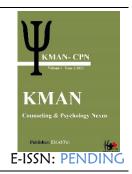


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# Predicting the Desire for Remarriage Based on Family Relationships, Attachment Styles, and Personality Traits Among Married Men

Elham. Araghchi<sup>1</sup>, Nadereh Saadati<sup>2, 1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Horticulture, Isfahan (Khorasgan) Branch, Islamic Azad University, Isfahan, Iran <sup>2</sup> Department of Psychology and Counseling, KMAN Research Institute, Richmond Hill, Ontario, Canada

\* Corresponding author email address: nsaadati@kmanresce.ca

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## ABSTRACT

The present study aimed to investigate the multifaceted relationships between family relationships, attachment styles, and personality traits with the desire for remarriage among married men in Isfahan. The research method was descriptive and correlational. The statistical population consisted of all married men in Isfahan during the years 2016-2017. The sample included 195 married men selected through convenience sampling. The research instruments were the Remarriage Desire Scale, the Family Relationships Questionnaire (Olson & Barnes, 2004), the Attachment Styles Questionnaire (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987), and the NEO Five-Factor Personality Inventory (Costa & McCrae, 1997). Data were analyzed using both descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (Pearson correlation and stepwise regression analysis). Analyses were conducted using the SPSS statistical package. Results showed that the predictor variables of family relationships, insecure attachment style with father, neuroticism, agreeableness, and conscientiousness significantly related to the desire for remarriage among married men, with family relationships having predictive power for the desire for remarriage in married men. Based on these results, it can be said that an increase in the experience of satisfactory family relationships, conscientiousness, and agreeableness reduces men's desire for remarriage, while neuroticism and insecure attachment style with father increase the desire for remarriage in these men. Additionally, satisfactory family relationships can predict a decrease in the desire for remarriage among married men. Thus, if women can form a good relationship with men, they can reduce their husbands' desire for remarriage.

**Keywords:** Family relationships, Attachment styles, Personality traits, Desire for remarriage, Married men

## 1. Introduction

One of the negative functions of the family that has become more prevalent today is the phenomenon of infidelity and disloyalty among couples. Infidelity refers to having sexual or emotional relationships with someone other than one's spouse (Bashirpour et al., 2020; Moradi et al., 2020), which in a monogamous society could be a precursor to a married man's desire for remarriage.

In Iranian culture, monogamy is praised in most parts of Iran, and polygamy is condemned. Monogamous marriage requires awareness of the factors affecting family stability. One of the factors that couples fail to prevent infidelity is that they believe in monogamy and therefore do not take action to prevent cheating, but merely believing in monogamy does not prevent the desire for more marriages among individuals (Bashirpour et al., 2020; Sevari & Talaeezadeh, 2015).

Nevertheless, some unmet needs cause the desire for remarriage in men to become prominent, in which case the individual becomes attracted to someone who can satisfy those needs. Indeed, unmet needs have a powerful influence in forming new relationships with another woman, powerful enough that individuals are willing to sacrifice their spouse, children, job, and beliefs to meet their needs (Law et al., 2019; Thadathil & Sriram, 2020). It seems that one of the important factors in creating this desire is the type of family relationships within the family context. Considering the interactions and relationships within the family, two types of families can be identified:

Symmetrical family, where internal relationships are free and balanced (gender equality), and family members are in a warm interactive field, feeling belonging and emotional attachment to each other. This emotional attachment produces commitment and friendship, and the division of labor is flexible and undifferentiated (Guzmán-González et al., 2017). Family relations are more based on participation and justice, and cooperation and collaboration between men and women transform competitive relationships into harmonious family relationships (Narimani et al., 2021; Roberts et al., 2005). Asymmetrical family, where family internal relationships are authoritarian or have absolute freedom (gender inequality) based on force and coercion. Empathy, collaboration, and cooperation do not exist in these families. The form of communication is distant, and unlike the balanced family where power is horizontal, here power is vertical, and one person, often a man, is at the top

of the family hierarchy, with the woman lacking resources (Ghazizadeh et al., 2018; Mohlatlole et al., 2018).

Research shows that adult family relationships are influenced by attachment styles in childhood (Malek et al., 2022; Zahra, 2022). It seems one of the effective factors in the instability of relationships, including men's marital relations, is their attachment style. Research has shown that attachment style is related to relationship disturbances in adulthood. Attachment styles refer to specific internal models of attachment that determine individuals' behavioral responses to separation from attachment figures and reconnection with these figures (BozkIR et al., 2022; Dewi, 2022). These styles, mainly based on childhood experiences with the mother (care), remain relatively stable throughout life and affect social interactions. Many experts have suggested that insecure attachment can be used to explain infidelity, and individuals with secure attachment are less inclined to marital infidelity because they feel comfortable and secure in their marital relationships, which acts as a barrier to starting extramarital sexual relationships (Aleem, 2022; Robakis et al., 2020; Zahra, 2022).

Attachment in adults is the individual's fundamental desire and efforts to gain and maintain contact with a number of specific people. People with a secure attachment style tend to describe their relationship experiences more positively and are more inclined to continue their relationships than anxious/ambivalent participants (Cardakctz, 2009). As expected, many studies have shown that people with a secure attachment style have more compatibility in their relationships, and those with insecure attachment styles have a greater tendency for infidelity and extramarital sexual relationships. People with avoidant attachment styles disregard the importance of establishing intimate relationships and are likely less supported by their spouses. People with ambivalent attachment styles doubt their worthiness and fear being rejected by their spouse, may exhibit more jealousy and anger in their relationships, and seek more validation from their spouses (Guo & Ash, 2020; Malek et al., 2022; Zahra, 2022). There is a general consensus that personality traits play an important role in the positive or negative outcomes of marital relationships and may even set the stage for a second marriage. Significant individual differences exist among people, and these differences are logically predictable and justifiable by individual differences. Personality directly affects and acts as an influential factor on the communication process of couples (Jardim et al., 2022).



One of the prevalent theories in the field of personality is the Five-Factor Model of Personality, also known as the Big Five (Costa Jr & McCrae, 1992). The five major personality traits are: Neuroticism, which relates to the individual's adaptability, emotional stability, maladaptability, and tendency towards negative emotions such as fear, sadness, arousal, anger, guilt, and a pervasive and permanent sense of confusion. Extraversion refers to individuals who are social, decisive in action, active, and talkative. These people enjoy excitement and movement and are optimistic about future success. The components of openness to experience, as the third trait, include active imagination, sensitivity to beauty, attention to inner emotional experiences, and independent judgment. These individuals seek new experiences, are curious about the fertility of internal experiences and the surrounding world, and their lives are full of experience. Agreeableness, like extraversion, focuses on interpersonal tendencies. An agreeable person is fundamentally kindhearted, empathizes with others, and is eager to help them. An agreeable person believes others have the same relationship with them. In contrast, a narcissistic person is self-centered, suspicious of others' intentions, and more competitive than cooperative. Conscientiousness, the last trait, refers to self-control, the active process of planning, organizing, and executing tasks (Mosadegh et al., 2023). It seems that each of these traits could explain a part of the variance in remarriage.

To date, no research has been conducted on the desire for remarriage, yet the desire for remarriage can be rooted in the man's personality traits, such as the Big Five personality traits or his attachment style, or stem from communication problems with his wife, but this is a mental hypothesis that must be answered scientifically. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct research on this important topic. It seems that research on the relationship between the predictor variables of this study and the desire for remarriage in men can contribute to the durability and survival of marital life, while clinical experience shows that an important question among married women is how they can make their husbands more enthusiastic about life. The results of this research will also help answer this question, hence the present study aimed to answer whether family relationships, attachment styles, and personality traits can predict the desire for remarriage among married men.

## 2. Methods and Materials

## 2.1. Study Design and Participants

This study was descriptive and correlational. Given the research objective, the statistical population of the present study consisted of all married men in the city of Isfahan during the years 2016-2017. In this study, a convenience sampling method was used. In this manner, 4 districts were randomly selected from 15 municipal districts, and from these districts, streets and alleys were randomly chosen. Then, married men who were available and willing to cooperate completed the questionnaires. Since the present study was correlational, 15 participants were included in the statistical analyses for each variable and sub-variable. Therefore, given that 13 variables and sub-variables were entered into the research, 196 subjects were selected.

## 2.2. Measures

## 2.2.1. Remarriage Desire

This scale consists of 20 items rated on a five-point scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Researcher examined its validity and reliability, reporting it as suitable and calculated its internal consistency (alpha = .955). Higher scores on this questionnaire indicate a greater desire for remarriage. In the present study, internal consistency was recalculated (alpha = .821).

### 2.2.2. Family Relationships

To assess family relationships, the Family Relationships Questionnaire by Olson was used. This questionnaire consists of 10 questions. The internal consistency reliability of this scale was .95 based on a sample of 2465 people, and the test-retest reliability was .86. Data from this questionnaire are rated on a 5-point scale from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1) (Fowers & Olson, 1989; Olson, 2000). The total score is of interest in this study. In the present study, internal consistency was recalculated (alpha = .880).

## 2.2.3. Attachment Styles

This questionnaire, developed by Armsden and Greenberg (1987), includes 50 items. It is a self-assessment questionnaire with a five-part Likert scale from strongly disagree=1 to strongly agree=5 (Armsden & Greenberg, 1989). In Iran, Cronbach's alpha method was used to determine reliability, and factor analysis was used to assess

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validity. Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the subscales of attachment to parents and peers were .82 and .72, respectively. Factor analysis using the principal component method indicated the existence of two general factors in the scale (Espeedkar et al., 2022). In this study, internal consistency of the questionnaire was calculated through Cronbach's alpha, resulting in .957 for secure attachment style with the father, .867 for insecure attachment style with the mother, and .890 for insecure attachment style with the mother.

## 2.2.4. Personality Traits

The NEO Personality Inventory (Revised Form) is one of the comprehensive tests that measures five major aspects or domains of personality and traits associated with these domains. This questionnaire was developed and standardized by Costa and McCrae in 1997 and has both short and long forms, consisting of 240 and 60 questions, respectively. In this study, the 60-question form was used. The answer sheet for this questionnaire is based on a 5-point scale from strongly disagree (score 5) to strongly agree (score 1), while some other items of this short form are scored in reverse. In the standardization of the NEO test by Garusi Farshi (2001) on a sample of 2000 people, Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the main factors of

## Table 1

Mean and Standard Deviation of Research Variables

neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness were .86, .73, .56, .68, and .87, respectively. To assess the content validity of this test, the correlation between the self-report form and observer assessment form was used, with the maximum correlation of .66 in the extraversion factor and the minimum of .45 in the agreeableness factor (Mosadegh et al., 2023). In this study, internal consistency was recalculated, resulting in .57 for neuroticism, .611 for extraversion, .342 for openness to experience, .56 for agreeableness, and .79 for conscientiousness.

## 2.3. Data analysis

Data were analyzed using both descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (Pearson correlation and stepwise regression analysis). Analyses were conducted using the SPSS statistical package.

## 3. Findings and Results

To investigate the hypothesis "There is a significant relationship between family relationships, attachment styles with parents, and personality traits with the desire for remarriage among men," the mean and standard deviation were first calculated, and then Pearson's correlation test was used.

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	
Desire for Remarriage in Men	42.28	17.51	
Family Relationships	36.62	8.22	
Secure Attachment Style with Father	49.20	18.15	
Insecure Attachment Style with Father	19.36	8.48	
Secure Attachment Style with Mother	48.77	21.45	
Insecure Attachment Style with Mother	19.86	9.63	
Neuroticism	33.59	7.01	
Extraversion	39.04	7.37	
Agreeableness	35.13	5.61	
Openness	38.33	6.77	
Conscientiousness	43.47	8.70	

Table 1 shows the mean and standard deviation of the variables.

The findings of Table 2 indicate that family relationships, agreeableness, and conscientiousness have a significant

negative relationship with men's desire for remarriage, while insecure attachment style with the father and neuroticism have a significant positive relationship with men's desire for remarriage.



## Table 2

Correlation Coefficients Between Family Relationships, Parental Attachment Styles, Personality Traits, and Men's Desire for Remarriage

Predictor Variables	Desire for Remarriage in Men	Significance	
Family Relationships	-0.344	<0.000	
Secure Attachment Style with Father	0.009	0.452	
Insecure Attachment Style with Father	0.152	0.016	
Secure Attachment Style with Mother	0.004	0.478	
Insecure Attachment Style with Mother	0.032	0.325	
Neuroticism	0.194	0.003	
Extraversion	-0.113	0.056	
Openness	-0.009	0.448	
Agreeableness	-0.156	0.014	
Conscientiousness	-0.200	0.002	

Accordingly, this hypothesis for the relationship between family relationships, insecure attachment style with the father, neuroticism, agreeableness, and conscientiousness with men's desire for remarriage is confirmed. To examine the most significant factor among the mentioned factors in predicting men's desire for remarriage, stepwise regression analysis was used.

#### Table 3

Stepwise Regression Analysis for Predicting Men's Desire for Remarriage Based on Family Relationships, Insecure Attachment Style with

Father, Neuroticism, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness

Variables Entered into the Equation	Regression Coefficient	Squared Regression Coefficient	Net Share	F	df1	df2	Significance
Family Relationships	0.344	0.119	0.119	26.62	1	198	< 0.000

As observed in Table 3, among the variables under study, family relationships with a regression coefficient of .344 entered the regression equation and were capable of

predicting 11.9% of the variance in men's desire for remarriage (p<.000).

#### Table 4

One-Way ANOVA for Evaluating the Significance of Family Relationships in Predicting Men's Desire for Remarriage

Variable	Count	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Square	F	Significance
Family Relationships (Regression)	-	7236.698	1	7236.698	26.622	< 0.000
Residual	-	53823.622	198	271.836	-	-
Total	-	61060.320	199	-	-	-

As can be seen in Table 4, the predicted contribution at each stage was statistically significant and reliable (p<.000). Table 5 shows the regression equation coefficients for

predicting men's desire for remarriage based on family relationships.

## Table 5

Raw and Standardized Regression Equation Coefficients for Predicting Men's Desire for Remarriage Based on Family Relationships

Variable	Raw Coefficient (B)	Standard Error	Beta Coefficient	Т	Significance
Constant	69.114	7.330	-	12.967	< 0.000
Family Relationships	-0.733	0.142	-0.344	-5.160	< 0.000

As observed in Table 5, raw and standardized coefficients for predicting men's desire for remarriage based on family

relationships are presented and are all statistically significant. According to the above table, the predictive



equation for men's desire for remarriage based on family relationships is as follows:

Desire for Remarriage in Men= 69.114+0.733×(Family Relationships)

## 4. Discussion and Conclusion

This correlational research studied the multifaceted relationships between family relationships, attachment styles, and personality traits with men's desire for remarriage in Isfahan. Statistical analysis results showed that family relationships, agreeableness, and conscientiousness have a significant negative relationship with men's desire for remarriage, while insecure attachment style with the father and neuroticism have a significant positive relationship with married men's desire for remarriage. Thus, with an increase in positive family relationships, secure attachment style with the father, and a decrease in neuroticism, and an increase in agreeableness and conscientiousness, men's desire for remarriage decreases. To examine the most important factor in predicting men's desire for remarriage based on family relationships, insecure attachment style with the father, neuroticism, agreeableness, and conscientiousness, stepwise regression analysis was used. The results of this analysis showed that family relationships could negatively predict men's desire for remarriage. No research had specifically addressed this topic to compare its alignment or misalignment with other studies.

In explaining the negative relationship between family relationships and married men's desire for remarriage, it can be said that the family is a center of love and closeness among individuals. A suitable and healthy family environment is one of the factors that create a desirable and balanced personality. In summary, creating a safe, calm, stable, and accepting environment, fostering self-regulation and freedom of action, a sense of social responsibility, and self-esteem makes the family environment warm and secure, and couples feel eager for each other. Also, the family is considered a form of social support (Mohlatlole et al., 2018). If families are not emotionally accepting and peaceful, they become unstable and disordered, affecting individuals' lives. As a result, they may experience more conflicts, have more disagreements with each other, and not understand each other well (Narimani et al., 2021). Consequently, the weaker the family relationships are, the more problems there will be, naturally leading to a lack of ability to understand and comprehend each other, causing emotional distance and, subsequently, physical distance. Therefore, to satisfy

emotional and other needs, men's motivation and desire for remarriage with another woman may be strengthened.

In explaining the significant positive relationship between insecure attachment style with the father and the desire for remarriage, it can be said that attachment is a system that manifests itself in adult romantic relationships (Frazier & Cowan, 2020). Hundreds of studies have shown that an individual's attachment pattern is a reliable predictor for explaining their differences in psychological dimensions, social dependencies, social cognition, romantic and marital relationships, stress and emotion control, reactions to separations, efficacy in interpersonal relationships, and individuals' schemas about themselves and others (Chen, 2023). The formation of insecure attachment styles (avoidant, anxious-ambivalent) leading to the acquisition of deviant identity bases (disorganized and premature) restricts their autonomy, increases their susceptibility to imitation, compliance, and seduction, thereby losing the decisiveness and clarity needed to reject irrational and socially unconventional demands (Jardim et al., 2022; Malek et al., 2022). Individuals with insecure attachment styles, due to their inability and inflexibility in adequately responding to adverse situations, will encounter behavioral and psychological problems (Guo & Ash, 2020; Huh et al., 2020). The behavior of individuals with insecure attachment styles shows stress, anxiety, irregular and unstable external emotions, and excessive help-seeking behaviors (Cook et al., 2017; Dewi, 2022; Hasim et al., 2018).

Given the characteristics described for individuals with insecure attachment styles, it is expected that men with an insecure attachment style to their father would experience a higher level of interpersonal communication problems, emotional support, and mood issues. Since these individuals are subject to rapid and extensive emotional, cognitive, and behavioral changes, their relationships with others, especially their family, are strained, facing emotional disorders. Thus, a man who, for whatever reason, cannot establish a proper relationship with his father lacks stability in interpersonal relationships, leading to various problems in managing their relationships with their spouses and consequently may consider establishing a relationship with another woman other than their spouse.

Overall, it seems that an insecure attachment style with the father reflects the presence of a strict, critical, and prejudiced father. As a result, these individuals either had a poor relationship with their fathers, were distant from them, or their fathers could not adequately meet their needs, or they may not have had a good paternal model in marriage due to

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conflicts and disputes between their parents. Therefore, they cannot effectively play the roles of a husband and father for their spouse and children, leading to family disputes, both with their spouse and children, which they cannot manage. Consequently, they have a greater desire for remarriage.

In explaining the significant positive relationship between neuroticism and the desire for remarriage, neuroticism is essentially the opposite of emotional stability or emotional balance and indicates the experience of negative emotions. Neurotic individuals experience a lot of emotions like anxiety, anger, or depression. This trait is actually related to an individual's ability to tolerate stress. Neurotics have low emotional stability, are worried, nervous, despondent, hopeless, stressed, shy, vulnerable, and impulsive. They generally have a negative attitude towards their work and living environment (Jardim et al., 2022). They react to their surroundings with higher emotional responses than the average person. Such individuals perceive ordinary life situations as threatening and find it difficult to love their surroundings. In other words, they often live in a bad mood (Tabik, 2016; Weiss et al., 2018). It seems this trait in marital life makes their relationships with their spouses unsatisfactory and experience many conflicts, leading to increased marital conflicts and more stress and anxiety for these men. These stresses and anxieties not only worsen relationships but may also lead them to incorrect ways of solving problems, including establishing relationships with another woman, thus forming a desire for remarriage in them (Ghazizadeh et al., 2018; Mosadegh et al., 2023; Sadeghkhani et al., 2023).

In explaining the negative relationship between agreeableness and men's desire for remarriage again, it can be said that the agreeableness factor has a significant and positive relationship with the desire for remarriage. Agreeableness actually refers to differences among people in interpersonal cooperation and social harmony. Therefore, they are cautious, friendly, forgiving, helpful, and willing to compromise over interests with others. These people have an optimistic view of human nature, believing humans are fundamentally honest, noble, and trustworthy (Özer, 2022). Since these individuals aim to adapt and get along with others, they usually avoid controversial or conflict-inducing discussions (Dijkstra & Barelds, 2008; Weiss et al., 2018). Thus, it seems these men would be lovable and attractive in various aspects of life, including life with their spouses, capable of overlooking their spouses' problems. Naturally, these individuals have higher marital satisfaction and better relationships with their spouses, thus enjoying a warm

family nucleus, solving family life problems appropriately, and hence have no desire for remarriage.

In explaining the negative relationship between conscientiousness and the desire for remarriage again, since conscientious individuals are goal-oriented, determined, hard-working, high-aspiring, and serious when facing problems, they are meticulous and possess perseverance and competence. Conscientiousness encompasses characteristics such as thinking before acting, delaying gratification, observing rules and norms, and organizing and prioritizing tasks (Weiss et al., 2018). Consequently, such men have commitment, adherence, and responsibility in various aspects of life, including family life. Therefore, it is expected that such men with these characteristics have better relationships with their spouses. Therefore, their emotional, physical, and cognitive needs in the marital relationship are well met. As a result, not only do they have no desire for remarriage, but they are also more committed to preserving the family.

Overall, based on the results of the present study, it can be said: the desire for remarriage decreases with the increase in creating a healthy family relationship. An insecure attachment style with the father in men increases their desire for remarriage. Increasing conscientiousness and agreeableness and reducing neuroticism can decrease the desire for remarriage.

This research, like other studies, has limitations, including: the study was correlational, sampling was done non-randomly, and the methods used in data analysis did not allow for causal inferences.

Based on the findings of this study, it is suggested to those interested in this field: Since other factors may be involved in the desire for remarriage in men, the relationship of other psychological variables with this variable should be examined. Since the only source of data collection in this study was a questionnaire, it is suggested to use other methods for investigation. Finally, to counselors dealing with clients related to the desire for remarriage and infidelity, it is recommended to focus more on the dimensions of neuroticism, agreeableness, conscientiousness, paternal attachment style, and family relationships to manage this feature. It is suggested, based on the results obtained, that parents, especially fathers, be trained so that the boundaries and shortcomings of a supportive relationship are such that the desire for remarriage in male children in adulthood is reduced.

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## **Declaration of Interest**

The authors of the study declare no conflict of interest related to the research.

## **Ethics Considerations**

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants.

#### References

All authors contributed equally in this article.

#### **Transparency of Data**

**Authors' Contributions** 

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

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