

Emotionally Stable, Extraverted, Conscientious, and Unambivalent: Iranian Women Successfully Navigating Divorce Adjustment

Journal of Family Issues
2021, Vol. 42(9) 2181–2206
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DOI: 10.1177/0192513X20968607
journals.sagepub.com/home/jfi



Omran Davarinejad¹, Azin Ghasemi²,
Scott S. Hall³ , Lawrence S. Meyers⁴,
Mehdi Shirzadifar¹, Maryam Shirzadi¹,
Serge Brand⁵, and Hassan Shahi¹ 

Abstract

The aim of the present study was to explore the extent to which the combination of the Big Five personality traits and adult attachment styles are associated with a broad array of divorce adjustment (DA) indicators. A total of 200 Iranian divorced women took part in the study. Participants completed

¹Clinical Research Development Center, Imam Khomeini and Mohammad Kermanshahi and Farabi Hospitals, Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences, Kermanshah, Iran

²Department of Psychology, Tehran Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran

³Department of Early Childhood, Youth, and Family Studies, Ball State University, Muncie, IN, USA

⁴Psychology Department, College of Social Sciences & Interdisciplinary Studies, California State University, Sacramento, Sacramento, CA, USA

⁵Department of Sport, Exercise, and Health, Division of Sport Science, and Psychosocial Health, University of Basel, Basel, BS, Switzerland

Corresponding Author:

Hassan Shahi, Clinical Research Development Center, Imam Khomeini and Mohammad Kermanshahi and Farabi Hospitals, Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences, Kermanshah, 6715847141, Iran.

Email: Hassanshahi84@gmail.com

a series of self-rating questionnaires covering socio-demographic, the Big Five, adult attachment styles, and indicators of DA. The results showed that higher levels of the Big Five (with neuroticism reverse-coded) were collectively associated with higher levels of feeling of self-worth (FSW), disentanglement of love relationships (DLR), social self-worth (SSW), rebuilding of social trust (RST), lower levels of symptoms of grief (SOG), and feelings of self-anger (FSA). Higher levels of secure attachment (and lower levels of ambivalent attachment) were associated with higher levels of FSW, DLR, RST, and lower levels of SOG, and FSA. The role of Iranian culture on post-DA is discussed.

Keywords

The Big Five personality dimensions, adult attachment styles, divorce adjustment, Iranian culture

Divorce is one of the most stressful life events and requires significant adjustment (Kitson, 2013; Kulik & Heine-Cohen, 2011). Results from a large body of research has indicated that divorced individuals confront a variety of stressors, including financial problems (Amato & Previti, 2003; Ghodrati, 2016; Kulik & Heine-Cohen, 2011), shrinking social networks (Bevino & Sharkin, 2003; Kramrei et al., 2007), friendship losses (Oygard, 2004; Pachauri, 2018), and moving (Kulik & Heine-Cohen, 2011; Wang & Amato, 2000). Divorced individuals may be at higher risk for physical (Cunningham & Waldock, 2016; Richmond & Christensen, 2001) and psychological dysfunction (Bowen & Jensen, 2017; Fine & Harvey, 2013; Lawson & Satti, 2016). However, some scholars (Boss et al., 2016; Kulik & Heine-Cohen, 2011; Wang & Amato, 2000) have pointed out that there is often considerable variation in how well individuals adjust to divorce-related stress due to a variety of factors. The general purpose of the current study was to explore variation in numerous elements of divorce adjustment (DA) among a sample of divorced women in Iran. Such a sample provides an opportunity to investigate DA within an under-studied and somewhat unique cultural context.

Literature Review***Divorce Adjustment***

Assessment and evaluation of DA have frequently focused on psychological maladjustment, such as depression, emotional distress, mental illness, anxiety, loneliness, feelings of personal failure, rejection, and identity crisis

(Birnbaum et al., 1997; Kitson & Morgan, 1990; Kuo et al., 2019; Lamela et al., 2016). However, divorce can also coincide with positive adjustments, including relief from symptoms of physical and mental illness, enhanced abilities to perform day-to-day responsibilities at home and work, and developing a more independent identity to a former marriage or spouse (Amato & Previti, 2003; Asanjarani et al., 2018b; Bursik, 1991; Fine & Harvey, 2013; Fisher & Alberti, 2016).

One of the most comprehensive conceptualizations of DA consists of six categories of adjustment (Fisher, 1977; Fisher & Alberti, 2016; Guzmán-González et al., 2017): (a) feeling of self-worth (FSW) includes changes in self-image and feelings about the self; (b) disentanglement from the love relationship (DLR) deals with a healthy cognitive and emotional detachment from an ex-spouse; (c) social self-worth (SSW) is the tendency to converse with others about the divorce, engage in new social interactions, and reconnect with old friends and kinfolk; (d) rebuilding social trust (RST) includes feeling comfortable about dating and sexual activity in new relationships; (e) symptoms of grief (SOG) involves loss-oriented emotional expression (depression, loneliness, fear, crying, and insecurity) or physical distress (changes in sleeping and eating habits, and exhaustion); (f) feeling of self-anger (FSA) includes anger about the ending the love relationship and feeling blame or guilt toward one's self. Four of these dimensions (i.e., FSW, DLR, SSW, RST) include the positive aspect of adjustment and the two others (SOG and FSA) reflect a negative adjustment.

Research on possible psychological and sociological factors that affect DA has produced inconsistent findings. For example, economic stability has been predictive of DA in some studies (Amato & Previti, 2003; Oygard, 2004; Wang & Amato, 2000) but not in others (Yárnoz-Yaben, 2009; Yousefi et al., 2019). Wang and Amato (2000) identified that education was associated with greater disentanglement from a prior relationship, and being employed appeared to buffer the effects of financial pressures, loss of friends, and the need to move. However, some studies have found no such association with higher education. Inconsistencies also exist in DA research regarding the number of children, length of marital life, length of divorced years, and job status of divorced women (Asanjarani et al., 2018a, 2018b; Bursik, 1991; Cavapozzi et al., 2019; Fattahian et al., 2017; Ferraro et al., 2016; Islam & Naz, 2018; Kitson, 2013). Some of these factors could be more relevant to specific situations and cultural contexts.

Despite being a developing society, divorce in Iran is increasing at a rate close to that of developed societies (Ahmadi et al., 2018; Asanjarani et al., 2018a, 2018b). Studies that focus on divorce's consequences in Iranian samples have identified some similar sociodemographic associations. For example,

gender and socio-cultural status can affect DA (Asanjarani et al., 2017; Yousefi et al., 2019). Being employed was also associated with higher DA, and adjustment was more positive for more highly-educated women (Yousefi et al., 2019). Iranian culture might contribute to some nuanced elements of DA or processes due to particular values systems. For example, a religious practice exists in Iran that is not widely practiced but is legally permissible. A couple can enter into a "temporary marriage" in which they decide its length (could only be for days or hours). These marriages tend to happen under unfavorable economic conditions in which a divorced woman secretly marries a married man for the sake of financial security while escaping social disapproval, for instance.

However, the value orientations of embeddedness and hierarchy are the most prominent cultural influences in Iran (Delkhamoush, 2005, 2009, 2014) and are thus particularly likely to impact marriage and divorce patterns, consistent with human basic values theory (Schwartz, 2017). In embedded and hierarchical cultures, values of conservation (security, conformity, and tradition) are favored above openness to change (self-direction and stimulation), and values of self-enhancement (hedonism, achievement, and power) are favored above self-transcendence (benevolence and universalism; Schwartz, 1992, 2012). Such a constellation of values tends to promote positive beliefs about and strong commitments to marriage. In such a cultural system divorce is viewed as a disgraceful and unfavorable event. The culture also enables men to remarry immediately while divorced women are stigmatized, especially since female virginity is highly valued in a new bride. Iranian cultural factors would be expected to contribute to additional stress and to DA processes and outcomes for Iranian women in ways that would be less common or familiar in other, particularly Western cultures.

Viewed from a family stress theory perspective (Boss et al, 2016), levels of distress associated with DA would be mediated by (a) perceptions of the magnitude and meanings of the stressor (e.g., divorce trauma and culture-based stigma), and (b) personal resources (e.g., cognitive-emotional coping, and instrumental and emotional social support). Research has shown that perceived stress resulting from divorce varies across cultures (Kramrei et al., 2007; Kulik & Heine-Cohen, 2011). Some of the demographic characteristics or background factors (e.g., gender and education) mentioned earlier could relate to how people perceive divorce and the resources they have to deal with DA. Other factors that some might expect to predict DA have limited research support, such as a sense of coherence, self-acceptance, perceived stress, attitudes toward marital dissolution, subjective well-being, and quality of social relationships. (Bevino & Sharkin, 2003; Kramrei et al., 2007; Kulik & Heine-Cohen, 2011; Nelson, 1995; Pledge, 1992; Quinney & Fouts, 2004; Steiner et al., 2011; Wang & Amato, 2000).

Personality and attachment styles, however, evolved in response to social-emotional adaptive problems recurrently faced by humans over evolutionary history (Michalski & Shackelford, 2010), making them arguably relevant to how individual interpret stressor events associated with divorce and to their resources or capacities to respond to such events. For example, a neurotic personality could contribute to paranoia and negative interpretations of the ex-spouse's behavior and motives, leading to anger and belligerence. An outgoing personality might contribute to a larger social network that provides helpful support during divorce, while an avoidant attachment style could have the opposite effect. Such dynamics would likely influence the nature of DA.

The Big Five

The "Big Five" personality dimensions (Costa Jr. & McCrae, 1992; McCrae & John, 1992) possibly account for some differences in how people adjust to divorce. The dimensions are comprised of Extraversion (characterized by breadth of activities, surgency from external activity/situations, and energy creation from external means; also referred to as "surgency"; Laney, 2002), Agreeableness (reflects individual differences in the general concern for social harmony; generally considerate, kind, generous, trusting, trustworthy, helpful, and willing to compromise; Barrick & Mount, 1991; Rothmann & Coetzer, 2003), Conscientiousness (a tendency to display self-discipline, act dutifully, and strive for achievement against measures or outside expectations; relates to the ways in which people control, regulate, and direct their impulses; Toegel & Barsoux, 2012), Neuroticism (characterized by the tendency to experience negative emotions, such as anger, anxiety, or depression; sometimes called emotional instability—the opposite of emotional stability; Jeronimus et al., 2014), and Openness to Experience (characterized by a general appreciation for art, emotion, adventure, unusual ideas, imagination, curiosity, and variety of experience; and intellectual curiosity, openness to emotion, sensitivity to beauty, and willingness to try new things; Ambridge, 2014; McCrae & John, 1992). As mentioned, personality characteristics appear to have relevance to interpretations and resources related to stress and ultimately DA.

Limited research has focused on personality and comprehensive DA. One study found that Cattell 16 personality factors predicted better adjustment scored for the following nine personality factors: Dominance, Assertiveness, Self-Assurance, Intelligence, Creativity, Imagination, Social Boldness, Liberalism, and Self-sufficiency (Thomas, 1982). Ernest Mowrer (Mowrer, 1932), one of the first scholars to examine post-DA, argued that that DA and personality traits strongly depend on cultural traits in society. The Big Five

personality dimensions appear to have been largely neglected in studies of DA, and to our knowledge, this is the first study of this kind based on an Iranian sample of divorced women.

Adult Attachment Styles

Attachment styles, though rooted in childhood (Bowlby, 1969, 1997, 2005), continue to be relevant to the developmental process and interpersonal relationships as people age (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Hazen & Shaver, 1992; Tagay & Karataş, 2012). A secure adult attachment style is demonstrated by those possessing a positive view of self and a positive view of others (Van Buren & Cooley, 2002). Securely attached people tend to have more satisfying relationships and feel comfortable both with intimacy and with independence (Hazan & Shaver, 1994). An anxious-preoccupied (ambivalent) adult attachment style possesses a negative view of self and a positive view of others (Van Buren & Cooley, 2002). People with this style of attachment seek high levels of intimacy, approval, and responsiveness from their attachment figures (Hazan & Shaver, 1990, 1994). People who are anxious or preoccupied with attachment may exhibit high levels of emotional expressiveness, emotional dysregulation, worry, and impulsiveness in their relationships (Sable, 2008). A dismissive-avoidant (avoidant) attachment style is described as possessing a positive view of self and a negative view of other (Brennan & Shaver, 1995; Feeney & Noller, 2004). People with this attachment style desire a high level of independence, often motivated by avoiding attachment altogether (Feeney & Noller, 2004; Pietromonaco & Barrett, 1997). People with a dismissive-avoidant attachment style tend to suppress and hide their feelings, and tend to deal with rejection by distancing themselves from the sources of rejection (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Van Buren & Cooley, 2002). As noted, these personal and relational characteristics due to or correlated with adult attachments styles appear to have the potential to influence perceptions and resources related to stress, ultimately shaping DA.

Research has indicated relevance of attachment styles for at least some element of DA. For example, Yarnoz-Yaben (2010) showed that preoccupied and fearful (avoidant) attachment styles predicted low levels of adjustment after divorce, while secure attachment and avoidance dimensions predicted better adjustment to divorce and positive emotions. Preoccupied (ambivalent) individuals demonstrated greater distress at the ending of a close relationships and have a higher tendency to become engaged in new relationships (Simpson, 1990). Because the Fisher's conceptualization on DA includes six distinct dimensions of DA, it can provide a more comprehensive investigation of attachment-related associations. Furthermore, because attachment styles and personality have been shows to correlate (Huis et al., 2011; Roccato et al.,

2013), studying attachment styles and personality traits simultaneously has the potential to account for overlapping or intercorrelated predictions of DA that lack extensive investigation.

Current Study

The current study has the potential to contribute to better understanding of the psychological mechanisms underlying DA, especially within an under-studied cultural context. It is rooted in assumptions consistent with family stress theory, namely, that the outcomes of stressors are mediated by subjective interpretations of stressors and resources to cope with stressors. Elements of evolutionary and attachment theories support the premise that personality traits and attachment styles are relevant stress-to-outcome mediators, both of which are relevant to how people perceive their environment and build and sustain resources that could assist with managing stress. The primary assumption is that DA would vary across Iranian women based on diverse personality and attachment characteristics, embedded within a broader set of cultural influences. Results could help focus efforts on reducing distresses after divorce, particularly within Iranian (and similar) contexts. The following research questions guided our analyses: First, to what extent is each of the Big Five Personality traits related to each distinct dimension of DA. Second, to what extent are attachment styles related to overall DA and each distinct dimension of DA. Third, to what extent do attachment styles and the Big Five personality dimensions uniquely predict the distinct dimensions of DA? An overriding question is the extent to which the predictor variables associate with DA above and beyond demographic and background characteristics (i.e., age, education, number of children, job status, length of married, length of time since divorced, and marriage style).

Method

Participants

Divorced women in Kermanshah, Iran were recruited to participate in the present cross-sectional study through two methods: (a) by posting flyers at the local state welfare organization of Iran (Behzisti) and (b) by having faculty members from a variety of disciplines at two local universities (with institutional approval) invite their students in their classes to ask their acquaintances or family members who had divorced if they would like to participate in the study. Participants were required to meet the following criteria: (a) consent to participate in the study, (b) be divorced for at least six months from a marriage that lasted at least six months, and (c) not be

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Sociodemographic Variables (N = 200).

	Mean (SD)
Age (years)	32.9 (7.3)
Length of marriage (years)	6.46 (5.0)
Length of time since divorce (years)	2.41 (2.0)
	<i>n</i> (%)
Number of Children	
0	78 (39)
1	84 (42)
2	30 (15)
3	8 (4)
Marriage Style	
Arranged	130 (65)
Love-based	70 (35)
Job Status	
Housewife	102 (51)
Employed	98 (49)
Education	
Primary/Guidance school	20 (10)
Diploma	72 (36)
Bachelor	90 (45)
Master's/Doctorate degree	18 (9)

receiving psychological treatment or therapy at the time of participation in the study. Participants were informed about the aims of the study and were not reimbursed for their participation. Participants were contacted by telephone, and an appointment was arranged for all of them (250 people). In a short lecture, the purpose of the research was reiterated. Questionnaires were distributed among the participants who were to return the completed questionnaires at a follow up meeting five days later. The ethics committee of the Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences (KUMS; Kermanshah, Iran) approved the study. Out of 250 questionnaires, 213 were returned (a response rate of 85%). Of the returned questionnaires, 13 were eliminated because of failing to meet the inclusion criteria, resulting in a final sample of 200 divorced women. See Table 1 for sample characteristics.

Measures

Participants reported their age, education (primary/guidance school, diploma, bachelor, and master's/doctorate degree), number of children, job status

(housewife vs. employed), length of prior marriage, number of years since the divorce, and marriage style (arranged vs. love-based). Dummy variables were created for the dichotomous variables.

Fisher Divorce Adjustment Scale (FDAS). Participants completed the Fisher Divorce Adjustment Scale (FDAS; Fisher, 1977). Asanjarani and colleagues (2017) translated the questionnaire into the Farsi/Persian version with satisfactory psychometric properties (Cronbach's $\alpha < 0.93$). The questionnaire consists of 100 items. Responses were given on five-point scales with the anchor points 1 (almost never) to 5 (almost always), with higher scores reflecting a better adjustment to divorce. The measure assessed six different dimensions of DA: (a) FSW—the higher the score, the less negative was her attitude toward herself and the more accepting she was of herself ($\alpha = 0.82$); (b) DLR—the higher the score, the more cognitively and emotionally detached she was from her ex-spouse ($\alpha = 0.86$); (c) SSW—the higher the score, the less she experienced biased social interactions and the less social rejection or deprivations ($\alpha = 0.70$); (d) RST—the higher the score, the more she was able to trust others while creating close relationships ($\alpha = 0.86$); (e) SOG—the higher the score, the more she displayed symptoms and signs of grief and depression ($\alpha = 0.89$); and (f) FSA—the higher the score, the more she experienced feeling of revenge and anger toward her ex-spouse and feelings of guilt toward herself ($\alpha = 0.89$).

Ten-item personality inventory (TIPI). Participants completed the Ten-item Personality Inventory (TIPI; Gosling et al., 2003). Atari (2015) translated the inventory into Farsi/Persian. The TIPI is a self-rating inventory of the Big Five dimensions. Answers are given with a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (disagree strongly) to 7 (agree strongly), with higher scores of each dimension reflecting higher level of that dimension. Composite scores for each personality feature were calculated by averaging participant responses to the appropriate items (Atari, 2015). Neuroticism was recoded to represent low neuroticism or “high emotional stability.” The Persian TIPI demonstrates adequate convergent validity and test-retest reliability (Atari, 2015).

Revised Adult Attachment Scale (RAAS). Sharifi et al. (2012) translated the Revised Adult Attachment Scale (RAAS; Collins & Read, 1990) into Farsi/Persian. It consists of 18 items and assesses three attachment styles (Secure, Avoidant, and Ambivalent). Answers are given with a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (not at all characteristic of me) to 5 (very characteristic of me), with higher scores of each attachment style reflecting higher level of that style. The Persian RAAS demonstrates adequate convergent validity and test-retest reliability (Sharifi et al., 2012).

Statistical Analysis

We examined whether age, education, number of children, job status, length of marriage, length of time since the divorce, and marriage style systematically correlated with DA indicators (FSW, DLR, SSW, RST, SOG, and FSA). Next, correlations were computed between DA indicators, dimensions of the Big Five personality, styles of adult attachment, and all sociodemographic variables. Multiple regression analyses (hierarchical) were performed with each DA indicator as dependent variables, with dimensions of the Big Five personality and styles of adult attachment as predictors, and sociodemographic as covariate variables. Statistical computations were performed with SPSS and AMOS 25.0 (IBM Corporation, Armonk, NY, USA) for apple Mac.

Results

Correlational Analyses

Table 2 reports the descriptive statistics and correlation coefficients for the relationships between all sociodemographic information and dimensions of DA. The correlation matrix indicates that age, education, number of children, length of marriage, and length of time since divorce, were correlated with some of the DA domains ($p < .05$). *T*-Tests indicated that job status and marital styles differed for FSW, SSW, SOG, and FSA ($p < .05$).

Each of the Big Five personality dimensions was correlated with at least one dimension of DA (see Table 2). Secure attachment and ambivalent attachment were each related to five of the DA dimensions; however, the avoidance style was unrelated to any of the dimensions.

Multivariate Analyses

Results of the six independent hierarchical regression analyses are displayed in Tables 3 to 8. For the FSW domain (Table 3), the model was significant ($p < .001$) and accounted for 52% of the dependent variable's variance. Sociodemographic variables explained 9.9% of the variance in FSW. The Big Five personality dimensions explained 35.3% of the variance in FSW. Specifically, Emotional Stability, (the most significant predictor of FSW) and Conscientiousness were significant predictors of FSW after controlling for demographics. Three styles of adult attachment explained 6.8% of the variance of FSW. Just the secure style was a significant predictor of FSW after controlling for demographics and the Big Five.

For the DLR domain (Table 4), the model was significant ($p < .001$) and accounted for 32.5% of the dependent variable's variance. Sociodemographic

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Correlations between Study Variables (N = 200).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
1. Age	-																				
2. Education	-.06	-																			
3. Number of Children	.38**	-.37**	-																		
4. Job Status	.10	.43**	-.13	-																	
5. Married Years	.53**	-.21**	.70**	-.12	-																
6. Divorced Years	-.06	.08	-.06	.17*	-																
7. Marriage Style	-.08	.33**	-.21**	.16*	-.12	.16*	-														
8. Emotional Stability	-.13	.08	-.28**	.29**	-.30**	.16*	.16*	-													
9. Extraversion	-.06	-.14*	-.10	-.26**	-.09	-.28**	-.10	-.01	-												
10. Agreeableness	-.01	.01	.18*	-.02	.18**	.18*	.13	.08	-.21**	-											
11. Openness to Experience	-.19**	.28**	-.09	.01	-.20**	-.01	.14*	-.01	.21**	.12	-										
12. Conscientiousness	-.10	-.13	-.05	.11	-.19**	-.17*	-.05	.22**	.20**	.05	.01	-									
13. Secure	-.04	-.05	-.06	-.26**	.03	.03	.15*	.13	.46**	.19**	.22**	.05	-								
14. Avoidant	.09	.01	.15*	.06	.08	.08	.21**	-.05	-.18*	.21**	.05	.20**	.19**	-							
15. Ambivalent	-.04	-.18**	.23**	-.01	.12	-.13	-.26**	-.30**	-.11	.10	-.15*	.07	-.39**	-.07	-						
16. Feeling of Self-Worth (FSW)	-.14*	.01	-.23**	.01	-.22**	.17*	.15*	.35**	.44**	.0	-.10	.31**	.49**	.06	-.35**	-					
17. Disengagement (DLR)	-.25**	.09	-.23**	.05	-.22**	.15*	.11	.25**	.27**	.17*	.26**	-.10	.18**	.01	-.22**	.34**	-				
18. Social Self-Worth (SSW)	.10	.05	.23**	.01	.16*	-.19**	-.18**	.09	.10	.06	-.03	.18*	.02	.07	.10	-.10	-.01	-			
19. Rebuilding Self-Trust (RST)	.02	.01	.07	.06	.01	-.09	.01	.12	.37**	.08	.02	-.07	.35**	-.04	-.51**	.33**	.36**	-.02	-		
20. Symptoms of Grief (SOG)	.17*	-.18**	.25**	-.32**	.30**	-.21**	-.14*	-.49**	-.24**	-.04	-.11	-.25**	-.29**	-.01	.44**	.62**	.57**	-.04	.52**	-	
21. Feeling of Self-Anger (FSA)	.05	-.11	.14*	-.20**	.13	-.17*	-.18**	-.36**	-.19**	.09	-.02	-.06	-.19**	-.07	.52**	.43**	.45**	-.03	.56**	.63**	-
Range	19-62	0-3	0-3	1-2	1-25	1-4	1-2	1-7	1-7	1-7	1-7	1-7	1-5	1-5	1-5	1-5	1-5	1-5	1-5	1-5	
Mean	32.9	1.53	.85	1.49	6.46	2.41	1.35	4.16	4.22	4.62	4.74	5.75	3.15	2.68	2.88	2.66	2.63	2.96	3.11	2.44	2.94
SD	7.30	.79	.83	.50	5.27	1.13	.47	1.56	1.60	1.21	1.14	1.05	.43	.45	.74	.40	.33	.37	.51	.57	.53

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

Table 3. Hierarchical Regression Coefficients (β) with Feeling of Self-Worth (FSW) as Dependent Variable, and Sociodemographics, the Big Five, and Attachment Styles as Predictors ($N = 200$).

Predictors	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Sociodemographics			
Age	-.006	-.027	-.065
Education	-.109	.009	.003
Number of Children	-.197	-.140	-.089
Job status	-.005	-.083	-.009
Married years	-.060	.153	.098
Divorced years	.127	.279***	.238***
Marriage style	.127	.150*	.080
The Big Five			
Emotional stability		.285***	.204***
Extraversion		.461***	.341***
Agreeableness		.076	.117
Openness		.018	.065
Conscientiousness		.258***	.261***
Attachment Styles			
Secure			.252***
Avoidant			.039
Ambivalent			-.117
Model statistics	$R^2 = .099, \Delta R^2 = .099$ $F(7,184) = 2.889***$	$R^2 = .452, \Delta R^2 = .353$ $F(12,179) = 12.309***$	$R^2 = .520, \Delta R^2 = .068$ $F(15,176) = 12.736***$

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

variables explained 10% of the variance in DLR. In the second step, the Big Five personality dimensions explained 18.9% of the variance. Among the personality dimensions, Extraversion (the most significant predictor of DLR), and Agreeableness were significant predictors of DLR after controlling for demographics. Attachment styles explained 3.6% of the variance of DLR. Specifically, secure and ambivalent styles were significant predictors of DLR after controlling for demographics and the Big Five.

For the SSW domain (Table 5), the model was significant ($p < .001$) and accounted for 15.7% of the dependent variable's variance. Sociodemographic variables explained 11.6% of the variance in SSW. The Big Five personality dimensions explained only 2.5% of the variance. Only Conscientiousness was significant predictor of SSW after controlling for demographics. Finally, styles of adult attachment only explained 1.7% of variance and none of attachment styles were significant.

For the RST domain (Table 6), the model was significant ($p < .001$) and accounted for 47% of the dependent variable's variance. Sociodemographic

Table 4. Hierarchical Regression Coefficients (β) with Disentanglement from Love Relationship (DLR) as Dependent Variable, and Sociodemographics, the Big Five, and Attachment Styles as Predictors (N = 200).

Predictors	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Sociodemographics			
Age	-.186	-.151	-.190*
Education	-.016	-.025	-.056
Number of Children	-.151	-.159	-.175
Job status	.025	.065	.057
Married years	.006	.075	.117
Divorced years	.109	.149*	.142
Marriage style	.052	.023	.009
The Big Five			
Emotional stability		.157*	.143
Extraversion		.335***	.431***
Agreeableness		.183*	.245***
Openness		.133	.124
Conscientiousness		.010	.004
Attachment Styles			
Secure			-.211*
Avoidant			.071
Ambivalent			-.198*
Model statistics	$R^2 = .100, \Delta R^2 = .100$ $F(7,184) = 2.929***$	$R^2 = .289, \Delta R^2 = .189$ $F(12,179) = 6.071***$	$R^2 = .325, \Delta R^2 = .036$ $F(15,176) = 5.653***$

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

variables explained only 2.7% of the variance om RST. The Big Five personality dimensions explained 15.2% of the variance. Specifically, Extraversion and Openness to were significant predictors of RST after controlling for demographics. Adult attachment styles explained 29% of the variance. Only the ambivalent style (the most significant predictor of RST) was significant.

For the SOG domain (Table 7) the model was significant ($p < .001$) and accounted for 58.7% of the dependent variable's variance. Sociodemographic variables explained 18.7% of the variance in SOG. The Big Five personality dimensions explained 29.7% of the variance. Specifically, Emotional Stability, Extraversion, and Conscientiousness were significant predictors of SOG after controlling for demographics. Attachment styles explained 10.3% of the variance. Only the ambivalent style was a significant predictor of SOG after controlling for demographics and the Big Five.

For the feeling of self-anger (FSA) domain (Table 8), the model was significant ($p < .001$) and accounted for 41.2% of the dependent variable's variance. Sociodemographic variables explained 10.1% of the variance in FSA.

Table 5. Hierarchical Regression Coefficients (β) with Social Self-Worth (SSW) as Dependent Variable, and Sociodemographics, the Big Five, and Attachment Styles as Predictors (N = 200).

Predictors	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Sociodemographics			
Age	.012	.013	.032
Education	.063	.074	.086
Number of Children	.236*	.210	.239*
Job status	.095	.065	.070
Married years	-.022	.051	.026
Divorced years	-.178*	-.123	-.115
Marriage style	-.142	-.137	-.113
The Big Five			
Emotional stability		-.018	-.039
Extraversion		.005	-.053
Agreeableness		-.062	-.067
Openness		.076	.084
Conscientiousness		.155	.192*
Attachment Styles			
Secure			.075
Avoidant			-.145
Ambivalent			.045
Model statistics	$R^2 = .116, \Delta R^2 = .116$ $F(7,184) = 3.438^{***}$	$R^2 = .141, \Delta R^2 = .025$ $F(12,179) = 2.445^{***}$	$R^2 = .157, \Delta R^2 = .017$ $F(15,176) = 2.191^{***}$

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

The Big Five personality dimensions explained 14.2% of the variance. Specifically, Emotional Stability and Extraversion were significant predictors of FSA after controlling for demographics. And, finally, attachment styles explained 16.9% of the variance. Only the ambivalent style (the most significant predictor of FSA) was a significant predictor of FSA after controlling for demographics and the Big Five.

Discussion

The key findings of the present study were that personality dimensions and attachment styles corresponded with a variety of dimensions of DA for a sample of divorced Iranian women. While accounting for key sociodemographic and marital background variables, each of the Big Five personality dimensions predicted at least one of DA dimensions, as did the secure and ambivalent attachment styles. The statistically significant increases in the R-square coefficients once attachment was added to the model suggest that

Table 6. Hierarchical Regression Coefficients (β) with Rebuilding Social Trust (RST) as Dependent Variable, and Sociodemographics, the Big Five, and Attachment Styles as Predictors ($N = 200$).

Predictors	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Sociodemographics			
Age	-.041	-.067	-.201
Education	-.055	.007	-.059
Number of Children	-.150	-.072	.008
Job status	.125	.164	.280***
Married years	.107	.143	.114
Divorced years	-.093	-.016	-.095
Marriage style	-.023	-.003	-.131*
The Big Five			
Emotional stability		.105	-.086
Extraversion		.426***	.373***
Agreeableness		-.018	.080
Openness		-.105	-.199**
Conscientiousness		-.046	-.018
Attachment Styles			
Secure			.045
Avoidant			.082
Ambivalent			-.597***
Model statistics	$R^2 = .027, \Delta R^2 = .027$ $F(7,184) = .743$	$R^2 = .180, \Delta R^2 = .152$ $F(12,179) = 3.271***$	$R^2 = .470, \Delta R^2 = .290$ $F(15,176) = 10.410***$

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

the Big Five personality dimensions and attachment styles function somewhat independently as they associate with DA.

Based on the presumptions that stress outcomes are mediated by subjective interpretation and coping resources (Boss et al., 2016), and that personality dimensions relevant to these mediating factors evolved in response to social-emotional adaptive problems (Michalski & Shackelford, 2010), we anticipated that the Big Five personality dimensions would predict at least some of the DA dimensions among divorced Iranian women. Key personality characteristics could themselves act as important coping resources. Emotional Stability was positively associated with divorce dimensions of FSW and DLR, and negatively associated with divorce dimensions of SOG and FSA. People who score high in Emotional Stability (low in neuroticism) react less emotionally and are less easily upset. They tend to be emotionally stable and calm, and avoid constantly experiencing negative feelings like anxiety, fearfulness, depression, and anger (Ashton & Lee, 2009). Individuals that score high on Emotional Stability may be

Table 7. Hierarchical Regression Coefficients (β) with Symptoms of Grief (SOG) as Dependent Variable, and Sociodemographics, the Big Five, and Attachment Styles as Predictors (N = 200).

Predictors	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Sociodemographics			
Age	.049	.052	.130*
Education	.091	.006	.045
Number of Children	.110	.046	-.007
Job status	-.318***	-.238***	-.309***
Married years	.124	-.050	-.030
Divorced years	-.084	-.144*	-.097
Marriage style	-.080	-.085	-.012
The Big Five			
Emotional stability		-.416***	-.296***
Extraversion		-.375***	-.335***
Agreeableness		.004	-.035
Openness		.021	.077
Conscientiousness		-.108	-.132*
Attachment Styles			
Secure			-.034
Avoidant			-.024
Ambivalent			.360***
Model statistics	$R^2 = .187, \Delta R^2 = .187$ $F(7,184) = 6.050***$	$R^2 = .484, \Delta R^2 = .297$ $F(12,179) = 13.996***$	$R^2 = .587, \Delta R^2 = .103$ $F(15,176) = 16.677***$

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

more likely to maintain a positive self-image after divorce and engage in activities focused on personal growth (FSW). Such traits may also decrease the frequency of performing socially and personally unacceptable behaviors (e.g., acting out, self-devaluating, and expressing violence) when confronting divorce stressors (FSA). High Emotional Stability might help people avoid or minimize symptoms of depression and sadness (SOG) and give divorced women the strength to disentangle emotionally and cognitively from their ex-spouse (DLR).

Extraversion was positively associated with the divorce dimensions FSW, DLR, and RST, and negatively associated with divorce dimensions SOG and FSA. Extraversion has been associated with an array of positive life outcomes and positive social interactions in Iranians (Aghababaei & Arji, 2014). Extroverted individuals might better withstand pressures from harmful cultural and social consequences of divorcing as an Iranian woman (FSW). Such women may use their extensive social relationships to receive social support and engage in activities that reinforce their self-esteem (RST), which in turn helps them avoid excessive symptoms of sadness and depression (SOG).

Table 8. Hierarchical Regression Coefficients (β) with Feeling of Self-Anger (FSA) as Dependent Variable, and Sociodemographics, the Big Five, and Attachment Styles as Predictors ($N = 200$).

Predictors	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Sociodemographics			
Age	.006	.028	.134
Education	-.024	-.072	-.011
Number of Children	.027	-.045	-.074
Job status	-.160*	-.124	-.184*
Married years	.084	-.025	-.042
Divorced years	-.142	-.176*	-.124
Marriage style	-.089	-.109	-.022
The Big Five			
Emotional stability		-.297***	-.182*
Extraversion		-.279***	-.325***
Agreeableness		.086	.007
Openness		.047	.108
Conscientiousness		.028	.022
Attachment Styles			
Secure			.135
Avoidant			-.120
Ambivalent			.488***
Model statistics	$R^2 = .101, \Delta R^2 = .101$ $F(7, 184) = 2.953***$	$R^2 = .243, \Delta R^2 = .142$ $F(12, 179) = 4.777***$	$R^2 = .412, \Delta R^2 = .169$ $F(15, 176) = 8.216***$

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Social interaction could cause a high level of emotional catharsis and reduce outbursts of anger towards oneself and one's ex-spouse (FSA). Furthermore, high levels of social courage and self-esteem could enable new emotional and romantic relationships and facilitate getting along with an ex-spouse (DLR).

Agreeableness and Open to Experience were positively associated with DLR. Agreeableness includes traits such as forgivingness, gentleness, flexibility, and patience. Agreeableness could make it easier to forgive an ex-husband and to adapt well to new life experiences. Openness to Experience includes traits such as unconventionality, aesthetic appreciation, creativity, originality, and inquisitiveness, and is associated with an array of positive life outcomes and social interactions (Aghababaei & Arji, 2014; Amani et al., 2019). Such openness might help with ignoring the social pressures of an embedded and hierarchical culture and to take an unconventional look at divorce challenges, including connections to an ex-husband. For example, in a sample of participants from the United States, Social Boldness and Liberalism were personality traits that predicted better DA (Thomas, 1982), which could have functioned in a similar manner.

Conscientiousness was positively associated with FSW and SSW, and negatively associated with SOG. Conscientiousness includes traits such as diligence, perfectionism, organization, responsibility, and prudence, and is associated with life satisfaction, autonomy, personal growth, and positive relations with others. High scores on responsibility may help divorced women accept and actively face their new responsibilities, resulting in a boost of confidence (FSW). High scores on prudence may ensure that these women are well-versed in their future prospects and avoid unfulfilling or rejecting situations (SSW)—particularly in an unsupportive culture, protecting them against depression and sadness (SOG).

Because attachment styles have been associated with divorce-related stress (Kramrei et al., 2007; Kulik & Heine-Cohen, 2011) and some emotional responses (Yáñez-Yaben, 2009, 2010), we also anticipated that attachment styles would predict at least some of the investigated DA dimensions among divorced women. Attachment security, as indicated either by a high secure style or a low ambivalent style (both had the same associations), was positively associated with DA dimensions of FSW, DLR, and RST, and negatively associated with DA dimensions of SOG and FSA, implicitly consistent with previous research (Yáñez-Yaben, 2009, 2010; Yáñez et al., 2008). Securely-attached individuals tend to express positive views about themselves and their attachments. They also have a positive attitude towards their relationship (Hazan & Shaver, 1994). A secure attachment style could help a divorced woman avoid a negative view of herself and others in the face of divorce, protect her self-concept, and avoid pathological anxiety caused by feelings of abandonment (FSW). Secure people feel comfortable and satisfied with both intimacy and independence (Sable, 2008). All of these characteristics may help divorced women disentangle cognitively and emotionally from her ex-spouse, and create a new identity in a new life space (DLR). Because secure attached women experience less anxiety and cope well with abandonment, they may experience less anger and remorse toward their ex-spouse and themselves (FSA and SOG). Attachment security would also help divorced women avoid seeing others as threatening and unworthy of trust (RST).

It is unclear why no significant correlations were found between scores of avoidant attachment style and the dimensions of DA. From a socio-cultural perspective (Schwartz, 2012, 2017), Iranian culture has a strong sense of collectivism that tends to condemn individuation. Avoidance might thus be a less common coping mechanism among these Iranian women (this style had the lowest mean score) and may be less relevant to adjusting to divorce. In contrast, in research on divorced individuals from Spain, avoidance has been associated with poorer DA (Yáñez-Yaben, 2010) and is embedded within the larger culture (*Hofstede Insights*, n.d.). An avoidance style might also be

closely associated with denial, which could lead to inaccurate reporting of actual adjustment indicators, skewing any potential associations between the constructs.

Personality and attachment styles generally associated simultaneously and additively with dimensions of DA. The dimensions of FSW and SOG were especially impacted by the inclusion of the Big Five variables, suggesting that personality factors may be particularly salient to how these women perceive their identity and value in the face of divorce. The inclusion of the attachment styles especially added to the predictability of RST and to some degree FSA. It makes sense that attachment would be essential in trusting others, and negative working models of the self (Bowlby, 1969) could be reflected in self-anger. SSW was the dimension least explained (by far) by personality and attachment styles, suggesting that perceived negative social bias and rejection may more likely result from more external factors, such as social support networks.

Limitations

Several limitations warrant against overgeneralization of results. First, participants were primarily recruited from only one city using non-random sampling techniques. Though the use of an Iranian sample increases the novelty of the current study, the women's experiences of divorce were likely influenced by the specific context of urban, Iranian society in which more emphasis is placed on preserving the family than in Western countries. Second, this study was limited to women, and the results could not be generalized to men. Third, self-report data is subject to social desirability bias. Future studies could also include the experts' ratings, particularly for the DA indicators. Fourth, the data do not include work load, job insecurity, family strain, financial issues, academic stresses, or other stressors that potentially impact cognitive-emotional processes involved in DA. Fifth, given the close association of Emotional Stability and Extraversion with the ambivalent style, it is conceivable that attachment anxiety was an epiphenomenon of broader dimensions of Emotional Stability. Nevertheless, the current research expands the DA literature in non-Western cultures and strengthens links between the psychological constructs of personality traits and adult attachment styles as they relate to adaptation processes.

Implication for Researchers and Therapists

The findings overall suggest unique contributions of personality and attachment styles when predicting DA. Including a multi-dimensional,

relatively comprehensive measure of DA helped detect those facets of personality and attachment that can differentially relate to specific elements of the post-DA process. Future research that uses a longitudinal design could test how personality and attachment shape the interactions and decisions that ultimately lead to certain adjustment outcomes. Furthermore, other variables might mediate or moderate associations among personality characteristics, attachment styles, and DA, including workplace circumstances and family strains.

Practitioners who work with divorced individuals might find that cultivating certain personality and attachment tendencies related to a particularly salient dimension could be a fruitful approach toward intervention. For example, an author of the current study provided services to an Iranian woman who had been divorced for 18 months from a marriage that had lasted four years. She had an insecure attachment style and a highly neurotic personality (low in emotional stability). This combination of factors made it difficult for her to face post-divorce changes and as a result she manifested very low DA, especially related to her SSW and rebuilding trust. During counseling sessions, she learned how her attachment style affected her emotional relationships and was able to moderate its effects. She also learned to manage her anxiety about others through several sessions of cognitive behavioral therapy. Other personality strengths (she had high scores in Openness to Experience and Conscientiousness) were leveraged to assist her in setting goals and to think about new social and emotional relationships. Eventually she was assessed as scoring healthy levels of each of the DA subscale. Understanding how specific personality traits and attachment styles relate to specific elements of DA enables more precise intervention strategies to benefit those working through challenges associated with a divorce.

Author's Note

- The manuscript is original work of author. All data, tables, etc. used in the manuscript are prepared originally by authors, otherwise the sources are cited and reprint permission is attached.
- The manuscript has not been and will not be published elsewhere or submitted elsewhere for publication.

Acknowledgments

The authors thank Nick Emler (University of Surrey, Surrey, UK) for proofreading the manuscript. The entire study was performed without external funding.

CRedit Author Statement

Omran Davarinejad: Conceptualization, Supervision.

Azin Ghasemi: Data Gathering, Investigation, Writing- Original draft preparation.

Scott, S. Hall: Methodology, Writing- Reviewing and Editing.

Lawrence S. Meyers: Statistical Supervision.

Mehdi Shirzadifar: Software, Validation.

Maryam Shirzadi: Writing- Original draft preparation, Editing.

Serge Brand: Theoretical Supervision, Editing.

Hassan Shahi: Methodology, Writing- Reviewing and Editing, Software.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

ORCID iDs

Scott S. Hall  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1572-7144>

Hassan Shahi  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5481-5692>

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