



THE PREDICTION OF PRE-MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIPS IN TURKISH UNIVERSITY STUDENTS THROUGH FIVE FACTOR PERSONALITY DIMENSIONS*

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze how five factor personality dimensions predict pre-marriage relationships of university students. 93 (68.9%) female and 42 (31.1%) male students participated into the study. The participants of the study include a total of 135 1st-4th year students studying at Kırıkkale University during the spring 2010-2011 academic year. The data of the study were obtained through the use of Pre-Married Relationships Evaluation Scale and Personality Test Based on Adjectives (ABPT). The data were analyzed through using of multiple regression analysis method. The study revealed that extroversion, agreeableness, emotional instability/neuroticism, openness to experience and conscientiousness personality dimensions of the five factor theory explain the pre-marriage relationships of university students.

Keywords: university students; pre-marriage relationships; personality type; five factor

Introduction

Humans are social beings. Flirtation, which is an important aspect of social development during youth, are essential in that they allow adolescents to better know and express themselves, while also preparing them for marriage.

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Duran and Hamamcı (2010) observed that friendships with persons of the opposite gender provide both positive and negative experiences to individuals by allowing them to see and test first-hand the problems they might later encounter during marriage, and to know someone intimately.

The relationship is one of the factors determining the process of personality. Özabacı (2004) described the impact of personality on the way relations begin, how relations are maintained, and how problems are tackled in relations. There are various studies examining the manipulating behaviors exhibited by different personality types, the structure of relationships, and the predisposition of individuals to unfaithful behavior. The results of these studies indicate that personality types have a significant effect on all these factors and how relationships are experienced, and that they consequently should be assessed to gain an insight on the course of relationships (Buss, 1992; Orzeck & Lung, 2005).

One of the Big Five personality dimensions, openness to experience is known as both intellect and culture and its facets are related to imagination, curiosity, broad-mindedness and artistic sensitivity. Agreeableness dimension is known as pleasantness and its facets are related to kindness, flexibility, trust, good nature, cooperation, forgiveness and empathy. Conscientiousness dimension is known as trustworthiness, prudence and compliance, its facets reflect both trustworthiness (for example; attention, consideration, dutifulness, orderliness, competence, being planned) and willpower (for example; industriousness, achievement, centralism and determination). At the same time emotional instability / neuroticism being emotionally unstable and extroversion regarding temperament of an individual. Each dimension is considered as continuity (Viswesvaran & Ones, 2003). When five factor personality dimensions literature is reviewed, in their study, Schmitt, Allik, McCrae, Benet-Martinez, Alcalay, Ault, et al. (2007) found that self-esteem, socio-sexuality and national personality profiles of university students predict emotional instability/neuroticism, extroversion, openness to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness dimensions. In their meta-analysis study, Fuller and Marler (2009) determined that extroversion, openness to experience, conscientiousness and emotional instability/neuroticism dimensions of the five factors are the prospective predictor of the personality. At the same time there are also studies into the correlation between big five personality dimensions and cross-cultural comparisons (Rodriguez & Church, 2003), and personality styles (Lindley &

Borgen, 2000), self-esteem (Erdle & Rushton, 2011); and the experiences in the past (Zhang & Howell, 2011).

Factors which determine the course of a relationship, such as how the relationship begins and continues, how the individuals adapt, and whether they enjoy the relationship, are all shaped by personality (Özabacı, 2004). In this context, we investigated the predictive effect of the classical personality types - which are based on the frequently used five-factor personality model whose reliability has, as described by Pervin and Cervone (2010), been universally tested and confirmed - on premarital relationships to evaluate the effect of different personality types, determine how healthier relationships can be formed, and to shed further light on the nature premarital relationships. In other words, we examined whether personality types have influence on premarital relationships. Within the frame of this study, the thoughts of university regarding premarital relationships was evaluated with respect to the predictive power of the classical personality types, and the relationship between premarital relations and the five-factor personality traits was examined.

Method

In this study, a convenience sampling method (Wallen & Fraenkel, 2001; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007) was used by the researcher, who involved the participants who were available during the course of the study. This study was designed as a cross-sectional study.

Participants

The sampling group consisted of 190 1st -4th year students studying at Kırıkkale University Faculty of Arts and Sciences during the spring 2010-2011 academic years. However, the data gathered from 55 respondents was excluded from the analysis due to incorrect or missing marking, therefore the analysis was conducted using a 135-person data set. The number of female students participating in the study was 93 (68.9%) and the number of male students participating in the study was 42 (31.1%).

Research instruments

Personality Test Based on Adjectives (ABPT): Developed by Bacanlı, İlhan and Aslan (2009) Personality Test based on Adjectives (*ABPT*) is a Likert

type scale consisting of 40 pairs of adjectives which can be graded between 1-7. *ABPT* is composed of five dimensions; extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional instability/neuroticism and openness to experience. Five dimensions explain 52.63 % of the variance of *ABPT*. The factor loadings of the five dimensions vary between .36 and .79. Test-retest reliability coefficient was found .85 for extroversion, .86 for agreeableness, .71 for conscientiousness, .85 for emotional instability/neuroticism and .68 for openness to experience. Meanwhile Cronbach Alpha coefficient was found .89 for extroversion, .87 for agreeableness, .88 for conscientiousness, .73 for emotional instability/neuroticism/neuroticism, and .80 for openness to experience.

The Premarital Relationship Assesment Scale: Developed by Kalkan and Kaya (2007) *The Development of Premarital Relationship Assesment Scale* is a Likert type scale consisting of 34 items which can be graded between 1-5. Test-retest reliability coefficient was found 0.72 ($p < .01$). The Premarital Relationship Assesment Scale correlate 0.48 ($p < .01$) with Relationship Happiness Questionnaire. The factor analysis showed that there were five factors explaining 42.99% of total variance of the scale. Meanwhile Cronbach Alpha coefficient regarding the internal consistency was found 0.86.

Data analysis

In this study, the explanation level of five factor personality dimensions of pre-marriage relationships was analyzed. Therefore, multiple regression analysis method was used in this study. This study also involves descriptive statistics regarding different variables. Data analysis was carried out through SPSS 18 package programmes.

Results and discussion

The findings and the correlations of variations among themselves were analyzed in the frame of multiple regression analysis. In Table 1, the correlations between the five dimensions of the Personality Test Based on Adjectives (*ABPT*), extraversion, agreeableness, responsibility, emotional instability/neuroticism, and openness to experience; and premarital relationship assesment are given.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics

	Statistical Values	
	Ortalama	Standart Sapma
Extraversion	48.67	9.10
Agreeableness	49.11	8.33
Emotional instability/Neuroticism	24.19	7.79
Openness to experience	42.88	6.89
Conscientiousness	38.88	7.09
Premarital relationship assesment	133.80	16.63

As can be seen in Table 1, the Personality Test Based on Adjectives (ABPT) regarding the participants involved in this study, the mean for extraversion is 48.67 and the SD is 9.10, the mean for agreeableness is 49.11 and the SD is 8.33, the mean for emotional instability/neuroticism is 24.19 and the SD is 7.79, the mean for openness to experience is 42.88 and the SD is 6.89, the mean for conscientiousness is 38.88 and the SD is 7.09. For premarital relationship assesment, the mean is 133.80 and the SD is 16.63.

Table 2. Results of Multiple Regression Analysis

Dimension	R ²	F	β	t
Premarital relationship assesment Extraversion	0.07	9.18**	0.25	3.03
Premarital relationship assesment Agreeableness	0.03	4.65*	0.18	2.16
Premarital relationship assesment Emotional instability/Neuroticism	0.08	11.23**	-0.28	-3.35
Premarital relationship assesment Openness to experience	0.04	5.89*	0.21	2.43
Premarital relationship assesment Conscientiousness	0.07	10.35*	0.27	3.22

Note: * p<.05; **p<.01

In Table 2, in the second step of the multiple regression analysis, the five dimensions of the Personality Test Based on Adjectives (ABPT), which were extraversion, agreeableness, responsibility, openness to experience, and emotional instability/neuroticism were evaluated. In the model, which was

established to evaluate whether these dimensions predicted extraversion ($\beta=0.25$ $p<.00$) was found to have a positive and significant effect on premarital relationship assesment ($R=.25$; $R^2=.07$; $F_{(1, 133)}=9.18$; $p<.00$). Agreeableness ($\beta=0.18$; $p<.00$) had a positive and significant effect on premarital relationship assesment ($R=.18$; $R^2=.03$; $F_{(1, 133)}=4.65$; $p<.05$). Emotional instability/neuroticism ($\beta=-.28$; $p<.00$) had a negative and significant effect on the premarital relationship assesment ($R=.28$; $R^2=.08$; $F_{(1, 133)}=11.23$; $p<.00$). Openness to experience ($\beta=.21$; $p<.05$) affect premarital relationship assesment ($R=.21$; $R^2=.04$; $F_{(1, 133)}=5.89$; $p<.05$). Conscientiousness ($\beta=.27$; $p<.00$) had a positive and significant effect on premarital relationship assesment ($R=.27$; $R^2=.07$; $F_{(1, 133)}=10.35$; $p<.05$).

Discussion

This study investigated the thoughts and assessments of university students on premarital relations along with their personality. The study results indicated that the extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional instability/neuroticism and openness to experience dimensions of the five factor personality model largely and significantly explained the premarital relations of university students. In this section of the manuscript, study findings are discussed in light of the literature.

A review of the literature shows that agreeableness, openness to experience and extraversion generally have a positive correlation with relationship and marriage satisfaction, while emotional instability/neuroticism has a negative correlation with relationship and marriage satisfaction (Dorros, Hanzal, & Segrin, 2007; White, Hendrick, & Hendrick, 2004). Goodboy and Booth-Butterfield (2009) identified a significant difference between the personality types of the five factor theory with regards to level of intimacy they prefer in their romantic relationships. In romantic relations, individuals with emotional instability/neuroticism personality type generally wish for greater intimacy and closeness than is ideal. On the other hand, individuals with the agreeable personality type generally prefer for less intimacy or closeness than is ideal. It was also observed that individuals with emotional instability/neuroticism personality type exhibit uncontrolled emotions associated with anxiety and isolation, and that they have greater tendency for negative experiences. Thus, it is possible to see that there are various studies with finding indicating that five-factor personality types have a significant

effect on relationships. The results of the present study are generally in agreement with the finding of the abovementioned studies. In contrast, Aydođdu (2010) described that personality types do not have a significant effect of romantic relationships.

Cramer (1993) determined that extraversion personality type was associated with inconsistency in marriage relationships. White, Hendrick, and Hendrick (2004) determined that the extraversion personality type is a predictor of sincerity in relations. The study of GÜngör and Cihangir (2007) demonstrated that agreeableness and emotional instability/neuroticism have an indirect effect of marriage satisfaction. On the other hand, in their study investigating unfaithful behavior and personality types, Orzeck and Lung (2005) determined that the extraversion and openness to experience personality types were significantly overrepresented in the group with individuals exhibiting unfaithful behavior, while the conscientiousness type personality was significantly overrepresented in the group of individuals who avoided unfaithful behavior. Also, this study can be repeated on a sampling group who have already married couples and it can be tested whether the findings of the study to be conducted will support the findings of this study.

In their meta-analysis study examining the predictive effectiveness of the different types of attachment and personality traits on the nature of relationships, Nofle and Shaver (2005) determined that types of attachment has greater predictive power than personality types. In this context, including the “type of attachment” factor in future studies will allow for more comprehensive studies that will help enrich the literature on this subject.

Wang (2008) determined that the agreeableness personality trait among university students was positively associated with state and trait forgiveness. Emotional instability/neuroticism, on the other hand, was found to be negatively associated with state and trait forgiveness. Furthermore, it was determined that the extraversion, openness to experience and conscientiousness personality traits were not associated with state and trait forgiveness.

The study results indicate that personality type had an important influence on how university students viewed premarital relationships. Based on this observation, a number of recommendations can be put forward. First of all, personality traits should be taken into consideration when organizing the content of premarital educational programs. This study was performed on university students; as such, the study could be repeated with individuals of

different age groups, especially with middle-aged and elder adults individuals. Studies where couples assess one another's personality traits might also contribute to the literature.

The most important limitation of this study was that it was conducted on a limited population of university students. Future studies should be performed with a larger number of university students, which will contribute to the literature and help assess whether the results of the present study were valid. In conclusion, personality traits play an important role in the way university students view premarital relations. Future studies could be performed by including different variables into the study methods.

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