Research population in this descriptive-correlation study includes male and female university students from Post-diploma to M.A level at state and non-state universities of Sanandaj. Sampling is done by two-phase random cluster sampling method which considers all the samples in second phase in the mentioned cluster (male and female students of each class). Totally 467 university students in 23 cluster or class took part in this study in the second educational semester of 2010-2011. Descriptive results of this study are in accordance with other related studies in this field. Regression analysis of the results proves that neuroticism and extraversion personality trait have a meaningful contribution toward the pre-marital affair with the opposite sex. Pre-marital affair with opposite sex among university students is highly affected by their personality traits.

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Keywords: Personality trait, Neuroticism, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Openness, Conscientiousness, Attitude, Tendency, Opposite sex, Pre-marital affair;

1. Introduction

Male and female pre-married affair and companionship is one of the alteration factors in the cultural realm of the transitory state of our community. Prevalence of new sexual transactions like male and female friendship indicates that the rethinking process of the youth in their sexual behavior has been highly accelerated (Rajabloo & Asghari, 2010). In recent years, this phenomenon has emerged in its new fashion from the interpersonal relationship of the
younger proportion of the society, due to structural and social changes like the expansion of urbanism, industrialization, increasing women presence in social areas, expansion of men and women co-presence places, and quantitative and qualitative expansion of mass media. Friendship relationship with the opposite sex would mean a relationship between two sexually-potent human beings with different genders, for the purpose of exchanging kindness, intimacy, affection, love and... These concepts are exchanged through direct dialogue (telephone, global communications networks, correspondence, and...), and non-verbal means (gestures, physical contacts, and...).

From the perspective of the religious and cultural value system of a majority of the [Iranian] society, these communications are seen as contradictory, since such male and female companionships are prohibited and are approved of only under certain conditions and religious formalities. Regarding the Islamic viewpoint, the sole way to build a sound and righteous relationship with the opposite sex is marriage. This act is the best way to build an intimate relationship with the opposite sex (Zinati, 2003). With no or little consideration to its religious dimensions, this type of relationship is a phenomenon whose generalization and normalization route could be observed-with little attention and precision given to-in the concrete atmosphere of social interactions (Ghasemi, 2004). Studies conducted in this field show a growing tendency and inclination towards these friendships among the younger proportion of the society (Movahed, et al., 2006). Zakayi’s findings (2005) in the non-student population also show that 69.5% of the respondents (youngsters in Tehran) had a friend from the opposite sex. Studies conducted at universities indicate that 54 to 58 percent of the students have experienced a pre-marital friendship relationship (Khalajabadi Farahani & Mehryar, 2010). Ghasemi’s results in his investigation (2004) at Isfahan Industrial University showed that 37.5 percent of the students under study had intimate friend or friends from the opposite sex. Movahed et al.’s study (2006) conducted over Shiraz university shows the student’s positive attitude towards male and female relationships and only 23.6 percent of the students had a negative attitude towards the notion. According to the conducted studies, various individual and social factors are in connection with the opposite sex relationships: individual factors like age and sex (Kiragu, 1993) and social factors like friend’s families (Kirby, 2002; Alexander et al., 2003, as quoted in Khalajabadi, 2010). Also Mirzayi and Baraghmadi’s study (2011) depicted a connection between the tendency towards media, the way internet is used, friends’ circumstances, the tendency towards hijab, the respondents and their families’ attitudes towards religion and the tendency towards the opposite sex relationships. Apart from individual and social factors, personality traits affect the opposite sex tendency as well. Although no totally relevant study was found in this area, conducted studied generally shout that personality traits are in connection will all human functions (Barelds & Dijkstra, 2011). Researchers believe that five great personality factors can predict behaviors and conceptions in binary interactions (Cuperman & Ickes, 2009). The research conducted on the connection between five great personality factors and the quality of love relationships show that personality factors have consistent connection with the quality of these relationships (Holland & Roisman, 2008). Some studies show that sexual interests have negative relation to extraversion and positive relation to introversion personality traits (Miri, et al., 2011). Also Lewandowski, Aron, and Gee’s study (2007) showed that the tendency towards the opposite sex is affected by non-physical factors like personality traits, that is personality of individuals plays a role in determining their appeal, and being informed of personality traits of the opposite sex affects their tendency to keep their relationship or to avoid it. Cooper’s study (2010) showed that there exist meaningful interpersonal differences in sexual behaviors, and these differences are logically justifiable and predictable through interpersonal differences in personality. Some researchers believe that being informed of the opposite sex’s good and desirable personality traits leads to a tendency towards him or her as a friend or partner and even increases physical appeal (Walker, et al., 2011). With respect to lacking such a study in Iran, and also the fact that domestic studies in this area have mostly been conducted revolving around quantitative methodology, scale technique, and at intervals as a common point, and have mainly been attitude-assessing in nature, this research aims at studying the role of personality traits in male and female pre-marital affair with the opposite sex attitude in Sanandaj universities. The approach implemented in this investigation is fundamentally exploratory and is upon the theoretical bases of NEO-five factor inventory assessment (Costa & McCrae, 1989) which is one of the most efficient and comprehensive personality theories. The general hypothesis considered in this investigation is that “attitude and inclination towards pre-marital affair with the opposite sex as an ordinary friendship or beyond that as
a sexual relationship can be connected to personality traits (neuroticism, extraversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, and openness)."

2. Methodology

Research methodology in statistical population, sampling: this study is based on correlation analysis (regression analysis, in which students’ five great personality factors as predictor variables and holding a pre-marital affair with the opposite sex as criterion variable are considered). Research population consists of male and female students at Sanandaj universities studying at state and non-state sectors ranging from post-diploma to master students for the second semester of 2010-2011. Sampling was conducted in two-phase cluster random method with respect to all samples in the second phase in the respective cluster (male and female students in each classroom). On the basis of size proportion sampling, the number of respective samples in each educational group or class was calculated; thereafter, according to the university type another sampling layer was defined for each university type in the classification process. A total number of 467 university students in 23 clusters or class in 2010-2011 second semester participated in the study. Clusters were collected randomly with equal chance and without replacement from the aforesaid universities until respective sampling was accomplished for each university. A number of 43 collected questionnaires were deficient and final sampling was conducted based on 400 male and female students, which were analyzed applying descriptive data such as mean-point and standard deviation and inferential data such as liner regression.

3. Assessment Instruments

Three questionnaires were implemented to collect information. The constituted questionnaire consisted of 14 items; each depending on the level of penetration had some secondary items, which consisted of some demographic information about the students such as age, sex, accommodation status, level of education, university entrance data and also some questions about their relationships and the form of their relationships with the opposite sex. (NEO-FFI) NEO-Five factor inventory was also implemented. NEO-Five factor inventory consists of 60 items based on Likert scale (1, totally agree and 5, totally disagree) which assesses five great personality factors (12 items for each factor, namely extraversion, accommodation, responsibility, neurosis, and openness), thereafter each factor’s score is calculated and eventually five score are obtained. Questionnaire’s reliability coefficient (re-assessment) results in a sampling of U.S. students were between 0.75 to 0.83 for a 3-month period, final long term coefficient (6 years) for neurosis, extraversion, and openness scales for an amplitude of 0.68 to 0.83, and for accommodation and responsibility streaks (for a 2 year term) were reported respectively 0.79 and 0.63 (Costa & McCrae, 1989). Internal consistency coefficient for Iranian students for each streak of neurosis, extraversion, openness, accommodation, and responsibility were respectively 0.86, 0.73, 0.56, 0.68, and 0.87 with their internal correlation coefficients being 0.56 to 0.87. Simultaneous descriptive study of the questionnaire through the personal report and observer assessment forms correlations was between 0.45 for accommodation streak to 0.66 for extraversion (Garrosi Farshi, 2000). Also in Kiamehr study (2002) this questionnaire’s reliability was determined between 0.41 to 0.75 in correlation coefficient of simultaneous descriptions between the questionnaire’s short and long formats on 380 Tehran university students, and between 0.65 to 0.86 in the perpetual study from re-assessment of correlation coefficient perspective between the two administrations for the questionnaire factors. The coefficient outcome of this questionnaire’s internal consistency with Cronbach alpha is 0.54 to 0.79. In Ahadi’s study, the final coefficient of the five factors was between 0.48 and 0.68 in terms of Cronbach alpha. Five main dimensions can be included in this questionnaire. Neuroticism (N) shows the individual’s inclination towards experiencing anxiety, tension, sympathy-seeking, hostility, impulsiveness, depression, and low self-esteem; while extraversion (E) deals with the individual’s inclination towards positiveness, assertiveness, and hyper-energeticness. Openness (O) deals with the individual’s inclination towards curiosity, passion for art, artistry, openness, and rationalism; while agreeableness (A) is related to the individual’s inclination towards compassionateness, kindness, generosity, sympathy and consultativeness, humanism, and trustfulness. And finally conscientiousness (C) shows the individual’s inclination
towards punctuality, efficiency, trustworthiness and reliance, being self-disciplinarian, progressiveness, rationality, and mildness. Another questionnaire taken into consideration is the pre-marital affair attitude questionnaire. This questionnaire was constituted by Kordlou (2001) to study the tendency and attitude of high school students towards pre-marital affair in Tehran, and was scored from totally disagree to totally agree on the basis of Likert five degree scale. The test’s descriptiveness has been assessed by prominent national figures in psychology and has been experimented for reliability in three tests on census sample, and perpetuity of 93% has been consistently emphasized during 1380-1387. With respect to the test’s reliability on high school students, the test’s textual descriptiveness on university students was re-assessed and emphasized, utilizing the theories of various experts in sociology and psychology fields. Utilizing Cronbach alpha, internal consistency of the scales was scrutinized. For most of the scales, Cronbach alpha was higher than 80 percent, and the test’s total reliability was 0.913.

4. Findings

All 400 students (43.5% female and 56.5% male) took part in the survey, their mean age being 22, 49.5% of whom being local and the rest non-local, studying at different levels (16.5) post diploma, (81.5) Bachelor, (6.5) Master. 65% of the sample under survey stated that they had experienced friendship with the opposite sex in the form of telephone contact (36%), chat (9.5%), going on picnics (29%), physical contact (22.5%), and sexual relationship (20%). 48.5% of the sample under survey admitted having had friendships with the opposite sex.

Table 1. Respondents’ distribution in terms of the variables under investigation and their respective descriptive statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal characteristics</th>
<th>Age (average)</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Residential status</th>
<th>Educational level</th>
<th>Entrance in university(year)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Local</td>
<td>Non-local</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>22.33</td>
<td>43.5</td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td>50.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Linear regression model in investigating personality traits in pre-marital affair attitude with the opposite sex in Sanandaj university students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>T-statistics</th>
<th>Significance level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neuroticism</td>
<td>.116</td>
<td>.014</td>
<td>.075</td>
<td>-.176</td>
<td>-.116</td>
<td>-2.338</td>
<td>.020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extraversion</td>
<td>.185</td>
<td>.034</td>
<td>.069</td>
<td>-.258</td>
<td>-.185</td>
<td>-3.747</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreeableness</td>
<td>.095</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>.085</td>
<td>.159</td>
<td>.094</td>
<td>1.884</td>
<td>.060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness</td>
<td>.073</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>.094</td>
<td>-.137</td>
<td>-.073</td>
<td>-1.464</td>
<td>.144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>.090</td>
<td>.008</td>
<td>.076</td>
<td>.136</td>
<td>.090</td>
<td>1.796</td>
<td>.073</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Discussion and Conclusion

In this article the attempt has been on investigating and evaluating male and female relationships at universities with respect to their personality traits. Different from previous studies on pre-marital affair with the opposite sex which stressed upon individual, social, and family factors, this study considers the impact of personality traits implementing NEO-Five factor inventory in the tendency towards these relationships, even though there is a compliance between this study’s descriptive findings and other studies among Iranian students in terms of tendency towards the opposite sex (Khalajabadi Farahani & Mehryar, 2010; Mirzayi & Baraghmadi, 2011; Rajabloo & Asghari, 2010; Movahed, et al., 2006). Linear regression analysis shows a meaningful relationship between neuroticism personality trait and pre-marital affair attitude with the opposite sex. In explaining this research finding it can be asserted that tendency presence in those individuals bearing this personality factor is justifiable due to their mental and affectional causes. Studies show that neuroticism trait predict depression and emotional instability (Bowen, et al., 2011). These individuals suffer from affectional instability and negative affections whose compatibility level is often affected by these items (Shakerian, 2011). Furthermore, neuroticism encompasses various negative emotions like fear, sorrow, anger, and arousal. These individuals are more likely to possess irrational beliefs and less control over desires and impulses. Hence a tendency and inclination to the opposite sex relationships can compensate for their affectional deficiencies and gaps which in some cases could lead to illness dependencies. In fact these relationships are supposed to be used to overcome fears, anxiety, and complexes, and to find a reliable rest point to lean against. In other words, these individuals act immaturly in their social interactions and interpersonal relationships and lack demanded skills to behave appropriately in various social situations. Skills that have to be acquired, practiced, and considered in order to build and maintain a persistent and healthy relationship (Hussein Chary & Delavarpour, 2006). Possibly, extreme cases (sexual relationships) show weaknesses in controlling extinct and desires. Other findings in this investigation show a relationship between extraversion and pre-marital affair with the opposite sex attitude. These individuals’ characteristics could be mentioned as explanatory points in this finding of the investigation. Extraversion is the best predictive factor for participating in entertainment activities leading to joyfulness (Hill & Argyle, 2001). Extraversion factor is in connection with positive emotions such as happiness, love, and intimacy. Those individuals who get high scores in extraversion often disclose their feelings and affections. These individuals are characterized as being sociable and active. Studies show that extrovert individuals are more appealing in their relationships, and their appeal in second behavior depicts them as being of a good disposition, good looking, and decent (Meier, et al., 2010). They have a positive notion about themselves, and are optimistic about the surrounding environment (Meevissen, et al., 2011). Extroverts are sociable, are in favor of parties, have numerous friends, need to converse with others, show enthusiasm towards stimulation and emotion, are curious, act abruptly and improvidently, are easily aroused, are improvisatorial, are repartee, are in front of change and alteration, approve of motion and work, are inclined to aggressiveness, act frantically, are not able to restrain their feelings, and are not much stable (Razeghi, et al., 2010). This set of behaviors can act as simplifying factors in relationships between individuals and their tendency towards the opposite sex in those possessing these attributes. Nevertheless, some investigators believe that extraversion is of trivial significance in close relationships formation, and this personality trait is intensively connected to social impact (Toobin et al., 2000, as quoted in Ahadi, 2007). Other findings of the investigation showed no meaningful relationship between conscientiousness, agreeableness, and openness personality traits and a tendency towards the opposite sex relationships. The results on meaninglessness of conscientiousness factor with a tendency towards the opposite sex pre-marital affair, with respect to the fact that the aforesaid factor gives the most stable prediction for problem solving among the five factors, are elaborated on (D’Zurilla et al., 2011), and controlling impulse and personal commitment are considered as important issues in conscientiousness which affect the quality of individuals’ behavioral interactions (Jarvis, 2006). These individuals are also able to control their impulses appropriately and are less likely to resort to drugs, physical aggressiveness, and marital betrayal (Kardok, 1993, as quoted in Ahadi, 2007). Hence, it could be predicted that in Iranian culture individuals possessing this factor are more potent in
problem solving and less likely to depend on pre-marital affair with the opposite sex for solving their problems. Lack of meaningful relationship between agreeableness factor and the attitude of pre-marital affair with the opposite sex can be explained based on these individuals’ characteristics. Researchers, therefore, believe that a high level of agreeableness causes individuals to modify their emotions in their interpersonal interactions, and to be more mild and tender in their behaviors. These individuals are able to easily solve conflicts connected to relationships (Watson, Hubbard & Weise, 2000). Different from neuroticism, which is able to predict only low level problem solving, openness factor is able to solve high level social problems (D’Zurilla et al., 2011). These individuals possess behavioral specifications of good-heartedness, compassionateness, inclination towards arts and rationalism; and these factors could be attributed to a person who is more bound to religious and cultural values. According to the findings in this investigation, it could be asserted that pre-marital affair with the opposite sex among students is affected by their personality traits. Although there exist numerous other personal, social, and cultural factors that lead to affair between sexes among students, delimiting the sample to this category of students is considered as a limitation in this investigation and a more extensive study over other students in other universities is suggested. As the final sum-up, it should be noted that affectional and sexual needs are of fundamental needs of the youth that affect other behaviors. Due to the cultural specifications of our country, a constitutional, normalized, and legitimate way must be introduced, since this religious community could be modern as well. Policy-makers and programmers should prevent social traumas and abnormalities in this area, utilizing western states’ experiences. Although non-homogeneous sexual structure at universities has constituted a structural opportunity for the two sexes’ interaction in various forms such as pre-marital friendships, and intersexual companionship, and can intensify the situation, mental structures like attitudes, values, and cultural norms of the community and individuals can resist this structural pressure and even overlook it.

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