

Prediction of Marital Commitment based on Personality Traits, Attachment Styles, and Religious Orientation in Married Students

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Abstract

Background and Objective: The marital commitment of couples is constructive in stabilization of family unit and various factors can influence the level of marital commitment. The current study aimed at revealing some of these factors through predicting marital commitment based on personality characteristics, attachment styles, and religious orientation in married students.

Method: The study is descriptive and correlational. The statistical population consisted of all married female students of Lorestan University in 2014/2015 academic year. Through applying Cochran's formula, 200 subjects were selected among them as the sample, using convenient sampling method. In order to gather data, Marital Commitment Inventory (DCI) by Adams Jones, Adult Attachment Scale (AAS) by Collins and Read, Personality Inventory (NEO), and Religious Orientation Scale (ROS) by Allport and Ross were used. The data were analyzed using correlation coefficient and Step by Step Regression Analysis. All ethical issues were observed in this study and the researchers declared no conflict of interests.

Results: The findings indicated that personality characteristics ($F=28.37$), the attachment styles ($F=24.44$), and also religious orientation ($F=18.65$) significantly predicted the level of marital commitment at the significance levels of 0.001, 0.05, and 0.001 respectively. Out of these factors, attachment styles were a stronger predictor for marital commitment.

Conclusion: The results illustrated that people's personality characteristics, the attachment styles formed in the family environment, and also their religious orientation have a direct effect on the personal relationship and marital commitment in the adulthood. The findings can be used to propose some strategies to maintain and develop productive relationship among couples and offer better training to people on how they should try to know each other.

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Summary

Background and Objective: Since a society is formed by families, it can be said that the health of the society depends on the health of the family and the health of family depends on the health of its members. Marriage is the first step in forming a family, and assessing the level of health and marital satisfaction requires an examination of the factors affecting it (1). Research

findings indicate that many factors, including individuals' personality traits (2-5). Another important factor in commitment and marital satisfaction is the attachment style of couples in adulthood. Patterns that are created in the first year of life remain relatively stable to adulthood and shape romantic relationships (6). Although in most studies there is a positive relationship between attachment style and marital commitment, the findings are not completely consistent in this regard (7). Given that the religious and family

institutions emphasize similar values and are interdependent to strengthen socialization, researchers predict the close relationship between them. Religious orientation can be effective in marital communication because of providing guidelines for life (8). Sullivan (2001) has shown that those who are at a higher level of religiosity have more marital stability than those with a lower religious level (9).

Chronic stress has a great influence on marital satisfaction and may also be related to other variables such as intimacy and financial concerns. Education at a university can add stress to marital relationships, which may in turn affect the satisfaction and eventually marital commitment. Nowadays, the number of female students has increased with many of them entering the job market upon graduation. Also, in addition to university responsibilities, ladies have other responsibilities such as child care and household chores. As a result, they feel less satisfied. Therefore, it is important to determine the factors affecting the marital commitment of married female students. Moreover, considering the importance of commitment in marital life, it is necessary to take some steps to improve marital and family relationships, especially to improve commitment among student couples. In order to accomplish this, we must first gain proper information about this construct and identify factors influencing it so that appropriate actions can be taken to create, maintain, and increase marital commitment in couples.

Personality trait, attachment style, and religious orientation are important factors in marital satisfaction and commitment, and marital commitment leads to lasting marriage. On the other hand, lack of marital commitment in marriage leads to extra-marital relationships, and ultimately will result to separation and divorce. Thus, the purpose of this study was to explore whether it is possible to significantly predict marital commitment based on personality traits, attachment styles, and religious orientation in married students.

Method: The statistical population consisted of all married female students of Lorestan University in 2014/2015 academic year. Through applying Cochran's formula, 200 subjects were selected from among them as a sample, using convenient sampling method. In order to gather data, Marital Commitment Inventory (DCI) by Adams Jones, Adult Attachment Scale (AAS) by Collins and Read, Personality Inventory (NEO), and Religious Orientation Scale (ROS) by Allport and Ross were used. The data were analyzed using correlation coefficient and Step by Step Regression Analysis.

Results: The findings indicated that there is a significant correlation between marital commitment and personality traits ($r=0.354$; $P<0.001$). There is also a positive and statistically measurable correlation between marital commitment and attachment styles ($r=0.149$; $P<0.05$), and between marital commitment and religious orientation ($r=0.34$; $P<0.001$). The results also showed that personality characteristics ($F=28.37$; $P<0.001$), attachment styles ($F=24.44$; $P<0.05$) and

religious orientation ($F=18.65$; $P<0.001$) predict the level of marital commitment, with attachment styles being the strongest predictor.

Conclusion: The results of this study showed that among the components of personality, neuroticism had positive relationship with moral component of marital commitment and had a negative significant relationship with the structural component. Also, the components of extraversion, consistency, and conscientiousness had positive and significant relationships with the structural component. Moreover, extraversion, adaptability, and accountability had positive and significant relationships with marital commitment, but there was no measurable relationship between neuroticism and openness to experience with marital commitment. In explaining the relationship between personality trait and adaptation to marital commitment, it can be said that some of these attributes are accompanied by confidence on the other side, and trust is an important factor in marital commitment.

The results also showed that, overall, attachment styles can predict the marital commitment. It can be said that since the desire to forgive and control the negative emotions are characteristics of the secure people, who are more likely to forgive mistakes in couples, the probability of marital commitment increases. Controlling negative emotions is also associated with marital continuity in couples.

The results also showed that there is a significant positive relationship between religious orientation and marital commitment. Considering the components of religious orientation, the external religious orientation had a positive and significant relationship with the component of personal commitment and the internal religious orientation had a positive and significant relationship with the structural commitment. It can be argued that religion provides general guidance to humans, which will lead to the strengthening of marital ties. These guidelines include laws on sexual relations, gender roles, self-sacrifice, and conflict resolution in marital relationships (13). Having a similar and harmonious religious emotions and tendencies and mutual religious beliefs between couples can contribute to emotional coordination, which is one of the most important issues in the marital satisfaction of couples (14, 15).

Due to an ever-increasing rise in the number of extra-marital relationships and divorce in Iran and the world, early counseling trainings aiming at introducing the concept of commitment in marriage can help to grow and strengthen the sense of commitment in couples and thus the stability and sustainability of marriages.

Ethical Considerations

Compliance with ethical guidelines

The Ethics Committee in Biomedical Research of Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences has confirmed this research.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declared no conflict of interest.

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