Same Marriage; Two Realities:
Gender Differences in Marriage *

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Abstract

This study aimed to examine gender differences in marriage among Taiwanese couples. Quantitative and cross-sectional data were collected from a community sample of 100 married couples in Taiwan. In general, the Taiwanese participants (85%) expressed satisfaction with their marriage, with men reporting higher satisfaction levels than women. Moreover, the correlation between husband and wife on how they view their relationship in various aspects of their marriage was significant, but it was a low or moderate correlation. This study echoes with previous western findings and demonstrates that there are gender differences in marriage. Husbands and wives have different levels of marital satisfaction.

Keywords: gender differences, marital satisfaction, marriage

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INTRODUCTION

Gender is one of the most frequently replicated demographic variables that seem to have significant effects on marital satisfaction (Karney and Bradbury, 1995). In general, research suggests that males are somewhat more satisfied with their marriages than females (e.g., Fowers, 1991; Ying, 1991; Kaslow, Hansson and Lundblad, 1994), although other studies show that there is little gender differences in marital satisfaction, especially among dual-career couples (e.g. Terry and Scott, 1987). Contrary to some previous research, some researchers have found wives’ satisfaction to be even higher than that of their husband (Clements, Cordova, Markman and Laurenceau, 1997). Therefore, the unique effect of gender remains inconclusive and its importance in predicting marital satisfaction is worth to be examined again.

Similar to many western societies, Taiwan has been transformed in the twentieth century by the impact of industrialization, urbanization, increased education, increased income, and extended contacts with other societies. Adjustments to Taiwan’s social and economic changes have included rapid changes in family structures and processes in Taiwan (Thornton and Lin, 1994). One of the major changes is the increasing proportion of married and educated women entering and staying in the labor force. As a result, their roles as wives and mothers must change and the traditional family norms and values are being challenged (Tallman, Burke and Gecas, 1998). As industrialization and
urbanization proceed, the convergence of eastern and western ideologies in Taiwan has inevitably great impact on marriage, especially the impact on gender differences in marital satisfaction. In light of these considerations, the purpose of this study is to examine whether there are gender differences in marriage among Taiwanese couples. The hypothesis of this study is as follows: There are gender differences in marital satisfaction. Husbands and wives have different levels of marital satisfaction. It is expected that husbands will report greater satisfaction than their wives in this Taiwanese sample.

METHOD

Participants

Participants in this study were 100 married couples (200 spouses) obtained from a non-probability and non-clinical sample in Taiwan. The sources of sample couples included friend-referral and agency-referral. The data collection was accomplished through the help of thirteen trained assistants over a three-month period during the summer of 1998 in Taiwan. Each couple took the same inventory in separate rooms or corners so that they could not discuss it with each other. The location for data collection was decided between the assistant and each couple, depending on the couple’s preference. Group administration was also used.

In terms of the demographic characteristics of the participants, the 100 couples in Taiwan had been married an average of 7.2 years. The
median age for both husbands and wives was between 31 and 35 years old. The majority of the couples (58%) had either one or two children (mean = 1.7), while 35% of the sample did not have children. A large percentage, 80% of the participants lived with their spouses, while 18% of the couples also lived with one of the spouse's parents.

In terms of education, 81% of the participants had at least some college education. Employment-wise, a large proportion were in professional and skilled occupations, with 32.5% of the sample in clerical, sales, and administrative occupations; 29% were in managerial or professional occupations (e.g., teachers, social workers); and 11% were executives, doctors, or lawyers. The mean individual yearly income was around USD $17,000. While 21% responded no religious affiliations, 38.5% were Protestants or Catholics and 37.5% were Buddhists or Taoists. Compared to the population in Taiwan (R.O.C. Executive yuan, 1997), the sample was younger, highly educated, better employed with professional occupations and with slightly higher incomes, and many were Protestants or Catholics.

Measure

This study selected ENRICH, ENriching Relationship Issues, Communication and Happiness inventory (Olson, 1997), to assess marital satisfaction of Taiwanese couples. ENRICH’s reliability and validity have been proven in rigorous research testing (e.g., Powers and Olson, 1989) and in clinical usage. It provides both individual (his and her) perspectives and dyadic measurement in the form of a positive agreement score—a joint assessment which emphasizes the collaborative
nature of marriage. The dyadic score is termed positive couple agreement (PCA) scores and indicates the degree to which the spouses agree in a positive direction on reporting their relationship.

ENRICHT (version 2000) is a 165-item multidimensional marital satisfaction inventory which contains 17 scales, and each scale consists of 10 items except Idealistic Distortion (7 items) and Personality Assessment (8 items). These scales include: Idealistic Distortion, Marriage Satisfaction, Personality Issues, Communication, Conflict Resolution, Financial Management, Leisure Activities, Sexual Relationship, Children and Parenting, Family and Friends, Role Relationship, Spiritual Beliefs, Couple Closeness, Couple Flexibility, Family Closeness, Family Flexibility, and Personality Assessment (see appendix for the description of each scale). In addition, the Personality Assessment scale contains four sub-scales called Self-Confidence, Assertiveness, Avoidance, and Partner Dominance. The Self-Confidence sub-scale has 8 items, while the other three sub-scales share items with other categories.

The ENRICHT inventory was translated and adapted into Chinese by the author for collecting data in Taiwan. The Chinese version of ENRICHT had fairly high internal consistency. The average internal consistency (alpha) across scales of the Chinese ENRICHT was .76, ranging from a low of .51 (Role Relationship) to a high of .85 (Idealistic Distortion and Spiritual Beliefs). The result of each scale was very similar compared to the American sample which had an average alpha reliability of .80 (Olson, 1997). In general, the alpha reliability
procedure supported the internal consistency reliability of the ENRICH inventory (Shen, 2001). In terms of the discriminant validity, overall 90.9% of the male spouses and 80.5% of the female spouses was correctly classified into satisfied or dissatisfied groups. Using couple PCA scores, 96.1% of the couples were correctly classified (Shen, 2001). This finding is consistent with the discriminant validity obtained in the American sample (85-95% accuracy) (Fowers and Olson, 1989). In sum, the alpha reliability tests and the discriminant analyses procedures indicated that the Chinese version of the ENRICH has high levels of internal consistency reliability and discriminant validity.

RESULTS

Hypothesis

There are gender differences in marital satisfaction. Husbands and wives have different levels of marital satisfaction. It is expected that husbands will report greater satisfaction than their wives in this Taiwanese sample.

Results

Two variables were used in the statistical analyses as the dependent variables: the one-items marital satisfaction question (5-point Likert scale) and the 10-items Marriage Satisfaction scale PCA scores. The Marriage Satisfaction scale is part of the ENRICH inventory and consists of ten items assessing ten major domains of the couple’s
relationship. These ten domains include personality issues, communication, conflict resolution, financial management, leisure activities, sexual relationship, children and parenting, family and friends, role relationship, and spiritual beliefs. The PCA score is a percentage score based on the number of responses for which couples agree on each scale. High PCA scores (60 and above out of a possible 100) reflect compatibility and satisfaction with most aspects of the couple’s relationship. Low PCA scores (30 and below) reflect a lack of satisfaction and concern with various aspects of the relationship (Olson, 1997).

The majority (85%) of the sample reported that they were satisfied with their marriage (according to the responses to the one-item question). This finding is consistent with that of many studies conducted in Taiwan (e.g., R.O.C. Executive Yuan, 1998) and with Ying’s findings (1991) on marital satisfaction based on Chinese-Americans. This result might be inflated due to the fact that the sample was a community sample, not a clinical sample, and the fact that there is strong social desirability for marital accord in Chinese culture.

As hypothesized, males were significantly more satisfied than females ($\bar{X} = 4.2$ versus $\bar{X} = 3.9$, $t = 2.67$, $p = .0045$, 1-tailed). With the one-item marital satisfaction question, the correlation between husband’s and wife’s satisfaction with marriage was only .367, indicating a significant but not a highly correlated relationship ($p<.001$). The paired samples t-test with the Marriage Satisfaction scale scores showed similar results: the correlation was .459 ($p<.001$) and the mean
difference was significant ($\bar{X} = 56.9$ versus $\bar{X} = 52.85$, $t = 2.455$, $p = .008$, 1-tailed). This Taiwanese sample confirmed the findings of previous studies that there are gender differences in marital satisfaction and that the husband tends to report a higher level of marital satisfaction than the wife. Therefore, this hypothesis was accepted.

A further paired t-test was done to examine the correlations and mean differences between the husband and the wife among all ENRICH scales. Table 1 presents the outcome. The correlation between husband and wife on each scale was significant, although it was a low or moderate correlation. The average correlation on the ENRICH scale was .45. The significant correlation ranged from .314 (Leisure Activities) to .811 (Spiritual Beliefs) and centered around .40 to .50. The low or moderate correlation indicated that the level of husband and wife agreement was rather low on how they view their relationship in various aspects of their marriage. Only two scales -- Family Closeness and Family Flexibility -- were not significantly correlated which was expected because these two scales were about the families of origin of spouses instead of the couple relationship itself.

In terms of mean differences on scales between the husband and the wife, only the mean scores of the Idealistic Distortion and the Children and Parenting scales were significantly different at the 0.05 level (besides Marriage Satisfaction scale which was already discussed above). The husband reported significantly higher scores on those two scales than the wife did. Idealistic Distortion scale assesses the tendency of individuals to answer personal questions in a socially
Table 1. Correlation and Paired Samples t-test of Couples (Husband vs. Wife) among ENRICH Scales (n = 100, df = 99)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>Paired differences</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>SE</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage Satisfaction</td>
<td>.459*</td>
<td>4.04</td>
<td>16.13</td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td>2.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idealistic Distortion</td>
<td>.473*</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>17.75</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>2.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality Issues</td>
<td>.434*</td>
<td>-3.63</td>
<td>20.22</td>
<td>2.02</td>
<td>-1.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>.529*</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>21.26</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict Resolution</td>
<td>.423*</td>
<td>-2.05</td>
<td>20.15</td>
<td>2.01</td>
<td>-1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Management</td>
<td>.506*</td>
<td>-5.6</td>
<td>21.58</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>-2.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure Activities</td>
<td>.314*</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>27.89</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>1.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Relationship</td>
<td>.526*</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>19.61</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children &amp; Parenting</td>
<td>.722*</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>17.19</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>2.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family &amp; Friends</td>
<td>.410*</td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td>25.77</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Relationship</td>
<td>.466*</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>22.25</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual Beliefs</td>
<td>.811*</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>16.92</td>
<td>1.69</td>
<td>.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple Closeness</td>
<td>.582*</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>17.21</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>1.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple Flexibility</td>
<td>.451*</td>
<td>2.02</td>
<td>19.36</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td>1.04</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family Closeness</td>
<td>.133ns</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>24.44</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>.33</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family Flexibility</td>
<td>.133ns</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>25.12</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>.20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self Confidence</td>
<td>.429*</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>30.67</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assertiveness</td>
<td>.399*</td>
<td>-7.3</td>
<td>20.72</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>-3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoidance</td>
<td>.343*</td>
<td>4.89</td>
<td>26.77</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>1.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner Dominance</td>
<td>.417*</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>23.14</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>1.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td>.450</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ns: not significant at the 0.05 level

*significant at the 0.05 level

desirable manner. High scores indicate that individuals are presenting their relationship in a highly favorable manner. Low scores indicate a more realistic disclosure concerning relationship issues. Children and Parenting scale measures a couple's awareness of the impact of children on their relationship, satisfaction with how parental roles and
responsibilities are defined, compatibility of philosophies toward discipline of children, and so on. Therefore, the significant mean differences on those two scales suggested that the husband were more idealistic about their marriages and more satisfied with the children and parenting issues than the wife were. The fear of losing face might be a powerful motivating force for men’s conforming to social expectations of marital harmony. In addition, as Chinese culture assumes that the wife as mother has the main responsibility for nurturing and caring for children, and that the husband is in a supportive role, the burden of parenting tends to weigh heavily on the wife (Watson, 1991; Young, 1995). This might explain why the wife reported lower contentment in parenting roles than the husband did.

Separate multiple regression analyses were also conducted on the level of individual spouses, to examine whether there are differences in terms of what scales were the significant predictors for males and for females. For the individuals’ analyses, the dependent variables were the male Marriage Satisfaction scale scores for men, and the female Marriage Satisfaction scale scores for women. All ENRICH scales (18) were entered by stepwise method as potential predictors (independent variables), including Personality Issues, Communication, Conflict Resolution, Financial Management, Leisure Activities, Sexual Relationship, Children and Parenting, Family and Friends, Role Relationship, Spiritual Beliefs, Couple Closeness, Couple Flexibility, Family Closeness, Family Flexibility, Self Confidence, Assertiveness, Avoidance, and Partner Dominance.
The multiple correlation of the scales scores with male marital satisfaction was .74 ($R^2 = .63$, $p = .000$), resulting in a significant model. According to this procedure, male Marriage Satisfaction scale scores were predicted significantly by Communication, Couple Flexibility, Self Confidence, and Children and Parenting. Other scales were not entered to the model by the criteria of probability-of-F-to-enter <= .05.

For females, the multiple correlation was .86 ($R^2 = .74$, $p = .000$), also resulting in a significant model. Female Marriage Satisfaction scale scores were predicted significantly by Couple Flexibility, Assertiveness, Family Closeness, and Financial Management scales. Table 2 summarizes the significantly predictive scales and related standardized coefficients for males, females, and couples.

Table 2. Standardized Coefficients (Beta) of Significant Predictors on Marital Satisfaction based on Multiple Regression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Couple</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Couple Flexibility</td>
<td>.30**</td>
<td>Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>.25**</td>
<td>Couple Flexibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple Closeness</td>
<td>.22*</td>
<td>Self Confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family &amp; Friends</td>
<td>.20**</td>
<td>Children &amp; Parenting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Yearly Income</td>
<td>-.14*</td>
<td>Financial Management</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dependent Variable: *Couple* Marriage Satisfaction scale  
Dependent Variable: *Male* Marriage Satisfaction scale  
Dependent Variable: *Female* Marriage Satisfaction scale

$R = .85$, $R^2 = .73$ $p = .000$  
$R = .74$, $R^2 = .63$ $p = .000$  
$R = .86$, $R^2 = .74$ $p = .000$

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In terms of gender differences, males in this study were slightly more satisfied than females, as hypothesized. The paired samples t-test both with the one-item marital satisfaction question and the Marriage Satisfaction scale scores showed that the mean differences between husbands and wives were significant. This finding is consistent with previous studies that males are somewhat more satisfied with their marriages than females (e.g., Rhyne, 1981; Fowers, 1991; Ying, 1991; Kaslow et al., 1994). Some reasons for this gender differences might be that women often hold greater or unrealistic expectations for marriage, and that men are often less introspective and denying of problems (Ying, 1991; Young, 1995). Fowers (1991) suggests that sampling and differences in marital tasks and power best explain the findings. Moreover, one of the reasons of gender differences as experienced in marriage could be accounted for in gender disparity in defining pleasurable behavior (Young, 1995). Males tend to emphasize instrumental behavior; while females tend to emphasize affectional behavior. Husbands consider being a responsible provider and engaging in physical activities and sexual activities as demonstrations of love and care for their wives. Wives desire emotional sharing and verbal expressions of love and care as demonstrations of intimacy. Therefore, they use different criteria for evaluating couple interaction and events (Young, 1995).

It is worth nothing that although there was a significant difference
between male and female marital satisfaction, the difference in actual mean scores was relatively small (4.2 for males and 3.9 for females). A difference of 0.3 point on a one-item, 5-point Likert scale question can make the result of the paired t-test significant, given the sample of 100 couples. This might explain why previous studies sometimes show inconsistent results in gender differences. Because of the relatively small margin of difference, it is possible that sometimes the result is significant, and sometimes it is not, depending on the sample size of the study. In other words, if one study has a small sample, it might not be able to detect the small but significant gender differences in marital satisfaction. If the sample size is large enough, the paired t-test tend to result in a significant result. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that there are significant gender differences in marital satisfaction, although the difference is relatively small.

In terms of “his and her” view on marriage, there was a low level of agreement between the husband’s and the wife’s view on the level of marital satisfaction. With the one-item marital satisfaction question, the correlation between husband’s and wife’s satisfaction with marriage was only .367. Moreover, the level of husband and wife agreement (correlation) across the research scales was also rather low (average = .45). The highest correlation (.811) reflects shared agreement about spiritual beliefs, and the lowest (.314) shows disagreement in leisure activities. In Larsen and Olson’s study (1990) with American couples, they found exactly these two scales as the highest (Spiritual Beliefs, r = .56) and the lowest (Leisure Activity, r = .30) scales in ENRICH. In addition, the correlation across the ENRICH
scales for American couples was .42 (pp. 37). Hence, the findings on
the highest, the lowest, and the average level of husband and wife
agreement seem to be cross-cultural.

In interpreting agreement correlations, Kenny (1998) argues that
"one should adopt the standards that Cohen (1988) has set for small (.1),
medium (.3), and large (.5) correlations," and that "an agreement
correlation itself represents the amount of variance that is shared
between husband and wife, and so it makes no sense to square the
correlation because it is already a variance measure (pp. 412)." Therefore,
he claims that researchers should not be disappointed about
the level of agreement (e.g., .3 agreement correlations) between
husbands and wives. If this study adopts Cohen’s standards, then we
could conclude that on average, there was a medium correlation
between husbands and wives’ agreement on various aspects of the
marriage they share. However, one would expect the agreement
correlation between husbands and wives to be higher than medium,
given that they share and experience the same marriage.

This finding of low correlations confirms and underlines the results
of previous studies (e.g., Larsen and Olson, 1990; Fowers, 1991) that
husband and wife might have very different perceptions about the
marriage they share. Bernard (1982) concludes that these discrepant
responses do not arise from methodological inadequacies, but truly
reflect differing perceptions of the two differing subjective realities of a
couple’s joint experience, arising from each spouse’s needs, attitudes,
beliefs, and backgrounds. This study echoes with previous western
findings and demonstrates that there is also a “his and her” view on marriage among Taiwanese couples. In other words, the same marriage can mean two different realities for husbands and wives.

In terms of significant predictors of marital satisfaction based on multiple regression (table 2), the Couple Flexibility scale appeared as the significant predictor among all three groups (couples, males, and females). The Couple Flexibility scale measures the ability of a couple to change and be flexible when necessary. Couples in Taiwan need to adjust and balance constantly between the traditional Chinese values on family life, and the rapid changes in modernized family structures and processes in Taiwan. Therefore, it requires couples to have better ability to adjust to changes, to be flexible, and to agree and compromise on how to adjust to changes.

While male Marriage Satisfaction scale scores were predicted significantly by Communication, Couple Flexibility, Self Confidence, and Children and Parenting, female Marriage Satisfaction scale scores were predicted significantly by Couple Flexibility, Assertiveness, Family Closeness, and Financial Management scales. What makes marriage satisfying for men seems to be different from what makes marriage satisfying for women. For males, if they feel good about themselves and believe in their ability to control things in their life (self confidence), if they are able to share important emotions and things with their spouses, and if they feel good about having and raising children, then men are satisfied with their marriages. For females, if they are able to express their feelings to their partners and ask for what they would
like (assertiveness), if they are satisfied with the way economic issues are handled and satisfied with couples’ economic status, and if they experience emotional closeness with their families-of-origin, then women are satisfied with their marriages. Men not only care about the continuation of the family chain and how their children are raised, but also seek confidence and good communication in marital relationship. Women who are traditionally dependent on their husbands for economic security seek to be more assertive with their spouses nowadays, and to keep connected with their families-of-origin for strengthening their social support outside the marriage. Therefore, the convergence of traditional and modern family ideologies in Taiwan has intermixed impact on what makes marriages satisfying for men and women.

Among the demographic variables, wives’ income emerged as the only significant negative predictor of couple marital satisfaction when both demographics and marriage assessing scales were entered in the regression model. In other words, wives with higher income had lower level of marital satisfaction. This finding is consistent with Hardesty and Betz’s (1980) finding that wives’ income has negative effects on wives’ marital satisfaction. One study analyzing a nationally representative household dataset of Taiwan indicates that “economic independence not only enables women to be less dependent on marriage for economic security but also makes divorce and separation more affordable” (Huang, Garfinkel and Han, 2000). Therefore, it appears that the marriages of financially independent wives become less satisfying or stable for couples in Taiwan.
Given that subjects’ participation in this study was entirely voluntary and recruitment was limited to major cities in Taiwan, selection biases were inevitable. This also limited the generalizability of the research results to the whole population in Taiwan.

In conclusion, this study contributes to marital research through the examination of both partners in each couple in the sample to demonstrate that there are gender differences in marriage among Taiwanese couples. The same marriage can mean two realities for husbands and wives.

**APPENDIX: DESCRIPTION OF ENRICH SCALES**

This appendix briefly describes each of the scales in ENRICH. For more detailed descriptions, please see Shen (2001).

*Idealistic Distortion* assesses the tendency of individuals to answer personal questions in a socially desirable manner.

High scores (60 and above) indicate that individuals are presenting their relationship in a highly favorable manner. This may suggest an unwillingness to acknowledge problematic areas in the relationship and/or a defensive attitude in completing the Inventory. Low scores (30 and below) indicate a more realistic disclosure concerning relationship issues.
Marriage Satisfaction provides a global measure of satisfaction by surveying ten major areas of the couple's relationship: personality characteristics, role responsibilities, communication, conflict resolution, financial concerns, management of leisure time, sexuality, parental responsibilities, relationships with family and friends and spiritual beliefs.

Personality Assessment assesses four personality characteristics in the inventory. They are defined below:

Assertiveness: a person's ability to express their feelings to their partner and be able to ask for what they would like.

Self Confidence: focuses on how good a person feels about himself/herself and their ability to control things in their life.

Avoidance: a person's tendency to minimize issues and reluctance to deal with issues directly.

Partner Dominance: focuses on how much a person feels their partner trying to control them and dominate their life.

Communication measures each individual's beliefs, feelings and attitudes toward the role of communication in the maintenance of his/her relationship. Items focus on the level of comfort felt by each partner in being able to share important emotions and beliefs with one another, perceptions of their partner's listening and speaking skills and perceptions concerning their own abilities to communicate with their
partner.

*Conflict Resolution* evaluates an individual’s attitudes, feelings and beliefs about the existence and resolution of conflicts in the relationship. Items pertain to the openness of partners in recognizing and resolving issues, the strategies and processes used to end arguments and the level of satisfaction with the manner in which problems are resolved.

*Financial Management* focuses on attitudes and concerns about the way economic issues are managed within the couple’s relationship. Items assess the tendencies of individuals to be spenders or savers, awareness and concern with issues of credit and debts, the care with which financial decisions on major purchases are made, decisions regarding financial matters, money management and satisfaction with their economic status.

*Leisure Activities* evaluates each individual’s preferences for using discretionary time. Items focus on: social versus personal activities, active versus passive interests, shared versus individual preferences and expectations as to whether leisure time should be spent together or balanced between separate and joint activities.

*Sexual Relationship* assesses an individual’s feelings and concerns about affection and the sexual relationship with his/her partner. Items reflect satisfaction with expressions of affection, level of comfort in discussing sexual issues, attitudes toward sexual behavior, birth control decisions and feelings about sexual fidelity.
Children and Parenting measures an individual's attitudes and feelings about having and raising children. Items reflect a couple's awareness of the impact of children on their relationship, satisfaction with how parental roles and responsibilities are defined, compatibility of philosophies toward discipline of children, shared goals and values desired for the children and agreement on the number of children preferred.

Family and Friends assesses feelings and concerns about relationships with relatives, in-laws and friends. Items focus on the attitudes of family and friends toward the marriage, expectations regarding the amount of time spent with family and friends, comfort felt in the presence of the partner's family and friends and perceptions of the situation as either potentially characterized by conflict or satisfaction.

Role Relationship evaluates an individual's beliefs, attitudes and feelings about marital and family roles. There is an implied bias in this scale toward equalitarian role behaviors that is based on current research.

Taken alone, neither high nor low scores are indicative of marital quality. Satisfaction with role relationships is suggested by the degree of argument between partners. If both partners are either high or low on this area, they will tend to have a high degree of satisfaction with their roles. Conversely, one partner's scoring high and the other low, indicates disharmony, suggesting this area is potentially problematic.

Spiritual Beliefs assess attitudes, feelings and concerns about the
meaning of religious beliefs and practices within the context of the relationship. Items focus on the meaning and importance of religion, involvements in church/temple activities and the expected role that religious beliefs will have in the marriage. The area is non-sectarian and does not reflect a specific theological bias.

A couple’s satisfaction with their spiritual beliefs is not necessarily indicated by either a high or a low score but by the amount of agreement partners report. If both male and female scores are either high or low, they will tend to be satisfied with the role of religion in their relationship. If one partner is high and the other is low, a low degree of harmony is suggested, indicating this area is potentially problematic.

The *Couple and Family Closeness* areas describe the level of emotional closeness experienced among family members and the degree to which they balance togetherness and separateness. Items deal with family members helping each other, spending time together and feelings of emotional closeness. Couple Closeness assesses a couple’s current relationship. Family Closeness measures closeness in the families-of-origin.

The *Couple and Family Flexibility* areas measure the ability of a couple to change and be flexible when necessary. Items deal with leadership issues and the ability to switch responsibilities and change rules when needed. Couple Flexibility evaluates a couple’s current relationship. Family Flexibility assesses patterns of change in families-of-origin.
REFERENCES


一樣婚姻兩樣情：檢視婚姻中的性別差異*

沈瓊桃**

中文摘要

本研究旨在檢視台灣婚姻關係中之性別差異。本研究使用標準化婚姻滿意度量表（ENRICH）作爲測量工具，以非隨機取樣的方式，收集了100對一般夫婦（community sample）的橫切面資料。研究結果顯示，多數的受訪者（85％）對其婚姻表示滿意，且先生的婚姻滿意度顯著地高於太太。另外，對於婚姻各個層面的滿意度（例如溝通、財務管理、性愛關係等），夫妻雙方對其評價的相關係數雖有達到顯著，但卻呈現低度至中度的相關，而非高度相關。這意謂著婚姻關係與婚姻滿意度有性別差異存在。處於同一個婚姻中的夫妻兩人，對其婚姻的整體評價，以及婚姻生活各個層面的看法與感受皆有顯著性的落差。

關鍵字：性別差異，婚姻滿意度，婚姻

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