people with bachelor education with 44% (n = 22) and the lowest frequency related to PhD level of education with 4% (n=2).

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of variables in students with traditional marriage

indices Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Personality traits	50	165.00	220/00	55/00	190/2400	136/513	11/68386	1/65235
Neuroticism (N)	50	26/00	43/00	17/00	32/7000	23/969	4/89585	0/69238
Extroversion (E)	50	29/00	50/00	21/00	39/8200	28/191	5/30956	0/75089
Openness to experience (O)	50	31/00	47/00	16/00	38/1200	14/883	3/85788	0/54559
Agreeableness (A)	50	32/00	51/00	19/00	38/4000	14/082	3/75255	0/53069
Conscientiousness (C)	50	32/00	48/00	16/00	41/2000	15/878	3/98466	0/56352
Attachment styles	50	35/00	70/00	35/00	51/6400	59/745	7/72951	1/09312
Closeness Style (C)	50	12/00	24/00	12/00	18/0200	10/796	3/28565	0/46466
Dependence style (D)	50	12/00	23/00	11/00	17/7600	6/145	2/47897	0/35058
Avoidant style (A)	50	6/00	26/00	20/00	15/8600	26/735	5/17060	0/73123

Table 2 examines scores of personality traits and attachment styles in students with tendency to traditional marriage. Scores of variable of personality traits have the M=190.240 and SD=11.683. Among the components of personality traits, component of neuroticism (N) M = 32/700 and SD = 4/895 had the lowest mean and component of conscientiousness (C) M = 41/200 and SD = 3/984 had the greatest mean. In the variables of extroversion (E) M=39.8200 and SD= 5.30956, openness to experience (O) M = 38/1200 and SD = 3/857, agreeableness (A) M=38.400 and SD=3.752 and mean and SD of scores of attachment styles are M=51.64 and SD=7.729, respectively. In its components, avoidant style (A) M=15.8600 and SD=5.170 had the lowest mean. The closeness style (C) M= 18.020 and SD=3.285 had the greatest mean. Dependency style (D) had also the mean and SD of M=17.760 and SD=2.478, respectively.

Table 3: homogeneity of variances

Personality traits	Levin statistics	Df 1	Df 1	significance
Neuroticism	0.420	1	98	0.518
Extraversion (E)	0.228	1	98	0.634
Openness to experience (O)	1.629	1	98	0.205
Agreeableness (A)	12.210	1	98	0.001
Conscientiousness (C)	0.043	1	98	0.836

The sig = 0.001 obtained in the agreeableness is smaller than 0.05 and it is significant, which indicates that the heterogeneity of variance in this variable, but there is homogeneity in the other variables. Considering the equality of individuals in the groups, we continue the analysis.

Table 4: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

Source of change	Total square	df	Sum of squares	F	sig	ATA separation square
Neuroticism	5.290	1	5.290	0.206	0.651	0.002
Extraversion (E)	153.760	1	153.760	5.796	0.018	0.056
Openness to experience (O)	1.210	1	1.210	0.063	0.803	0.001
Agreeableness (A)	53.290	1	53.290	2.205	0.141	0.022
Conscientiousness (C)	0.360	1	0.360	0.022	0.883	0.000

The sig = 0.001 obtained in the extraversion variable is smaller than 0.05 and it is M=39.8200 and SD=5.30956 in people with traditional marriage. According to ATA coefficient, the effect of extraversion variable explains 5.6% of variance that is small value. In rest of variables, sig is greater than 0.05, so types of personality traits among students with traditional marriage are significant.

Table 5: The homogeneity of variance

Variables	Levin statistic	Df 1	Df 1	significance
Closeness style (C)	0.779	1	98	0.380
Dependence style (D)	4.188	1	98	0.043
Avoidant style (A)	2.403	1	98	0.124

sig=0.43 obtained in the dependence style is smaller than 0.05 and it is significant that suggests heterogeneity of variance in this variable, but there is homogeneity in other variables.

Table 6- variance analysis (ANOVA)

Source of change	Total square	df	Sum of squares	F	sig	ATA separation square
Closeness style (C)	19.360	1	19.360	1.977	0.163	0.020
Dependence style (D)	20.250	1	20.250	2.150	0.146	0.021
Avoidant style (A)	16.000	1	16.000	0.499	0.482	0.005

The value of sig to examine the significance is greater than 0.05, so types of attachment styles among the students with traditional marriage are not significant. Discussion and conclusion

The results of the study show that the only difference is in the extroversion variable. The results of other studies in this regard suggest that the relationship between personality traits and attachment styles is significant. Investigation of the results showed that there is no significant difference among types of attachment styles in students with traditional marriage. Therefore, significant difference was not observed in types of attachment style components, although people with more secure attachment had more stable marital relations and emotional behavior and they had greater satisfaction. Therefore, they should show greater tendency to traditional marriage. Extroverted people are social people. In addition to loving others, they show greater tendency to attend in gatherings and parties. They are decisive in action, active, and talkative people. These people love the excitement and mobility and they have hope for future (McCrae, Costa, Holland, 1984). It seems these features in extroverted people to cause tendency toward external factors. In other words, these people have a tendency to external environment and they adapt themselves with conditions. In addition, one part of personality traits related to mood and heritage and other part of them related to environmental factors and family. These factors indicate that the combination of heritage and learning, nature and environment can influence the differences among the people. Mentioned points along with results of this study show that selection of type of marriage in people mainly depends on learning and environmental conditions rather than internal traits of people. Homayuni (2010) in a study titled the relationship between personality traits and emotional intelligence in learning driving behavior of students concluded that learning the driving behavior has negative relationship with nervousness and positive relationship with other personality traits. In addition, there is a positive relationship between personality traits and emotional intelligence. People with insecure and anxiety attachment styles often refuse to attach others due to various reasons and avoid emotional closeness. They experience anxiety and insecurity. Therefore, a certain emotional coldness is seen in their lives and they have less marital satisfaction. The research conducted by Yeltsin (2011), regression analysis showed that social support and optimism are associated with life satisfaction and secure attachment is associated with optimism. Zare et al (2013) provided a causal model of attachment dimensions and emotion regulation strategies with mediating role of social self-efficacy and self-disclosure. In this regard, 384 students of Yazd University were selected by multistage cluster sampling. This study tools include attachment dimensions scale of Collins (1996), social self-efficacy scale of Smith and Betz (2000), the self-disclosure scale of Kahn and Hesling (2001) and adaptive strategies of Carver, Sheer, and Vintrab (1989). Results showed that attachment anxiety with mediating role of social self-efficacy is negative predictive of adaptive emotion regulation strategies and positive predictive of maladaptive solution of over-activation. In addition, this variable directly and negatively predicts the deactivation solutions. Attachment avoidance also directly and with mediating role of self-disclosure is a positive predictive of deactivation solution and negative predictive of over-activation. Attachment avoidance predicts adaptive solutions of emotion regulation directly and negatively and it could be stated that attachment dimensions predict emotion regulation solutions and social self-efficacy and self-disclosure mediate and explain this relationship. Aboamerh and Alragad (2013) examined the relationship between adult attachment styles and personality traits. The results showed a significant positive relationship between the secure attachment style and extroversion. In addition, results suggested a significant positive relationship between the anxious-ambivalent attachment style and neuroticism and negative relationship between anxious-ambivalent attachment style and introversion. Heseh and Floyd

(2011) concluded that adolescents and adults with secure attachment style experience low levels of negative emotions and they create strong relationships with others when they refer to them when they are in emotional helplessness to get support. However, people with insecure attachment style, in contrast to people with secure attachment style, experience lower levels of positive emotions and they show disability in regulating anxiety and depression and other negative emotions.

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