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Marital satisfaction and spousal cost-infliction

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Abstract

This research tested the hypothesis that marital satisfaction is a psychological state regulated by evolved mechanisms that monitor spousal cost-infliction and benefits. Three separate data sources were used to study a sample of married couples. First, 214 participants provided information on their personality and marital satisfaction. Second, participants provided information on their spouse's personality, mate guarding and susceptibility to infidelity. Third, couples were interviewed by two interviewers, who subsequently provided independent ratings of each participant's personality. Results indicate that costs associated with spouse's personality, mate guarding and susceptibility to infidelity negatively correlate with participants' marital satisfaction. Discussion evaluates the utility of an evolutionary perspective on marital satisfaction and spousal cost-infliction. © 2000 Elsevier Science Ltd. All rights reserved.

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1. Introduction

Marriage has been documented in every known culture (Brown, 1991). More than 90% of the world's population will marry at least once (Epstein & Guttman, 1984). Most societies also have instituted divorce procedures (Brown, 1991). The ubiquity of marriage and divorce suggests the potential utility of an evolutionary perspective for understanding marital satisfaction. From an evolutionary perspective (Buss, 1989, 1999), marital satisfaction can be

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viewed as a psychological state regulated by mechanisms that monitor the benefits and costs of marriage to a particular person. The costs and benefits are gauged psychologically, but the mechanisms that gauge them have been forged over the vast expanse of evolutionary time. At an ultimate level, therefore, these mechanisms monitor what would have been costs and benefits in ancestral times. A spouse who commits a sexual infidelity, for example, inflicts on their partner a probabilistic cost of lowered paternity or diversion of resources. Infidelity, therefore, can be expected to lower the partner's marital satisfaction because marital satisfaction monitors costs of this sort. Marital dissatisfaction might function to motivate the individual to attempt to change the existing relationship, or to seek another one that may be more beneficial (Buss, 1989).

We tested several predictions derived from the hypothesis that marital satisfaction monitors spousal cost-infliction. We first identify spousal personality characteristics associated with cost-infliction and propose that these characteristics evoke dissatisfaction in a marriage partner. Next, we discuss spousal tactics of mate guarding and propose that tactics defined by cost-infliction will decrease marital satisfaction. Finally, we discuss infidelity as a cost inflicted by people on their spouses and propose that estimates of the probability of spousal infidelity reflect estimates of likely cost-infliction and, therefore, will decrease marital satisfaction.

1.1. Spousal personality characteristics

The five-factor model of personality (Norman, 1963) describes five dimensions that capture significant individual differences in personality. These bipolar factors are *urgency* (dominance, extraversion vs. submissiveness, introversion), *agreeableness* (warm, trusting vs. cold, suspicious), *conscientiousness* (reliable, well-organized vs. undependable, disorganized), *emotional stability* (secure, even-tempered vs. nervous, temperamental) and *openness/intellect* (perceptive, curious vs. imperceptive, uncurious). The most consistent predictor of marital dissatisfaction is a spouse's emotional instability (Buss, 1991; Karney & Bradbury, 1995). Low conscientiousness, low agreeableness and low openness/intellect also evoke dissatisfaction in a partner (Bentler & Newcomb, 1978; Buss, 1991).

A spouse with low emotional stability, low conscientiousness, low agreeableness and low openness/intellect inflicts many costs on a partner. Buss (1991) found that men and women married to people with these characteristics complain that their spouses are condescending, jealous, possessive, dependent, neglectful, unreliable, unfaithful, sexualizing of others, abusive of alcohol, emotionally constricted and self-centered. One design feature of psychology that may have been selected over human evolutionary history is the triggering of dissatisfaction with marriage to a spouse displaying disagreeableness, undependability, emotional instability or close-mindedness. Marital dissatisfaction might have prompted the unhappy spouse to defect from the costly relationship in search of a more beneficial one.

Prediction 1. Spousal disagreeableness, emotional instability, undependability and close-mindedness will negatively correlate with partner's marital satisfaction.

A spouse's unfaithfulness is likely to have had substantial reproductive costs for ancestral men and women (Buss, Larsen, Westen & Semmelroth, 1992). Because of the asymmetry in

certainty of genetic parentage, however, a wife's infidelity is potentially more costly to her husband than is a husband's infidelity to his wife. The wife of an unfaithful man may lose some of his investment to another woman. Even if she loses all his investment, however, any children she bears are unquestionably her genetic offspring. The husband of an unfaithful wife may lose the entire reproductive capacity of his spouse for at least one childbearing cycle. He also risks long-term investment of resources in a rival's offspring. Buss and Shackelford (1997) found that a woman's low conscientiousness was the best personality predictor of her husband's estimate that she would be unfaithful. This finding, combined with the asymmetry in parental certainty, leads to the following prediction.

Prediction 2. A woman's low conscientiousness will be a reliable predictor of her husband's marital dissatisfaction.

Physical abuse is one of the greatest costs that men can inflict on their wives (Daly, Wilson & Weghorst, 1982). Buss (1991) reported large negative correlations between a wife's complaints that her husband abuses her and his agreeableness and emotional stability. This leads to the following prediction.

Prediction 3. A man's low agreeableness and low emotional stability will be reliable predictors of his wife's marital dissatisfaction.

1.2. *Spousal mate guarding*

Once the adaptive problems of locating, attracting and wedding a suitable marriage partner are solved, many adaptive challenges follow, including guarding a spouse from encroachment by intrasexual competitors. Buss (1988) identified 19 tactics that men and women use to guard their partners from intrasexual encroachment. Four tactics involve inflicting or threatening to inflict costs for spousal defection: *monopolizing mate's time* (e.g. He spent all of his free time with her so that she could not meet anyone else); *threatening infidelity* (e.g. She went out with other men to make him jealous); *punishing or threatening to punish mate's infidelity* (e.g. He hit her when he caught her flirting with someone else); and *emotional manipulation* (e.g. She threatened to harm herself if he ever left). We predict that these tactics will evoke marital dissatisfaction in the guarded spouse because they, more than the other mate guarding tactics, operate by inflicting costs on the guarded spouse.

Prediction 4. Spousal time monopolization, infidelity threats, punishment or threatened punishment for infidelity and emotional manipulation will negatively correlate with partner's marital satisfaction.

1.3. *Spousal susceptibility to infidelity*

Insofar as infidelity inflicts costs on the spouse of an unfaithful partner, people who anticipate

spousal infidelity are likely to be less satisfied with their marriage than people who do not anticipate spousal infidelity. This is expected if anticipating spousal infidelity is tantamount to anticipating that costs will be incurred with continued participation in the marriage.

Prediction 5. Perceptions of spousal susceptibility to infidelity will negatively correlate with marital satisfaction.

To test the predictions about marital satisfaction, we collected self-report, spouse-report and interviewer-report data on a sample of 107 married couples. Previous reports are based on data provided by this sample (e.g. Buss, 1989). The current article, however, presents new analyses conducted to test a new hypothesis and five derivative predictions.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

Participants were 107 men and 107 women who had been married less than 1 year. Participants were located through the public records of marriage licenses issued in a large county in the Midwest. All couples married within a 6-month period were contacted by letter and invited to participate, in exchange for US\$30 per couple. The mean age of wives was 25.5 years (S.D. = 4.1; range 18–36). The mean age of husbands was 26.8 years (S.D. = 3.8; range 17–41). This was the first marriage for 96% of the sample and 96% of couples had no children. Couples had been romantically involved for an average of 44 months (S.D. = 24.6; range 1 month to about 8 years).

2.2. Procedure

Participants participated in three waves of assessment. First, they received through the mail a battery of instruments to be completed at home. This battery contained a self-report instrument assessing the five factors of personality (Botwin, Buss & Shackelford, 1997). Second, participants came to a testing session 1 week after receiving the self-report instruments. Spouses were separated to prevent contamination due to discussion. Participants completed a marital satisfaction instrument, reported on their spouse's personality, susceptibility to infidelity and mate guarding behaviors. Third, a male and a female interviewer drawn from a staff of 10 interviewers interviewed the couples. Following the interview, the interviewers independently completed an instrument in which they recorded their perceptions of the personality of each participant.

2.3. Materials

2.3.1. Marital satisfaction

We developed a short, face-valid measure of marital satisfaction. Each of the three items was intended to assess a different domain of satisfaction. General marital satisfaction was assessed by the item: "Thinking about things all together, how would you say you feel about your

marriage?” Sexual satisfaction was assessed by the item: “How do you feel about your sexual relationship?” Emotional satisfaction was assessed by the item: “How do you feel about your spouse as a source of encouragement and reassurance?” For each item, participants were provided with a 7-point Likert scale with 1 = unsatisfied and 7 = extremely satisfied.

2.3.2. *Self-reported personality*

Participants completed a 40-item instrument during the self-report phase of the study. This instrument consisted of 40 bipolar adjective scales, eight each for the following personality dimensions: *surgency*, *agreeableness*, *conscientiousness*, *emotional stability* and *openness/intellect*. The instructions were: “Please read the following list of characteristics and circle the number that *best describes* you generally.” Each scale was rated on a 7-point scale. The five dimensions were scored by summing the relevant eight scales for each dimension. Alpha reliabilities for each 8-item factor were: surgency, $\alpha = 0.77$; agreeableness, $\alpha = 0.62$; conscientiousness, $\alpha = 0.72$; emotional stability, $\alpha = 0.73$; openness/intellect, $\alpha = 0.63$. Factor analyses of self-ratings, spouse-ratings and interviewer-ratings obtained from this measure replicate the 5-factor solution for all three data sources (Botwin et al., 1997).

2.3.3. *Spouse-reported personality*

A parallel version of the personality instrument was administered in a separate testing session to the spouses of each participant. The instructions were: “Please read the following list of characteristics and circle the number that best describes *your partner* generally.” The five dimensions were scored by summing the relevant eight scales. Alpha reliabilities for each 8-item factor were: surgency, $\alpha = 0.74$; agreeableness, $\alpha = 0.77$; conscientiousness, $\alpha = 0.74$; emotional stability, $\alpha = 0.77$; openness/intellect, $\alpha = 0.73$.

2.3.4. *Interviewer-reported personality*

A pair of interviewers interviewed each couple. Each interview lasted about 40 min, during which the couple was asked a standard set of questions. Following each interview, the interviewers independently rated each participant on an observer-based version of the personality instrument. The five dimensions were scored by summing the relevant eight scales. The two interviewer ratings of participants' personality significantly agreed along each of the dimensions ($r = 0.55$ for surgency, 0.43 for agreeableness, 0.56 for conscientiousness, 0.48 for emotional stability and 0.51 for openness/intellect; all $ps < 0.001$, two-tailed) and therefore were standardized and summed to form five more reliable scores for each participant. Alpha reliabilities for each 8-item factor for the composited interviewer reports were: surgency, $\alpha = 0.90$; agreeableness, $\alpha = 0.88$; conscientiousness, $\alpha = 0.88$; emotional stability, $\alpha = 0.83$; openness/intellect, $\alpha = 0.92$.

Self-ratings, spouse-ratings and aggregate interviewer-ratings were significantly positively correlated for each personality dimension (mean rs : surgency, 0.52; agreeableness, 0.24; conscientiousness, 0.51; emotional stability, 0.42; openness/intellect, 0.31; all $ps < 0.001$, two-tailed) and therefore were standardized and summed to create a composite score for each participant on each dimension. Alpha reliabilities for each 8-item factor for the total composites were: surgency, $\alpha = 0.90$; agreeableness, $\alpha = 0.88$; conscientiousness, $\alpha = 0.88$; emotional stability, $\alpha = 0.83$; openness/intellect, $\alpha = 0.92$.

2.3.5. Spousal tactics of mate guarding

Participants completed a spouse-report version of the tactics of mate guarding survey developed by Buss (1988). Participants indicated the frequency with which their partners had performed each of the 104 acts in the past year, with 0 = *never*, 1 = *rarely*, 2 = *sometimes* and 4 = *often*. Relevant act performance frequency ratings were standardized and summed to create the following four tactics (alpha reliability coefficient in parenthesis): monopolization of mate's time ($\alpha=0.81$), threatening infidelity ($\alpha=0.80$), punishing or threatening to punish mate's infidelity ($\alpha=0.82$) and emotional manipulation ($\alpha=0.82$).

2.3.6. Spousal susceptibility to infidelity

During the testing session in which the spouses were separated, each completed an instrument entitled "Events with others." Participants estimated the likelihood that their spouse would commit each of six types of infidelity in the next year: flirting, passionately kissing, going on a romantic date, having a one night stand, a brief affair and a serious affair. Participants provided estimates on 11-point scales. The low end of the scale indicated 0%, the high end indicated 100%, with the scale marked off in 10% increments.

3. Results

3.1. Spousal personality characteristics

We predicted that people married to disagreeable, emotionally unstable, undependable and close-minded spouses would be less satisfied with their marriages than people married to agreeable, dependable, emotionally stable and open-minded people (Prediction 1). Table 1 presents correlations between own personality and the three dimensions of spouse's marital satisfaction.

As predicted, men's and women's marital satisfaction was positively associated with their spouse's agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability and openness/intellect. Men and women married to disagreeable persons were less generally satisfied, less sexually satisfied and less emotionally satisfied with their marriages. Men married to less conscientious women were less sexually satisfied with their marriages, whereas women married to less conscientious men were less generally satisfied. Men married to emotionally unstable women were less satisfied across all three satisfaction domains, whereas women married to emotionally unstable men were less generally satisfied and less emotionally satisfied. Men whose spouses scored lower on openness/intellect were less generally satisfied with their marriages, whereas women whose spouses scored lower on openness/intellect were less generally satisfied and less emotionally satisfied.

We predicted that a woman's low conscientiousness would be a reliable predictor of her husband's marital dissatisfaction (Prediction 2). Table 1 shows that wife's conscientiousness shared with her agreeableness the largest correlation with husband's satisfaction. These correlations, however, were not significantly different from other correlations between women's personality and husbands' satisfaction ($ps > 0.05$, one-tailed, by Fisher's r -to- z transformation followed by a z -test. Subsequent tests of the difference between two correlations were conducted by the same method and using the same criteria).

Additional analyses showed that the correlation between women's conscientiousness and husband's sexual satisfaction ($r = 0.32$) was marginally ($p < 0.09$) significantly larger than the correlation between men's conscientiousness and women's sexual satisfaction ($r = 0.14$). Additionally, the correlation between women's conscientiousness and men's sexual satisfaction was significantly larger than the correlation between men's conscientiousness and women's emotional satisfaction ($r = 0.06$), but did not differ significantly from the correlation between men's conscientiousness and women's general satisfaction.

The most consistently strong predictor of men's marital satisfaction was their wives' agreeableness, which showed a mean correlation of 0.31 across the three satisfaction domains. Women's emotional stability also consistently predicted husbands' marital satisfaction. Although the correlations with women's emotional stability across the three satisfaction domains appeared smaller than the correlations with women's agreeableness, the differences were not statistically significant.

We predicted that a man's low agreeableness and low emotional stability would be reliable predictors of his wife's marital dissatisfaction (Prediction 3). Table 1 shows that the two largest correlations between women's marital satisfaction and their husbands' personality were between husbands' agreeableness and women's emotional satisfaction ($r = 0.47$) and general satisfaction ($r = 0.37$, not significantly different from $r = 0.47$). After husbands' agreeableness, the next best predictor of women's marital satisfaction was husbands' openness/intellect. In this sample, therefore, the best predictors of women's marital dissatisfaction were husbands' low agreeableness and low openness/intellect, partially supporting Prediction 3. Note, however, that although the correlations between women's satisfaction and husbands' openness/intellect ($r_s = 0.31$) were marginally ($p < 0.09$) significantly different from the correlation between women's general satisfaction and husbands' agreeableness ($r = 0.47$), the former correlations

Table 1
Correlations among standings on personality dimensions with spouse's marital satisfaction^a

Participant	Spouse's self-reported marital satisfaction					
	General		Sexual		Emotional	
Husband						
Surgency	0.07	(-0.12, 0.26)	0.08	(-0.11, 0.27)	0.04	(-0.15, 0.23)
Agreeableness	0.37***	(0.20, 0.58)	0.19*	(0.00, 0.38)	0.47***	(0.32, 0.70)
Conscientiousness	0.20*	(0.01, 0.40)	0.14	(-0.05, 0.33)	0.06	(-0.13, 0.25)
Emotional stability	0.23*	(0.04, 0.43)	0.09	(-0.10, 0.28)	0.20*	(0.01, 0.40)
Openness/Intellect	0.31***	(0.13, 0.51)	0.13	(-0.06, 0.32)	0.31***	(0.13, 0.51)
Wife						
Surgency	0.12	(-0.07, 0.31)	-0.08	(-0.27, 0.11)	0.03	(-0.16, 0.22)
Agreeableness	0.32***	(0.14, 0.52)	0.31**	(0.13, 0.51)	0.29**	(0.11, 0.49)
Conscientiousness	0.06	(-0.13, 0.25)	0.32***	(0.14, 0.52)	0.11	(-0.08, 0.30)
Emotional stability	0.27**	(0.09, 0.47)	0.25**	(0.06, 0.45)	0.26**	(0.07, 0.46)
Openness/Intellect	0.29**	(0.11, 0.49)	0.04	(-0.15, 0.23)	0.18	(-0.01, 0.37)

^a Data were provided by 107 men and 107 women. Shown in parentheses below each correlation is the 95% confidence interval. * $p \leq 0.05$, ** $p \leq 0.01$, *** $p \leq 0.001$ (two-tailed).

did not differ significantly from other husband personality-wife satisfaction correlations that achieved statistical significance.

Additional analyses showed that the correlations between men's agreeableness and their wives' general and sexual satisfaction did not differ significantly from the correlations between women's agreeableness and husbands' general and sexual satisfaction. The correlation between women's agreeableness and husbands' emotional satisfaction was marginally ($p < 0.09$) significantly *smaller* than the correlation between men's agreeableness and wives' emotional satisfaction. These analyses suggest that although spouse's agreeableness was a good predictor of wife's marital satisfaction, it was an equally good predictor of husband's marital satisfaction.

The most consistent predictor of women's marital satisfaction was husbands' agreeableness, which correlated with all three satisfaction domains. Husbands' emotional stability and openness/intellect positively correlated with women's general satisfaction and emotional satisfaction.

3.2. Spousal mate guarding

Table 2 shows the correlations among spouse's use of four mate guarding tactics with men's and women's marital satisfaction. We predicted that people whose spouses monopolize their time, threaten infidelity, punish or threaten to punish their infidelity and manipulate them emotionally would be less satisfied with the marriage than people whose spouses do not use these mate guarding tactics (Prediction 4). Some support was found for Prediction 4. Men who reported that their wives monopolize their time were less generally satisfied and less emotionally satisfied with their marriages. Women who reported that their husbands monopolize their time were less generally satisfied. The most consistent pattern of negative correlations between men's satisfaction and their reports of wives' mate guarding occurred for threatening infidelity. Men whose partners threaten infidelity were less satisfied across all three

Table 2
Correlations among spouse's mate guarding tactics with own marital satisfaction^a

Spouse's mate guarding	Self-reported marital satisfaction					
	General		Sexual		Emotional	
Husband's report that wife...						
Monopolizes his time	-0.22*	(-0.42, -0.03)	-0.02	(-0.21, 0.17)	-0.23*	(-0.43, -0.04)
Threatens infidelity	-0.28**	(-0.48, -0.10)	-0.22*	(-0.42, -0.03)	-0.35***	(-0.56, -0.17)
Punishes infidelity	-0.24**	(-.44, -.05)	-0.09	(-0.28, 0.10)	-0.31**	(-0.51, -0.13)
Emotionally manipulates	0.20*	(-0.40, -0.01)	0.00	(-0.19, 0.19)	-0.08	(-0.27, 0.11)
Wife's report that husband...						
Monopolizes her time	-0.26**	(-0.45, -0.07)	-0.17	(-0.36, 0.02)	-0.15	(-0.34, 0.04)
Threatens infidelity	-0.35***	(-0.56, -0.17)	-0.26**	(-0.45, -0.07)	-0.30**	(-0.50, -0.12)
Punishes infidelity	-0.31***	(-0.51, -0.13)	-0.20*	(-0.40, -0.01)	-0.30**	(-0.50, -0.12)
Emotionally manipulates	-0.31***	(-0.51, -0.13)	-0.12	(-0.31, 0.07)	-0.14	(-0.33, 0.05)

^a Data were provided by 107 women and 107 men. Shown in parentheses below each correlation is the 95% confidence interval. * $p \leq 0.05$, ** $p \leq 0.01$, *** $p \leq 0.001$ (two-tailed).

domains. Women who reported that their husbands threaten infidelity also were less satisfied across all three domains.

One other husband mate-guarding tactic consistently predicted women's marital dissatisfaction: Women whose partners punish or threaten to punish their infidelity were less satisfied across all three domains. Men who reported that their wives punish or threaten to punish their infidelity were less generally satisfied. Finally, men and women who reported that their spouses were emotionally manipulative were less generally satisfied.

3.3. Spousal susceptibility to infidelity

Table 3 shows the correlations among estimates of six types of spousal infidelity with the three dimensions of marital satisfaction. We predicted that people who anticipate spousal infidelity would be less satisfied with their marriages than people who do not anticipate infidelity (Prediction 5). Table 3 reveals some support for this prediction. Men who perceived their partners to be susceptible to infidelity were less sexually satisfied and less emotionally satisfied with their marriages, whereas women who perceived their partners to be susceptible to infidelity were less generally satisfied with their marriages.

4. Discussion

We tested five predictions derived from the general hypothesis that marital satisfaction is an

Table 3
Correlations among spouse's susceptibility to infidelity with own marital satisfaction^a

Spouse's susceptibility to infidelity	Self-reported marital satisfaction					
	General		Sexual		Emotional	
Husband's estimate of wife's infidelity						
Flirt	-0.19	(-0.38, 0.00)	-0.24*	(-0.44, -0.05)	-0.30**	(-0.50, -0.12)
Passionately kiss	-0.15	(-0.34, 0.04)	-0.18	(-0.37, 0.01)	-0.15	(-0.34, 0.04)
Romantically date	-0.15	(-0.34, 0.04)	-0.19	(-0.38, 0.00)	-0.20*	(-0.40, -0.01)
Have one night stand	-0.10	(-0.29, 0.09)	-0.22*	(-0.42, -0.03)	-0.18	(-0.37, 0.01)
Have brief affair	-0.10	(-0.29, 0.09)	-0.30**	(-0.50, -0.12)	-0.23*	(-0.43, -0.04)
Have serious affair	-0.13	(-0.32, 0.06)	-0.28**	(-0.48, -0.10)	-0.31**	(-0.51, -0.13)
Wife's estimate of husband's infidelity						
Flirt	-0.17	(-0.36, 0.02)	-0.25*	(-0.45, -0.06)	-0.18	(-0.37, 0.01)
Passionately kiss	-0.26**	(-0.46, -0.07)	-0.14	(-0.33, 0.05)	0.01	(-0.18, 0.20)
Romantically date	-0.11	(-0.30, 0.08)	-0.09	(-0.28, 0.10)	-0.05	(-0.24, 0.14)
Have one night stand	-0.26**	(-0.46, -0.07)	-0.12	(-0.31, 0.07)	-0.13	(-0.32, 0.06)
Have brief affair	-0.24**	(-0.44, -0.05)	-0.06	(-0.25, 0.13)	-0.08	(-0.27, 0.11)
Have serious affair	-0.20*	(-0.40, -0.01)	-0.04	(-0.23, 0.15)	-0.02	(-0.21, 0.17)

^a Data were provided by 107 women and 107 men. Shown in parentheses below each correlation is the 95% confidence interval. * $p \leq 0.05$, ** $p \leq 0.01$ (two-tailed).

evolved psychological state that monitors spousal cost-infliction. In this discussion, we highlight the key findings.

4.1. Spousal personality characteristics

People married to disagreeable, undependable, emotionally unstable and close-minded spouses are subjected to many spouse-inflicted costs. We predicted that people married to spouses with these characteristics would be less satisfied with their marriage than people whose spouses do not have these characteristics. Previous research supports this prediction and we replicate the links between spousal personality and partner's marital satisfaction. This research contributes to the literature by identifying spousal cost-infliction as a link between spousal personality and partner's marital satisfaction.

Because of the reproductive costs involved, we predicted that wife's low conscientiousness would be a reliable spousal personality predictor of a man's marital dissatisfaction. Previous research indicates that the best spousal personality predictor of a man's estimates that his wife will be unfaithful is her low conscientiousness. The results indicate that wife's low conscientiousness and low agreeableness are equally good predictors of a man's marital dissatisfaction. Low conscientiousness is not, however, the most consistent spousal personality predictor of men's marital dissatisfaction. Men married to women low in agreeableness and low in emotional stability are less satisfied across all three domains.

Disagreeable, emotionally unstable men are more likely than agreeable, emotionally stable men to abuse their wives. We predicted that husband's low agreeableness and low emotional stability would be reliable spousal personality predictors of a woman's marital dissatisfaction. This prediction receives some support. The two largest husband personality–wife satisfaction correlations are between husbands' agreeableness and wives' general satisfaction and emotional satisfaction. Additionally, husbands' agreeableness is the only personality characteristic that significantly correlates with wives' marital satisfaction across all three domains. Post-hoc analyses suggest that although spouse's agreeableness is a good predictor of wife's marital satisfaction, it is an equally good predictor of husband's marital satisfaction.

4.2. Spousal mate guarding

Monopolizing a spouse's time, threatening infidelity, punishing or threatening to punish infidelity and emotional manipulation are mate guarding tactics that impose costs or threaten the imposition of costs for spousal defection. Reasoning that marital satisfaction monitors spousal cost-infliction, we predicted and confirmed that people whose spouses use these mate guarding tactics are less satisfied with the marriage than people whose spouses do not use these tactics.

4.3. Spousal susceptibility to infidelity

We predicted that people who anticipate spousal infidelity would be less satisfied with their marriages than people who do not anticipate infidelity. This prediction is supported, but with an unpredicted sex-differentiated relationship between spouse's susceptibility to infidelity and

marital satisfaction. Men who anticipate spousal infidelity are less sexually satisfied and less emotionally satisfied with their marriages. Women who anticipate spousal infidelity are less generally satisfied.

One limitation of this study pertains to the sample of couples. The use of newlywed couples may have produced range restriction for several variables, including marital satisfaction and perceived spousal susceptibility to infidelity. Newlywed men and women, relative to longer-married persons, are likely to be more satisfied with their marriages and to be less concerned with spousal infidelity, for example. The present results therefore may not generalize to longer-married couples.

A second set of limitations applies to all cross-sectional research. Longitudinal studies of marriage allow for a *causal* analysis of marital satisfaction that cannot be achieved in cross-sectional designs (Karney & Bradbury, 1995). This research documents several correlates of marital satisfaction that could be examined longitudinally. For example, do spousal personality and mate guarding tactics predict marital satisfaction *beyond* the first year of marriage? Does marital satisfaction track spousal susceptibility to infidelity *over time*, or might the observed relationships be peculiar to newlyweds?

The results provide some support for an evolutionary model of marital satisfaction. Future research might pit evolutionary psychological predictions against predictions generated from alternative theories of marital satisfaction, such as social exchange theory (see Bentler & Newcomb, 1978) and behavioral theory (see Gottman, 1993). This research identifies several empirical links between marital satisfaction and spousal cost-infliction, such as the links between marital satisfaction and spousal mate guarding. These empirical links should be addressed and accounted for, regardless of theoretical orientation.

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