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## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CONSCIENTIOUSNESS AND COMMITMENT ON ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP

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**Abstract.** Introduction: Romantic relationships and personality traits are quite interesting and studied concepts. Purpose: The purpose of this research is to find the relationship between consciousness and commitment in a romantic relationship. Methods: The research was conducted in different cities of Kosovo, where questionnaires were used as measuring instruments. Big Five Inventory (BFI) John & Srivastava, (1999) is the questionnaire that was used to measure the consciousness and the second questionnaire that was used is to measure commitment in romantic relationships (Straus et al., 2010), where from this questionnaire a total of 6 questions were selected that measure engagement in relationships. The total sample was attended by 485 students from different universities where the average age is 21, the minimum age was 18 and the maximum age was 44 years with a DS = 2,581. Results: The data were analyzed using the SPSS statistical package, from which the hypothesis was confirmed. Thus, by means of Spearman correlation it has been proved that there is a significant correlation between consciousness and commitment in relationship ( $r = .185, p < .000$ ). Conclusion: From the results of the research we conclude that in Kosovo society the more the consciousness characteristics increase the higher the level of commitment in romantic relationship is. In the future it would be good to review other variables influencing this hypothesis, such as: age, gender, duration of relationship or marital status.

**Keywords:** Personality, romantic relationship, conscientiousness, commitment.

## ВЗАИМОСВЯЗЬ МЕЖДУ СОЗНАТЕЛЬНОСТЬЮ И ПРИВЕРЖЕННОСТЬЮ К РОМАНТИЧЕСКИМ ОТНОШЕНИЯМ

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**Аннотация.** Введение: Романтические отношения и личностные черты - довольно интересные и изученные понятия. Цель: Цель этого исследования - найти взаимосвязь между сознанием и приверженностью в романтических отношениях. Методы: Исследование проводилось в разных городах Косово, где в качестве измерительных инструментов использовались вопросники. Big Five Inventory (BFI) John & Srivastava, (1999) - это анкета, которая использовалась для измерения сознания, а вторая анкета, которая использовалась для измерения приверженности в романтических отношениях (Straus et al., 2010), из этой анкеты было выбрано в общей сложности 6 вопросов, которые измеряют вовлеченность в отношения. В общей выборке приняли участие 485 студентов из разных университетов, средний возраст которых составляет 21 год, минимальный возраст - 18 лет, а максимальный возраст - 44 года с DS = 2,581. Результаты: данные были проанализированы с помощью статистического пакета SPSS, и гипотеза подтвердилась. Таким образом, с помощью корреляции Спирмена было доказано, что существует значительная корреляция между сознанием и приверженностью в отношениях ( $r = .185, p < .000$ ). Заключение: Из результатов исследования мы пришли к выводу, что в косовском обществе чем больше возрастают характеристики сознания, тем выше уровень приверженности в романтических отношениях. В дальнейшем было бы хорошо рассмотреть другие переменные, влияющие на эту гипотезу, такие как: возраст, пол, продолжительность отношений или семейное положение.

**Ключевые слова:** личность, романтические отношения, сознательность, приверженность.

### INTRODUCTION

Personality is a dynamic organization, within the psychophysical systems of the person that create characteristic patterns of the person's behavior, thoughts and feelings (Allport, 1961; McAdams & Olson, 2010; Mischel et al., 2004). These enduring personal characteristics that are revealed in a particular pattern of behavior in different situations are defined as personality traits. Personality is divided into five main dimensions known as the «Big Five» which are: openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, compliance and neuroticism (or emotional stability). These dimensions are generally consistent over time, and about half of the variance appears to be attributed to a person's genetics rather than environmental effects (Briley & Tucker-Drob, 2014; Lucas & Baird, 2004). The Big Five model implies that personality consists of five relatively independent dimensions that together provide a meaningful taxonomy.

Conscientiousness is one of the five traits of the big five personality model that is attributed to characteristics like being careful, or vigilant which implies a desire to do a task well, being persistent and responsible. Conscientious people are efficient, organized, and systematic individuals (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Thompson, 2008). They exhibit a tendency to show self-discipline, act with dedication and aim at achievement, exhibit planned behaviors, are credible, and are likely to be conformists (DeYound et al., 2002).

Conscientiousness is positively associated with the quality

of partner relationships, and is associated with lower rates of behavior associated with divorce. Behaviors of this trait can have a direct impact on the quality of relationships. People who have this more pronounced personality dimension are better at managing conflicts and tend to have less disagreement, perhaps because they provoke less criticism because of their good, controlled, and responsible behavior (Roberts et al., 2009). A relationship is made up of two different personalities, where the personality traits of both partners come together and inimitably shape the quality of their relationship (Robins, Caspi, & Moffitt, 2000). The quality of a romantic relationship is seen as a broad construct that encompasses many dimensions. Fletcher et al. (2000) have identified six relationship quality constructs, one of which is engagement.

Commitment represents a long-term orientation towards a relationship including the feeling of connection with a partner and the desire to maintain a relationship. Commitment depends on individual preferences. Thus a committed partner is described as a person who feels morally obligated to continue the relationship which envisions a long-term future together with the partner. Commitment as a multidimensional construct consists of three components: emotional connection, long-term orientation, and the goal or motive to continue the relationship. Factors that affect the level of commitment are: relationship satisfaction, amount of investment (how much time passes) and emotional effort.

Early commitment theories emphasize the positive fac-

tors that push people to pursue a relationship such as the degree of love and satisfaction in the relationship. Commitment is considered an important variable of the relationship by researchers for several reasons: as a powerful motivational key and that commitment is a proximal predictor of the breakdown of a relationship (Agnew, 2009).

Robert Sternberg's concept of triangular love is one of the most important theoretical models in the realm of romantic relationships. He proposed that love consists of three dimensions: intimacy (feeling of closeness), passion (physical attraction), and commitment (which includes aspects of love, support, consideration) (Sternberg, 1986, 1998). Together, these three components form the three sides of a triangle which symbolizes love. The presence of three components would lead to a complete love and the absence of one would form different loves e.g. commitment-only love would form an "empty love," consisting of a strong union but little intimacy and physical attraction. The triangular theory of love can vary based on the individuals involved in the couples. Applications of the triangular model to understand aspects of romantic relationships have also been seen in personality studies. Consciousness is associated with trustworthiness, perseverance, which can help explain the connection between this personality factor and commitment (Sternberg, 1988, p. 12). When referring to the theory of love, people with higher levels of this trait adhere to greater commitment (Arriaga, 2001; Shiota et al., 2006).

Empirical studies have shown that commitment is positively related to these above-mentioned factors (Le & Agnew, 2003; Rusbult, 1983; Rusbult et al., 1998). Strong commitment has also been shown to be associated with different relationship maintenance behaviors (Kilpatrick, Bissonnette, & Rusbult, 2002), including a willingness to sacrifice personal interests for the good of a relationship (Powell & Van Vugt, 2003), and greater tendencies to forgive a partner in a betrayal (Cann & Baucom, 2004). Some people have suggested that high divorce rates in America are associated with low levels of commitment (Baumeister 1991; Bellah et al 1985; Cherlin 2002). According to Engel, Olson, and Patrick (2002) the components of love were related to the model variables of the five personality factors. The results showed that the consciousness trait was an important predictor of commitment, intimacy and passion and that it is positively related to engagement. As noted above, awareness is associated with greater credibility, perseverance, and task accomplishment, consistency which can help explain the relationship between this personality factor and commitment (Fagan, 2014). And these characteristics can lead to greater commitment. In other words, «conscious persons tend to be motivated workers in their love relationships.»

In the same field, the study by Ahmetoglu, Swami and Chamorro-Premuzic (2010), with a sample of English adults emphasizes that consciousness is positively correlated with commitment and intimacy. In his findings, age is considered as an important variable where it is seen that age is correlated with commitment, where with increasing age also increases commitment. Other relevant research has suggested that personality factors may influence the quality of the relationship where commitment is a part (Bradbury & Fincham, 1988).

In collectivist cultures as opposed to individualistic cultures where physical attraction plays a greater role than other components, in collectivist cultures they give more importance to commitment in maintaining a bond, as well as considering that credibility is a characteristic of our culture and at the same time a feature of consciousness has been seen as necessary to spot the connection between consciousness and commitment. So the purpose of this paper is to see if consciousness as a personality trait is related to commitment in romantic relationships hence the research question. From the literature review it is hypothesized that there is a positive correlation between consciousness and commitment in romantic relationships.

## METHODOLOGY

### Participants

In this research the sample was deliberately selected. 485 students participated, of which 268 were girls and 217 boys. The age ranged from 18 years to 44 years where the average age of the sample was 21.86 years with SD = 2,581. The sample was distributed in different regions of Kosovo where students from different universities were surveyed. The questionnaire was administered after the students were explained the purpose of the research and after they agreed to participate.

### Procedures

Prior to the distribution of the questionnaires, the students were told the purpose of this research and were told that the data obtained would remain completely confidential. After obtaining the consent of the students, they started filling out the questionnaire and for any ambiguity they were free to ask for additional clarifications. The procedure for completing the questionnaire took about 40 minutes.

### Instruments

The Big Five Inventory (BFI) personality trait questionnaire was used as the measuring instrument. The questionnaire has been translated and adapted into Albanian John & Srivastava, (1999). The inventory contains a total of 44 statements which measure the five dimensions of personality (Goldberg, 1993) measured by the Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree). Questionnaire Questions such as: Are you hardworking, trustworthy, doing things effectively are some of the questions that measure the trait of consciousness. The second questionnaire used was to measure commitment in romantic relationships (Straus et al., 2010), where from this questionnaire, a total of 6 questions were selected that measure commitment in relationships. Commitment is measured by questions like: marriage is permanent, my relationship with my partner is the most important relationship I have. Reliability has been measured and it has been found that for the consciousness trait it is with Cronbach  $\alpha = .609$ , and Cronbach  $\alpha = .119$  for commitment.

### Results

The data analysis was done through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences SPSS, where first the descriptive analyzes was performed, then the correlation between the main variables of the paper. In the beginning, descriptive statistics were performed, which show the total number, minimum, maximum, average and standard deviation of the main variables (see Table 1). Spearman correlation was used to confirm the hypothesis of this study as there was abnormal data distribution. In order to reach the obtained data it was necessary for some of the questions to be reversed. So consciousness is positively correlated with relationship commitment ( $r = 0.185$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ) see Table 2.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for variables

Variable	N	Min	Max	Mean	DS	Missing
Age	481	18	44	21.86	2.581	4
Gender	485	-	-	-	-	0
Consciousness	485	1.67	5.00	3.7794	.66247	0
Commitment	484	1.33	19.17	2.7327	1.17731	1

Note. DS = standard deviation. N = number of participants. M = mean. Min=minimum. Max = maximum

Table 2. Correlation analysis between consciousness and relationship commitment

		Consciousness	Commitment
Spearman's rho	Consciousness	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
		N	485
	Commitment	Correlation Coefficient	.185**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
		N	484

## DISCUSSION

This research was conducted to look at the relationship between consciousness and commitment in romantic relationships in Kosovo. Starting from the hypothesis, during

the literature review and various researches conducted, it has been claimed that there is a positive correlation between consciousness and commitment in romantic relationships. In this study it was proved that there is a positive correlation between the variables ( $r = .185, p < .000$ ). The results of this study are consistent with the study conducted by Ahmetoglu, Swami and Chamorro-Premuzic (2010), a study according to which there is a significant correlation between consciousness and commitment as opposed to the sample number that was around 16,030 and their study included the variable for five personality traits with the three components of triangular theory. Commitment has a slower growth in a relationship, and is also the last component to reach the peak of a relationship (Baumeister & Leary, 1995), and given that love goes through different stages of the relationship it would be good for the relationship duration to be viewed as an influential variable. Also demographic variables like age and gender would contribute to the results if they were to be included as study variables. There are social rituals where in most cultures marriage marks a dramatic increase of commitment as it is thought that after marriage individuals will become more and more committed to each other. Whether such rituals increase commitment, or they are indicative of a previous commitment, remains to be determined (Sternberg, 1986). Considering that the personality traits of an individual can change depending on different stages of life then it would be necessary to consider these variables in future studies. The results of this study may have important implications for relationships that promote more commitment in a romantic relationship.

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