Reviewer’s report

Title: The Relationship between Personality Traits and Marital Satisfaction: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis

Version: 0 Date: 10 Dec 2019

Reviewer: Rebekka Weidmann

Reviewer's report:

I had the opportunity to review the article "The Relationship between Personality Traits and Marital Satisfaction: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis". It's an important endeavor to summarize the link between Big Five traits and marital satisfaction in a circumscribed culturally homogeneous sample. I do have, however, some minor and major comments that are hopefully helpful for the authors when revising their manuscript.

Abstract
I was surprised to see a positive correlation with marital satisfaction and neuroticism. Given that the authors conclude that neuroticism is linked to lower marital satisfaction, I think a negative sign is missing: r = 0.439 should be -0.439. The same applies for the confidence interval. This point applies throughout the paper. Since in the total sample, the z-score of neuroticism was below 0, it should also be negative for the R and the confidence interval for all effects listed for neuroticism.

Intro
- I appreciate that the authors see marriage as sacred. I do, however, think that not all see marriage this way, especially in more secular countries. Maybe a reformulation could help with this issue: "Marriage can be seen as a sacred agreement through which the family unit is created."
- The definition of marital satisfaction can be shortened. The authors use multiple references to define what marital satisfaction is. After reading the text, however, I am not yet sure, which definition they used. Is marital satisfaction a composite of emotional and sexual satisfaction or is it commitment and adjustment? I think it would be useful if the authors made use of one current definition that also matched the ENRICH measure of marital satisfaction.
- Could the authors provide a reference that today researchers agree on the five-factor model of personality? (page 1, line 51 and following).
- Could the authors provide a reference for the statement that "People with different personality traits can have different attitudes toward different aspects of marital satisfaction?" In addition, could the authors explain what these differing attitudes mean for marital satisfaction? Maybe provide an example?
- Why is it important to review the evidence on Iranian samples only? Do the authors expect that Iranian couples are different from other couples studied in the social sciences? And how were the results inconsistent in the past? Null effects or opposite effects?
- The authors also mention that there also studies with Iranian samples that have focused on one specific trait, why where these studies not included in the current meta-analysis?

Methods
- The availability of the full-text version of the paper depends on the access that the university has. Did the authors also contact the unavailable paper's authors to receive the full-text version? Because if these six studies could be included into the present meta-analysis, it would be a great
addition.
- Can the authors provide more information about the rating of the quality of the studies? When does a paper receive the rating of 0, when of 3? I also am not sure what the authors mean with comparison group, did the study have to have a comparison group and if yes, what kind of comparison group?
- Since SEM can also stand for structural equation modelling and the authors do not reuse the abbreviation, I think they can omit it.
- Can the authors provide references regarding their cut-off criteria? (chi-square of .01, I squared value of 25%, etc?

Results
- How were the regions classified?
- Maybe this information is somewhere and I have not seen it, but I would recommend to list this information in the tables and see whether the correlations are lower in longitudinal studies compared to cross-sectional studies.

Discussion
- Page 10, line 48 and 49: To describe people with high levels of neuroticism, I would recommend formulations like: "Because these people tend to be moody and irritable,..." or "Because these people are more likely to be moody and irritable,..." Not every neurotic person is always moody or irritable, but they tend to experience these feelings more often. I think a more cautious language would improve the discussion greatly.
- Page 10, line 50: what is meant with "proper levels of marital satisfaction"? Do the authors mean higher levels of marital satisfaction?
- When referring to the effects reported in the meta-analysis of Malouff et al. (2010) it needs to be mentioned that these effects only refer to partner or interpersonal effects between partners. These correlations are usually smaller because they do not share method variance with the outcome variable (also see Orth, 2013).
- I think there are various reasons why people with higher levels of neuroticism tend to experience lower levels in relationship satisfaction. The interpretation of Taraghijah is one of them. Others include negative interactions (Donnellan, Assad, Robins, & Conger, 2007), negative interpretation of ambiguous situations (Finn, Mitte, & Neyer, 2013), higher levels of aggressive externalization and more negative interpersonal behavior during conflict (Vater & Schröder-Abé. 2015), lower sexual satisfaction (Fisher & McNulty, 2008), and so forth. Maybe the authors can either indicate that the argument of Taraghijah is one of many reasons or the authors could add more possible interpretations.
- Generally, when the authors state which correlation is higher than another, I wonder whether they tested this for significance or whether they are just a ocularly different? I think a clear statement would be helpful. I would prefer to test statistically whether the correlation coefficients differ.
- How would health care officials take appropriate measures to strengthen the marital relationship of Iranian couples? Given that there are bidirectional links between personality and relationships (Neyer, Mund, Zimmermann, & Wrzus, 2014) I would be cautious in stating that personality would be the place to improve couple well-being. I think targeting relationship processes would be beneficial to improve couple well-being and maybe even enable personality development (see for instance Finkel et al., 2013; Finn et al., 2015).

References
- The references only display the first 33 of the total 40 references.

Smaller issues
- Page 1, line 16: Two-third should say two-thirds
- Page 1, line 22: Marital satisfaction (2, 4). ◇ is this a title or is the sentence not finished?
- Page 1, line 29: martial should be marital
- Page 1, line 31: a couple experiences. The s is missing after experience.
- Unfortunately, I find many smaller mistakes like the ones mentioned above and I would recommend that the paper is thoroughly proofread upon resubmission.
- Generally, I would omit the word "believe" in scientific language. In the instances where it is used, it could be clarified whether it's a hypothesis of the cited authors or whether it is a claim based on evidence.

Literature mentioned

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

No

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes
Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I am able to assess the statistics

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Needs some language corrections before being published

Declaration of competing interests
Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

1. Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

4. Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?

6. Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?

If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.

I declare that I have no competing interests

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal. I understand that my name will be included on my report to the authors and, if the manuscript is accepted for publication, my named report including any attachments I upload will be posted on the website along with the authors' responses. I agree for my report to be made available under an Open Access Creative Commons CC-BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). I understand that any comments which I do not wish to be included in my named report can be included as confidential comments to the editors, which will not be published.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal