

An Assessment of the Personality Traits of Divorce in Computer Professionals Chennai

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Abstract: Personality is made up of the characteristic patterns of thoughts, feelings and behaviors that make a person unique. In addition to this, personality arises from within the individual and remains fairly consistent throughout life. It is a dynamic and organized set of characteristics possessed by a person that uniquely influences his or her cognitions, emotions, motivations and behaviors in various situations.

Key words: Agreeableness, divorce, extraversion, IT professionals, personality traits

INTRODUCTION

According to the diagnostic and statistical manual of the American Psychiatric Association, personality traits are enduring patterns of perceiving, relating to and thinking about the environment and oneself that are exhibited in a wide range of social and personal contexts. Theorists generally assume that:

- Traits are relatively stable over time, constant, they do not usually change
- Traits differ among individuals, traits influence behavior
- They consistently are used in order to help define people, as a whole
- Traits are also bipolar
- They vary along a continuum between one extreme and the other (e.g., friendly vs. unfriendly) (Feist and Gregory, 2009)
- Lewis Goldberg proposed a 5-dimension personality model, nicknamed the big five
- Openness to experience: The tendency to be imaginative, independent and interested in variety vs. practical, conforming and interested in routine
- Conscientiousness: The tendency to be organized, careful and disciplined vs. disorganized, careless and impulsive
- Extraversion: The tendency to be sociable, fun-loving and affectionate vs. retiring, somber and reserved
- Agreeableness: The tendency to be softhearted, trusting and helpful vs. ruthless, suspicious and uncooperative (Ellis, 2009)
- Neuroticism: The tendency to be calm, secure and self-satisfied vs. anxious, insecure and self-pitying (Antrock, 2008)

Psychologists and sociologists have examined the relationship between personality traits and family outcomes, such as marital satisfaction and fertility traits predict important life outcomes, such as health and longevity, marital success and educational and occupational attainment. Assessing personality of people is very useful as it helps understand them, their traits, biases and their preferences and hence how they may be convinced (play to their preferences and traits).

Lundberg personality inventories are intended to be descriptive of stable differences in individual dispositions. There are many alternative taxonomies but the big five are broadly accepted as a consistent and reliable categorization of attributes that people find important and useful in daily interactions (Goldberg, 1981). In an evolutionary context, the 5 factor model may identify individual variations on behavioral dimensions that are significant to human social acceptance and status in groups.

IT/ITeS industry in India got tremendous boost in the past decade due to factors like liberalization and globalization of the Indian economy coupled with favorable government policies. This sector of the sunshine industry brought a new work environment and sea changes in the employment trends. Service providers characterized this sector by adhering to strict deadlines set by their customers, working in different time zones, interdependency in teams, multitasking, increased interaction with offshore clients and extended work hours (thefreelibrary.com).

With the new strains and challenges that have emerged for the Indian family, the latter has been going through a new kind of transition. It has been wavering between traditional and Western models. The fast-changing social and family environment has thrown

up new challenges, particularly to the young people, like growing instability, lack of communication, changing attitude towards sex, changing roles of husband and wife and tensions of fast life.

All these have resulted in the lack of harmony among married couples. The decline in harmony can be associated with values that emphasize individualistic, materialistic and self-oriented goals over family well-being.

Objectives:

- To assess the level of personality traits for divorce among computer professionals those who have applied for divorce (litigants)
- To associate the personality traits with the demographic variables

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research design: Research approach selected for the present study was a descriptive survey, as it was aimed to assess the personality traits of computer professionals those who have applied for divorce.

Setting: The study was conducted at Family Courts, Madras High Court.

Sample: Information technology professionals those who have applied for divorce for the first time from their life partner in Family Court at Madras High Court.

Sample size: A total of 399 computer professionals those who have applied for divorce (litigants) were selected to explore the reasons and to assess the personality traits. Non-probability convenient sampling technique was adopted to select the samples.

Description of the tool: Part 1 enlists the demographic profile of the litigants which includes monthly income (in Rs. per month), type of family, type of marriage and duration of marriage.

Part 2 is the assessment of personality trait by a standardized scale named Neo five factor inventory by Costa and Mc Crae (1992) which is named as NEO-Five-Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI). The NEO-FFI (Costa and McCrae, 1992) contains 60 including both positive and negative statements (12 questions per domain) representing the 5 personality domains namely: Neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness. Each of these 5 domains has 6 facets.

Research ethics was considered throughout the study. Participant’s information, consent form obtained

and confidentiality was assured. Analysis was carried out by both descriptive and inferential statistical method. Frequency and percentage distribution was used to assess the demographic variables. Mean, standard deviation and ANOVA were adopted to assess the personality trait with the demographic variable.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Part 1; demographic variables: Regarding the monthly income, nearly 46% of litigant’s family income was >50,000 Rs. 43% of the litigant’s income was between Rs. 10,000-50,000. It revealed that more number of litigant’s income was >50,000 per month (Fig. 1).

The type of family revealed that out of 412 litigants nearly 59% were residing as nuclear family and joint family contributed about 40%. Among the study population most of the litigants were from nuclear family (Fig. 2).

As far as, the type of marriage is concerned nearly 77% of the arranged marriages had opted for marital disharmony whereas only 10% of the love marriages applied for divorce and 11.7% of the marriages were love cum arranged (Fig. 3).

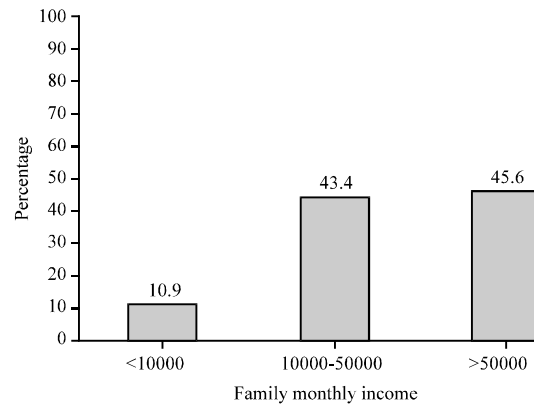


Fig. 1: Percentage distribution of family income (N = 399)

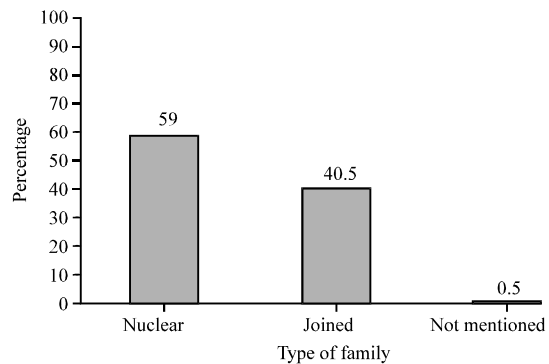


Fig. 2: Percentage distribution of type of family (N = 399)

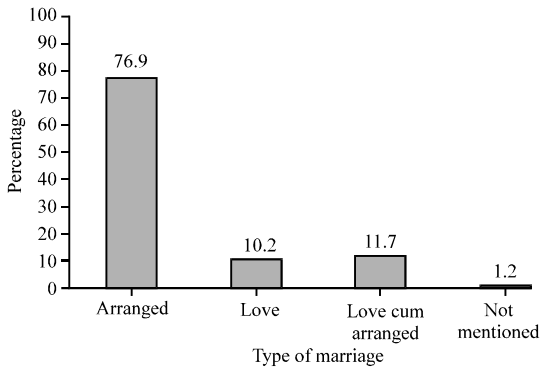


Fig. 3: Percentage distribution of type of marriage (N = 399)

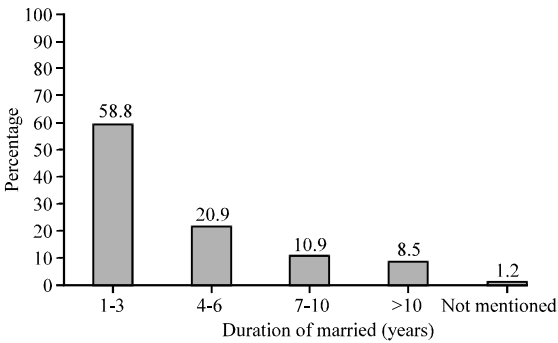


Fig. 4: Percentage distribution of duration of marital life (N = 399)

In case of duration of marital life, about 60% of the litigants had applied for divorce within 1-3 years of married life and 25% of the litigants have approached the court for divorce in their 4-6 years of marital life. Results indicated that almost 81% of the marital discord was filed at the very early stage of the life, i.e., between 1-7 years of married life (Fig. 4).

Levels of personality assessment: Based on the personality traits, the 5 traits are classified as very high, high, average and low or very low. The classifications were done using international scoring and classification procedures given in Neo five factor. Classification of the personality traits of the divorce litigants of the present study is described below.

Nearly 96% of the divorce litigants have very low conscientiousness. People who score low on conscientiousness tend to be more laid back, less goal-oriented and less driven by success, they also are more likely to engage in antisocial and criminal behavior (Ozer and Benet-Martinez, 2006).

About 93% of the IT professionals who opted for divorce have low or very low extraversion. The trait of

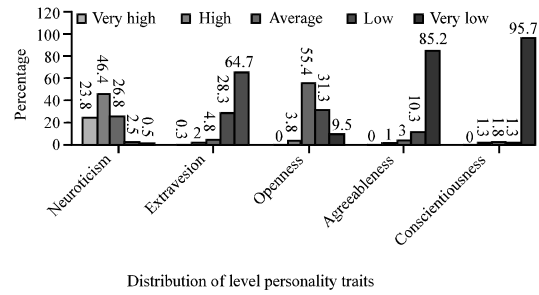


Fig. 5: Percentage distribution of personality traits (N = 399)

extraversion-introversion is a central dimension of human personality theories. Extraversion and introversion are typically viewed as a single continuum. Thus to be high on one, it is necessary to be low on the other. Introverts tend to be more reserved and less outspoken in groups (Fig. 5).

They often take pleasure in solitary activities, such as reading, writing, using computers (Thompson, 2008).

Nearly 87% of divorce litigants had average or low level of openness where openness trait features characteristics, such as imagination and insight and those high in this trait also tend to have a broad range of interests. Low levels of openness indicate narrow level of imagination and insight and lesser range of interest.

Agreeableness trait assesses trust, altruism, kindness, affection and other pro social behaviors. Nearly 85% of the respondents of the present study have very low level of agreeableness. Individuals high in the trait, neuroticism, tend to experience emotional instability, anxiety, moodiness, irritability and sadness. Nearly 70% of divorce litigants have high or very high level of neuroticism.

Demographic variables (vs.) personality traits: ANOVA carried out to compare the mean difference between the traits and it revealed that family income does have significant difference on traits, such as neuroticism (0.010) extraversion (0.005) and agreeableness (0.013).

Tamhane's post hoc test was carried out, since the variances were not homogeneous. Among the significant personality traits, neuroticism scored highest mean score in family monthly income of >50,000 category when compared with other two income category (<10,000 and 10,000-50,000).

Hence, it is inferred that respondents hailing from families with higher income tend to have higher level of neuroticism and lower level of agreeableness and conscientiousness. Type of family did not demonstrate any significance on the 5 personality traits assessed.

Table 1: Married of 10 years neuroticism (N = 399)

Personality traits	Duration of marital life (years)								One-way ANOVA	
	1-3		4-6		7-10		>10			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F	p-value
Neuroticism	26.16	6.44	26.43	5.58	27.09	5.93	29.31	6.80	2.709	0.045
Extraversion	17.15	5.91	16.77	5.77	16.91	5.78	14.69	5.81	1.801	0.147
Openness	24.27	4.41	24.35	4.27	24.58	4.15	23.37	5.12	0.556	0.645
Agreeableness	19.21	6.26	19.11	6.28	18.56	5.57	15.63	5.97	3.520	0.015
Conscientiousness	13.67	7.35	13.56	6.93	13.30	6.50	9.97	7.47	2.742	0.043

People who are married for >10 years have high level of neuroticism, low levels of agreeableness and conscientiousness, such as neuroticism (0.045), agreeableness (0.015) and conscientiousness (0.043) (Table 1).

To explore, further when there is significant difference, post hoc tests Tukey’s B, Tmahen’s tests were carried out and the results were neuroticism was found to be significantly higher (29.31) among the litigants who had married for >10 years compared to those who were married for 6 or less number of years.

Tukey’s B demonstrated that agreeableness trait was found to be low among litigants of having >10 years of marital life. Regarding the conscientiousness trait it was found to be significantly lower (9.97) among the couples of >10 years of their marital life whereas it was significantly higher among the couples who have 1-10 years of married life.

Amato and Previti (2003) found that personality problems were the fifth most commonly blamed causes of divorce and were cited by approximately 10% of divorced individuals.

Among the personality variables that have been considered, as predictors of divorce and relationship dissolution, neuroticism a generalized tendency to experience negative effect, such as fear, sadness, embarrassment, anger and guilt has gained the strongest empirical support (Karney and Bradbury, 1995).

Higher levels of neuroticism have been consistently linked to elevated rates of divorce. Kelly and Conley (1987)’s impressive longitudinal study that followed 300 couples over nearly 50 years demonstrated that neuroticism at the start of the study was associated with subsequent divorce. Kurdek (1993) replicated these findings in a 5 year longitudinal study, as did Jocklin *et al.* (1996) in their genetic analysis of factors affecting divorce risk.

However, other researchers have failed to find an association between neuroticism and divorce in longitudinal studies of marital stability (Bentler and Newcomb, 1978). Similarly in a 4 year longitudinal study, Karney and Bradbury (1997) found that although,

neuroticism was associated with initial levels of marital satisfaction, it was not related to marital dissolution or trajectories of marital satisfaction.

Alternatively, neurotic individuals may be difficult to live with and/or may easily give up on marriage (Kurdek, 1993). Low levels of agreeableness and high levels of extraversion have also been considered, as predictors of divorce and relationship dissolution.

Present study concluded that among the demographic variables monthly income was statistically significant with the neuroticism trait. Similarly, duration of marital life is also significant with the traits of neuroticism, agreeableness and conscientiousness.

CONCLUSION

The present was under taken with a aim to know the role of personality traits in marital split. However, this attempt can be a base for further research to progress exclusively to study about each personality traits in detail.

LIMITATIONS

The study subject included were both the applicants and or the respondents who were willingly involved in personality assessment. It did not focus on either the husbands or wives exclusively.

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