

# Personality traits, Infidelity and Marital Satisfaction among Married men and women

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## Abstract

*The present study was conducted to assess the relationship between personality traits, infidelity and marital satisfaction among married men and women. Ninety (90) out of which 45 married men and 45 married women were selected through purposive sampling. Big Five Inventory by John & Srivastava (1999), Infidelity Scale by Whatley (2006) and adapted version of Comprehensive Marital Satisfaction Scale (CMSS) by Khan (2006) were administered to measure personality traits, infidelity and marital satisfaction respectively. The Pearson's product moment correlation and t-test were used to figure out statistical significance of the data. The level of infidelity was high among men than women as  $p < 0.01$  while the level of marital satisfaction among women was higher than men as  $p < 0.05$ . Moreover a significant relationship was found between personality traits and infidelity as  $p < 0.01$ , secondly there was significant relationship between personality traits and marital satisfaction as  $p < 0.01$  while there was significant relationship between infidelity and marital satisfaction as  $p < 0.01$ .*

**Key words:** Personality traits, Infidelity, Marital Satisfaction, Gender, Pearson product moment correlation coefficient, and Independent sample T-test.

## 1. Introduction

Marital dissatisfaction, infidelity and divorce are very common and serious issues of the society affecting families, children, and relationships. Every next person is suffering from any of this problem. Personality traits and marital dissatisfaction seems to be the main reasons that lead to marital infidelity. Men and women having conflicts in their marital life may indulge in friendships, dating and extra-marital affairs leading to infidelity and may worsen the relationship.

We cannot deny the fact that with modernization, influx of western culture through media the concept of dating and extra-marital affairs

has become common in Pakistan. Researches on personality traits, marital satisfaction and infidelity are quite in vogue in western culture but in developing countries like Pakistan, no considerable work has been done in this field. The foremost aim of this study is to highlight the personality traits that might be associated with infidelity and marital dissatisfaction.

Nowadays, infidelity may be a most significant reason of divorces. As supported analysis reports, 90% of all divorces involve infidelity. The National Science Foundation sponsored General Social Survey to trace the opinions of USA citizens about social behaviors since 1972 that gave

consistent information on infidelity. The survey information shows that in any given year, about 100% of married couples (12% men and 7 of women) have engaged in sex outside their marriage. But elaborate analysis of the information from 1991 to 2006 shows shocking shifts. University of Washington researchers have found that the speed of period infidelity for men over 60 augmented to 28% in 2006 from 20% in 1991. For women over 60, this rate augmented from 5% in 1991 to 15% in 2006 (Barker,2011).

As coated in an articles by Clark (2011), most current surveys estimate the number of people who cheat during a marriage at anywhere from 20 to 50 percent of women and 30 to 60 percent of men. Note, though, that in 2002 the NationalOpinionResearchCenter at the University of Chicago found that 15 percent of married women admit to have an affair, compared to 22 percent of men. The best educated guess, in line of the researchers conducted at University of Texas at Austin, is that an affair takes place within 40 to 76 percent of marriages. A predictable justification of these statistics suggests that although perhaps half of all married couple remains monogamous, the other half will experience an infidelity over the period of a marriage.

Another part of literature about gender differences and infidelity refers to different rates of men and women involvement in infidelity. Gender has been the most commonly studied variable in the context of infidelity. The typical finding mentioned in a number of studies has been that more men than women have engaged in infidelity (Allen, et al. 2005; Klein, 2007).

Additionally, in a study of divorced men and women, 40% of men and 44% of women reported having more than one extramarital sexual contact during their marriages (Janus & Janus, 1993).

Marital satisfaction is a mental state which reflects observable advantages and wedding prices to a particular person. More overheads that a wedding partner inflicts on the person, less been satisfactory, is in general with marriage and with marriage spouse. Of even bigger visible advantages are, more been satisfactory is with marriage and with wedding partner (Snyder, 1979).

Irrespective of how marital satisfaction/marital quality is conceptualized, certain factors appear to remain common to happy couples. They tend to spend more time in joint activities, use more humor, are involved in more affectionate touching, are less critical of each other, are less hostile towards each other and engage in less frequent arguments (Taylor, Peplau& Sears,1997).

To be faithless can distinctly grounds troubles of marriages. Revealed infidelity raises issues of fairness, trust between the partners, commitment and finally, love. Because the infidelity of a partner has possible to inflict these emotional prices, marital satisfaction looks to be negatively linked to likelihood that a partner will be infidel. So, better the partner must be faithless, been less satisfactory is with his marriage and spouse.

Marital conflict or dissatisfaction is associated with important family outcomes, including poor parenting, poor adjustment of children, increased likelihood of parent-child conflict, and conflict between siblings. Marital conflicts that are frequent, intense, physical, unresolved, and child related have a particularly negative influence on children, as do marital conflicts that spouses attribute to their child's behavior (Grych&Fincham, 2001).

According to John (2006), different things predicted the behavior for men and women. For men, considerable predictors of infidelity are personality variables, including tendency for sexual excitation (becoming easily aroused by many triggers and situations) and concern about sexual performance failure. For women, relationship happiness is supreme. Women who are dissatisfied with their relationship are more than twice as likely to cheat; those who feel they are sexually mismatched with their partners are nearly three times as likely (Sexual Anxiety, Personality Predictors of Infidelity)..As a consequence, infidelity becomes an important issue in psychology literature which attracts lots of attention of researchers.

Marie (2012), narrated that 70% of their participants who engaged in infidelity attributed their behavior to marital problems. More recent studies find that when participants are asked to justify their own infidelity, they often cite problems with the marital relationship. Other studies have found that as marital satisfaction decreases, the likelihood of infidelity increases. Another

relationship variable that has been found to be associated with infidelity is sexual satisfaction.

If we have a view on literature, we came to know that findings are mixed. According to Karney and Bradbury (1995) wives are more satisfied than men while some studies have indicated that husbands tend to be more satisfied in their marriages than wives (Acitelli&Antonucci, 1994; Markman&Hahlweg, 1993; Rogers & Amato, 2000).

### 1.1. Rationale of the study

In Pakistan, marriage is defined as a contract in which male and female become husband and wife after Nikkah (Islamic way of betrothal). Most of marriages are arranged by parents and elders of the family. In our culture there are double standards for male and female children. There is more restriction on females as compared to male and arranged marriages are more common than love marriages. Usually in Pakistan the bride moves to the husband's house and she must accept her in-laws where she shares the family ideas about what is good and worthwhile and the members of the family basically bring a bride who is according to them will adjust to the family values and daily activities. This practice keeps the cohesiveness of the family intact. In Pakistan where marriage and bond between individuals is taken as a family affair and given great importance, divorce is not approved of (Zainab, 2003).

In some cultures, infidelity, extra-marital affairs and such relationships were not given much importance before but now they have started giving importance to such factors as they are affecting their marital life and resulting in divorce. Researches on personality traits, marital satisfaction and infidelity are quite in vogue in western culture but in developing countries like Pakistan, no considerable work has been done in this field. Personality traits and marital dissatisfaction are the main reasons that lead to marital infidelity. Nowadays, infidelity is a most important reason of marital dissatisfaction that might result in divorce as well and according to many studies about consequences of infidelity showed negative outcomes like: rage, lost of trust, decreased personal and sexual confidence, damaged self esteem, fear of abandonment and surge of justification to leave the spouse.

So the main purpose of this study is to highlight the personality traits that might be associated with infidelity and marital dissatisfaction.

Findings gained from current research, would be helpful to select and introduce some appropriate interventions for men and women (if they appear to have above mentioned problems) as an effort to save them from negative outcomes and thus saving our society from future problems.

### 1.2. Hypotheses

1. Level of infidelity would be higher among men than that of women.
2. Level of marital satisfaction would be higher among women than that of men.

## 2. Materials and Methods

### 2.1. Participants

The sample of current study was comprised of married men and women of Faisalabad non working and working in different organization, institutes etc. A sample of 90 participants was taken. The sample was further divided into 45 married men (n=45) and 45 married women (n=45) by using purposive sampling technique (i.e. 45 men and 45 women).

### 2.2. Research Design

The comparative group design (with in group design) was used in current study.

### 2.3. Sampling Strategy

Purposive sampling technique was used in the current study to collect the data.

### 2.4. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Married men and women were included in this current study whose ages were ranged between 25 years to 45 years. The qualification of the participants was graduation or above. The sample whose qualification was below graduation was not included in the sample. Below 25 years and above 45 years married men and women were not included in the sample.

### 2.5. Operational Definition of Variables

#### 2.5.1 Infidelity

The operational definition of the infidelity was the score obtained on infidelity scale given by Whatley (2006).

#### 2.5.2 Marital Satisfaction

The operational definition of marital satisfaction will be the score obtained on translated and adapted version of Comprehensive Marital Satisfaction Scale (CMSS) given by Khan (2006).

## 2.6. Instruments

Following instruments were used in this current study to measure the variables.

### 2.6.1. Infidelity Scale

Infidelity was defined as a person being unfaithful in a committed monogamous relationship (Whatley, 2006). The scale consists of 12 items, consisting 6 positively scored items and 6 reversed scored items. The participants will respond on a 7 point scale ranging from “Strongly Disagree” to Strongly Agree. Selecting a 1 reflects the least acceptance of infidelity and selecting a 7 reflects the greatest acceptance of infidelity. The lowest possible score is the 12 reflecting the less acceptance of being infidelity; the highest possible score is the 84 reflecting the greater acceptance of being infidelity. A score of 48 reflects midpoint between being very disapproving of infidelity and very accepting of infidelity.

### 2.6.2. Comprehensive Marital Satisfaction Scale (CMSS)

Marital satisfaction was identified with the help of translated and adapted version of comprehensive marital satisfaction scale (CMSS) given by Khan (2006). It was developed by Blum and Mehrabian (1999) and further translated and adapted by Khan (2006). The scale has 35 items, consisting of 18 positively and 17 negatively worded items. The major content categories were general satisfaction, handling family finances, communication, time together, decision making and way of dealing with in-laws etc.

The participants responded on a 9 point scale ranging from “very strong agreement” to very strong disagreement”, in middle there is a zero value which means “neither agreement nor disagreement” some items will be positively scored and other will be negatively scored (Khan, 2006).

## 2.7. Procedure

A sample of 90 participants was drawn as described earlier. To check infidelity and marital satisfaction among married men and women, infidelity scale and adapted version of comprehensive marital satisfaction scale (CMSS)

were used respectively. After getting institutional permission and the written consent from the selected participants, instructions were given to them to help them in understanding the instrument. Test was then administered and was taken back after the given time. Scoring and interpretation was done according to the guidelines of the manual.

## 2.8. Statistic

In the current study the t-test were used through SPSS window version 15.00. The t-test was used to compare the scores of married men and women on infidelity and marital satisfaction.

## 3. Results

**Table 1**

Difference in level of infidelity among men and women N=90

Gender	M	SD	df	t	p-value
Men (n=45)	75.13	50.27	88	-2.683	0.009
Women (n=45)	48.58	43.36			

Result indicates that level of infidelity is higher among men than women  $p < 0.01$

**Table 2**

Difference in level of marital satisfaction among men and women N=90

Gender	M	SD	df	t	p-value
Men (n=45)	33.62	9.09	88	2.110	0.038
Women (n=45)	40.31	19.23			

Result indicates that level of marital satisfaction is higher among women than men  $p < 0.05$

## 5. Discussion

**Hypothesis No 1 :** Level of infidelity would be higher among men than that of women.

This hypothesis is supposed by results and is significant at  $p < 0.01$  level. It is clear by table # 1 that level of infidelity is higher among men than women. The obtained results are in line with many findings concluded before. Some of them are discussed here to provide support to our above mentioned hypothesis. According to Clark (2011), most current surveys estimate the number of people who cheat during a marriage at anywhere from 20 to 50 percent of women and 30 to 60 percent of men. Another part of literature about sex differences and infidelity refers to different rates of men and women involvement in infidelity.

Moreover, gender has been the most commonly studied variable in the context of infidelity. The typical finding mentioned in a number of studies has been that more men than women have engaged in infidelity (Allen, et al. 2005; Klein, 2007). Some researchers strongly assert that men are more engage in infidelity than women (Allen & Baucom, 2004, Atkins et al. 2001).

Furthermore, the most widespread and latest information regarding the percentage of married individuals that have engaged in extramarital sex shows that in a national sample of over 3000 adults, 25% of men and 15% of women reported having sex with somebody other than his or her spouse while married (Laumann, Gagnon, Michaels, & Michaels, 1994).

In Pakistan the probable reasons for these findings are that men have more options and exposure than women. If women are housewife then she has to stay at home most of the time while men go out every day to earn bread and butter. Another observed reason of men infidelity might be the imposed marriages made by parents. Sometimes it may happen that man does not find his wife compatible, so he might start looking for someone compatible or as per his demands to make himself satisfied.

**Hypothesis No. 2:** Level of marital satisfaction would be higher among women than that of men.

This hypothesis is supposed by results and is significant at  $p < 0.05$  level. It is clear by table # 2

that level of marital satisfaction is higher among women than men. The obtained results are in line with many findings concluded before. Some of them are discussed here to provide support to our above mentioned hypothesis.

Both the men and the women enter marriage with higher urge of interpersonal communication, privacy and sexual contentment (Furstenberg, 1996). If expectations of marriage have increased, then couples assume that a more satisfying marriage is the ultimate goal to be attained by these increased expectations.

If we have a view on literature review we came to know that findings are mixed. According to Karney and Bradbury (1995) wives are more satisfied than men while some studies have indicated that husbands tend to be more satisfied in their marriages than wives (Acitelli & Antonucci, 1994; Markman & Hahlweg, 1993; Rogers & Amato, 2000).

According to analysis of the above mentioned hypothesis shows that the marital satisfaction would be higher among women than men. As data was collected from Pakistani culture, so we could say that these results show our culture. In Pakistan the probable reasons for these findings are that women have less options and exposure than men. Women in our culture are always told to consider her husband's house as her own and she has to live and survive there in every good or bad situation. She is not supposed to come back to her parent's place. As women have very less options to go back, she always tries her best to survive in her place. As per this reason she will accept her marriage sooner or later. Secondly as women have less exposure than men, she tries to make her house a piece of heaven. So ultimately she becomes more maritally satisfied than men.

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