

Relationship Between Personality Traits and Marital Quality Among Married Individuals in Kiambu Catholic Deanery, Archdiocese of Nairobi, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Numerous studies have indicated that personality traits have both a positive and negative impact on marriage quality. However, such researches with Catholic married people in Kiambu Deanery are lacking. The study objective was to determine the association between personality traits and marital quality among married people in Kiambu Catholic Deanery, Archdiocese of Nairobi, Kenya. The study made use of a correlational research design. A sample size of 193 participants was chosen for the study using proportionate stratified sampling. The Big Five Inventory Scale and the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale were used to collect data for the study. SPSS version 32 was used to do correlational analysis on the data. Apart from negative emotionality, the data revealed that all four personality qualities linked favorably with marital quality. The study suggests that future studies be conducted with married couples rather than married individuals.

Key Words: The Big Five Personality Traits; Marital quality; Married individuals; Archdiocese of Nairobi

INTRODUCTION

Studies done across the world have established that there exists a relationship between personality traits and marital quality. For instance, a descriptive correlation study carried out in Hamadan, Iran involving 100 ordinary married individual women stable in marriage and a 100 individual married women pursuing divorce. This study showed that there was a relationship between personality traits and marital quality as heterosexual married individuals who were directly involved in the divorce process were psychologically stressed and their marital relationship was significantly affected negatively (Solomon & Jackson, 2014). Personality traits of the heterosexual married individuals are likely to direct the outcome of a marital relationship. For example, Terling-Watt (2015), showed that there exists a relationship between personality traits and marital quality as an approximately 66% of married individuals globally go through divorce after a certain period of co-existing together.

Some researchers (Dyrenforth, et al., 2010; Headey, Muffels & Wagner, 2013; Malouff, et al., 2010; Zare, Nasir, Mastor, & Wan Shahrazad, 2013) in their study pointed out that there is a relationship between personality traits and marital quality. Furthermore, the same studies have found out that, when heterosexual married individual or both married individuals experience high levels of neuroticism personality trait, chances are that, marital conflicts episodes are high, leading to negative episodes, touching on marital quality. There is a probability that such incidences are likely to occur as a result of the relationship between personality traits and marital quality among the married individuals.

Margelisch, Schneewind, Violete and Perrig-Chiello (2017) conducted a longitudinal survey in Switzerland that consisted of 374 married individuals. The participants were approximately 74 years old, having been married averagely for a period of 49 years. There is a possibility that there exists a relationship between personality traits and marital quality. For example, Claxton, O'Rourke, Smith and DeLongis, (2013) and

Jerskey et al. (2010) argue that specific personality traits of the big five personality trait for example neuroticism is likely to facilitate fewer adaptive as well as additional challenging behaviors among the married individuals resulting to increased discordance. This is likely to distress the married individuals' marital quality, showing a possibility of a negative relationship between personality traits and marital quality among the married individuals.

Several studies (Bulgan et al., 2018; Kiani et al., 2020; Popescu & Karner-Hu?uleac, 2020) argue that a significant negative relationship was found to exist between neuroticism personality trait of the big five and marital satisfaction (marital quality) of the married individuals. This is likely to confirm that, there exists a negative relationship between personality traits and marital quality among married individuals. This study intends to find out whether married individuals of Kiambu Catholic Deanery could be experiencing such negative challenges that may show a relationship between personality traits and marital quality.

Studies conducted in Turkey, India and United Kingdom on how marital satisfaction relates to big five personality traits reported relationship between personality traits and marital quality among married individuals. The study involved 627 volunteer married individuals aged between 15 to 82 years. In this study, Okorafor (2017) reported a positive relationship between the big five personality traits of extraversion, and agreeableness and marital quality. Similarly, Bulgan, Kemer, Cetinkaya and Yildiz (2018) in their study established that there was a relationship between personality traits and marital quality. Similarly, study has reported relationship between personality traits and marital quality. As Fania and Kheirabadi (2011) argue that, the married individuals whose stable characteristics of personality traits are extraversion, conscientiousness, openness to experience, and agreeableness as well as whose neuroticism trait have controlled levels present minimal chances of their relationship ending in divorce. Therefore, these personality traits help in uplifting the marital quality of the married individuals in a positive manner thus, confirming a likelihood of a relationship between personality traits and marital quality.

A study carried out in California, USA by Duncan, Rogers, Shelece and McAllister (2018) on individual personality and the outcome of perceived helpfulness and change among married individuals. This study covered samples from all regions of the United States of America and involved 5,516 married individuals. There is a possibility that personality traits are likely to have a relationship with marital quality. For example, Larson, Blick, Jackson and Holman (2010) argue that the big five personality traits are said to take part in either increasing or decreasing the element of marital satisfaction among the married individuals thus, showing a likely existence of relationship between personality traits and marital quality.

A study by Duncan et al. (2014) reported that personality and personality traits are said to significantly enhance the married individuals' relationships, demonstrating a relationship between personality traits and marital quality. Further, Cameron and Baucon (2009) argue that, the married individual's competence and core characteristics of the individual personality traits interrelate well within the married individual's relationships thus, demonstrating a likely relationship between personality traits and marital quality.

Empirical studies (O'Rourke, Claxton, Chou, Smith, & Hadjistavropoulos, 2011; Rosowsky, King, Coolidge, Roades, & Segal, 2012) have established that there exists a relationship between the big five personality traits and marital quality. The study further argues that extraversion personality trait found to have been positively related as well as positively connected to the global assessments of the married individual's relationship. This is likely to confirm that there is a relationship between personality traits and marital quality among the married individuals.

Duncan, White and James (2021) conducted a study in USA based on understanding of how personality traits helped early-married individual men become involved in marital interventions. The study participants were those involved in the Married Individuals Relationships and Transition Experiences. The study found that personality traits have a relationship with marital quality. Furthermore, a study by Duncan et al. (2014)

examined personality characteristics related to involvement of married individuals' interventions that established that married individual's with extroversion personality trait as well as those with characteristic features such as anxiety, kindness, flexibility, self-esteem, maturity and even depression played a role of possible participation in the married individuals marital interventions, as per the different interventions. The findings showed a likelihood of a relationship between personality traits and marital quality among married individuals.

In Africa, there are limited empirical study on the relationship between personality traits and marital quality. However, Januario, Narciso, Vieira- Santos and Relvas (2021) carried out a descriptive review study on African Marital Relationships study in Nigeria, Ghana and South Africa. This empirical study reviewed 90 scientific articles. Personality traits are likely to have a relationship with marital quality. For example, Botha and Booysen (2013a) argued that, study has established that married individuals are normally happy with their marital relationships as well as being more satisfied than those divorced and the widowed. In addition, Moore and Govender (2013) reports that, the relationship in married individuals normally provides the source of well-being among the individual, and this remain a powerful and relevant scale of marital quality among the married individuals worldwide. This is likely to be experienced because of the relationship between personality traits and marital quality among the married individuals. The previous study was conducted using the reviewed scientific articles while the present study will involve married individuals as participants.

Though there are limited empirical studies in Kenya on the relationship between personality traits and marital quality among the married individuals, a study by Webbo (2017) among Christian married individuals in Nairobi established that personality and personality traits played a great role in marital success, quality and stability. Another study by Junius (2018), among Christian married couples of PCEA Mukinyi parish in Kiambu County revealed that personality traits had either positive or negative relationship with marital quality as heterosexual married individuals were generally experiencing marital conflicts. Such conflicts were likely to have been brought about by personality traits of the married individuals thus, generally showing a relationship between the big five personality traits and marital quality. However, there is lack of empirical study on this area particularly in Kiambu Catholic Deanery, Archdiocese of Nairobi, Kenya and hence the significance of this study to bridge the gap.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study made use of a correlational research design. It is appropriate for researchers who seek to establish a relationship between two or more variables. The approach is primarily appropriate for this study because it allows the researcher to establish a link between the Big Five personality traits and marital quality among married people in Kiambu Catholic Deanery, Archdiocese of Nairobi, Kenya.

Target Population

The target population was Catholic married individuals in Kiambu Catholic Deanery, Archdiocese of Nairobi, Kenya. The total population was 415 Catholic married individuals. The population was drawn from the four parishes in Kiambu Catholic Deanery. The parishes includeded Our Lady of Holy Rosary Ting'ang'a Parish; St. Peter and Paul Kiambu Parish; All Saints Riaru Parish; and Okey Peter Ikinu Parish.

Sampling Technique and Sample Size

Sampling is the procedure a researcher uses to gather people, places, or things to study. It is a process of selecting a number of individuals or objects from a population such that the selected group

contains elements representative of the characteristics found in entire group (Orodho & Kombo, 2002). The study employed proportionate stratified random sampling. The sampling technique was appropriate for this study because the participants were drawn from different parishes with different population and was equally represented.

In empirical research, sample refers to number of subjects representing the research population in a study while to determine the sample size of this study, the researcher employed Krejcie and Morgan’s formula of determining samples from finite populations in educational and psychological measurement (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). According to Krejcie and Morgan’s formula a population of 360 leads to a sample size of 193 participants. The sample size is presented in table 1.

Table 1. Sampling Techniques

Name of the parish	Target Population	Sample size
1. Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Ting’ang’a Parish	75	40
2. Okey Peter Ikinu Parish	55	30
3. St. Peter and Paul Kiambu Parish	118	63
4. All Saints Riara Parish	112	60
Total Population	360	193

Research Instruments

The data was collected using standardized questionnaires (Crane, Middleton, & Bean, 2000). The questionnaire contained three sections including the demographic details of the participants, personality traits, and marital quality. Section A contained demographic information such as age, gender, educational level, parish, and years of marriage while section B contained the “The Big Five Inventory Scale” which was developed by John and Srivastava 1999. This scale has 44 items that assess an individual’s Big Five traits as explained by Goldberg, 1990. Extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness are the five personality traits measured by the instrument. This instrument requires participants to select the feature that best describes them in each item presented. For example, “Do you agree that you enjoy spending time with others?” The scale runs from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Section C collected data on marital quality using the revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (RDAS) developed by Crane, Middleton and Bean 2000. It is a self-report questionnaire that assess three categories of marital quality namely consensus, satisfaction and cohesion. The instrument contains 14 items each asking the participants to rate certain aspects of his/her relationship on a 5 or 6-point scale. The scores range from 0 to 69 with higher scores indicating greater relationship satisfaction and lower scores indicating greater relationship distress. From the previous studies, the RDAS have found to have a Cronbach’s of .90. In terms of construct validity, it has been .68 ($p < .01$) and .97 ($< .01$). In discriminant validity, the RDAS has reported 81% in differentiating distressed and non-distressed cases.

Data Analysis

The data collected was analysed using correlational analysis to establish the relationship between the Big Five personality traits and marital quality among the married individuals in Kiambu Catholic Deanery, Archdiocese of Nairobi, Kenya using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 32.

RESULTS

The study was set to establish the relationship between personality traits and marital quality among the

married individuals in Kiambu Catholic Deanery, Archdiocese of Nairobi, Kenya. The section began by presenting the demographic details of the participants followed by the findings based on the objective of the study.

Demographic Details of the Participants

The study sought to understand the demographic characteristics of the sample that filled the questionnaire. These demographic characteristics were sought and analysed so as to gain a clear understanding of the kind of respondents that were involved in the study. The demographic analysis would also provide an understanding and insights into the kind of population that was involved in the current study. Demographic characteristics sought were age, gender, educational level, and years in marriage.

Age of the Participants

The age of the respondents was taken into account in this study. Respondents were asked to indicate their age. Table 2 shows the descriptive age of the participants in the current study.

Table 2. Age of Participants

Variable	Sample Size	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age	193	22	71	42.55	10.615

Descriptive statistics were run to describe the age of the participants. Results in table 2 showed that the youngest participant was 22 years old and the oldest participant was 71 years old. The average mean of the participants was 42.55, SD=10.615. The age of participants indicated that majority of the participants were at the middle age. That means they are likely to have attained stability in their personality compared to those are young in years and in marriage.

Gender of Participants

The gender of the respondents was sought in this study in order to establish their true representation in terms of sex. Gender was classified as either male or female. The respondents were asked to indicate their gender in the questionnaire. The results of the gender distribution of respondents are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Gender of the Participants

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	99	51.3
Female	94	48.7
Total	193	100

The results in table 3 showed that that majority of the participants were males (51.3%) compared to the female participants (48.7%). However, there was a small difference in gender representation in the current study. Gender was important in the current study in regard to understanding the personality traits of married individuals because they are likely to differ in their personality based on the environmental factors. For instance, in the society, the men are expected to be assertive and women are expected to be humble and submissive which can a positive or negative impact to marital quality.

Educational level of Participants

The study sought to understand education level of the Participants. Education level was classified in terms of primary, secondary, certificate, diploma, degree and masters. The respondents were asked to indicate their level of education based on the levels provided. The results of the educational level of the respondents were computed in terms of frequencies and percentages and presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Education level

Educational Level	Frequency	Percent
Primarily	13	6.7
Secondary	47	24.7
Certificate	41	21.2
Diploma	57	29.5
Bachelor's Degree	33	17.1
Master's Degree	2	1.0

The results in table 4 showed that majority of participants had attained a Diploma (29.5%) followed by those who had secondary education (24.7%) and certificate (21.2%). Few of the participants had attained a master's degree (1%) and primary education (6.7%). This implies that majority of married individuals in Kiambu Denary had attained basic education in their lives. People with high level of education are likely to be aware of their personality type and of their partners and that can have a big influence on the marital quality because married individuals knows how to communicate and relate with each other.

Years in Marriage for Participants

The study sought to understand the year's individuals had stayed in their marriage. This was later to understand whether the years spent in marriage contributes to marital quality. Table 5 gives the descriptive statistics on years spend in marriage by married individuals.

Table 5. Years in Marriage

Variable	Sample Size	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Years in Marriage	193	1	48	16.50	10.45

The results in table 5 shows that lowest years of marriage for married individuals was 1 years. On the hand, those who had stayed in marriage for long were married 48 years. The mean of the participants years in marriage was 16.50, SD=10.45. This means majority of the participants were married for 16 years. Most of the married individuals are likely to be bringing up the adolescent children.

Personality traits and marital quality among the married individuals in Kiambu Catholic Deanery

The objective of the study was to establish the relationship between the Big Five personality traits and marital quality among the married individuals in Kiambu Catholic Deanery, Archdiocese of Nairobi, Kenya. A correlational analysis was run to establish the relationship between the big five personality traits and marital quality among the married individuals and results are presented in table 6.

Table 6. Correlation between the Big Five Personality Traits and Marital Quality

Variable		Marital Quality
Extraversion	Pearson Correlation	.176*
	Sig.	.015
Agreeableness	Pearson Correlation	.388*
	Sig.	.000
Negative Emotionality	Pearson Correlation	.282*
	Sig.	.000
Open Mindedness	Pearson Correlation	.134
	Sig.	.063
Conscientiousness	Pearson Correlation	.376**
	Sig.	.000

** Correlation is Significant at the 0.01 Level (2-tailed).

** Correlation is Significant at the 0.05 Level (2-tailed).

The results obtained indicated that all the four personality traits correlated positively with marital quality apart from negative emotionality ($p < 0.05$, $r = -.282$). The findings showed that the more extraverted, agreeableness, open-minded and conscientious one was, the higher the marital quality they displayed. However, of all the four personality traits that correlated positively with marital quality, agreeableness scored the highest ($p < 0.05$, $r = -.388$). This therefore, is an indication that agreeable is a key concept in marital quality.

Correlation of Personality Traits with Dimension of Marital Quality among Married Individuals

Furthermore, the researcher was interested in establishing the correlation of the Big Five personality traits and dimensions of marital quality (Consensus, Satisfaction and cohesion) and therefore, a correlational analysis was run and the results are presented in table 7.

Table 7. Correlation of personality traits with Consensus, Satisfaction and Cohesion

Variables		Consensus	Satisfaction	Cohesion
Extraversion	Pearson Correlation	.227**	.125	.067
	Sig.	.001	.083	.354
Agreeableness	Pearson Correlation	.426**	.258**	.236**
	Sig.	.000	.000	.001
Negative Emotionality	Pearson Correlation	-.233**	-.291**	-.167*
	Sig.	.001	.000	.020
Open Mindedness	Pearson Correlation	.181*	.451	.078
	Sig.	.012	.480	.282
Conscientiousness	Pearson Correlation	.471**	.214**	.199**
	Sig.	.000	.003	.006

** Correlation is Significant at the 0.001 Level (2-tailed).

** Correlation is Significant at the 0.05 Level (2-tailed).

The big five personality traits were correlated with the specific three dimensions of marital quality which includes consensus, satisfaction and cohesion. From the results obtained, there was a moderate positive correlation between the personality trait conscientiousness and consensus as an aspect of marital quality (quality ($p < 0.05$, $r = .471$). This implied that the more one became conscientious, the more marital quality of consensus increased. Conscientiousness as an aspect of personality therefore seemed to correlate strongly with consensus compared to the other personality traits. On the other hand, however, negative emotionality had a negative relationship with consensus ($p < 0.05$, $r = -.233$). This therefore means that the more one possessed negative emotionality, the less they reached consensus. On the same breadth, negative emotionality had a weak negative relationship with satisfaction ($p < 0.05$, $r = -.291$) and cohesion ($p < 0.05$, $r = -.167$). Notably too was the fact that open mindedness correlated positively with satisfaction in a stronger way compared to all other personality traits ($p < 0.05$, $r = .480$). The more open minded a couple was, the more satisfied they were in terms of marital quality.

DISCUSSION

The study sought to establish the relationship between personality traits and marital quality among the married individuals in Kiambu Catholic Deanery, Archdiocese of Nairobi, Kenya. The results obtained indicated that all the four personality traits correlated positively with marital quality apart from negative emotionality ($p < 0.05$, $r = -.282$). The findings showed that the more extraverted, agreeableness, open-minded and conscientious one was, the higher the marital quality they displayed. However, of all the four personality traits that correlated positively with marital quality, agreeableness scored the highest ($p < 0.05$, $r = -.388$). This therefore, is an indication that agreeable is a key concept in marital quality.

The findings of this study resonated with findings of Okorafor (2017) who conducted studies in Turkey, India and United Kingdom among 627 volunteer married individuals aged between 15 to 82 years and found a positive relationship between the big five personality traits of extraversion, and agreeableness and marital quality. The findings of current study were equally supported by the findings of Fania and Kheirabadi (2011) who found that the married individuals whose stable characteristics of personality traits are extraversion, conscientiousness, openness to experience, and agreeableness had experienced marital quality in their marriage.

Also, the current study findings was consistent with several studies (Dyrenforth, et., al., 2010; Headey, Muffels & Wagne, 2013; Malouff, at al., 2010); Zare, Nasir, Mastor, & Wan Shahrazad, 2013) which reported neuroticism personality trait to have negative impact to marital quality among the married individuals. In addition, the findings were in line with findings of Claxton, O'Rourke, Smith and DeLongis, (2013) who reported that the personality trait of neuroticism is likely to facilitate fewer adaptive as well as additional challenging behaviors among the married individuals resulting to increased discordance. This is likely to distress the married individuals' marital quality, showing a possibility of a negative relationship between personality traits and marital quality among the married individuals.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that there is a correlation between the Big Five Personality Traits and marital quality among the married individuals in Kiambu Catholic Deanery, Archdiocese of Nairobi, Kenya. The study recommends to marriage and family counsellors during pre-marital counselling to psycho-educate the individuals preparing to get married on the role of personality traits in marital quality. Individuals preparing to get married need awareness on how personality traits are likely to affect their marriage in a positive or negative way. The higher institution of higher learning offering degree in marriage and family counselling from different levels need to factor personality traits in the curriculum.

Furthermore, the study recommends to marriage and marriage counsellors to come with ways of helping married individuals possessing the personality trait of neuroticism. The findings have shown that it has a negative influence in marital quality. There is a need of counsellor to employ assessment of neuroticism personality traits and especially among the married individuals whom their marriage relationship is not working. There is a need to include assessment courses in the curriculum of marriage counsellors in order to develop competent counsellor who can conduct assessment with married individuals when need in order offer effective services to their clients.

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