

## **The Relationship Between Affective Temperaments, Emotional Expressivity and Marital Adjustment in Women**

**Yazdan Hossein Zadeh<sup>1,2\*</sup>, Akbar Atadokht<sup>3</sup>**

*1. Department of Psychology, Ardabil Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Ardabil, Iran*

*2. Department of Psychology, Ardabil Branch, Islamic Azad University, Ardabil, Iran*

*3. Department of Psychology, University of Mohaghegh Ardabili, Ardabil, Iran*

*Corresponding Author: Yazdan Hossein Zadeh*

**K E Y W O R D S:** Affective temperaments, emotion, emotional expressivity, marital adjustment.

**ABSTRACT:** This research was carried out to investigate the relationship between affective temperaments, emotional expressivity and marital adjustment in women. It is a descriptive correlational research. The statistical population consisted of all the women visiting the health centers of the Iranian city of Rasht in the second quarter of 2015, out of which, 123 individuals were selected as the statistical sample using simple random sampling. For data collection, the Berkeley emotional expressivity questionnaire, affective temperaments questionnaire and dynamic adjustment scale (DAS) were used. The research data were analyzed using Pearson's correlation coefficient and multi-regression. The results showed that the components of irritability and anxiety had a significant negative relationship with marital adjustment. Also, among the emotional expressivity components, positive expressiveness had a significant positive relationship with marital adjustment while intensity of behavior and expressiveness had a significant negative relationship with marital adjustment. According to the results, irritability 0.23, hyperthermia 0.33, anxiety 0.26 and positive expressiveness 0.17 can predict marital adjustment. Therefore, it can be said that the variables of affective temperaments and emotional expressivity are among the variables related to marital adjustment in women.

### **Introduction**

Marital adjustment is a multi-dimensional term that clarifies multi-levels of marriage. Marital adjustment is a method with which, married people individually adjust to each other for continuity of marriage and is one of the most important factors in determining the stability and continuity of married life. Various research were done to identify factors influencing the adjustment or non-adjustment of couples (Nabizadeh Chiyane et al. 2014). Accordingly, various factors were identified such as individual factors, socio-cultural factors, current status of life, interaction and interpersonal processes. Overall, the existing evidence shows that personality factors are effective experimental predictive components for marital adjustment and stability, and the existence of relationships between personality factors and marital efficiency of couples was confirmed using various longitudinal and cross-sectional designs (Moin, Ghiyasi, Masmui, 2011).

One of the individual traits that may influence marital adjustment, is affective temperament of couples. Temperament, is the relative inherent and fundamental inclination of people which underlies and regulates their behavior and is natural (Rimer et al. 2010). According to Cloninger's view (1991) with an emphasis on biological parameters, personality consists of temperament and nature. Cloninger has proposed his neuro-biological model which are temperament systems in brain having functional organization and consist of various and independent systems for activation, continuation and behavioral retention in responding to certain groups of drivers. He introduced the four dimensions of novelty seeking, harm avoidance, reward, dependence and persistence for temperament. Rimer et al. (2010) introduced five categories of people's affective temperaments including, periodic temperaments, depression, irritability and anxiety which can lead to the appearance of mood and emotional disorders. Lesli et al (2005), in their investigation results said that emotional arousal (related to affective temperaments) of spouses, have a negative effect on their marital adjustment. Bakhshande (2000), in a research showed that there is a significant relationship between affective, emotional factors and marital adjustment. Hafezi and Jameinezhad (2011), in a study investigated the relationship between positive emotion, negative emotion and marital satisfaction. The results showed that positive emotion has a significant positive relationship and negative emotion has a significant negative relationship with marital satisfaction.

Another individual trait that can have a significant role in marital adjustment is expression of emotion. Emotions have a high quality such that they can provoke positive or negative reaction in people. If they are tailored to the situation, they lead to positive reaction otherwise negative reaction (Heidari, 2011). When emotional data cannot be understood and evaluated in the process of cognitive processing, people will suffer emotional and cognitive depression which may disrupt the organization of their emotions and cognitions. People who can recognize their emotions and positively express their

emotional states, are more successful at adapting to their environment and other people (Besharat, 2008). Athar (2014), in his study results stated that regulation and expression of emotions has a significant effect on marital adjustment and can predict it. Barazandelegha (2003), in a research showed that communicational standards (related to expression of emotion) are related to marital adjustment. Also, Sorap and Asli (2014) in a study showed that men and women with higher expression of emotion, had more marital adjustment.

Finally, given that experts of family issues and relationships between couples refer to communicational issues and human relations in a family as the cause for mental health, investigation and research on factors that threaten the human relations in a family seem quite essential. The present research was done on this same subject with the purpose of investigating the relationship between affective temperaments, emotional expressivity and marital adjustment.

**Methodology**

This is a descriptive correlational research. The statistical population of the research includes all the married women visiting the health centers of the Iranian city of Rasht in the second quarter of 2015, the number of whom according to the health center is 190. 123 individuals were chosen out of them using simple random sampling based on Morgan's table, as the statistical sample. For selection of statistical sample and research implementation, after receiving the required permissions, we visited the health centers and asked the female visitors to participate in the research. The research data were analyzed using hypothesis testing, Pearson's correlation test and multi-regression analysis and the statistical software SPSS. The data collection tools included the following questionnaires:

***Dynamic Adjustment Scale (DAS)***

This scale is a 32-question tool for evaluation of marital relationship quality in wife or husband's view or the couple's view that live together. It is possible to use this tool for measuring the overall satisfaction in an intimate relationship by acquiring the total score. Factor analysis shows that this scale measures four dimensions of a relationship, which are: mutual satisfaction, mutual correlation, mutual agreement and expression of love. By applying some changes to these tools they can also be used for interviewing. The total scale score with a 0.96 Cronbach's Alpha has a significant internal consistency. The internal consistency of the scales ranges from good to excellent: mutual satisfaction = 0.96, mutual correlation = 0.81, mutual agreement = 0.90 and expression of love = 0.73. Also this scale was initially checked using logical validity of content. Marital adjustment scale with the power to distinguish married and divorced couples in every question, has showed its validity for the identified groups. This scale also enjoys concurrent validity, and is correlated with "Locke-Wallace marital adjustment test" (Sanayi, 1995).

***Berkeley emotional expressivity questionnaire***

This is a 16-item tool which measures emotional expressiveness in a 7 point Likert scale from 1 (totally disagree) to 7 (totally agree). Of course in the questions, 3, 8 and 9, scoring is done reversed as 7 (totally disagree) to 1 (totally agree). This questionnaire, consists of the 3 scales of intensity of behavior, negative expressiveness and positive expressiveness. The whole questionnaire, shows a high internal stability and has a good test-retest reliability (Groth & John, 1997). Convergent and divergent validity of each subscale of this questionnaire is reported as good (Groth & John, 1998). In a study performed by Davis, Slovan and Karpinski (2007), the Cronbach's alpha of each subscale of intensity of behavior, negative expressiveness and positive expressiveness were measured as 0.78, 0.63 and 0.63 respectively, and for the entire questionnaire, it was obtained as 0.82.

Tables 1: research variables mean and standard deviation

variable		Mean	Standard deviation
Marital adjustment	Marital satisfaction	32.41	5
	Mutual correlation	15.18	3.30
	Mutual agreement	44.57	4.78
	Expression of love	11	2.16
Emotional expressivity	Positive expressiveness	22.34	3.42
	Intensity of behavior	31.88	5.74
	Negative expressiveness	30.76	6.17
Affective temperaments	Periodic temperaments	6.47	2.26
	Depression	3.21	1.99
	Irritability	3.26	2
	Hyperthermia	4.94	1.72
	Anxiety	1.85	0.87

Table 1 shows the data related to the mean and standard deviation of marital adjustment, life expectancy, emotional expressivity and affective temperaments.

**Affective temperaments questionnaire**

This questionnaire was designed by Charles et al (1992). It has 39 questions which measure hyperthermia and anxiety in the five dimensions of periodic temperaments, depression, irritability and anxiety. The answers in this questionnaire are yes and no, which are accordingly chosen by the examinee. The Cronbach's alpha for this questionnaire was reported as 0.91 by its developers. Also, the Cronbach's alpha for the above components are 0.09, 0.89, 0.89, 0.87 and 0.85 respectively (Charles et al. 1992).

**Findings**

Based on the findings, the mean and (standard deviation) of the respondents' age are 29.30 (and 6.43) and the duration of marriage was 7.70 and (5.23). Also, 28.5% of the research were below high school diploma, 68.3% were undergraduates and high school diploma, and 3.3% were graduates, also, 6.5% of the examinees were self-employed, 90.2% were house wives and 3.3% were of other types.

Table 2: correlation coefficients of affective temperaments with marital adjustment

Affective temperaments	Marital satisfaction		Mutual correlation		Mutual agreement		Expression of love		Marital adjustment	
	r	p	R	P	R	P	R	P	R	p
Periodic temperaments	-0.015	0.868	-0.133	0.141	-0.164	0.070	-0.006	0.949	-0.124	0.173
Depression	**0.280	0.002	**0.361	0.000	**0.301	0.000	**0.252	0.004	-0.168	0.064
Irritability	-0.078	0.394	**0.504	0.000	**0.374	0.000	**0.500	0.000	**0.464	0.000
Hyperthermia	0.072	0.430	**0.390	0.000	0.098	0.280	0.145	0.110	0.000	0.000
anxiety	-0.111	0.220	**0.439	0.000	-0.164	0.070	**0.342	0.001	**0.332	0.000

Table 2 shows that among affective temperaments, irritability and anxiety have a significant negative relationship with marital adjustment, while hyperthermia has a significant positive relationship with marital adjustment and periodic temperaments and depression do not have a significant relationship with marital adjustment.

Table 3: correlation coefficients of affective temperaments with marital adjustment

Emotional expressivity	Marital satisfaction		Mutual correlation		Mutual agreement		Expression of love		Marital adjustment	
	r	p	R	P	R	P	R	P	R	p
Periodic temperaments	0.116	0.202	**0.345	0.001	**0.206	0.001	*0.388	0.001	**0.224	0.001
Depression	-0.096	0.291	**0.354	0.002	**0.302	0.002	-0.454	0.001	**0.293	0.001
Irritability	-0.055	0.543	**0.320	0.001	**0.359	0.001	**0.486	0.001	**0.344	0.001

Table 3 shows that among emotional expressivity, positive expressiveness has a significant positive relationship with marital adjustment and intensity of behavior and negative expressiveness have a significant negative relationship with marital adjustment (p<0.01).

Table (4): multi-regression analysis results of the variables of affective temperaments and emotional expressivity in predicting women's marital adjustment

Model	SS	df	MS	F	P		
regression	5635.53	8	704.44	9.87	0.001		
Remaining	8129.16	114	71.30				
Total	13794.69	122					
Predictive variables	Non-standard coefficients	Standard coefficients	T	P	R	R <sup>2</sup>	ARS
	SE	B	BETA				
Constant	7.85	109.25	0.09	13.90	0.001		
Periodic temperaments	0.538	-0.465	0.301	-0.864	0.389		
Depression	0.758	1.60	-0.516	2.11	0.037		
Irritability	0.518	-2.72	0.233	-5.26	0.001		
Hyperthermia	0.521	1.43	-0.336	2.75	0.007	0.640	0.409
Anxiety	1.014	-4.07	-0.265	-3.55	0.001		
Positive expressiveness	0.411	-0.821	-0.178	-1.99	0.048		
Intensity of behavior	0.264	0.329	0.170	1.24	0.214		
Negative expressiveness	0.223	0.293		1.31	0.190		

The results of table 4 show that the model for prediction of marital adjustment of women by affective temperaments and emotional expressivity is significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). The beta coefficients of the predictive variables also show that out of these variables, irritability 0.23, hyperthermia 0.33, anxiety 0.26 and positive expressiveness 0.17 can predict the significance of the criterion variable.

### **Conclusion**

The present research was carried out to investigate the relationship between affective temperaments, emotional expressivity and marital adjustment in women.

The results showed that out of the affective temperaments, irritability and anxiety have a negative relationship with marital adjustment and there is a significant positive relationship between hyperthermia and marital adjustment. The results were in agreement with the research findings of Lesli et al (2005), Velante et al. (2011) and Lee (2011). Lesli et al (2005) in their results stated that emotional arousal (related to affective temperaments) of spouses, has a negative effect on their marital adjustment. Also, the study of Lee (2011) showed that alexithymia's effect and affective temperaments have a role in marital satisfaction. In the research of Bakhshande (2000), it was shown that there is a significant relationship between affective and emotional factors and marital adjustment. Hafeziand Jameinezhad (2011) in a research showed that positive emotion has a significant positive relationship with marital satisfaction and vice versa. One of the individual traits that can influence marital satisfaction, is couple's affective temperament. Based on Cloninger's (1991) view, with an emphasis on biological parameters, personality consists of temperament and nature. The existence of negative temperaments such as irritability, always results in distress in family and couples. The existence of irritability in couples makes them react to any low tension incident which can further increase the tension and result in marital non-adjustment. Another part of the results showed that out of the emotional expressivity components, positive expressiveness has a significant positive relationship with marital satisfaction and intensity of behavior and negative expressiveness, has a significant negative relationship with marital satisfaction. These results were in agreement with the studies done by Barazandelegha (2005), Athar (2014) and Sorap and Asli (2014). Athar (2014) in his results stated that regulation and expression of emotions, has a significant effect on marital adjustment and can predict it. Barazandelegha (2005), showed in a study that communicational standards (related to expression of emotion) are related to marital adjustment. Also, Sorap and Asli (2014) in a research showed that men and women with high expression of emotion, have a higher marital adjustment.

In describing this relationship it can be said that adjustment with life conditions and marital adjustment, are of the fundamental components of life. Interpersonal relationships play as much an important role in job and friendship as they do in married life. In these relationships, the amount and method of expression of emotion is very important and can highly affect a marital relations.

The last part of the research showed that the model for prediction of women's marital adjustment by affective temperaments and emotional expressivity is significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). The Beta coefficients of the predictive variables also show that out of these variables, the components of irritability 0.23, hyperthermia 0.33, anxiety 0.26 and positive expressiveness 0.17, can predict the significant of marital adjustment.

Finally, it can be said that the variables of affective temperaments and emotional expressivity are of the variables related to marital adjustment in women and can predict them. The statistical sample of this research included the women visiting the health centers of Rasht and caution should be taken in generalization of these findings to other region's women. Therefore, it is recommended that research be conducted in other regions as well. Moreover, given the negative relationship between affective temperaments and marital adjustment in women, it is recommended that authorities, advisers, etc.... prepare plans for training individuals to identify and modify their temperaments and other things. Also, given the relationship between expression of emotion and marital adjustment in women, it is recommended that authorities, advisers etc. prepare plans to train these people to predict other peoples' social behavior, to appropriately express their emotions, to learn how to treat emotions, how to interact with others, etc. Doing so can increase women's marital adjustment.

### **References**

- Athar, A. (2014), predicting marital adjustment based on cognitive emotion regulation strategies in parents having children who suffer from chronic illnesses in Ahvaz. First national congress on healthy family, Tehran, Iran.
- Bakhshande, S. (2000). Investigating the relationship between love and marital satisfaction in married female students. Master's thesis, Islamic Azad University, department of Ahvaz, Iran.
- Barazandelegha, H. (2003). The relationship between communicational standards, early maladaptive schemas and marital adjustment. Master's thesis, faculty of psychology, Ferdowsi University, Mashhad, Iran.
- Beshart MA. [Relation of alexithymia with ego defense styles]. *Journal of fundamentals of mental health* 2008; 10(3): 181-90.
- Cloninger, C. R. (1991). Brain networks underlying personality development. In B.J. Carroll & J. E. Barrett (Eds.), *Psychopathology and the brain*, New York, Raven Press, 183-200.
- Hafezi, F & F, Jameinezhad, (2011). The relationship between love, positive emotion, negative emotion and styles of attachments and marital satisfaction in the employees of National Drilling Company, Khuzestan, Iran. *New findings in psychology*, (1)12, pp52-59.
- Lee Victoria, E. (2011). The impact of alexithymia, emotional intelligence, marital values, and culture on relationship satisfaction. roQuest, UMI Dissertation Publishing.
- Moin, L; Ghiasi, P. & Masmoi, R. (2011). The relationship between hardiness and marital adjustment. *Sociology of Women (Women and Society)*.(4)2. Pp 163-189.

- Moradi, N. (2007), comparing life expectancy and cognitive emotion regulation strategies in female heads of household who are supported by the Relief Committee, and employed women. Counseling psychology master's thesis, Islamic Azad University, Department of Tabriz, Iran.
- Nabizadeh Chyanh, Q., Poursharifi, H., F., AR; Qaderi, Halaleh; Zngkany Ansari, Bahjat and Shir Ali Zadeh, N.. (1393). Comparison of affective temperaments and early maladaptive schemas in patients with borderline personality disorder. Bipolar disorder and normal individuals. 6 (2), pp. 13-28.
- Rihmer, Z. Akiskal, KK. Rihmer, A. & Akiskal, HS. (2010). Current research on affective temperaments. *Curr Opin Psychiatr*, 23(1), 12-8.
- Spotten, A. (2000). Divorce its' causes and consequences in Hindu society. *Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy*, 24(3), 154-158.
- Suri, M and Mousavian, S.F. (2011). Investigating the relationship between expression of emotion and lifestyle with life expectancy in female heads of household. First National Congress on counseling, family and community empowerment of vulnerable groups. (1)6, pp 21-28.
- Vellante, M., Zucca, G., & Preti, A. (2011). Creativity and affective temperaments in non-clinical professional artists: An empirical psychometric investigation. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 135(3), 28-36.